

Today we consider the story of Jacob and Laban and how God blesses us.  
 Now, there is something today often called the prosperity gospel.  
 You'll hear it from time to time if you listen to the radio or watch preachers on TV.  
 In some churches, it's about all you hear.  
 It goes like this:

If you obey God and give a lot, especially to the guy who's speaking, then God will bless you materially...  
 money, land, friends, etc.

And, this is all essentially what it means to be a Christian. In fact, being a Christian is a means to get rich.  
 This is not Biblical Christianity.

And, yet, there is a little bit of truth in all this.

God does call us to obey Him.

When we really try to obey Him, even if we don't do it all perfectly or understand perfectly, God blesses us.

Though His blessing is not necessarily material... it might not be with things or money. But it might.

God blesses people He chooses... and He blesses those He chooses because He has made them promises.

And, when they try to obey Him, He doubles down on the blessing.

The point is...

### **The Lord takes care of His own.**

He does this with you!

It does not mean that everything will be easy... not at all. Things might get harder.

Jacob has had a falling out with his brother... see, Jacob is not a very nice guy.

He's run away from home because he's scared of his brother.

He's tried to bargain with God.

He has been taken advantage of by a man who is now his father-in-law.

He now has two wives, four if you count their maids... and his family is already a mess. You might call it dysfunctional.

Yet, with all of this going on, God has not forgotten him, is committed to him, is speaking to him, and is blessing him.

How is God blessing you?

In spite of your flaws?

In spite of the setbacks?

In spite of brokenness?

Maybe in spite of you not even believing in God or knowing much about Him?

And, why would God be doing this? Blessing you?

Because He thinks about you and is at work in your life. See, God works in messed up people.

And, like with Jacob, He's not going to quit until you understand Him and follow Him with your life.

And, even then He won't quit, and the real blessings will have only just begun.

Our God is a God of blessing... let us see how.

## **I. God blesses.**

**30:25-43**

### **Read 30:25-30**

Jacob wants to return to his own country, Canaan. In this he is obedient to the Lord.

It is the land that God has promised to him through Abraham and Isaac.

And, of course, he's not willing to go without his family.

But, the situation with his father-in-law is complicated.

Some of you know all about complicated family situations. You have lived through them. Maybe you are in one right now.

Laban is greedy, manipulative, and he doesn't want to lose his cash cow... Jacob.

Laban knows that Jacob works hard and God blesses him.

But, Jacob is not ultimately serving Laban. He has learned at least this. He answers to God.

There are some things that Jacob is mindful of... he remembers...

Gen. 28:1-4 He lives under God's blessing.

Gen. 28:12-15 God has made him a promise.

Gen. 28:19-21 He's made God a promise.

If you have read something in the Bible, don't forget it. It is God speaking to you.

If God has made you a promise, don't forget it. He's going to keep His promise.

If you have made God a promise, don't forget it. He expects you to keep it.

So, Jacob is trying to get back to Canaan... because he knows that is what God wants him to do.

And, Laban is trying to get him not to go and to stay working for him.

**Read 30:31-43**

This is not instruction for modern sheep breeding. It shows that God keeps blessing Jacob.  
But, all is not well.

**II. God provides.****31:1-21****Read 31:1-3**

Now there is a new problem. Family jealousy has crept in, or in now an issue.

So, God speaks to Jacob again... for the second time, 20 years after Gen. 28. Jacob is 60.

Imagine if by the time you're 60 you hear from God twice. What a blessing is the Bible.

God reminds Jacob of two things that he needs to remember:

The command. God is reassuring Jacob of His will.

And, God is reassuring Jacob that He will stay with him.

These are two reminders that we always need when we are trying to walk with God.

We need to remember His commands.

We need to remember that He is with us.

Now Jacob takes action. He has decided that the time to act obediently has come.

**Read 31:4-21**

Jacob realizes that these people, Laban and his sons, mean to keep him from obeying God.

Jacob recognizes God's blessing in spite of them and their jealousy.

Jacob remembers what God has said to him before... he is recalling God's words in Gen. 28.

Jacob obeys God and leaves.

Though we might wonder at how he leaves... with deception... but, this is Jacob's way.

We might wonder as well at what his wives do... especially Rachel.

But all of these things are really beside the point.

God provides what Jacob needs... family, livelihood, direction. Jacob obeys God by fleeing... a journey of some 300 miles.

**III. God protects.****31:22-42****Read 31:22-29**

Jacob gets to the hills of Gilead, at least 200 miles... before Laban finally catches up with him.

If you do the math you realize that Jacob, with family and flocks, was travelling at an incredible pace.

Laban and the rest of the family were flying. This was a chase... with the family fortunes at stake.

God protects Jacob by warning Laban. And, at the time, Jacob does not even know it.

Most of what God does to protect us we never even learn about.

**Read 31:30-35**

God protects Jacob by hiding the truth from Laban.

**Read 31:36-42**

God protects Jacob by showing Laban that He is Jacob's God.

Remember, God did this for Abraham with Pharaoh.

God did this with Abraham with Abimelech.

When God is on your side, you need not fear what people will do to you... God tells people just how far they can go... even Satan.

Recall the story of Job.

**Hebrews 13:6** "So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

**IV. God gives peace.****31:43-55**

God moves Laban to make peace with Jacob. He thought he could fight Jacob and make him stay.

But he knows he cannot fight Jacob's God.

**Read 31:43-55**

So, Laban and Jacob make a covenant together. They make peace and make promises to one another.

They both recognize that God is in charge. Which is, after all, the most important thing to recognize.

So, Jacob is learning what it means to know God and walk with God.

He is learning to remember what God says.

He is learning to obey even when it is difficult.

He is learning to face opposition in obeying God.

He is learning that God does not forget His promises, nor does He quit blessing those to whom He has promised.

And, he is learning that He has to keep learning.

God takes care of His own.

God takes care of you.