

March 31st

THE CHEATER MEETS HIS MATCH

“And in the morning, behold, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, “What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?” Laban said, “It is not so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years.”” Genesis 29:25-27

Carnies. You’ve seen them. You’ve heard them. They work at your local fairs. They will say anything to get you to pay to play...except the odds are always stacked against you. It’s like a casino, except these are games that even children can play. There’s usually some trick to get you to use your money to feel confident and then lose it all when more money is involved for a bigger prize. Is it that much different with life? There’s so much that calls for our attention as men in this world. Maybe that’s why we find it so hard to give God our undivided hearts. Jacob is no different from us in this way. Here in Genesis 29 we see that God uses another cheat to teach Jacob a great lesson. What does God want to teach us through this event?

Jacob was excited when he found Laban and Rachel. How do we know this? Notice how many men it usually took to roll the stone away from the well: an entire group of shepherds! But after he sees his future bride Rachel, testosterone and bravado took over. This wasn’t a weightlifting competition where we see how much Jacob can bench press. Instead, it’s a rock moving event! Jacob’s adrenaline is flowing. He’s found his own people. These are the very people that his father Isaac sent him too. But be careful what you wish for. We can see in later events that Laban is not a follower of Yahweh. So he uses Jacob to further his kingdom rather than blessing Jacob with what he wanted...Rachel.

Can you imagine the conversation that Jacob had with Laban? We have some of the details that Moses gives us, but our minds can imagine how Jacob felt in this scenario. He has stayed with Laban for a month. Laban is ready to give him his wages. Experts generally agree at this time that the bride price was forty shekels, and shepherds made about ten shekels per year. But notice how Jacob sees Rachel; he is willing to wait seven years, which is double the amount for a usual bride. This shows us how lovestruck Jacob was. But God. This isn’t simply a Hollywood love story where it all works out in the end. God has far too much work to do in Jacob’s life. And He has much to teach us.

Do you notice the parallels between Jacob’s wives and Jacob’s earlier life? What’s the birth order? Leah is older but is the second choice. Rachel is younger but is first choice. Sounds a lot like some other people we’ve already been introduced to...Esau and a younger Jacob. God doesn’t waste anything men. God is teaching Jacob here that you reap what you sow. He has deceived his father and his brother, and now he has met his match. It appears that Jacob isn’t the most selfish person on the earth. Laban stands alone as first place, by offering his daughters as pawns to make him more rich! The excitement in finding his sister’s relatives has already faded from view. He doesn’t say “please, give me my wife.” Instead, he says “Give me my wife.” And Laban complies but gives him the wrong one! Two weeks prior, Jacob was a bachelor...now he had two wives! Where was God in such events? He was where He always was. He was always with Jacob, even though Jacob had sinned. But God. God works in us despite our sin and offers us hope. Men, even in your sin and failures God still promises to be with you. Because it was never about you...it’s always been about His faithfulness.

Spend some time thanking God for His constant presence in your life and His constant teaching. Ask Him for wisdom for how to live faithfully for His glory today.

For Further Reading: Genesis 29:1-30