

WHAT'S IN THE MIDDLE? PT2

3. PRAISE CHANGES WHAT IS IN THE MIDDLE

Look at Leah's journey - this will break regional bondage off your life! Her first three sons expose a broken, codependent woman whose heart is held hostage by rejection.

- REUBEN (Genesis 29:32): “The LORD has surely **LOOKED** on my affliction. Now therefore, my husband will love me.” What’s in her middle? Jacob.
- SIMEON (Genesis 29:33): “Because the LORD has **HEARD** that I am unloved...” What’s in her middle? Her rejection.
- LEVI (Genesis 29:34): “Now this time my husband will become **ATTACHED** to me...” What’s in her middle? Still Jacob! Still desperate for human approval!

For three births, she tried to use children to force an earthly man to fill a heaven-sized void in her soul. When

Genesis 29:31 says something terrifying: **“the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, He opened her womb...”**

Jacob did not see Leah. But God did. **Before Leah ever says, “Now I will praise,” Scripture says, “The LORD saw.”**

Do not miss this:

- **The eyes of God were already on the woman who was killing herself trying to get the eyes of Jacob.**
- **Some of you are exhausting yourself trying to be seen by people while heaven has never taken its eyes off you.**

Rejection makes you chase eyes that cannot see you while ignoring the Eyes that have never left you.

Then the babies start coming...

REUBEN: “SEE, A SON!” Genesis 29:32.

- The name Reuben, Re’uven carries the thought, “See, a son!”

Listen to Leah: “The LORD has surely looked on my affliction. Now therefore, my husband will love me.”

- She names the child SEE!
- Why?
- Because she desperately wants Jacob to see her.

God saw her in verse 31, but she is still trying to make Jacob see her in verse 32.

That is what rejection does. God can see you, bless you, favor you, open your womb, put something miraculous inside you, and you can still be emotionally imprisoned by somebody who refuses to see your worth.

Her womb was fruitful, but her heart was still starving.

DO NOT LET SOMEBODY’S BLINDNESS MAKE YOU QUESTION GOD’S BLESSING.

Another child comes

SIMEON: “HEARD” - Genesis 29:33: “Because the LORD has heard that I am unloved, He has therefore given me this son also.”

- She calls him Simeon, Shim'on, related to shama, “to hear.”
- Reuben: See me. Simeon: Hear me.

Do you see the progression? Rejection is screaming through the names of her children.

- “Somebody see me!”
- “Somebody hear me!”
- “Somebody acknowledge me!”

She is naming her future after her wounds.

BE CAREFUL WHEN YESTERDAY'S REJECTION STARTS NAMING TOMORROW'S GENERATION.

You can become so wounded by what happened to you that you unconsciously give your pain naming rights over your future.

Then comes Levi...

LEVI: “ATTACHED” - Genesis 29:34: “Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons.”

Levi, Levi, is associated here with joining, attaching, being bound together.

Now watch the progression:

SEE ME. HEAR ME. ATTACH YOURSELF TO ME.

That is codependency in three Hebrew names! She is producing sons, but emotionally she is still orbiting Jacob. Jacob is still in the middle.

- And whatever is in your middle has gravitational pull over everything else in your life.
 - Your thoughts orbit it.
 - Your emotions orbit it.
 - Your decisions orbit it.
 - Your conversations orbit it.
 - Your identity begins orbiting it.

Whatever sits in the middle becomes the sun of your emotional solar system.

For Leah, it was Jacob.

THEN SHE GETS PREGNANT A FOURTH TIME. She steps into the labor room, pushes through the pain, looks at the newborn babe, and something shifts in the realm of the spirit!

Jacob didn't change. Rachel didn't change. Her home environment didn't change. LEAH CHANGED.

She looks past Jacob, looks past her pain, and declares in Genesis 29:35: “NOW I WILL PRAISE THE LORD!” And she named him JUDAH.

Something has happened to this woman.

- Jacob has not changed.
- Rachel has not changed.
- The marriage has not changed.
- The atmosphere has not changed.

But Leah has changed. Listen carefully to what she does not say:

- She does not say, “Maybe Jacob will love me.”

- She does not say, “Maybe Jacob will see me.”
- She does not say, “Maybe Jacob will hear me.”
- She does not say, “Maybe Jacob will attach himself to me.”

JACOB HAS DISAPPEARED FROM HER VOCABULARY.

For the first time, Leah gives birth and does not connect the baby to Jacob. SHE CONNECTS THE BABY TO JEHOVAH.

“NOW I WILL PRAISE THE LORD!” She calls him JUDAH.

Something just moved in the middle.

JUDAH IS THE SOUND OF A PERSON WHO FINALLY GOT FREE

- Praise is not merely music.
- Praise is evidence that something has been dethroned.

When Leah says, “Now I will praise,” she is announcing:

- “Jacob, you don’t get to determine my joy anymore.”
- “Rachel, you don’t get to define my worth anymore.”
- “Rejection, you don’t get to name my future anymore.”

Instead she cries: “NOW I WILL PRAISE THE LORD!”

- **Somebody needs to get a NOW in their spirit.**
- I cried yesterday - NOW I will praise.
- I begged them to understand me yesterday - NOW I will praise.
- I spent years trying to prove myself - NOW I will praise.
- I cannot rewrite yesterday - But I can decide what occupies my middle NOW.

AND HERE IS WHERE THE REVELATION GETS EVEN DEEPER

Watch what comes out of Judah - Kings.

- David comes through Judah.
- Solomon comes through Judah.

- Ultimately, Jesus Christ comes through Judah.

Revelation 5:5: “Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah...”

Do you understand what happened?

The woman begging one man to choose her became the mother of the tribe God chose for kingship.

- Leah is crying: “Jacob, choose me!”
- And heaven is saying: “**Leah, you have no idea what I have chosen inside you.**”

STOP MEASURING YOUR VALUE BY SOMEBODY ELSE’S ABILITY TO RECOGNIZE IT.

Jacob’s rejection could not cancel Jehovah’s election.

YOU’RE GRIEVING WHAT DIDN’T CHOOSE YOU WHILE CARRYING WHAT GOD HAS ALREADY CHOSEN. STOP WEEPING OVER WHAT REJECTED YOU WHEN GOD HAS ALREADY CHOSEN WHAT HE PUT INSIDE YOU.

- Leah wanted Jacob's affection. God had put kings in her womb.
- She was fighting Rachel for a man's attention while carrying the bloodline through which Messiah would eventually come.

NEVER LET TEMPORARY REJECTION BLIND YOU TO GENERATIONAL PURPOSE.

- Jacob's opinion was temporary.
- Judah's destiny was generational.

THEN GOD DOES SOMETHING ALMOST POETIC

Years later, when Israel camps around the Tabernacle, guess who is positioned prominently on the east? JUDAH. Numbers 2 places Judah's camp on the east side, and when Israel marches, Judah goes first.

That is what Judah does! **Praise doesn't always alter what is happening around you right away - praise changes who occupies the center within you!**

For three sons, Jacob held her middle. But when Judah hit the atmosphere, GOD TOOK THE MIDDLE!

- Some of you have allowed a divorce to hold your middle.
- You've allowed a betrayal, a bankruptcy, or a diagnosis to sit on the throne of your heart.
- But today, Judah is stepping into the room to shout: "**NOW I WILL PRAISE THE LORD!**"

PRAISE REORIENTS YOU TOWARD THE PRESENCE

Psalm 100:4 - "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise..."

- Notice the action word: ENTER.
- Praise is the vehicle that moves you out of self-preoccupation and thrusts you into conscious awareness of God.

Listen closely:

- Praise doesn't manufacture God's Presence - He is already omnipresent!

- Praise manufactures your awareness of His Presence.
- Praise doesn't twist God's arm or manipulate His throne; praise realigns your broken heart!
- It doesn't drag God down to your level; it lifts your eyes off your storm and seats you with Him in heavenly places!

That's why you can drag yourself into the house of God on a Sunday morning, weighed down by a mountain of bills, emotional exhaustion, and hellish pressure—and five minutes into high praise, something breaks!

- The bill is still in your wallet.
- The trial is still on your desk.
- The circumstance hasn't moved an inch.
- But suddenly, your problem is no longer sitting in the middle—GOD IS!

4. PRAISE PREPARES THE WAY FOR WARFARE

When God gets ready to move His people, look at the order of march.

Numbers 10:14 declares: “The standard of the camp of the children of Judah set out first...”

- **When Israel broke camp, JUDAH MARCHED FIRST.**

Turn over to Judges 1:1–2. Joshua is dead. The Canaanites are occupying the land. Israel cries out: "Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites to fight against them?"

And Jehovah answers: “JUDAH SHALL GO UP!”

- Whenever warfare breaks out, the divine strategy remains unchanged:
- Before you send your military strategy—Send Judah!
- Before you send your human opinions—Send Judah!

- Before you roll out your financial panel—Send Judah!
- Before you step into tomorrow's battlefield—SEND JUDAH AHEAD OF YOU!

Why? Because **PRAISE SETTLES IN YOUR SPIRIT WHO ACTUALLY OWNS THE VICTORY BEFORE A SINGLE SWORD IS DRAWN!**

- Praise doesn't ignore the battle; praise strips the battle of its power to dictate who God is!

PRAISE CHANGES THE ATMOSPHERE OF BATTLE

- Look at King Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20.
- A massive, triple-headed coalition of enemy armies is marching through the valley to erase Judah from the map. They are wildly outnumbered.
- God speaks through a prophet: "The battle is not yours, but God's."

Then Jehoshaphat executes a military strategy that makes zero sense to human reason, but commands absolute power in the spirit realm!

2 Chronicles 20:21: “...he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army...”

- He put the worshippers front and center! PRAISE WENT FIRST!

Now look at verse 22: “Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people...”

- They didn't wait to see the corpses of their enemies before they opened their mouths—they launched the arrow of praise (Yadah) into the atmosphere while the enemy was still advancing!
- Anyone can scream after the Red Sea splits—Faith praises while Pharaoh's chariots are closing in!

- Anyone can shout after Goliath is decapitated—Faith roars while the giant is still bellowing threats!
- Anyone can rejoice after Lazarus walks out of the tomb—Faith worships while the stone is still cold and sealed!

JUDAH GOES FIRST!

5. PRAISE BREAKS THE PRISON MENTALITY

Fast forward to Acts 16. Paul and Silas aren't sitting in an air-conditioned sanctuary. Their backs are shredded from Roman whips. Their feet are locked in wooden stocks. They are buried in the deepest, darkest dungeon of Philippi.

It's pitch black. It's midnight.

Acts 16:25: “But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God...”

- They didn't wait for the angel to turn the key before they lifted their voice. They praised God while the

blood was still wet on their backs! **They threw up their hands (Yadah) in the dark!**

- “Suddenly there was a great earthquake...”
Chains fell off! Prison doors flew open!

Hear this principle: **IF YOU CAN PRAISE GOD WHILE YOU ARE STILL INSIDE THE STORM, THE STORM LOSES THE POWER TO GET INSIDE OF YOU!**

- Rome had Paul in a prison, but the prison couldn't get into Paul!
- Caesar could dictate where his physical body sat, but Caesar couldn't touch who sat on the throne of his heart!

JUDAH ULTIMATELY BRINGS US TO JESUS

Now trace the red thread all the way home! Judah began as Leah's radical altar of praise: "Now I will praise the LORD!" Judah grew into a mighty tribe. Judah became the royal lineage of King David.

Genesis 49:10 promised: “The scepter shall not depart from Judah...”

And out of the fiery root of Judah stepped JESUS CHRIST OF NAZARETH!

Revelation 5:5 echoes through the halls of eternity: “Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed...”

WHEN GOD GETS THE MIDDLE, EVERYTHING FINDS ITS PLACE

Look down upon that wilderness camp one final time.

Every single tribe had a designated coordinate:

- Judah to the East.
- Reuben to the South.
- Ephraim to the West.
- Dan to the North.

Why? Because when the center is sovereignly established, everything on the outer edge falls into perfect divine alignment!

ORDER FLOWS FROM THE CENTER.

We spend our entire lives begging God to fix our outer circumstances:

- "Fix my marriage!"
- "Fix my bank account!"
- "Fix my anxiety!"
- "Fix my career!"

And Almighty God looks at us and says: “LET ME FIX YOUR MIDDLE!”

You cannot fix the outer boundaries of your life while ignoring the throne of your heart!

CLOSING: WHAT’S IN YOUR MIDDLE?

That is the prophetic word over your life today: GET GOD BACK IN THE MIDDLE!

- Put Him back in the middle of your marriage!
- Put Him back in the middle of your parenting!
- Put Him back in the middle of your finances!
- Put Him back in the middle of your ministry!

- Put Him back in the middle of your mind!

What's sitting in your middle today?