

**Psalm. 139:1-7, 17-18**

Have you ever thought that God thinks about you much much more than you think about Him.

**The Lord is more involved in Your life than you know.**

It is good that we reorient ourselves in the story of Genesis and this moment in Jacob's life.  
 God created the world and human beings infected it with sin.  
 As population grew so did the suffering due to rebellion against God.  
 God wiped out people in a flood... all except Noah, but that did not eliminate sin.

God picked out Abraham and made a promise to him.

God would bless him with descendants, land, and His own presence... to be a blessing to all peoples.

God has a plan to save people from sin, but He does not yet tell Abraham what it will be.

God blesses Abraham with a son, Isaac, the son of the promise.

God blesses Isaac with two sons, Esau and Jacob, and picks out the younger, Jacob, to love.

Jacob tricks Esau and takes his birthright and blessing

So, in ch. 28 we read of Isaac's blessing and command to Jacob.

Jacob sets out and God meets him, the first moment when Jacob hears from God.

He's 40 years old and apparently knows very little about God, and believes less, but he clings to God's promise.

Now, Jacob sets forth to the land of his grandfather's family with renewed purpose.

**I. God is faithful to His people even when we do not acknowledge Him. 29:1-14**

This journey of Jacob to Haran is both like and unlike the journey of Abraham's servant in Gen. 24.

In that chapter the servant sets out to find a wife for Isaac. In this case Jacob is going to find a wife for himself.

In that chapter the servant goes praying and trusting God. In this case there is no praying and trusting God.

In that chapter the servant meets the woman, Rebekah, and is impressed. Here Jacob meets Rachel and falls in love.

In that chapter the servant gives thanks to God when he realizes that God has led him.

Here there is no realization or thanksgiving.

In that chapter the servant brings Rebekah back immediately.

Here Rachel does not leave with him promptly and Jacob will stay for at least 20 years.

The differences are striking... particularly Jacob's lack of prayer and thanksgiving. He is not mindful of God.

And, yet, God still blesses him and leads him.

And, God's blessing is wonderful. Jacob meets Rachel and they are in love. It is a very emotional meeting. (vss. 9-12)

There are times in our lives just like this. God is blessing us and we are filled with a sense of joy and progress.

Maybe in school. In a career. We are making money. Harvest has been good.

Meeting someone and we are going to be married. A baby is born.

But, we do not take time to pray, to recognize God's working, to give Him thanks. We might even think it is our own doing.

But, all great blessings in life, though some may be partially our own accomplishment, all are from God.

If it weren't for His working we would not have them. This is an essential truth to realize.

So, it all looks good for Jacob, but things are about to get really complicated... this is how life often goes.

**II. God disciplines His people: The principle of sowing and reaping. 29:15-30**

So Laban tricks Jacob who ends up with two wives and serves him for 14 years in order to get them.

Why? Well, obviously Laban is interested in getting them both married off and having a son-in-law as a servant.

But, why does God do this? If God is in control of everything... and we have learned in Genesis that He is...

why does He do this to Jacob?

God loves Jacob, right? He does!

And because He loves Jacob, He is teaching Jacob a lesson he needs to learn.

First, Jacob ought to have known better. He asked for the younger daughter. That is not wise. It is not how things were done.

Second, until now Jacob has been the master under his father. He's never served. So, he will learn to be a servant.

But, there is a deeper lesson.

Thus far Jacob has lived by his wits... planning, plotting, cheating, stealing... and not by faith in God.

He learned this from his mother, Rebekah, Laban's sister.

Now Jacob is at the mercy of someone who lives that same way.

And, now it is Jacob who gets tricked and taken advantage of.

God is teaching him a basic principle of life. We, today, have ways of describing it.

What goes around comes around.

Those who live by the sword, die by the sword.

The apostle Paul said it this way, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap."

This is why Jesus taught us to do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

The lessons God teaches us often (and uncomfortably) force us to see ourselves and our failings... for our good.

What is God teaching you?

Is He using people to teach you? People that you don't really like? Are they more like you than you would like to admit?

Are you a selfish person? God may bring another selfish person into your life to show you what you are like.

Are you insensitive? God may show that to you in similar fashion.

Do you tend to insist on your own way, thinking that your way is the best way?

God can show you that through people just like you, and He often does.

Sometimes it is the people who are most like us that give us the most trouble. We ought to learn from that.

These lessons are never comfortable, but they are always essential. We ought to help one another to see it. **Eph. 4:14-15**

Next, things get better for Jacob... and they get worse.

### III. God blesses His people even when we do not deserve it.

**29:31-30:24**

Now it is clear, here and elsewhere in Scripture, that children are a blessing from the Lord. They are God's to give.

Jacob says as much to Rachel early in their marriage. (vs. 1-2)

Before that we learn of Leah's first three children... and her sadness and struggle of faith in naming them.

vss. 31-32 She's unloved... but recognizes God's blessing. Reuben = God looks upon

vs. 33 still unloved... but recognizing God's attention. Simeon = God hears

vs. 34 still unloved... but hopeful. Levi = love or affection

Amidst the blessing of children, how sad.

vs. 35 Judah = praise the Lord. She has given up on being loved by Jacob. He does not care about her.

And, Rachel responds, not with compassion, but with jealousy... her emotion becomes the controlling behavior of the home.

The names of her maid's sons reflect the competition with her sister Leah.

The names of Leah's maid and then Leah again reflect Leah's continuing need for significance, love, and happiness.

This is not a happy family.

Take note of this married people. Your behavior creates the atmosphere of your home.

Rachel's behavior wrecks her home... and everyone in it.

Leah and then all the children will be heavily influenced by how Rachel begins to act, her jealousy.

Here, with Jacob, Leah, and Rachel, we find three of the most immature people in the whole Bible.

They do not help one another.

They are petty, envious, selfish, needy, and they interpret God's gifts in light of their own jealousies.

Finally, Rachel's son, Joseph, will be sold into slavery by his brothers... why? They are jealous of him.

But, God keeps blessing them. Jacob ends up with a huge family.

Why? It is God's plan.

God's blessings are always bigger than our inadequacies. God blesses us in spite of ourselves, when we don't deserve it.

And, it is a good thing that He does... or we'd have nothing.

Finally, at the very end, God blesses Rachel with a son, Joseph. (vss. 22-24)

And, God will give her one more son, Benjamin (ch. 25), and she will die in childbirth.

What we are seeing in these chapters displays one of the great themes of Genesis.

God's plan was to make a nation of Jacob. God is going to carry out His plan... no matter what.

God fulfills His promises. He blesses those He has promised to bless.

He has promised eternity to you and I... all who believe in Jesus the planned and promised Savior.

However, we can make the journey more pleasant and beautiful if we respond to Him with faith and obedience.

Acting out our immaturities, rather than praying, trusting, learning, growing, and loving...

it will only make the journey more difficult.

This is going to be the principle lesson of Jacob's life.