

Jacob's Family

(Genesis 29:31-30:24)

Yearly Theme: "Patience is..."

Series Title: "Family Dynamics"

October 9th, 2022

Something to think about:

In reference to his ministering to a Roman Centurion by the name of Cornelius, Peter learned that GOD truly has no favorites with regard to pedigree, nationality, or ethnicity. In the book of Acts in the New Testament, after his experience in Cornelius' home, and seeing that the Gospel of Christ had transformed this Gentile family, and that the Holy Spirit had come upon them to confirm this, Peter proclaims...

Acts 10:34-35 (NLT), ³⁴ "I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism. ³⁵ In every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right.

Today, we come to another dysfunctional family of the Bible, and again, in the book of Genesis: the family of Jacob. Jacob was the son of Isaac and Rebekah, and the grandson of Abraham and Sarah. As we will see in today's passage of Scripture, when Jacob set out to start a family of his own, it didn't turn out quite like he expected. As much as he had been a conniving trickster in his youth, he would soon meet his match: his uncle Laban.

After leaving his father and mother to escape the murderous rage of Esau, Jacob found his way to his uncle Laban's clan. Not long after his arrival there, Laban's second daughter, Rachel, caught his eye and he fell deeply in love with her. Looking to have her as his wife he offered to work for his uncle Laban for seven years in order to secure a dowry. Seeing that it was more than a fair offer, Laban agreed and the seven years quickly came to pass. On his wedding day, Jacob could not have been happier. He had waiting for this day patiently and longingly.

Due to the customs of the region, a bride would have been completely veiled for her wedding. After the ceremony, the couple was ushered into the wedding tent to consummate the marriage. By sunrise, much to his surprise and dismay, Jacob lay next to Leah, Rachel's older sister. Incensed by such a great deception, Jacob railed against Laban for what he had done, but being quick on his feet, Laban found a way to appease Jacob by offering Rachel to him for another seven years of indentured servitude. Agreeing to the terms, Jacob, seven days later, would marry Rachel. And this is the beginning of a complicated mess of dysfunction that would cause much grief for generations to come. Let's pick up the story after the two marriages had taken place. Turn in your Bible to...

Turn in your Bible to: Genesis 29:31-30:24

Here's the takeaway this morning:

Key Point: "Favoritism within families breeds dysfunction which leads to division."

What can we learn about the problem of favoritism through the family dynamics of Jacob's clan? Let's take a closer look at how favoritism causes division:

- **Favoritism causes feelings of rejection.**

Genesis 29:31-32 (NLT), ³¹ When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, he enabled her to have children, but Rachel could not conceive. ³² So Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben, for she said, "The LORD has noticed my misery, and now my husband will love me."

- **Favoritism promotes unhealthy competition.**

Genesis 30:14-15 (NLT), ¹⁴ One day during the wheat harvest, Reuben found some mandrakes growing in a field and brought them to his mother, Leah. Rachel begged Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes."

¹⁵ But Leah angrily replied, "Wasn't it enough that you stole my husband? Now will you steal my son's mandrakes, too?"

Rachel answered, "I will let Jacob sleep with you tonight if you give me some of the mandrakes."

- **Favoritism produces feelings of inadequacy.**

Genesis 30:16-21 (NLT), ¹⁶ So that evening, as Jacob was coming home from the fields, Leah went out to meet him. "You must come and sleep with me tonight!" she said. "I have paid for you with some mandrakes that my son found." So that night he slept with Leah. ¹⁷ And God answered Leah's prayers. She became pregnant again and gave birth to a fifth son for Jacob. ¹⁸ She named him Issachar, for she said, "God has rewarded me for giving my servant to my husband as a wife." ¹⁹ Then Leah became pregnant again and gave birth to a sixth son for Jacob. ²⁰ She named him Zebulun, for she said, "God has given me a good reward. Now my husband will treat me with respect, for I have given him six sons." ²¹ Later she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.

Something to take home:

Favoritism is not a part of the Kingdom of GOD. GOD doesn't love some of His children more than others. He doesn't concern Himself with only the so-called "worthy." Indeed, we have all sinned and stand before GOD worthy of judgment. However, because of what Christ did through the cross and the empty tomb, those of us who believe in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life. Regardless of skin color, ethnicity, gender, or station in life, all who believe in Christ stand on level ground at the foot of the cross.

Is there favoritism in your family? How have you handled it? Have you felt feelings of rejection, unhealthy competition, and inadequacy? Have you allowed those things to take root in you and cause you to respond the way the world does? Or have you risen above those feelings and reactions to find your worth in Christ Jesus?

As a parent, maybe you have favorites. Does your love for one overshadow another? Have you noticed how your behavior has affected the dynamic of your home for better or for worse? What are you doing to change the way you respond to difficult family members, or those who you have trouble relating to?

You see, as followers of Christ, we are to love as we have been loved by GOD. We are to be reconciled one to another. Our love toward others should be indicative of the love of GOD who shows no favoritism, but loves all with a special, unconditional love from the heart.

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