
SG020116

The Whole Counsel of God – Genesis 30-33

Got questions? Email Pastor Jason at jasonduff7@gmail.com

(You can download this message as a pod cast by searching Jason Duff on I-Tunes)

Introduction & Overview of the Section

Introduction

When we last left Jacob he had just had 11 sons and one daughter with four different wives. As the story of his life continues, we are going to see various sides to Jacob's personality.

Different sides to Jacob – Genesis 30-33

#1 – Determination – Genesis 30:25-43

Jacob begins by being determined to do what God has called him to do. Whether it was to ask for the speckled and spotted sheep that God had told him to request as his wages or when God called him to head for home, no matter how ridiculous it seemed, Jacob was determined to obey.

#2 – Frustration – Genesis 31:1-55

When Jacob is escaping from Laban, a confrontation ensues which brings about a great deal of frustration for Jacob. We can learn a lot about ourselves from Jacob's anger.

#3 – Panic – Genesis 32:1-33:16

After obeying God and heading home, Jacob hears that Easu is coming to greet him with 400 men. This produces an all out panic in Jacob as he wonders how God is going to keep His word.

Key Issues or Words

“Mizpah” (31:49) – The term “Mizpah” that Jacob and Laban say to one another at the end of chapter 31 literally means, “The Lord watch over us while we are apart.” However unlike what Christian bookstores have sold it as, a sign to hang up between friends who are apart. The meaning of the phrase is actually, “I don't trust you, so the Lord watch over you when I can't, you rat.” Think that through before you hang the sign in your home or give it to your best friend.

By the way...

Genesis 30:39 – “So the flocks conceived before the rods, and the flocks brought forth streaked, speckled, and spotted.”

– Commentator Nahum Sarna argues that it was known in ancient times that more vigorous animals of the flock were single colored hybrids. Therefore by careful observation as to which animals are more energetic, the breeder can determine which single colored animals carry recessive genes for spottiness Sarna goes so far as to suggest that Jacob may have gone through the elaborate procedure of arranging the peeled sticks to disguise his empirical technique. – Who knows???

Going Deeper

(think it over yourself or discuss with the family)

Questions for the all of us...

Read Jacob's prayer in his state of panic in Genesis 32:9-12. What can you learn about how we should pray in any season of our lives?

Homework 4 Next Week – Read Genesis 33-36,38

W020115 – 01/09/13

Genesis 30-33

“The Life of Jacob – part two”

Introduction

- Tonight we are going to continue our study in the foundational book of the Old Testament and really all of the Bible
 - Remember the content is not hard to remember, because the title says it all

The word Genesis means “beginnings”

- And truly so many things in scripture have their beginning in the book of Genesis
 - The universe
 - Life in general
 - Man, marriage
 - Sin and evil
 - Language, government, nations
 - Specifically we will see the nation of Israel
- In fact, understanding that this book means and is about beginnings really is a good way to divide up our look at this book as you can see in your book intro sheet

Outline for the Book of Genesis

Chapters 1-11 – The Beginning of all nations

- **Chapters 1-2 – The Creation**
- **Chapter 3 - 5 – The Fall**
- **Chapter 6-9 – The Flood**
- **Chapters 10-11 – The Tables of Nations**

Chapters 12-50 – The Beginning of the Jewish nation

- **Chapters 12-23 – Abraham**
- **Chapters 24-27 – Isaac**
- **Chapters 28-36 – Jacob**
- **Chapters 37-50 – Joseph**

Now we are continuing in our study in the life of Jacob, a man of many sides and emotions

- All of us can have many sides to our personality and sometimes they can turn on a dime
 - In fact I was reading one commentator on this section and he was encouraging young men that just because Jacob had four wives, this was not something the Bible wanted us to follow
- In fact he went on to say, you don't need four wives, one is enough, they will change personalities so often it will feel like you have four wives
 - Now that I say that, that is what I was reading was saying – don't get mad at me ladies, don't prove my point
 - “The answer is Jesus!” – I love these Wednesday Nights
 - “What did He just say” – I can't stand Wednesday Nights

Anyway, and of course this is true for many of us in the room, our moods and attitudes can change at any moment

- And Jacob was no exception

And so as we go through our text tonight, I want us to notice three different sides to Jacob

Different Sides to Jacob – Genesis 30-33

#1 – Determination – Genesis 30:25 – 43

#2 – Frustration – Genesis 31:1-55

#3 – Panic – Genesis 32:1-33:16

- Lets look at these one at a time tonight and pick it up where we left off last week, in chapter 30 of Genesis, verse 25
 - Jacob has had 11 sons and 1 daughter, from 4 different women, the family is growing and then we read...

Different Sides to Jacob – Genesis 30-33

#1 – Determination – Genesis 30:25 – 43

Fourteen years Jacob has served Laban for his two daughters, something like 20 times the normal bride price, when you equate the money

- and finally Jacob has had enough
 - I'm out of here, Uncle Laban, it is time for me to go
 - But then Laban says, no – don't leave – I know I have been blessed because you have been with me, name your wages and stay, stay working for me so the blessing for me continues

The first thing I would like you to notice in that is that when we work as unto the Lord, when we do things determined to please the Lord... people notice.

- Whether it is the world or fellow Christians, people will notice when you are a diligent worker.
 - Laban says "I have learned by experience, the Lord has blessed you."
 - He saw it personally
- Christians we ought to be the best workers our boss has. We should be the best student possible.

You see, here is a secret.

- God loves to bless those who are His people.
 - That was the original plan with the nation of Israel. – God would bless them as they followed His ways and then the other nations would say, hey, who is this God of Israel
 - That was Israel's plan, but friends, I believe that is what God wants to do with us
- We follow His Word, not to make Him love us anymore, not to make our salvation more secure, but just because it is the best way to live – the world sees

The world says, hey I want to know this God that you serve, I want to live for Him like you do as He blesses you

- I have noticed that your life is a blessings
 - That is what is suppose to happen in our lives
 - That is what was happening between Jacob and Laban
- I have noticed, God has blessed me, because of you
 - Your work ethic, the way you live
 - So don't leave, tell me what you want your wages to be

And Jacob then seems to mentioned a pretty bizarre request

- it was normal for someone in his position in those days to ask for up to 20 percent of the flock as payment, no doubt that was what Laban was expecting
 - but then Jacob says, I want all the speckled and spotted sheep and goats
- now you combine that with the fact most sheep come out white and most goats are a solid color, the speckled and spotted are rare

And so when Laban hears this he is overjoyed

- may it be according to your word, totally Jacob, deal, sign right here
 - it would be like today, a business executive up for a vice presidency saying, can you pay me at least half of minimum wage, can you swing that? – can you pay me 4 bucks an hour?
 - Yes – we can swing that – sign right here

Laban is overjoyed, but still goes throughout all the flocks and removes every speckled and spotted sheep and goats, virtually ensuring that none of their offspring will have those recessive genes

So Laban thinks he was pulled the wool over Jacob's eyes

- but then something bizarre
 - Jacob puts striped poles out in front of the mating sheep, and they produce striped babies. He puts rods out in front of the strong animals, and they conceive and he doesn't in front of the weak animals and they don't
- The majority of the babies are spotted and so Jacob's herd gets bigger and healthier, while Laban's flock gets weaker and smaller.
 - Now what in the world?
 - Is this some new farming technique we are not aware of
 - Maybe..

But most Bible commentators think one of two things is really happening here

- either this was superstition and Jacob was using the superstitious of the day and God just choose to bless it - or and I tend to lean this second direction

Commentator Nahum Sarna argues that it was known in ancient times that more vigorous animals of the flock were single colored hybrids. Therefore by careful observation as to which animals are more energetic, the breeder can determine which single colored animals carry recessive genes for spottiness.

- Sarna goes so far as to suggest that Jacob may have done through the elaborate procedure of arranging the peeled sticks to disguise his empirical technique.

We don't really know in our day and age what Jacob was doing

- but we do find out in the next chapter, it was the Lord that told him to ask for the speckled and the spotted in a dream

So it could be, Jacob is determined to obey and honor what the Lord told him to do

- and he is just trying what he knows in order to honor the Lord with his situation

You see Jacob's heart of determination was noticed by Laban, and blessed by the Lord

- When Laban pulled another fast one, Jacob did what he thought was best to make the vision happen and God blessed it.

You see you can respond two ways to God giving you vision for you life, or God's calling on your life.

- You can sit around and wait for something to happen
 - Which by the way is not waiting on the Lord.
 - Not sitting on the couch, but seeing how the Lord may want to do such things
- Waiting upon the Lord is like how a waiter waits upon you at a fine restaurant
 - What can I get you, do you need anything
 - That is waiting upon the Lord
- God you have called me to do this, you have put this on my heart
 - How can I honor you with this
 - How can I live for you in these circumstances
 - Lord you have called me to do, I am going to do what I can

I love to hear people share the gospel on mission trips. I have heard some of the worst presentations of the gospel, and then to my surprise someone responds. Why???, because God is blessing the efforts of someone who says I'll go Lord, send me. I don't know how, but I am willing

- You see I think we really affect less than we think.
 - We think we are so valuable to the Lord's plan – and I think He would say – you are valuable to me, but not in the way you think

I love when you trust me to work and say, Lord I don't know how this is going to work out – but I am simple enough to believe that I serve a big God who is capable of anything

- and it's not great giftedness that that Lord so often blesses, but a great willingness to just trust and obey the Lord
 - Jacob is determined to ask for what God has told him to ask for, He is determined to see that vision come about
 - And whether the spotted poles had anything to do with it or not
- I think it is clear, God blesses Jacob's determination
 - So God blesses Jacob, but as we continue on we notice, everyone is not so happy back at the ranch – Laban is upset and that brings out another side of Jacob

Different Sides to Jacob – Genesis 30-33

#1 – Determination – Genesis 30:25 – 43

#2 – Frustration – Genesis 31:1-55

Laban is not pleased and Jacob picks up on the bad vibes and realizes it is time to bail

- but first he must gets his wives on board
 - the reason is a cultural thing in Mesopotamia
 - From all the records we have some these societies, it seems clear that it was against the law in Mesopotamia for a man to take his wife out of the country without her permission
 - We picture these gals back then as doormats and baby producers, but in ancient Babylon they had more rights than in some 3rd world countries today

- So hence the meeting, Jacob is saying, we need to go and I need you to be on board
 - And the girls totally agree

In verse 14 when they say, “Is there any inheritance or portion left for us in our father’s house”

- it is a reference to the 14 years Jacob had served for the two of them
 - if a young man traded work for a dowry, the father was suppose to take that money that he earned and put it away
 - but Laban had done nothing of the sort, he hadn’t saved those wages, to him it was just 14 years of free labor and he got his girls expenses off the books – win, win for Laban
- So the girls are saying, there is nothing for us in his house, lets go Jacob
 - And they were off

Now we see that Jacob’s determination was seen by the world, blessed and led by God, but now he is on the run, Laban catches up, there is a confrontation and the frustration flows from Jacob’s heart

- and I want you to notice a couple of things about that

Notice 2 things about Jacob’s Frustration

#1 - He is getting upset about flaws in Laban’s character. The same flaws however, that are wrong in his own life.

- Jacob is mad that Laban has deceived him
 - But that’s Jacob’s name
 - Remember his life – taking the Birthright
 - Remember the Hairy arms

It is amazing how bad our sin looks on other people.

- That is why Jesus exhorted us to examine the plank in our own eye, before removing the speck in another’s eye.
 - Because I am hardheaded, one way God deals with my sin, is to show me that sin in others.
 - I am learning that when I am frustrated with someone, to look at my life and see what I see.

Notice 2 things about Jacob’s Frustration

#1 - He is getting upset about flaws in Laban character. The same flaws however, that are wrong in his own life.

#2 - Secondly though, not only was Jacob upset..., his anger through it appeared to be justified was not based on all the facts.

- Jacob is incensed that Laban would suggest that he had stolen the household Gods
 - Now right there – stop a second, - if your God can be stolen, that is not a very good God
 - If your God can be hidden by sitting on it – that is not a good God

But all of that aside, Jacob is frustrated, how can you say, I stole your gods – He is so mad, but...

- Rachel did have the idols.
 - Now why would she do such a thing?

- Well something called the Nuzi tablets, writings from this time that give us insight into the culture, suggest possession of the family gods strengthened your claim to an inheritance
 - So it could be that Rachel stole them, so that someday, once her Dad was dead, she could come back and say, all of his wealth is mine, look I have the household gods
 - That could be what is going on or...
- It could be just she was having a hard time letting go of her past
 - And I think all of us to one degree or another can understand

Some things we when got saved, man, they were gone instantly – but some things that we clung to in our rebellion before God, well, we still embrace in our rebellion after meeting God? – I know none of this applies to you guys, but those watching at home can relate

I mean, whatever the reason, what was Rachel thinking?

- what would have happen if they had been discovered?

Death? Would her father have killed her?

- I don't know, but she could have brought heavy problems on herself
 - And again she is a picture of us, holding on to part of the world
 - It will eventually bite you, and cause you harm
 - We need to cling to God
 - Not the things of our past

But Jacob is angry, angry without all the facts

- This is a problem we can run into
 - We get angry without having all the facts
 - Has anyone every thrown you a surprise birthday party and you were upset because you thought everyone forgot you – and you have your little pity party – and all the time, people are going to extremes to bless you
 - That is what is happening with Jacob
- He is frustrated, without all the facts
 - That is why it is so important to be slow to wrath like the book of James says
 - I think one of the greatest pictures of this is Jesus cleaning the temple that we will get to in Mark
- But it is from Mark's gospel we learn, Mark 11:11, Jesus goes to the temple, sees the wickedness, but then goes away for the night – no doubt praying, God what do you want me to do about this
 - And the next day, Jesus comes back and verse 15 of the same chapter – starts turning over tables

But without Mark's insight – we picture Jesus losing it like we do

- and doesn't it make you feel a little better, wow, Jesus got upset, so do I
 - but when we really see the story, we see that He was right on like, slow to anger, slow to wrath
- We too precious church – we need all the facts, we need to slow down and pray
 - to hear it all out before overreacting.

Well the chapter ends with these two deceivers – Jacob and Laban making a covenant with one another

- they call it Mizpah
 - it basically means..

- **Mizpah = “The Lord watch over us while we are apart”**
- And sometimes I see this in Christian bookstores
 - Be careful before you hang it on your wall
 - I know it sounds nice, but the intent of the Hebrew is – I don’t trust you, you rat, so God watch you while I can’t
 - So next time your Christian neighbor says, Mizpah, you will know what they really mean
- Well one more section tonight

Different Sides to Jacob – Genesis 30-33

#1 – Determination – Genesis 30:25 – 43

#2 – Frustration – Genesis 31:1-55

#3 – Panic – Genesis 32:1-33:16

Jacob is first met by angels of God

- He calls the camp “God’s camp”
 - What security Jacob must have felt, God was with him
 - But oh no then he finds out Esau is coming with 400 men!!!

You remember how Esau and Jacob left one another

- Jacob deceiving his father
 - Esau wanting to kill him
- Now, his brother is coming with 400 men

Jacob panics – what is he going to do?

- The first thing Jacob does, when he thinks he is in trouble is begin to panic and then he plots
 - He panics – what am I going to do
 - Then he plots – I know I’ll divide into two groups, and then Esau will only destroy the one, and the rest can escape
 - And I want you to notice this is all after God shows that He is with him, he still panics and he still plots

I bring this up, because we can do the same thing

- We are moving along, smooth sailing in our lives
 - And then bam here comes trouble
 - Something unexpected
 - Some disappoint, some trial

And immediately we begin to panic

- What am I going to do, I thought she was the one
 - I guess I am going to be old and single, its over
- What am I going to do, I lost my job
 - The Bills, my car

We panic, and then we plot

- I know, I’m going to win him back
 - He won’t be able to resist me
- I’ll take a loan out or get a second job for that car, it will work

And all the while we, just like Jacob, have the promise that God is with us, He is working for our good

- But somehow that is not enough
- So we panic and we plot

But what we really should do, is what happens next – He prays

- And even though he blames God at first which is so typical – God you said you would be with me, but Esau is coming
 - Yeah – you know it wasn't my plan for you to glue all the goat hair to you?
 - He blames God, but then Jacob prays some pretty important things

He reminds himself of God's past faithfulness

- "I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies."
 - When I came to this land, I owned a stick, and they are free, that is pretty sad – what do you own, I own a stick
 - And yet now God has made him two companies – God you have been faithful

Friends it is so important when we are panicking, to remind ourselves of God's past faithfulness

- because God's past faithfulness is evidence He will be faithful in the future – [the need for a journal](#)

He remembers God's faithfulness and He repeats God's promises

- You said – to come home
 - You said – you would be with me
 - You said – you would take care of me
- Nehemiah did this in Nehemiah chapter one

“Remember, I pray, the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, but if you return to Me, and keep My commandments and do them, though some of you were cast out to the farthest part of the heavens, yet I will gather them from there, and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for My name.’” – Nehemiah 1:8-9

- All over, we see this, Abraham, Moses, Daniel

It is very important that we reiterate or repeat the promises of God in our prayers

- But the reason is not to remind God or convince Him that He needs to bless us
 - It is not like reminding your boss or your parents of what she said
- But the reason the we do it is to remind us
 - We reiterate the promises of God to strengthen us

You see it builds our faith to remember what God has said

- God tells me He will provide all of my need
 - So when an unexpected bill comes in, I pray, “Lord you said you would provide”
- Now, does that make God respond? – oh you are right
 - No, it builds my faith and trust in Him

Understand God has made some rich promises to you in His Word, and in a world of uncertainty they are about the only thing you can depend on, God will back up His word

- Have consistent times in the Word so you can know them
 - and then pray them in

Well we see Jacob, reminding himself of God's promises, giving it all over to the Lord, but then something interesting happens.

- Jacob panics, then he plots, then he gets to what he really should be doing, he prays, but then, what next??
 - He is not praying and resting in God to help him
 - He is not praying and trusting the Lord knows best
 - No, he is taking the matter back into his own hands

You ever do that?

- before we criticize Jacob, we need to examine our own hearts to see if we've ever been guilty of praying piously and then depending on our own schemes and resources.
 - There is something about us that will run to pray but then take the situation back into our own hands

Something in us is convinced that we know what's right - Something in us is sure we can do it better

- And I fear we can be like that, I know I have, where I get on my face and pour out my heart, and give an issue totally over to the Lord, and then take it right back again
- Let God guard us against that
 - And teach us to trust Him

Jacob is going to learn, but He is going to learn the hard way

- He has sent the gifts ahead, separated his family
- He has no idea how Esau will respond
 - And now he will have one of the two most important nights of his life.

One was at Bethel

- He was running away, had nothing
 - And God revived that He was with him, in that place, and God told him He would bless him

Well Jacob is about to have another encounter with God

- In Jacob's two meetings with God
 - One He walks away with literally happy feet
 - One He leaves limping

Jacob is not meeting just any Man

- He says I have seen God face to face
 - And I love it, God is coming to beat Him up
 - We need a real view of God

This is such a hard circumstance in my life, there is no way this is God

- really what God are you talking about?
 - You know the God that pats little kids on the head and tells adulterous women to go and sin no more
 - That God
- Okay – well that same God, shows up in the middle of the night and clocks Jacob in the back of the head, cause he needs it
 - Lets not put character traits on God that we don't see in the scripture – He is loving and He is so loving He also knows we sometimes need a season of stretching
 - That is going to be this night for Jacob

Jacob wrestles with God

- And it's a picture of all of His life

- God wanting to bless him, wanting to lead him, and yet Jacob's always fighting and wanting to do it his way.
- And as God does not prevail, in the sense of getting Jacob to surrender, God wounds Him

And it is interesting where the wound is given

- Jacob, his entire life when the going would get tough, Jacob would get going, literally.
 - He would run – Esau/Laban
- And now his ability to run is hindered.
 - He will now have to depend on the Lord.
 - And Jacob walks away, a hobbled but a better man.

I'm saying that not because every set back, every disappoint is God giving up on normal means of reaching you, and getting your attention

- No, sometimes God is just testing you and refining your faith. Making you an example

But sometimes, like Jacob we are so thick headed, we are so into our own ways, that God must break us

- And often times where we are strong

And the reason is not because God is sick and demented

- It is because He loves you, and the pain will change you forever and for the better.

As we begin to wind this study down, I want to see five things that happen to Jacob that picture what I want to see in my life, and they are 5 blessings of brokenness

- 5 things that make me pray, God I am going to let you bring in my life what ever seems best to you
 - Because I know you love me
 - And I see and desire what happened in his life

Blessings of Brokenness

#1 – God changes Jacob's Name

- Jacob – deceiver
 - His life was in his life
- So God changes it – verse 28
 - It is now Israel, ruled or governed by God

Jacob goes from being known as the deceiver to being the man whose life is ruled by God.

- and I say this because the first blessing of brokenness is God will change your name
 - Not your name like you think
 - But what you are know by
 - What do people see
 - What does God see

When God takes you to that place of brokenness, you will never be the same

- You go from “out of control” “Jerk” “Disobedient”, “Troublemaker” – to ruled by God.
 - It doesn't happen when everything is fine and dandy – there is no change then

Blessings of Brokenness

#1 – God changes Jacob’s Name

#2 - God brings him to a place of dependence

- Before Jacob could run whenever he wanted
 - He was dependent on his wits and ability
 - But now after being broken the only thing Jacob can depend on is the Lord.

There is a saying, that “You will never discover God is all you need until He is all you have.”

- There is so much truth to that
- It is in those times of depending on Him that you get to know Him the best.
 - When everything is well, there is no need to desperately cry out, to seek Him with all our hearts
- Oh but in the time of brokenness, God becomes your closest friend. – the Hebrew phrase Jacob uses is “please don’t go!!!” – don’t go, bless me!!!

It says in Psalm 34:18, “The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart.”

- There is a blessing in that nearness that strangely is worth the pain.

Jacob for the rest of his life, every step that He would take, He would realize his dependence on God

- and you know, it was this dependence while broken that affects his family – notice verse 32
 - The offspring of Jacob did not remember him for his stew cooking ability or his craftiness.
 - No, they remembered his brokenness and his dependence on the Lord
- You want to affect those around you
 - It rarely happens when everything is well
 - It is a blessing of brokenness

Blessings of Brokenness

#1 – God changes Jacob’s Name

#2 - God brings him to a place of dependence

#3 - God works in His life independently of his efforts

- Jacob wants to give Esau gifts in hopes that he will not be angry
 - He is trying to use his own efforts
 - But God has already worked independently of his own efforts

You see when we come to that place of brokenness we see Him work and we know it’s all Him, because we know we have nothing to offer

- Before the brokenness there must be something I can do, somehow I can have victory
 - Then the brokenness comes, and the blessing is you see God work independently of what you can do on your own
- But we won’t let him do it on our own, we need to go the place of brokenness

Blessings of Brokenness

#1 – God changes Jacob’s Name

#2 - God brings him to a place of dependence

#3 - God works in His life independently of his efforts

#4 - Old wounds are healed.

- When Jacob left 20 years before, Esau wanted to kill Jacob, now they are embracing, no bad blood
 - That is a work of the Lord
- You might look at a situation you face, and think it will never be worked out, it can't happen
 - But the blessing of brokenness is all of a sudden, petty things are put aside. And God brings healing

Blessings of Brokenness

#1 – God changes Jacob's Name

#2 - God brings him to a place of dependence

#3 - God works in His life independently of his efforts

#4 - Old wounds are healed.

#5 - There is a separation between you and the world

- Esau wants to join up, go together – Jacob says no
 - Esau wants to leave him some of his people – Jacob says no
- Esau is a picture of sin and the world
 - Wanting to get in and invade our lives
 - Wanting to join up
- and the natural man, loves that kind of thing
 - easier way to do it
 - less problems and friction

But from broken, and the resulting dependence on the Lord, you no longer need to be part of the world to feel like you belong, no buying into those lies

- You see that God desires you to be set apart and holy

And maybe many of you realize this, maybe many of these things

- Bad reputation, always depending on yourself/ trying to do things in your own strength, dealing with old wounds, and constantly mixing your life with the world

Well my advice is to get on your knees and pray that God would break you, work in you

- Because yes it does hurt, it may be painful
 - But the blessing will affect you and others for eternity.
 - Lets pray