

The Hungry Heart

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 19 July 2026

Preacher: Matthew Capone

[0:00] Good morning. My name is 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.

! We're continuing our series in the book of Genesis, which you'll remember is the origin story of God's people Israel. This summer we're in the story of Isaac and Jacob, mostly Jacob, found in chapters 25 through 36.

Remember last week Jacob got married to two sisters, Leah and Rachel. He married Rachel because he loved her and he married Leah because Laban tricked him into marrying Leah. So we begin this week with a big problem. We have two women and one man and one woman is loved and the other woman is unloved.

In fact, the first verse of this passage, verse 31, tells us she's not just unloved, she's hated. So you don't have to be a genius to know that we are headed into some big, big trouble.

[1:11] Okay, it's with that that I'm going to invite you to turn with me to Genesis chapter 29 starting at verse 31, which you'll find on page 7 of your worship guide.

And as we come to this passage, remember that this is God's word. Jeremiah chapter 23 tells us that God's word is like a hammer that breaks a rock into pieces, which means that there's nothing so powerful that God's word is not more powerful still.

And so that's why we read now Genesis 29 starting at verse 31. When the Lord saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren.

And Leah conceived and bore a son and she called his name Reuben. Again, she conceived and bore a son and said, Now this time my husband will be attached to me.

Because I have born him three sons. Therefore, his name was called Levi. And she conceived again and bore a son and said, This time I will praise the Lord.

[2:49] Therefore, she called his name Judah. Then she ceased bearing. I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's word.

Our Father in heaven, we do praise you and thank you again this morning for your word. And we ask that you would honor your promise, that it would be like a hammer that breaks a rock into pieces, that you would use it to soften our hearts.

You'd show us our sin, our great need for the gospel and for salvation. And you'd show us Jesus, how he meets us at that very same place of need.

Now we ask that you would use your word this morning to grow our love and our affection for Jesus Christ. You'd use it to grow our reverence and our all for him. You'd use it to lead us in obedience, in faith, following after you.

And we ask all of these things in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen. In 2022, Forbes magazine officially named Elon Musk as the richest man in the entire world.

[4:06] He was able to finally displace Jeff Bezos of Amazon. Jeff was dropped all the way to number two. So he reaches this great accomplishment.

Now that same year, 2022, Elon Musk goes on this trip to Greece. He spends time with a man named Ari Emanuel, who is a entertainment and media mogul.

And he's visiting him in Greece because Ari is trying to help them work out this deal for Elon to buy Twitter. And while he's there, he spends time on Ari's yacht, which makes the news because of pictures that are now famous.

There's pictures of Elon and Ari, and they're both on the yacht. They're both shirtless. And that's the problem because there is a stark contrast. Ari Emanuel is looking lean and muscular and jacked. Elon Musk, not so much. Walter Isaacson published a biography a few years ago of Musk, and he says this.

[5:15] He, Elon, was photographed on a yacht looking pale and blubbery alongside Emanuel, that's Ari Emanuel, who looked preternaturally trim and tan.

So Elon is embarrassed. He gets shamed on social media, and you think that's going to be the end of it. No, it actually gets worse because Elon's unhinged father, Errol Musk, goes on to an Australian radio show shortly thereafter to discuss the incident.

And he says this. Elon is very strongly built, but he's been eating badly. He says he's told his son, hey, you need to take a weight loss supplement.

Then the interviewer on the Australian radio station asks Errol, are you proud of your son, Elon? And he says, no. Then he proceeds to talk about Elon's younger brother, Kimball, who he describes as his pride and joy.

So just so you understand how bad it is, Elon's father in public on a radio station says three things. One, my son really needs to lose weight.

[6:26] Two, I'm not proud of him. And three, I really like his younger brother. So what does Elon do next?

Elon does what his father has told him to do. He starts taking a GLP-1. And he starts taking a weight loss supplement. The richest man in the world still cares what his father thinks of him. Now there's a lesson here about how we speak to our children, whether we can, we choose to bring them life or death with our words. That's for another day. The point of the passage and that story is this.

There is a longing in the human heart for identity, for belonging, for acceptance, for love, for connection, for approval.

Being the richest man in the world does not take that away. There's no amount of money that makes you immune.

[7:42] Our passage this morning is in certain ways tragic. And it is about just that. It is about the need for love and worth and identity.

Leah has a very hungry heart. And it's not hard to understand why.

The very last verse of our passage last week, verse 30, said this. He, that is Jacob, loved Rachel more than Leah. It gets even worse, the beginning of this week's passage, verse 31, when the Lord saw that Leah was hated.

So Leah's husband does not love her. And worse than that, he hates her. And on top of that, her father has used her as a pawn.

Laban gave her in marriage to a man who didn't love her for his own benefit. Because he wanted seven more years of labor out of Jacob.

[8:53] If we fast forward in Genesis chapter 31, which we'll get to before too long, there's a comment from both Leah and Rachel about what they think of Laban. And they say this.

That's a Father's Day card.

Dear dad, you have regarded us as foreigners, and you sold us, and you took all our money. Leah's father uses her.

Leah's husband hates her. Of course, of course she is desperate for love, hungry for love.

She's not beautiful. She wasn't chosen. So what is she going to do? As the old saying goes, you have to play the cards you were dealt.

[9:58] So Leah does. The one thing she knows that she can do, she has kids. That takes us to verse 32. Child number one.

And Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben. For she said, because the Lord has looked upon my affliction, for now my husband will love me.

Reuben means see a son. So Leah's saying, look, I've given you what Rachel has, and I've given you the thing that is most important and valuable.

What you need for God's promises to be honored is for the line to continue. Of course, you will love me now.

But he doesn't. So we move on from son number one to son number two.

[10:56] Verse 33. She conceived again and bore a son and said, because the Lord has heard that I am hated, he has given me this son also. And she called his name Simeon.

So Leah's still self-absorbed. She's still consumed with her relationship to her husband. Now, she doesn't express a hope that this son will solve things like she did with son number one.

She does repeat the fact that her husband hates her. But then the next son, she does express her hope once again.

So we're now moving from son two to son three. Verse 34. Now this time my husband will be attached to me because I have borne him three sons.

Therefore, his name was called Levi. Did you hear that? This time. This time it will be different.

[11:57] This time Jacob will finally love me because I've given him not one, not two, but three sons. How could I not at this point be on top?

Isn't this enough? Will Jacob love me now? Will three sons do the trick?

They don't. And if you're honest, you've asked yourself the same question.

Am I enough to be loved? Am I interesting enough?

Am I impressive enough? Have I had enough peak experiences and done enough interesting adventures? Do I have the right hobbies? Am I attractive enough? Do I look beautiful enough? Young enough?

[13:01] Do I have the right clothes and good style? Is it time to start the Botox? Am I smart enough? Do I have the right SAT scores, good enough grades, the right degrees from the appropriate schools?

Am I successful enough? Am I successful enough? Am I athletic a performance at the level that I need for people to finally find me interesting? Do I bring home enough money?

No matter what it is, shame comes along and says, no, that's not going to cut it.

And so the treadmill never ends. Even if you're the richest man in the world.

And that's the problem. The problem for Leah, and it's the problem for us. Your hungry heart will never be full.

[14:12] It will never be satisfied by the people in your life, by the experiences of this world.

They will never give you what you want or need. And if you demand that the people around you and the things of this world satisfy you, you will always be disappointed.

Remind you of this quote that I've told you many times on page 7 of your worship guide from David Gibson. Listen, in the created world, you can only truly enjoy what you do not worship.

If you worship those things, you will end up bitter. And you will turn off your heart eventually.

So what do we do? What do we do with our hungry hearts? Thankfully, Leah's story shows us things can end differently.

[15:39] And that's what happens with son number four. This is verse 35. This time.

Something's going to be different. There's going to be a change in the pattern. What is it? The change is this. God's name has been mentioned in the past.

She mentions the fact that God has seen her in her pain and provided for her. But she's never said what she says here. I will praise the Lord. She had mentioned God.

She had not praised God. And for the first time, there's no mention of Jacob and her desire for his love.

What happened? As Leah's hope for her husband's love fades, Leah's contentment in God grows.

[16:53] As Leah's hope for her husband's love fades, her satisfaction in God becomes more and more.

Over the course of four sons, Leah has changed where she sets her eyes. Over the birth of her four sons, she has decided where her hope actually is.

Now, it's not complete. Leah's not perfect. She's going to get into another competition next week.

Okay? That's how sanctification works.

We are not there until we are in heaven. But Leah is growing. She is growing. She is growing in knowing where her hungry heart is really fed.

Leah has to be brought to the end of herself to find that only God satisfies. It's a long journey.

[18:10] It's a painful journey. But God is at work. God has been at work, sun by sun, shaping her and refining her.

God has been using Leah's disappointments. He's been using her heartbreak to draw Leah to him. Christian, God is doing the same with you. It's wrong that Leah was treated this way by her husband and her dad.

It's actually right. It's good and right for her to desire a healthy marriage, a healthy father. Of course, right? We want our spouse to love us. But what about when it doesn't happen?

God uses this injustice, and it is an injustice. Don't hear what I'm not saying. It is wrong that Jacob and Laban have behaved this way. God is using this injustice to place Leah's eyes on him.

[19:35] Remember, we looked at Romans 5, verses 3 through 5. God uses suffering to transform you. God uses suffering to make you look more like Jesus.

God uses the disappointments in your life to fix your eyes on him. that you can become like Leah and said, this time, this time it will be different.

I won't wallow in my disappointment. I won't be looking for other people to fill the hole in my heart.

No, this time, I will praise the Lord. God uses the failures of humans to grow your hope in him.

A number of years ago, I met with a Christian counselor, and we were talking about a frustrating person in my life who will remain nameless.

And the counselor said this to me. He said, are you ready? Are you ready to give up on this person?

[20:52] Now, it sounds shocking. It doesn't sound like something a Christian counselor should say to you. Depending on what you mean by give up. If by give up, you mean abandoning them. Of course, that's not what we want to do, but he meant something different.

What he meant was this. Are you ready to give up your demands? Are you ready to accept this person for who they are? Are you ready to come to terms with the fact that they may never change?

Are you ready to look in the face the reality that this person will never be who you need or want them to be? Are you ready to love them right here, right now, if they never change?

Are you ready to give up? Are you ready to grieve who you wish they would be but never will?

You can only give up if you stop demanding that they give you what only God can give. Are you ready to give up?

[22:12] Are you ready to give up the dream, the illusion that your family, your friends will meet your needs and fill your heart? Are you willing to admit they will never be what you need or want them to be and finally, finally let the Lord be and do those things for you?

Are you ready to say with Leah, this time, this time, I will praise the Lord? The psalmist in Psalm 73 gives us a little picture of what this looks like.

He says this, my flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

For a moment, Leah lets God be her portion. The psalmist then says this, but for me, it is good to be near God.

I have made the Lord God my refuge that I may tell of all your works. That's the secret.

[23:37] the hungry heart will not be quiet. It's got to feed on something.

The hungry heart will only be full when it feeds on Jesus Christ. That's what Jesus is talking about in John chapter 7 when he says this, on the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, if anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

Whoever believes in me as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. water. Do you want rivers of living water to flow out of you?

It won't come from your spouse. It won't come from your dad or your mom. If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

it looks a little bit like this. I'm not married now and I may never be.

[25:10] And I could choose quiet desperation I could grasp at any chance of a relationship or I can recognize that the greatest love is a love I already have and cannot lose.

I can still hope for a spouse, right? But it's not my greatest hope. That is not what my life rises or falls on. Psalm 73 can be true for me.

God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. forever. Maybe your husband finds many things more interesting than you.

You could run away and you could hide yourself in hobbies or romance novels. that's an option.

You could choose bitterness. You could distract yourself.

Or you can grieve it. You can say this is a real loss but I will not. I will not shut my heart down but for me it is good to be near God.

[26:27] I have made the Lord God my refuge that I may tell of all your works. Maybe your dad loved your brother more.

And you can spend your whole life on overdrive if you want. You can try to prove him wrong. I think that's the path that Elon is going for. Or you can say this I'm going to grieve it.

That's a real loss. And I have a greater love. I have the love of my heavenly father. And so you can say with the psalmist God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

When you give up. When you stop demanding that other people do what only God can do you will find real freedom and real joy.

because you can love them truly really for the first time. You're able to take risks. You can be vulnerable and have intimacy because God will be there if it all falls apart.

[27:48] You know that he's the strength of your heart and your portion forever. forever. I want you to look with me on the back of your worship guide which talks with us about what it is that Jesus does for us that gives us this freedom.

we won't need to be recognized by others if we know we are seen and known and deeply loved by the king of all the universe himself.

We can unclench our grip on status if we know we're held in Jesus' hands. we can kneel down if we are sure he will one day lift us up.

Christian that is your hope. That is what allows you to unclench your grasp and give up asking that others do what only God can do.

By the way we see that very thing in this passage. Jacob has eyes only for Rachel but Leah is not unseen.

[29:19] Verse 31 very beginning of this passage when the Lord saw that Leah was hated.

Jacob does not see Leah. God has seen Leah from the very beginning.

In Christ God sees you and nothing else matters.

Hast thou heard him seen him known him is not thine a captured heart chief among ten thousand own him joyful choose the better part captivated by his beauty worthy tribute haste to bring let his peerless worth constrain thee crown him now unrivaled king let's pray.

Our father in heaven we do praise you and thank you that you offer us a love that is unshakable you offer us something that no human can give we ask that you would do the work in us that you did in Leah that we would look at you more than anything else before anything else that we would be able to say with her this time I will praise the Lord we ask all of these things in the mighty!

[31:20] name of Jesus Christ Amen