

39. What goes around comes around

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In the last couple of chapters in Genesis, we witnessed how Jacob deceived his father and brother to get his birthright and blessings that were already designated for him by God before he was born. Now we are going to see that Jacob will learn his lesson from someone far worse than him and he will be deceived. So he gets to learn the principle of "what-goes-around-comes-around."

A. HELLO, RACHEL

Genesis 29:1-11 So Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the East. 2 And he looked, and saw a well in the field; and behold, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks. A large stone was on the well's mouth. 3 Now all the flocks would be gathered there; and they would roll the stone from the well's mouth, water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the well's mouth. 4 And Jacob said to them, "My brethren, where are you from?" And they said, "We are from Haran." 5 Then he said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" And they said, "We know him." 6 So he said to them, "Is he well?" And they said, "He is well. And look, his daughter Rachel is coming with the sheep." 7 Then he said, "Look, it is still high day; it is not time for the cattle to be gathered together. Water the sheep, and go and feed them." 8 But they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together, and they have rolled the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep." 9 Now while he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. 10 And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. 11 Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept.

In His providential will, God directs Jacob to the house of Laban, but note that Jacob did not pause to pray, as did Abraham's servant when he was on his important assignment to find Isaac's bride.

Jacob seems like he is trying to get rid of the shepherd boys, so he can be alone with Rachel.

Jacob knew he had come to marry one of the daughters of Laban, so he is more than willing to show kindness and impress Laban's daughter Rachel with his strength.

Well, what do you know? Here is the first record of 'Kissing Cousins' in the Bible. But it must be the bad breath Rachel had that made Jacob cry.

B. DO YOU WANT MY DAUGHTER?

Genesis 29:12-19 And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's relative and that he was Rebekah's son. So she ran and told her father. 13 Then it came to pass, when Laban heard the report about Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. So he told Laban all these things. 14 And Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him for a month. 15 Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what should your wages be?" 16 Now

Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. 17 Leah's eyes were delicate, but Rachel was beautiful of form and appearance. 18 Now Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter." 19 And Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to another man. Stay with me."

This might sound like a nice offer, but it is Laban's way to let Jacob know if he wants to stay around, he must stay as a hired servant. Jacob was the son of a man of tremendous wealth. Certainly, he was not lazy, but he wasn't used to hard work. Servants did all the hard work back home. But now Jacob is the servant.

Jacob's reaction in this situation will reveal much of his character. This demonstrates the principle that you never know what kind of servant you are until others treat you like a servant.

In my experience, I've seen many people who claimed to be servants of Jesus Christ, but when it comes to truly getting down to what seems to be a lowly job, they give me "You're-out-of-your-mind" look. In other words, they want the title of 'servant of God', but they don't want to do real servant's work. They'd better change that attitude because God remembers their looks and prideful hearts.

There are some disputes as to exactly what the phrase "*Leah's eyes were delicate*" means. The Hebrew meaning of the name "Leah" is "Wild Cow." All I know from this portion of the Scripture, Leah was not as pretty as her sister Rachel. Maybe her appearance was hurting the eyes of those who look at her.

Jacob's offer to work for seven years was essentially a dowry. Though Jacob came from a family with great wealth, he left home penniless. Before he could take a woman in marriage he had to provide a dowry to demonstrate he was fit to support a family and to compensate for the taking of the daughter from the bride's family.

Seven years was a very generous offer, far above a normal dowry. Jacob didn't want to risk a refusal. When Laban saw how badly Jacob wanted Rachel, he knew he could take advantage of him.

C. WELCOME TO THE SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS, JACOB

Genesis 29:20-30 So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed only a few days to him because of the love he had for her. 21 Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in to her." 22 And Laban gathered together all the men of the place and made a feast. 23 Now it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her. 24 And Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a maid. 25 So it came to pass in the morning, that behold, it was Leah. And he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served you? Why then have you deceived me?" 26 And Laban said, "It must not be done so in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. 27 Fulfill her week, and we will give you this one also for the service which you will serve with me still another seven years." 28 Then Jacob did so and fulfilled her week. So he gave him his daughter Rachel as wife also. 29 And Laban gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as a maid. 30 Then Jacob also went in to Rachel, and he also loved Rachel more than Leah. And he served with Laban still another seven years.

Notice the great love he had for her. How romantic! All the ladies say, "Aah!"

In this ancient culture, Jacob was not allowed to spend as much time as he wanted with Rachel. Their strict social guidelines were keeping unmarried men and women apart from each other.

Jacob was willing to wait seven years for Rachel. This clearly demonstrates an important principle: True love waits.

Single ladies and teenage young ladies, listen carefully:

Galatians 5:19-21 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

You need to keep your purity until your marriage no matter what your boyfriend says. Because keeping your purity glorifies God. If he insists, here is a quick cure for him: Curl up your fingers like this and smack his nose with it. He will forget anything about sex.

Animals cannot control their sexual desires, but humans can. That is another difference you find between humans and animals.

If you thought Jacob was a deceiver, Laban was the master deceiver. Jacob was getting a taste of his own medicine. Here are a few examples:

- Jacob deceived his own father to get what he wanted. Now Jacob was deceived by his father-in-law.
- Jacob deceived his father as if he was the older son while he was the younger one. Jacob was deceived by his father-in-law by making him think that he was getting the younger sister, but in reality, he got the older one.
- Jacob deceived his father as if he was the older son by putting goat hair on his hands and neck. Later Jacob will be deceived by his own sons who brought Joseph's coat of many colors with the blood of sheep on it and told him that Joseph was killed by wild beasts.

What goes around comes around. There are bad reactions to our bad actions.

Galatians 6:7-8 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

The passage in Galatians is written primarily for Christians, but it expresses a universal law of God in every age. It is true in any area of life. You sow wheat, you reap wheat. You sow weed, you reap weed.

Examples of this principle run all the way through the Scriptures. For instance, Pharaoh slew the male children of the Hebrews, and in time all of the first borns of Egyptians were slain by the death angel. King David committed the terrible sins of adultery and murder. God forgave him for his sin. Yet, he reaped what he had sown. His own daughter was raped and his son slain. Even Paul the apostle felt the weight of this law. He had given his consent at the stoning of Stephen. Later, Paul was taken outside the city of Lystra and was stoned and left for dead.

Talk about a rude awakening in the morning for Jacob! Remember, Leah's Hebrew name is 'Wild Cow'? Jacob is having a cow by now.

He ran outside to demand an explanation from Laban. Laban calmly answered him, "Didn't you read the fine prints on the back of the contract? Don't feel bad. You got yourself a special deal only for this week. Two for one deal. Buy one, get one free." Welcome to the school of Hard Knocks, Jacob!

How interesting! Jacob was hopping mad because somebody who was more cunning than him just pulled this stunt on him. It was OK for him to deceive his father and brother to get what he wanted, but it is not OK for others to do the same thing to him. Isn't that the case for all of us?

This man Jacob had plenty of trouble in his family from here on, and it all can be traced back to his own deceptive methods which he had used. Chickens have come home to roost.

D. THE START OF JACOB'S FAMILY FEUD

Genesis 29:31-35 When the Lord saw that Leah was unloved, He opened her womb; but Rachel was barren. 32 So Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben; for she said, "The Lord has surely looked on my affliction. Now therefore, my husband will love me." 33 Then she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the Lord has heard that I am unloved, He has therefore given me this son also." And she called his name Simeon. 34 She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore his name was called Levi. 35 And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now I will praise the Lord." Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she stopped bearing.

Leah was a sad person because she knew her husband loved Rachel rather than her. When she became the mother of 'Reuben', it brought joy to her heart, and she felt that Jacob would love her now. But he didn't.

The second child born to Jacob, through Leah again, was named by Leah 'Simeon', meaning "hearing." Leah hoped Jacob would notice the Lord had heard her.

Obviously, Jacob continuously had physical unions with Leah even though he didn't love her.

It has been said that men give love to have sex, women give sex to have love. Single ladies teenage girls, you tell your boyfriend, "If you love me, you will respect my decision to stay pure until we get married." If he says, "No," that means he doesn't respect you, nor your decision. For that matter, he doesn't deserve you and you don't need that jerk.

The third child born to Jacob, again through Leah, was named 'Levi', meaning "attachment." Leah still lived in the hope her husband Jacob would love her and become attached to her through the birth of these sons. The pain in the heart of Leah was evident as the hardness of Jacob's heart. He was simply and selfishly using her.

The fourth son born to Jacob, again through Leah, was named 'Judah' meaning, "praise." Apparently, Leah had stopped naming her children to reflect the pain and longing in her heart. Now she focuses on God and can praise Him.

Leah, though she was neglected by Jacob and despised by Rachel, had a great purpose in God's plan. The two greatest tribes came from Leah, not Rachel: Levi – the priestly tribe and Judah – the royal tribe. And most importantly, the Messiah came from Leah, the ugly sister, who was neglected and despised but learned to look to the Lord and praise Him.

E. APPLICATION

We must remember that whatever sin we commit in secret will be exposed at the worst time.

Hosea 8:7a "They sow the wind, And reap the whirlwind."