

Seven short years, seven long years

These verses show the happiest and saddest stories of Jacob’s life placed side by side. The point: God gives to each of us periods of joy and sorrow to show us more of himself, and to show us how to be more like himself.

Grace Can Be Easy

Acknowledging the grace of God

Vs. 1 “Went on his journey” is literally “picked up his feet.” Demonstrates cheerfulness.

Vs. 10 “When he saw Rachel... Jacob came near and rolled the stone from the well’s mouth.” A young man sees a beautiful woman, shows off his strength.

Vs. 11 “Then Jacob kissed Rachel and wept aloud.”

What is going on? Why does he kiss her and weep?

Compare this story to the betrothal story in Genesis 24:27.

When Abraham’s servant finds Rebekah for Isaac, he exclaims “Blessed be the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and his faithfulness toward my master. As for me, the LORD has led me in the way to the house of my master’s kinsmen.”

Conclusion: Jacob is kissing her and weeping because he realizes that this young beautiful woman is God’s plan for fulfilling the promise. He remembers his parents’ story and weeps because, unlike Abraham’s servant, he cannot muster words. He is overcome with emotion.

A sweet time of blessing

Vs. 12 “And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father’s kinsman, and that he was Rebekah’s son, *and she ran* and told her father.”

Vs. 20 “So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.”

One month’s work is worth about ¾ a shekel. OT limited a bride price to 50 shekels, and limited indentured servitude to 6 years.

How should you honor God during good times?

Let your heart be overcome with God’s blessings!

Psalm 133:1 “How good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell together in unity!”

Build a foundation when the times are good.

Good times are their own sort of test.

Grace Can Be Hard

An evil uncle

Vs. 14 – The first warning sign... here is a man that doesn't understand marriage

Vs. 15 – second warning sign... a preoccupation with wages. “Laban has observed Jacob's attachment to Rachel which he is willing to exploit by inviting Jacob to make an offer.”

Vs. 21 – The third warning sign... Jacob has to ask for Rachel's hand in marriage

Jacob is young in the Lord and has a lack of wisdom.

Hebrews 12:6 “The Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastens everyone he accepts as his son.”

Poetic justice – confronting his sin

The deceiver is deceived – “What is this you have done?” Echoes God in the Garden of Eden, Pharaoh to Abraham, and Abimelek to Isaac.

“Why have you deceived me?” Jacob unwittingly condemns himself.

Laban says, “In our country, we don't give the younger before the firstborn.” The exact type of situation that Jacob had run away from, with deception, by deception he is placed back into it.

Matthew 7:2 “For with the judgment you judge, you will be judged.”

Even deeper growth in grace – confronting his father's sin

Vs. 30 “And he loved Rachel more than Leah.”

He grew up envious of his older brother because his father, who had the duty to equally love his two sons, loved one more than the other and so treated him better. Now he is in the position of having the duty to equally love his two wives, but he loves one more than the other.

How will you face the sins of your previous generation? How will you break the cycle?

Hebrews 10:14 “For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being made holy.”

Questions for Personal or Group Study

1. Are you in a good time or a bad time right now? Do those near you agree?
2. How can you praise God for the blessings of your life? How can you use them to establish a foundation?
3. Are there ways the Lord is showing you your sin? What will you do about this? Tell a trusted friend and have them hold you accountable to grow.