

April 8th

EXITING STAGE LEFT

“So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah into the field where his flock was and said to them, “I see that your father does not regard me with favor as he did before. But the God of my father has been with me. You know that I have served your father with all my strength, yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times. But God did not permit him to harm me.” GENESIS 31:4-7

Leam and cleave. Ever heard of the concept? Do you know where the idea comes from in the Bible? This concept originates from Genesis 2:24, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. Here in Genesis 31, we find that Jacob is finally ready to separate from Laban after decades, but only after God gives the command to leave.

We’ve seen that Jacob has now served Laban for 20 years. Indeed, Jacob reveals to his two wives that Laban has cheated him not a few times, but ten times! It wasn’t enough for Jacob to be tricked about the woman that he was working for; Laban changed his wages with the sheep and goats also. But God. God has continued to show Jacob that He is fulfilling the promise that He gave to Him at Bethel. Remember God promised riches, descendants, and land. When he first arrived, he had no wife. After seven years, he had two wives and sons, but no riches. After another thirteen years, he had riches that dwarfed Laban’s, but no land. Now it’s time for God to bring him back to the land that He had promised. God reminds Jacob of His promise at Bethel and commands Jacob to return to the land that he ran from.

While we may not have specific similarities with Jacob’s story of wives and property battles, we do have the same God who showed Himself faithful to Jacob and shows Himself to us. Jacob gives us hope because he struggles to trust God with his life. But there is hope here that we find in Genesis 31. Moses has summarized twenty years of Jacob’s life into a few chapters. By Jacob’s own confession to Laban, he has not cheated Laban. He has dealt faithfully with Laban’s livestock and loved his daughters. In contrast, it is Laban who has cheapened his daughters and cheated his own kin ten times! There’s no shortage of contempt here for Laban, and we have observed that the Jacob of chapter 31 is different from the Jacob who cheated Esau. This change is due to God’s work in remaining faithful to the promise that He gave to Abraham!

What does God want to show us in this event from Jacob’s life? Jacob was driven into a faraway land away from His own people. He was a fugitive that was running from his brother because of his own deceitful actions. But God. God uses the most difficult desert of Jacob’s life to grow Him to be more dependent. It’s the fire of the desert that shapes Jacob into the man of God that he shows in Genesis 31. Men, sometimes we may wonder what God is doing in our lives. We might think that we don’t have much to offer God. Let Jacob’s story take you back to school and instruct you. God doesn’t waste anything. It’s here where we find the healing balm of Romans 8:28-29: “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.” God declared Jacob’s destiny and used these hard events as the means to make him more like His God. And he does the same thing with you...making you more like Him while always remaining faithful to giving you His presence in all things. Will you trust His work on your life today?

Spend some time reflecting on the trials that you’ve endured in your life. How has God deepened your commitment to Him through those times? Take time to thank Him that He is with you during them.

For Further Reading: Romans 8:18-30

