

Jacob's Sin, God's Promise

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Preacher: Matthew Capone

[0:00] My name's Matthew Capone, and I'm one of the pastors here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church. And it's my joy to bring God's word to you today. You may notice on Sunday mornings when Andy's leading worship, I sit over there on the front row, and I do something a little bit odd, which is I read the song lyrics often off the back projector rather than the front projector.

And the reason I do that is because it allows me to look out on the whole congregation and see you all. And I have many thoughts on a Sunday morning. And this morning I was just thinking as I looked out on you all singing about just God's faithfulness and his grace to this church over the last nine years that I've been here.

And, of course, many, many your years, 21 years before that. Our church turns 30 this year. I don't know if you knew that. We're at three decades now, and I'm just grateful for the ways God has grown us and is growing us and the people that he's brought.

And Ruth coming to be with our music and all the deacons and elders that God has raised up over the last number of years. And, you know, it takes a whole team for a church to move forward.

So I'm grateful, grateful for you all. We're continuing our series in the book of Genesis. The book of Genesis is the origin story of God's people, Israel.

[1:17] This summer we are looking at the story of Isaac and Jacob, mostly Jacob, in chapters 25 through 36. And I want to remind you where we are in that story.

If you don't know where we're at in the story, this next part is actually not going to make sense. So chapter 27, Jacob steals Esau's birthright.

Esau is so upset that he threatens to kill Jacob. And so Rebekah, Jacob and Esau's mom, has Jacob flee to Laban. Laban is Rebekah's brother, Jacob's uncle.

You also may remember he's not just fleeing from Esau. He's not just trying to protect his life. He's also seeking a wife. The beginning of chapter 28, Isaac tells Jacob, hey, go.

Not just flee to Laban. Actually, Isaac doesn't know why he's fleeing to escape being killed. But go, and I want you to marry one of Laban's daughters. So that's the part we've been on ever since then.

[2:17] Jacob is doing two things. He's on his way to find Laban. He's on his way to marry one of Laban's daughters. That takes us to this week. Jacob's going to end his journey.

Verse 1, he's going to arrive at Laban's place. We're going to see Jacob's sin and God's promise. I had a brain malfunction in your worship guide. It says our title is Isaac's sin and God's promise, and I don't know why I did that.

So Jacob's sin, God's promise. As I sometimes say when we come up against passages like this, this is a really rich passage, and I'm probably not going to say even more than what I'm going to say, just because we could probably do two or three sermons on this.

So I'm going to say something, something about what's happening in this passage, not everything. With that, I invite you to turn with me to Genesis chapter 21, starting at 29, starting at verse 1, which you'll find on page 7 of your worship guide.

As you turn there, remember Isaiah chapter 40 tells us that the grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

[3:26] And so that's why we read now Genesis chapter 29, starting at verse 1. Then Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the east. As he looked, he saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep lying beside it, for out of that well the flocks were watered.

The stone on the well's mouth was large, and when all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place over the mouth of the well.

Verse 4. Jacob said to them, My brothers, where do you come from? They said, We are from Haran. He said to them, Do you know Laban, the son of Nahor? They said, We know him. He said to them, Is it well with him? They said, It is well, and see, Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep. He said, Behold, it is still high day. It is not time for the livestock to be gathered together. Watch the sheep and go pasture them. But they said, We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together, and the stone is rolled from the mouth of the well.

[4:43] Then we water the sheep. Verse 9. While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. Now as soon as Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother, Jacob came near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban, his mother's brother.

Then Jacob kissed Rachel and wept aloud. And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's kinsman, and that he was Rebecca's son. And she ran and told her father. As soon as Laban heard the news about Jacob, his sister's son, he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. Jacob told Laban all these things. And Laban said to him, Surely you are my bone and my flesh. And he stayed with him a month.

Verse 15. Then Laban said to Jacob, Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be? Now Laban had two daughters. [5:55] The name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance. Jacob loved Rachel.

And he said, I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter, Rachel. Laban said, It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man. Stay with me. So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her. Then Jacob said to Laban, Give me my wife, that I may go into her, for my time is completed.

So Laban gathered together all the people of the place and made a feast. But in the evening, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he went into her. Laban gave his female servant Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her servant. And in the morning, behold, it was Leah. And Jacob said to Laban, What is this you have done to me?

[7:03] Did I not serve with you for Jacob? Why then have you deceived me? Laban said, It is not so done in our country to give the younger before the firstborn.

Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years. Jacob did so and completed her week. Then Laban gave his daughter Rachel to be his wife. Laban gave his female servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her servant. So Jacob went into Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah and served Laban for another seven years.

I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's word. Our Father in heaven, we do once again thank you that you have not left us to wander in the dark as orphans, but instead you come to us as our Father.

You speak to us clearly in your word. We ask that you would do that this morning, that you would open our eyes, you'd unstop our ears, you would clear our minds, and you'd soften our hearts, that we would be able to see and hear and believe and understand everything that's written about you in your word.

[8:24] Most of all, we ask that you'd show us Jesus. You'd show us his mercy, his compassion, his tenderness with foolish sinners like Jacob, foolish sinners like us.

We ask all of these things in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen. This morning, I'm going to teach you an insult.

I don't recommend insulting people, so you need to use this responsibly. This one, I believe, comes from the kids, and it's become popular in recent years. This insult is when you call someone or something great value brand.

Okay, and great value brand, one of Walmart's store brands, right? Hopefully you're familiar with this. And so when you say someone is great value brand, you're saying, they're not the name

brand.

They're similar. You know, it's the same product, but it's not quite as good. So here's how it works. Let's say you see a man. He's fit.

[9:26] He's in good shape. He's got a full head of hair, and he's on the short side. Okay? You might say, great value brand, Tom Cruise. He's like Tom Cruise, right?

He's short. He's fit. He's got a full head of hair, but he's not a movie star. He's not a model. Great value brand. It's a knockoff, right? It's a similar product, lower quality.

You could have bought the Oreos, but you didn't. You bought chocolate sandwich cookies. That's on you, okay?

Jacob, in this story, is a knockoff of Abraham's servant in Genesis chapter 24.

Remember in 24, Abraham's servant goes to find a wife for Isaac, and he meets Rebecca. Now, in chapter 29, Jacob goes to find his own wife and meets Rachel, and there's a very intentional way in which the author of Genesis is making chapter 29 an echo of chapter 24, and I'll explain this to you.

[10:41] We're going to jump right into the story. So track with me. Verse 1, Jacob went on his journey. That is, Jacob is going on the journey that began a couple chapters earlier to Uncle Laban.

Remember, to escape Esau, who wants to kill him and to find a wife. Verse 1 again, came to the land of the people of the east. That is the land of his Uncle Laban, and what does he find there? Verse 2, he finds a well. Who else ran into a well on his journey for a wife? Abraham's servant in chapter 24.

Jacob stops at the well. Abraham's servant stopped at the well. Jacob finds a wife. He finds Rachel at the well. Abraham's servant finds a wife.

He finds Rebecca at the well. In fact, some commentators think it might be, this passage doesn't tell us, but it might be the exact same well. So this is *deja vu*.

[11:41] We are repeating this same kind of type and trope here, but then it gets interesting because instead of similarities, we have differences. Chapter 24, who was it who drew the water?

It was Rebecca. It was the woman. Abraham's servant waits for Rebecca to water his camels because he wants to test Rebecca's character.

Okay? Instead, here, Jacob draws the water and this is one place where the story gets fun. Go with me to verse 10. We're told Jacob single-handedly rolls away the stone from the well, which is a big deal because we were told, verse 2, the stone on the well's mouth was large.

Then, in case we missed it, verse 3, all these shepherds, they're waiting around. They say, we don't roll away the stone until everyone is here. Why?

It's a compound lift. Okay? Everyone helps move the stone because it is so big. It requires multiple men to uncover this well. So Jacob is flexing on all the other shepherds.

[12:55] He is clearly a strong man. He is showing off to Rachel. He is doing what is impressive and even worse or maybe even better.

Watch what he also does. So he's flexing in front of all these shepherds. By the way, he insulted them when he said, shouldn't you be out, you know, letting your sheep graze? He's saying, you're really lazy. You're really lazy and I'm also going to show you that I can single-handedly do what it takes a bunch of you to do.

Then, notice this again, verse 10, he rolls the stone from the well's mouth and watered the flock of Laban, his mother's brother. Remember when he shows up, this is, I think, in verse 1, verse 2, there's three flocks of sheep waiting.

There's a bunch of shepherds who are ahead of Rachel in line. And Jacob says, you know what? I don't really care. She's going to skip all of you.

You showed up early because you wanted to be first to the water. Guess what? This girl that I like, she's going to jump all of you. Okay? Abraham's servant was interested in Rebecca's character.

[14:13] Abraham's servant wanted a godly wife for Isaac. Jacob is not interested in that.

Jacob is interested in how attracted he is to Rachel. He's not focused on a godly wife. He's focused on a beautiful wife. There's a stark contrast between the first well episode and the second episode. Notice what it says in verse 10 again. When does he roll away the stone? He rolls the stone away when he saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban. But it is not just because he sees Rachel and the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother.

So there's two things going on. He sees Rachel. Okay? Rachel's beautiful. I need to impress her by rolling away the stone. But there's something else going on. Rachel's dad is rich.

He's got those sheep. Okay? So there's a multiple things that are attractive here. He's like, oh, I see the woman and I see the wealth of her family.

[15 : 27] It's go time. I'm going to roll that stone away. The differences continue. The next ones matter even more. You may remember Abraham's servant stops and prays to God before he does anything.

Jacob, no prayer. Abraham's servant then stops and gives thanks to God after he connects with Rebecca.

Jacob, no prayer. As clearly as he can, the writer of Genesis is trying to show us this.

Abraham's servant trusted God and relied on God. Jacob, Jacob trusts himself and relies on himself.

Which gives us to a bigger point. Jacob is rough around the edges. Yes, God made this great promise to him that Andy explained last week.

[16 : 41] God reminded him of his promises to the patriarchs that are his promises as well. God adds to that that his presence is going to be with Jacob. Jacob, and Jacob keeps living out the story of the Abraham family.

We've talked about this before. The story is this. It's all up to me and my skill and my cleverness, my strategies and my schemes. Jesus is highlighting then for us how much Jacob needs to grow. Thankfully, God is still at work. He's going to use the sandpaper of life to smooth out Jacob's rough edges.

Jacob is going to suffer and he's going to suffer greatly to become the man that God is calling him to be.

Andy read this for us earlier this morning from Hebrews chapter 12. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son whom he receives.

[17 : 59] That takes us to the next half, the second part of this story. Verse 12, Rachel runs to Laban and tells him about this impressive man, this strong man who also happens to be a relative.

So then verses 13 and 14, Laban welcomes him, brings him into his house. Verse 14, I don't want you guys to miss this. I can't tell you everything but I want to tell you this.

He says, surely you are my bone and flesh. Now on the surface he's saying, yeah, we're definitely related. But he says that after Jacob told him everything, all these things.

Commentators think there's a double entendre here. Laban is saying, yeah, you're my relative.

Also, you're a trickster like I'm a trickster. Game recognizes game.

I see what's going on here. Oh, you tricked your brother out of his birthright? Yeah, I do things like that. I do things like that. Yeah, you and me, same, same. We're the same here.

[19 : 03] We do some things. So Jacob's a strong man. He's a great worker. Laban wants him on staff. So that leads to the negotiations. This is verses 15 through 20.

Verse 18, he offers seven years for Rachel. I won't go into the details but seven years is exorbitant for a bride price. Okay, so Jacob is offering above market rate.

He doesn't, he's not playing the art of the deal here. Okay, he's not coming in under so he can negotiate over. No, he offers a ridiculously good price. Of course, Laban immediately accepts it. Oh man, this, you know, there's a sucker made every day.

Seven years, yeah, let's go. Isaac's failure continues, by the way. Remember, we've talked about the fact Isaac, Jacob's father, is ruled by his appetites.

Abraham's servant came with money to pay the bride price. So Abraham's servant, you'll remember, chapter 24, he shows up at the well, he pays the bride price, immediately takes Rebecca and goes back home.

[20 : 11] That's what should have happened here. Jacob doesn't have any money for the bride price because Isaac didn't give him any. Isaac's negligence and his selfishness continue to damage his son.

So we have this bad deal. Okay, Jacob offers more than he should. He shouldn't even have to offer. His father should have given him what he needed to pay a bride price. And then it gets worse.

There's the bait and switch. Verse 21, he goes to Laban, he says, give me my wife. Verse 23, there's the switcheroo. Rachel and Laban are switched out.

He gives him his other daughter, the unattractive daughter, the one we're told is weak in the eyes. And verse 25 says it all in just a few words. And in the morning, behold, it was Leah.

Genesis is a brilliant piece of literature. Okay, notice what happens here. Jacob, remember Jacob tricked his father to give him the oldest's birthright.

[21 : 22] And how was he able to do that? He tricked his father because of his father's blindness. What does Laban do? He tricks Jacob because of his blindness.

He can't see what's happening in the dark. There's this poetic justice that's happening here. The trickster is tricked.

And it's not just that the trickster is tricked, he's tricked with his very own scheme. He really has met his match.

Jacob's used his own plan against him. Oh yeah, you ran that play with your dad where he couldn't see? That's actually a good one. I'm going to take that. I'm going to use that too. I'm going to run a play where you can't see.

I can borrow some tricks. Then he makes it even worse. He really digs the knife in in verse 26.

Laban said, it is not so done in our country to give the younger before the firstborn.

[22 : 31] And this is a mic drop. Laban is saying, you know that trick you pulled with your dad? We don't do that here. Oh, you thought that was real smart?

Yeah, that actually doesn't fly over here. You thought you could switch the younger and the older?

Yeah, Laban doesn't do that. Laban actually respects the birth order.

Typically, commentators tell us the words first or second would be used. It's strange here that he says youngest and oldest, and he's doing this to really give it to Jacob.

Jacob. The Apostle Paul, Galatians chapter 6, says this, Do not be deceived.

God is not mocked. For whatever one sows, that will he also reap. The point is this.

[23 : 33] God is disciplining Jacob. God is bringing Jacob to the end of himself. God is bringing Jacob to a place where his schemes and his tricks no longer work.

He's putting him in a position he cannot lie his way out of. He's saying, look, Jacob, you're actually going to be forced to rely on me.

And that's actually what's going to happen over the next few chapters. Jacob is going to learn that his hope and his only hope is in God.

For the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son whom he receives. as the story goes on, we're going to see Jacob trust God more and more and trust himself less and less.

Jacob is going to have to learn the hard way, but Jacob is going to learn. Christian, in the failures, in the hardships of your life, when your foolishness finally catches up with you, and it will, that's how foolishness works, when your lies finally come out, when your tricks stop working, when your children come to you as adults and say, this is how you failed me, when your wife comes to you and finally shows you her pain, God is still at work.

[25 : 41] He hasn't given up on you. It will be painful, just like it was for Jacob. God is using that pain to purify you, to refine you, to shape you, to look more like Jesus.

God is not done with you. Malachi chapter 3 says this, speaking of God, he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver.

God is refining Jacob like gold and silver. He has put him in the heat, and he will burn his impurities away.

for 20 years, 20 years, think about that. Jacob is going to learn little by little to trust and follow God more than he trusts himself.

even more than that, as we've talked about many times, God remains faithful to his promises.

[27 : 10] Andy talked about this last week, last week's passage. God promised his presence to Jacob. God repeated his promises to Jacob's forefathers, and notice God's hand in this passage behind the scenes, still at work.

Is God with Jacob? Is his presence there as he promised? Absolutely. Jacob appears at the right well at the right time, and it's clear from his questions to the shepherds that he has no idea.

He has no idea that God has just put him exactly where he needs to be. Last week, God repeated his promise that he was going to make Abraham's line, his offspring, like the dust of the earth.

What does Jacob need for his offspring to be like the dust of the earth? He needs some wives. He leaves this passage with two wives.

In the midst of Jacob's failure and sin and foolishness and pride, God is still at work refining and purifying and shaping him.

[28 : 38] God is still at work keeping his promises. promises. Christian, God is shaping you.

He's keeping his promises to you. And when you hit up against the consequences of your own foolishness and stupidity, it is not the end of your story.

Because God is going to weave it into his bigger story. And he's going to use it to do for you everything he said he would do.

It's going to be painful. The next 20 years for Jacob are not easy. Your sin and your unbelief and your failures, as I've said before, cannot stop the freight train of God's kingdom.

They cannot get in the way of God keeping his promises. They cannot prevent God's work in your life. Because God is faithful to his promise.

[30:01] If you're in Christ, he's faithful to you. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son whom he receives.

And why are we sons? We're sons because of Christ. Remember what John tells us in John chapter 1, but to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Is that you? If it is, God's promise is true. Philippians chapter 1, verse 6, and I'm sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Christ. Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, we do praise you and we thank you that you seek us out, even when we're caught up in our own sin and foolishness and pride, and that you're merciful enough not to leave us there, that you bring hardship and pain to purify us and refine us.

We ask that you would give us that hope in the midst of our lives, that we would turn to you and trust you no matter what, knowing that you are at work bringing your purposes to bear, to end, keeping all your promises to us.

[31:40] We ask these things in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen.