



Parkway Fellowship

No Regrets • Laughing at Insecurity • Genesis 29:16-30:1; Ephesians 2:10 • 10/06/2019

Main Point

God made me exactly who He wants me to be to do exactly what He wants me to do.

Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is a situation where you have felt insecurity creep up on you?

When you feel insecure, how do you tend to respond—avoid the situation altogether, go overboard trying to mask it, freeze up in awkwardness, cling to someone else who is more confident, other? Explain.

In today's passage, we'll see how insecurity plagued Laban, Rachel, Leah, and Jacob throughout their lives. Through it all, the Lord was faithful. He cares for every person and has unique plans and purposes for each of us.

Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| Ask a volunteer to read Genesis 29:16-28.

What do you think of Laban's deception of Jacob? Why do you think Laban did this?

What insecurities did Laban's insecurities cause in the lives of his family?

Laban didn't give Jacob, Leah, and Rachel a chance. Whether Laban didn't believe God would provide for Leah or he didn't believe God would provide the help he needed, Laban was insecure and acted out of that. Imagine how Jacob felt towards his new father-in-law.

Imagine how Leah and Rachel would now feel about one another as they had to share the same husband. Because of his selfishness, Laban's trick doomed both himself and sentenced his daughters and son-in-law to lives of tremendous internal struggle and external difficulties in relationships.

What past experiences have played a role in the insecurities you've faced in your own life?

Only the Holy Spirit can guide us to deal with our pasts and live in His security with the kind of patience, humility, and understanding we need to make future relationships healthy.

| Ask a volunteer to read Genesis 29:31-30:2.

Why do you think that the Lord intervened for Leah?

What do you think about Leah's hope that more children would win Jacob's affection?

What do you think about Leah's statement after she had Judah?

How has God provided security for you in your insecurities?

Leah's words indicate that she spent time in petition for children from the Lord. She hoped that through them, by being the perfect wife in her culture, she would finally be loved and honored by her husband. How many people have tried to be "perfect" for their significant other, only to find that they could never measure up? We often fall into the trap of seeking things that win others' favor when really we would be better served by simply seeking the Lord Himself.

The Lord was loving to Leah. He gave her strong sons to comfort her in her distress. The Lord did not give Leah children to win Jacob's approval, He gave her children for her. By the time Judah was born, she was past hoping her children would win Jacob's affection. By then, she was content simply to thank the Lord for another son, at least for a little while.

What does Rachel's jealousy say about her own level of insecurity?

Is it right or wrong for us to compare our lives to other people? Explain.

| Ask a volunteer to read Ephesians 2:10.

Who are the "we" in Ephesians 2:10? What were we created in Christ Jesus to do?

Why do you think God wants us to know that we are His workmanship? Is it difficult for you to believe this about yourself? Why or why not?

If God has prepared these good works for us to do, how does this affect the way you think about yourself? How does it impact your relationships with other people?

We cannot do anything to earn salvation. Yet God means for us who have received salvation to produce good works. If we have been given new life, raised with Christ, and seated with Him, we will certainly do good works as evidence that we have received this great salvation.

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Who is someone you know who seems to be content with who God made him or her to be, doing what He made him or her to do?

In this week's message, we learned that God wants us to be genuinely happy with others' success. In what situations do you struggle to do that?

What steps can you take to become more secure in the Lord? How can this group help you with that?

Pray

Thank God for His patience and lovingkindness toward us, even when we fail to trust that He loves us and has good plans for us. Ask Him to help you reject insecure feelings and thoughts that plague you and to rest in the confidence of relationship with Him through Jesus Christ.

Commentary

| Genesis 29:16-30:2

29:15-20. Laban called Jacob my own flesh and blood and gave him the right to stay in the home permanently. Jacob was neither a son nor a slave, so it was appropriate to work out a suitable arrangement that compensated Laban for his provisions and Jacob for his labor. It was not appropriate for Jacob to work for nothing, so it was agreed that Jacob would work for seven years for the right to marry Rachel.

This arrangement is reminiscent of a provision in the law of Moses that permitted certain

slaves to work seven years for their freedom (Ex 21:2). Men did not buy wives in the strict sense of the word; however, they did customarily pay a bride-price (Gen 34:12; Ex 22:17; 1Sam 18:25) to their future wife's family to compensate them for the care and protection provided to the woman prior to her marriage.

29:21-23. Jacob, now almost 50 years old (25:24-26; 26:34-35; 27:46) after working for Laban seven years, informed Laban that it was time for him to sleep with Rachel. Arranging a weeklong wedding feast, Laban proceeded to cheat the family member who had cheated other people in the past (27:12-25,36). Instead of the expected younger daughter Rachel, Laban gave Leah to Jacob. In the darkness of the evening and with his bride concealed behind a veil (24:65), Jacob did not realize what had been done to him. Accordingly, he slept with Leah.

29:31-35. The Lord, who had seen and provided for Hagar previously in her time of need (16:13-14), now saw that Leah was "unloved" (lit "hated") and opened her womb. In a society where a woman's prestige depended almost entirely on her success in bearing sons, the Lord gave Leah four sons before she temporarily (31:17) stopped having children. Three themes are present in Leah's remarks: her conviction that God provided these children in response to her affliction and unloved condition, her hope that the births would cause her husband to love her, and her praise to the Lord for what He had done. The explanations connected with each son's name are not linguistic etymologies, but explanations of wordplays.

30:1-2. Rachel's extreme unhappiness created serious tensions in the marriage. Jacob reminded her that it was God, not he, who has withheld children (lit "fruit of a womb") from her.

| Ephesians 2:10

One of the goals of salvation for us is the fruit of Christlike character and of good deeds. Grace can be compared to the power grid that extends to someone's house; faith is having the switch turned on to connect with the power; and good works are like all the helpful equipment that springs to life when connected to the power supply with the switch turned on.

In eternity past God prepared ahead of time that His redeemed people would do these good works as evidence of His grace. Here is His power not only in giving us new life but also in helping us to walk in good works throughout this life and into eternity. We cannot do anything to earn salvation. Yet God means for us who have received salvation to produce good works. If we have been given new life, raised with Christ, and seated with Him, we will certainly do

good works as evidence that we have received this great salvation.