

Genesis: From Creation to New Creation

Genesis 31:1-55

"When God is on Your Side"– June 18, 2023



Introduction

Our God is sovereign over all things. He is a refuge for His people. When feeling vulnerable and threatened by the world, the flesh and the devil, you can become weary - exhausted. The world can make what is wrong seem right.

Where do you look for shelter when you face disappointment? Where do you look for protection from the threat of loneliness? Where do you look for refuge from temptation that wages war against your soul? The world offers countless counterfeit shelters. Yet God alone is the only true refuge for us. Whom will you trust - God or yourself?

The Big Idea of Genesis 31: God is a refuge for those who trust and obey.

Sermon Outline

1. Trusting God means obeying God. Vs. 1-21
2. God is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Vs. 22 -55

Read & Discuss

1. Read vs. 1-21

God was faithful to bless Jacob. It could be seen in the prosperity with which Jacob had been blessed. This made Laban and his sons jealous and angry. ([Proverbs 27:4](#)) Because of that, leaving Laban and returning to Jacob's homeland would be risky. The response of Rachel and Leah showed how miserable it was to live with their father. Laban did not provide an environment for his daughters to flourish. On this Father's Day, we can reflect on the picture of what Godly fathers should be as seen in [Ephesians 6:4](#). A father is called to bring up or train their kids with the goal of Christian maturity. Fathers should be involved, spend time with, encourage, correct, and teach their kids.

Faith is more than just saying, "I believe." It starts there, but biblical faith involves trust. Trusting God is obeying God. Where would Jacob and his family find the courage to leave? Jacob was beginning to see God's providence. He was seeing the faithfulness of God that He once doubted. ([Vs. 5, 7, 9, & 13](#))

When you read about the dysfunction and mess in Genesis, do you ever get tired? We can become weary as the reader. Life can be like this sometimes. This can leave us wondering, where is God in all of this? Our perspective is limited. Left to ourselves, we can't make sense of life. God is making all things beautiful in His time. ([Ecclesiastes 3:11](#)) What circumstances in your life have left you or are currently leaving you wondering where is God in all of this? How has God shown Himself faithful in the past?

When Jacob came to Paddan-aram, he was alone, broke and in fear of his life. Yet God was at work. When he left, he left with a family and livestock, knowing the protection of God. It can be easy to look at the prosperity of the wicked and lose perspective. ([Ps. 73:16-17](#)) Have you ever felt like Asaph, the writer of Ps. 73? We need the calibrating perspective of God's word daily. It strengthens us and emboldens us to step out in obedience.

2. Read chapter vs. 22-55

Laban is upset for a number of reasons. However, God intervened, telling Laban not to touch Jacob. After catching up with Jacob, Laban then went to him and accused him of stealing his household gods. Jacob tells him to go and search. He doesn't find them, but we know that Rachel has them. We do not know and are not told why she took them. Moses doesn't tell us why.

Moses wants us to see a contrast between the gods of Laban and the one true God of Jacob. Laban's gods are lost. But the one true God stops Laban in his tracks and protects Jacob. Compared to the one true God, the idols of this world are worthless. Idols can be many things. An idol can be anything that we love or trust more than God. It's something that we can't live without. Something we are willing to break the rules to get.

What is it that you are prone to love or trust more than God? What do you look upon to deliver what only God can deliver?

The God of the Bible is powerful, holy, awesome, and He will not be domesticated. Either we trust Him and do what He says, or we do not know Him as God. We like the idea of retaining a sense of control - that's why we like idols. However, anything we trust other than God will let you down.

Seeing God's providence, Jacob starts to fear God more than man. ([Vs. 42](#)) The fear of God did not leave Jacob insecure. When he learned that God was on his side, he gained confidence. ([Proverbs 14:26](#)) God is faithful. He keeps His promises. Jacob was safe because he came to understand that God was on his side. Laban was in danger because God was opposed to him.

Is God on your side? He isn't on your side because you are a good person. When you try to perform, it will fail. God opposes the proud. ([James 4:6](#)) Grace is poured on the humble. We can declare a greater freedom than Jacob could because of what Jesus did for us.

We have all sinned. As our Judge, God will not forgive sin by sweeping it under the carpet. Sin has a cost. ([Rom 6:23](#)) God will punish every one of our sins. Jesus is our Passover Lamb who bore the penalty of sin. Jesus is our Refuge, our Shelter, or Protector from the righteous wrath of God. Because of that, God can forgive sin AND uphold His righteous standard. God can be on your side because of Jesus. ([Romans 8:31-34](#)) This is good news.

It's not enough to say, "I believe" or "That's true." You have to decide who you will trust. Do you trust yourself or Jesus? Where do you look for refuge or shelter?

Prayer of Response

- 1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?
- 2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand, believe, desire, or do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come. If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at fbcum.org

Next week's sermon text: we turn to Genesis 32:1-32 "Wrestling with God"
