

“The Search for One, True Love” // Genesis 27–30 // *The Whole Story* #7

MEN’S CONFERENCE

Let me say quick word about our Men’s Conference next weekend:

Men, **literally everyday** our understanding of manhood is assaulted by culture in some way: through media, politics or pop culture.

- **What the Bible teaches is caricatured** and people are just confused.
- **So on Friday night I'm going to debunk** some of our culture's lies and unpack how the gospel shapes our vision of what it means to be a man.

If you haven't already signed up, do so **today**, because I'm telling you we will sell out. You can do that at summitrdu.com.

INTRODUCTION

As we work our way through the entire Bible, I’m trying to focus on those sections that will give you a **sense of “the whole story.”**

We come now to a story that is as **profound as it is odd...**

- I learned this story first as a kid—it’s a classic because it is so **unusual**, but I **never really understood the significance** of it until I heard a teacher named **Tim Keller** explain it.

Works Consulted:

Tim Keller, “The Girl Nobody Wanted”

Tim Keller, “The Struggle for Love”

Sally Lloyd-Jones, “The Girl No One Wanted” (From JSB)

Craig Groeschel, “Never Satisfied”

Steven Furtick, “Sister Wives (Or Unexpected Blessings)”

- (Keller’s interpretation is reflected in **the JSB**, if you are reading that)
- This story would make a great **Netflix or HBO drama**. It has everything: **betrayal, sex, scandal...**
- In some ways, it feels like a modern story—because it shows you the **crazy things** we’ll do for love. *Ever know somebody do something just insane for love?*
 - **Move across country** with no commitment from the other person
 - Quit their **job**
 - Alienate their **friends and family**
 - Get a **tattoo**
 - I knew of someone who switched their major in college to a field they didn’t like just to try and get close to someone.
 - 6 years later, they said, they are in a job that they hate and the girl is not even around anymore...
 - I heard of one poor guy who fell so in love with this girl... **shortly after they started dating**, her brother, or who he thought was her brother, went into the hospital and needed to kidney transplant—so to impress her he donated his kidney. Only for it to come out after the operation that this guy was actually her ex-boyfriend that she was still in love with. Shortly after the operation she broke up with the kidney donor so she could marry her fake brother.
 - Or my favorite: There is a little known movie called “City of Angels,” starring Nicolas Cage, where Nic plays an angel who falls in love with an earth girl (**Meg Ryan**) he is supposed to watch over. Rather than be an angel, he chooses to be a human so that he can be with girl he loves. **Here’s the whole movie:**

- Nic Cage becomes a human.
- Girl he loves dies.
- Angel now stuck as human.
- Roll end Credits. Takes really sophisticated movie tastes to appreciate it.
- Well, believe it or not, all of that is ‘small potatoes’ compared to what happens in this story.

In a deeper sense, this story shows us the search each of us is on in life.

GENESIS 29, if you have your Bibles. **As you turn there, here’s the context:** **Abraham** is the sterile old man that God chose to start a nation that would bless the world. Abraham has this miracle baby named Isaac. **(Family tree type of graphic)**

Well, Isaac has had two twin sons, named **Jacob and Esau**. They were twins, but they could not have been more different.

- **Esau was a man’s man.** He ate **lots of red meat** and **liked to hunt**. I assume he really **liked sports**. He probably drove an **F-250**. We also know he was **really hairy**.
 - In fact, **that’s what his name literally means**, “Esau” = red and hairy.
 - **Interesting note is that they gave him this name at birth**, which is a strange thing to notice about a baby. It would **be like naming your baby “fuzzy.”** He came out of the womb looking like a **Chia pet**.
 - When I think of Esau, **this is the image:** **(picture of hairy guy at a NASCAR race).**
 - **He also was the firstborn**, which meant that he got the blessing.
 - **(Now, real quick, let me explain “the blessing:”** *In every family, one of the kids, almost always the oldest, got the family inheritance, which **meant they got the majority of the property and assets, and the right to be the family name.***

- *For the descendants of Abraham, there was this **added element of inheriting the promise** to bring forth the Messiah promised to Abraham. One son in every family carried the Messianic seed.*
- *That was Esau*

- **Jacob was the opposite.** He was more, *shall we say*, **genteel**. Really into **fashion**. Used a **luffa** and a lot of **special shampoos**; **ate tofu ice cream**; knew **not to wear white** after Labor Day. Probably drove a Miata or a **Mini-Cooper**... that kind of guy.

Well, Isaac prefers Esau and makes that pretty clear. And this, of course, is really hurtful to Jacob. So Jacob **schemes a way to steal** the blessing of the firstborn from his brother.

I don’t have time to go deep into the details of this ruse, but **here’s the basic gist:**

- **Isaac is really old and thinks he’s going to die**, so he says, “I’ve got to confer the blessing to my son.” So he tells Esau to go out into the field and hunt him up some venison, prepare it as a stew, and they’ll eat it and he’ll confirm the blessing on Esau. Then he’ll die.
- **So, Esau leaves to go hunt the venison** and Jacob sees his opportunity.
- (You see, **Isaac was really old and couldn’t see or hear that well** anymore.)
- So he takes a goat and makes a stew. Then he **dresses up in Esau’s clothes and takes the skin of the goat** and attaches it to the back of his arms and his neck, which—I don’t know what that says about Esau. **When people impersonate you by covering** themselves with a dead goat so that they smell and feel like you, that’s a bit disgusting.
- He walks in and lowers his voice and says, (High) – “Dad, it’s...” (Low) – “Dad, it’s ESAU.”

But Isaac, in his old age, falls for it, and confers the blessing onto Jacob thinking it is Esau.

Well, Esau returns and says, “Dad, I’m here...” and Isaac realizes what has happened and says, “Son, it’s too late.”

- (Now, it always seemed to me like Isaac would have just said when he realized his mistake, “Oh, well, I take it back,” but the bestowal of the blessing was irrevocable. No take-backs.)

Jacob has deceived his dad and betrayed his brother.

- Jacob’s name **literally means “deceiver.”** Which I also thought was an odd name to give a baby: “**Liar.**” You name one son “**Fuzzy**” and one “**liar.**”
- But it’s a play on words: **When Jacob and Esau were born, Esau had come out first** (I think **Rebekah’s womb had probably had enough**, and was like, “**Get this hairy thing out of here**”), and as he’s being pulled out of the birth canal, this **little hand comes out** of the womb and grabs hold of the heel of Esau. So they give this younger kid the name “heel grabber” (‘Yakob’). But the word had a double meaning and could also mean “trixter” or “struggler.”
- **So he’s named “heel grabber” at birth** but the name fits as a description of Jacob’s character as a deceiver.

Well, Esau of course is fightin’ mad and so he vows to kill Jacob. So **Jacob hops in his Miata** and zooms off. His **mom tells him he has some relatives** in a far off place called Haran, so he heads there.

Eventually he arrives at the house of an uncle named “Laban,” which **brings us to the main part** of this story for today.

Laban has 2 daughters. One is named Rachel, and **Gen 29:17** says she “...**but Rachel was beautiful in face and figure.**” Which is Hebrew for “super hot.” Cute face; great body.

The other was named Leah, and, well, she was not hot. The narrator indicates that in two, not-so-subtle ways:

- First, “**Leah had weak eyes, but Rachel was beautiful in face and figure...**” **Gen 29:17** We’re not sure exactly what “weak eyes” means, but it is in contrast to Rachel’s beauty.
 - **So it can’t mean simply that**, “Leah couldn’t see very well,” because then it would say, “Leah had weak eyes, but Rachel could see *really*, really far.”
 - It has to mean that some how her eyes made her really unattractive. Maybe they **protruded really badly from her face**. Or most probably it meant that when she was **facing east**, one of her eyes was checking on things in the north and the other monitoring activity down south.
- **The other was we know Leah was unattractive is that Leah’s name in Hebrew literally means, “cow.”**¹ You say, “Well, maybe it had a different implication in Hebrew.” Nope. Calling someone a cow is an insult in any culture. And if your name happens to be Leah... I am so sorry. It’s not my fault. I’m sure it means something different in English, but in the original Hebrew...

So when Jacob first gets there, he is **smitten with Rachel**. ((**And I know you’re thinking**, “What a sexist pig! He only evaluates women by their face and body. The Bible is so backwards.” **Yeah. I’m so glad we’re a part of a society that doesn’t do that any more.** *Where guys don’t evaluate girls first by how they look. We’re way advanced past that.*))

Let me tell you the story of how they met really quickly, because it is super-awesome.

- **Genesis 29:1:** Jacob finally has gotten to Haran, where his uncle Laban lives.

¹ Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*

- He **literally has nothing**. He is an **outcast from his family**; he is **friendless, penniless**—he has nothing but a **guitar strapped** over his back and a pair of **\$300 Escada** jeans around his waist and **Prada Italian leather loafers** on his feet.

And so he **comes up to the village** where his extended family lives and he slumps down on this big old rock covering the well.

Notice the description: ²The stone on the well's mouth was **large**, ³and when all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds (plural) **would roll the stone from the mouth of the well...**

- **And then, vs. 6, she comes walking up to the well.** Rrrachel, the most beautiful girl he's ever seen.

[10] Now as soon as Jacob saw Rachel... he rolled the stone from the well's mouth.

- **Isn't that awesome?** Little old genteel Jacob, with his fashion jeans, sees Rachel, and starts trying to make his muscles bulge out. And he's like, "Oh, big rock no problem..." **There's something about a girl** that enables a guy to accomplish amazing feats of strength.

Well, **they get to talking** and turns out that not only is Rachel really pretty, but **they are related**. As I mentioned, her dad, Laban, is Jacob's uncle; which makes them... that's right, 1st cousins.

- So you would think **that would have quelled any romantic interest** right there. But, oh no, this is Old Testament, baby and in the OT, being cousins with someone was actually a *turn-on*. (That's **also still true in places like Valdosta, GA**, where Hank Murphy is from.)

So Jacob says to Laban, **"I want to marry Rachel."** Laban says, "Well, there's got to be some kind of **bride price**." Jacob says: *"I'll work for 7 years to get her."* (Gen 29:18)

- That's an **exorbitant price!** To put it in perspective, the **going rate for dowries** in those days was 30 to 40 shekels. The average monthly wage then was about 1.5 shekels, so in offering 130 shekels, Jacob is offering more than 4x the usual amount.
 - *You get this idea that he's obsessed...*
- **Laban knows a sucker** when he sees one, so he agrees, and Jacob works 7 years. **"But these seven years seemed like just a day because of his love for her"** (29:20).
 - **All he thought about was her...!**

So when the 7 years are up (vs. 21) Jacob says to Laban, **"I have fulfilled my contract... Now give me my wife so we can be married."**

- That's actually **not a very good translation...** Literally, in Hebrew, Jacob says, **"I have finished my years so give me my wife so I can have sex with her."**
 - You say, **"That's kind of crude."**
 - It is. **Robert Alter**, a Jewish scholar on Genesis, says it is very "out of character" for ancient Middle Eastern authors to state something in such a crude or blunt way. And so for years translators try to smooth it out.
 - **But literally what he said.** *"Let me have her so I can have sex with her."*
 - It's written that way to show you that **he is obsessed with her**. For 7 years Jacob been thinking about one thing.
- Jacob does what **a lot of people who deal** with deep disappointment in their lives do: They **search for** the answer to their life's problems is finding that **one, true, romantic love**.² Someone who will **fulfill you**, give you **meaning**, make your **life worth living**.

² Tim Keller, *The Struggle for Love*, Genesis 29, in "The Gospel According to Jacob" series.

○ LIFESAVER

Well, it comes time for **ceremony**—and **in comes Laban**, with Jacob's bride that he has worked for for 7 years now, wearing the **traditional veil**, of course, that covers her face.

They **go through the ceremony** and Jacob is so happy that he really **pounds down the booze** at the reception. And **after the party** he takes his veiled wife back to his tent, **in the dark, of course**, and they spend their first night together.

Jacob feels like for the first time in his life something has gone right!

V. 25, "And Jacob awoke the next morning... and behold, it was Leah."
Behold indeed!

- Some of you have **bad honeymoon stories**. My wife and I have a couple... red bathing suit
- But **nothing like this has ever happened to you**. You roll over in the morning light and say, "*Wait, you're not your hot sister.*" (**And if that has happened to you**, well...you should come up afterwards for prayer. Although you probably need more than prayer, you need professional counseling.

So Jacob goes back, furious, of course, and says, "What's the deal, Uncle Lab?" And Laban says "Oh... it is just that it is **not the custom** in our country to marry off the younger before the older."

- Now, I've **always wondered why Jacob** didn't say back, "Well, that would have been a great point to make... *7 years ago.*"
- **No custom gives Laban the right** to commit fraud. But **Jacob never even insists** that Laban honor the contract. He doesn't so much as **offer a single word** of argument!

Why not? Because I think **when he says to Laban, "Why have you deceived me?"** he realizes it's the exact same phrase Isaac had said to him. **And when Laban says, "it's our custom to honor the firstborn"**

Jacob remembers how he had stolen the **right of the firstborn** from his older brother.

- **Just like Isaac had reached out in the dark**, thinking it was Esau, and Jacob deceived him, **so Jacob had reached out in the dark** for Rachel, and Laban deceived him.

Do you see it now? The deceiver has been deceived.

Jacob felt the **dagger of his conscience** go right into his soul.

- In fact, **Gen 29:25, Jacob literally says to Laban**, "You 'ha-Yakobed'" me; you "Jacobed" me. Jacob is brought face to face with who he is.

Jacob is so **obsessed with Rachel, however**, that not even this can deter him. He **gets Laban to agree** that if he'll work **another 7 years**, then he'll get Rachel as his wife, too.

- **Graciously, Laban gives Rachel to him right a way** instead of making him wait the 7 years. It's like he got **Rachel on credit**; he'd gotten Leah on lay-away program. Rachel he gets on credit.

In one week, Jacob has gotten 2 wives, sisters, one of whom has always been jealous of the other. Does this sound like the happy family Jacob has always wanted?

But think about this, now: How bad must this have been for poor Leah? She's a real person, too, ... and all her life she's grown up in the shadow of her stunning sister (the **only way her deadbeat dad can get her married off** is to get some guy crunk and swap her out in the dark.)

But all her life she's dreamed about being a wife and mom, and now she is that, and so she **really wants to please Jacob** and make him happy... but **now he's married to Rachel, too, and so she has to watch every day** as he delights in the girl she's always been negatively compared to. **Poor Leah.**

Genesis 29:31 But because Leah was unloved, the Lord let her have a child, while Rachel was childless. **32** So Leah became pregnant and had a son. She named him Reuben, (which literally means, “See, a son!”) for she said, “The Lord has noticed my misery, and now my husband will love me.” Leah says, “A son; now maybe Jacob will love me. I may not be pretty, but I Rachel can’t have sons, and I can. So she names the kid, “Reuben,” “see, a son! “Doesn’t this **make me love-able?**”

Does it work? Take a look: **33** She soon became pregnant again and had another son. She named him Simeon, which sounds like the Hebrew for heard, for she said, “The Lord **heard** that I was unloved and has given me another son.” **No, it didn’t work the first time,** because she is still unloved, and so **when she gives birth to her 2nd son,** she names him “heard” because she thinks, “God has heard my prayers and given me a son that will make Jacob love me.”

34 Again she became pregnant and had a son. She named him Levi (yillaweh, which sounds like the Hebrew for “attached”), for she said, “Surely now my husband will feel affection for me, since I have given him three sons!” It didn’t work the 1st or 2nd time, so she thinks surely it will work on the 3rd.

Listen: Just like Jacob, she’s dealing with her disappointment in life by reaching out for one, true love.

- **Jacob looked for it in romance** and sex; she looks for it in being a cherished wife and mother.
- **She has a son and thinks,** “Now, I’ll be visible, now I’ll be heard; now he’ll be attached to me!” But **each time it leaves her empty.**
- **When we deal with disappointment** in life, we almost always respond the **same way.**
 - We didn’t find it in **that romance**, but maybe in *this next* romance we will.
 - Not in **this job...**

- Not in **this city...** in a bigger one with more nightlife.
- Not in **this economic bracket or stage of life...** 10K more dollars/year....

- **We’re like Leah: we just keep “having sons”** and thinking it’s going to solve the problem. Another relationship, another attempt, *another job.* And it always ends up the same.

And THEN, in verse 35, we get the gospel. (*This is the best part of this whole story.*)

35 Once again she became pregnant and had a son. She named him Judah, for she said, “Now I will praise the LORD!” (Judah sounds like the Hebrew for “praise to God.”) **And then she stopped trying to have children.**

And you’re like, “Wait, what? I didn’t see the gospel in that verse. It just says she stopped having kids.”

A couple of things:

- See how **LORD is spelled in all caps** here? That is God’s covenant name.
 - (The book of Genesis uses 2 primary **names for God.** Whenever you see “**G-o-d**,” it is “Elohim,” which just means the all-powerful one. But “**L-O-R-D**” indicates his covenant name. It has to do with the promises of blessing made to Abraham.
 - **If someone refers to God as Yahweh,** it is because they have come to **know and believe** those promises.
- **That’s the name Leah uses,** and she **names her last son “praise to the God who has made this covenant with her.”**
- In other words, **Leah “stopped” trying to earn** the love of Jacob through having sons and **received the love of God** given to her as a gift, and that comes **the source of her joy** and praise in life.

Here's more: Judah is going to grow up to be the ancestor of a very important great, great great grandchild. Jesus will be, "The Lion of the Tribe of Judah." This would be the **son through whom Jesus Christ** would come.

- IOW, her lineage became infinitely beautiful not because she had some physical beautiful she passed on to them, but because of the gift of God.

Right in the middle of her painful, ugly, unloved life Leah learned the gospel.

- She got it *long before Jacob*, the famous patriarch, got it. He won't have his **gospel moment** for several years. She gets it first. And maybe more than anyone up to this point has gotten it.

And in that moment, she embodies the whole message of the Bible. It's 4-fold:

1. In all our searching, we are searching for Jesus

- We talked about this some last week, **every person is on a search**, and whether they **know it or not**, they are searching for Jesus.
- **Both Jacob and Leah** are on a search.
 - Jacob **thinks his answer is in riches and sex** and will **do whatever to get them**—he'll burn whatever bridges he needs to with his family; he'll pay whatever price for romance and sex.
 - Leah thinks her answer is in being a mom and wife.
 - (One commentator said that **Jacob is the liberal** who thinks sex will fulfill him; Leah is the conservative who thinks family will fulfill her. Both liberal and conservative end up empty.)
- Both are trying to fill the void in their heart through an **"idol," a substitute god.**
 - **Idols** are anything you substitute for God.

- One of the Hebrew words **related to worship, kabod**, or "glory," literally means, "weight." To give something glory—to make it an idol, is to give it too much weight in your life.
- **Idols are not usually a bad thing**, but a good thing you make into a God thing.

- **What in your life do you feel like you can't live without?** What is that one, essential thing you need for happiness? Are you **Jacob**, thinking it is in romantic love? Are you **Leah**, thinking it is in family? Respect of friends? The praise of people? Money?
- **OT scholar Derek Kidner:** "The words 'Behold, it was Leah' are the very embodiment of man's disappointment with life, and this moment is a snapshot of the disillusionment man has experienced from Eden onward."³
 - **All the blessings of the world turn out to be Leahs...** No matter what you think is Rachel, in the morning, when you finally awake; it's going to be Leah.
 - **Every time you get into a relationship, or start a new job, or a new marriage, you think,** "This is it! This will finally make my life right! This is Rachel." You have the Jerry Macguire moment: This completes me.
 - I can assure you—**she looks like a Rachel now, but in the morning when you see her in the full light of day, it will be Leah.**
- Last week I told that you that when that happens, you do **1 of 4 things**:⁴
 - **Blame the idol:**
 - Replace it with a new version of the idol: Kelly Clarkson, the original American Idol (see what I did there?), after she made it big, get into this romantic relationship that fell apart. In one of her future songs she described it saying, "I fell so

³ Derek Kidner, *Genesis*, 160.

⁴ From Tim Keller, *Counterfeit Gods*

hard... because of you, I'm ashamed of my life, because it's empty...

- **Did her next song talk** about a whole new focus in life? No, just a new guy!
- **Sometimes people will switch idols:** Saw a **great illustration** of this recently. **Taylor Swift** had a song last year called, "Out of the Woods." The **whole song is about a relationship on the rocks.** Well, in the **music video** the music ends with these words on the screen: "She lost him. But she found herself. And somehow that was everything." As in, this relationship turned out to be a Leah; but in knowing herself is where the real joy is.
- I've got news for Taylor Swift: I've found myself, and it's not that pretty.
 - The one who has disappointed me most, and broken more promises to J.D. Greear than anyone else, is J.D. Greear!
 - **In the morning, you're** going to turn out to be a Leah, too.
 - **Taylor Swift** was like, **"He's Leah, but I'm Rachel.** Nope, you're going to be a **Leah, too."**
- **All idols disappoint.** Because we are made for God.
 - **Blame yourself**
 - **Blame the world**
 - **Realize you were created for another world**
- Jesus is **the true bridegroom** that we seek. **Jesus was the one who could give to Leah the unconditional love** that she craved; a love that went beyond physical attraction. A love not conditioned on anything; a love deep and fulfilling.
- Jesus is the **bridegroom that you are seeking**, too!
 - The arms you are searching for in love, or any pursuit, are his arms.

- **Lonely, miserable, insecure single people** become lonely, miserable, insecure married people, because **problems like loneliness and insecurity...**
- **St. Augustine:** "Our hearts will always be restless until we find our rest in you."

Leah teaches us, #2...

2. God gives his "blessing" not to those who strive, but to those who receive it in faith.

- **It's only when you "stop" trying to earn God's and others' love** that you can be free.
- *The gospel flips everything we believe about love on its head:*
 - Jacob chose Rachel because she was naturally appealing. **But God chose Leah** to bear the Messiah.
 - Isaac chose Esau, because he **fit his definition of what he wanted his son to be.** But God chose Jacob to be the one through whom the **ultimate Man** would one day come.
- **God's blessing does not come to those who earn it but those who receive it by faith.** Paul summarized *Jacob's* life this way: **"So then it depends not on human will or exertion** (i.e. not to those who figure out how to manipulate circumstances and achieve it, or have enough sons to earn in), **but on God, who has mercy."** (as a gift) **(Romans 9:16 ESV)**
- Titus 3:5
- **Eph 2:8, It is by grace** you have been saved through faith...

That can **liberate you!** You see, because **some of you**—and let me talk especially to the ladies, since this is about Leah—all your life you've been **captive to the Labans and the Jacobs** in your life. Voices telling you that you're not **pretty enough, skinny enough; good enough.**

You have a heavenly Father who has set his love on you... just because. His love is unearned!

- **Me to my daughters:** “Does daddy love you because you’re smart? Or pretty?” And they say, “No. You love us because we’re your daughters.”

Which leads to #3...

3. God doesn’t love us because we are beautiful; we become beautiful because he loves us

- Her lineage became infinitely beautiful because of the gift of God.
- SLJ says, “God **doesn’t need us to be beautiful** so that he can love us with all his heart. We will be beautiful because he loves us.”⁵
 - He doesn’t love us because we’re **valuable**. We are **valuable** because he loves us.
 - He doesn’t love us because we’re **pure**. His love purifies us.
 - He doesn’t love us because we’re **strong**. We become **strong** through his love for us.
- **Martin Luther, “The love of God does not find, but rather creates, that which is pleasing to it.”**⁶
 - He doesn’t say, “Oh, that one has potential... her sin is not that bad.” *His love doesn’t find us lovely*; it makes us lovely.
- So, when you feel like a Leah, you reflect on two things:
 - ONE: God has set his love on you unconditionally, conditioned not upon how you perform or anything about you...
 - When Kharis first walked... Stood up holding on to coffee table. Then we did what was cruel. Backed away and offered her a Twinkie. She leaned her head toward it and gravity took over. Not so much “walking” as a “controlled fall.” Enough for us!
 - Look! She walked!

⁵ Sally Lloyd-Jones, *Jesus Story Book Bible*

- We have out the camera... sending it to friends.
- **I’ve never known a dad** who saw his kids take their first step and fall and say, “Well, that’s it. My kid’s an idiot. What’s wrong with you? No, seriously, it’s not my problem; it’s your problem. See? I can walk just fine.”
- **Then**, seeing how happy we were when she took those steps, she took more...
- IMPORTANT: We love her not because of her ability to walk, but because she is our girl. Our love and affirmation become the confidence that enables her to walk.
- **Our heavenly Father says, “Look!”** Yeah, you’re stumbling around like a fool but he says, “They are growing. That’s my kid.” And that unconditional love gives you the ability to walk beautifully!
- **First, I know God loves me unconditionally and SECOND: I know that one day he’s going to make my outside match the beauty of Christ he’s put on my inside.**
 - **1 John 3**, “*Beloved, we are God’s children, and what we will be exactly has not yet appeared, but we know that one day when he appears we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.*”
 - **He’s not done with me!** He’s going to take my ugliness—maybe physical ugliness, moral ugliness, and make the beauty of my outside match the beauty of Christ on my inside.
- **When you really grasp these truths, and let them seep into your soul, you’ll be free of the addiction of the approval of others;**

⁶ 1518 Heidelberg Disputation

you'll be released from the captivity you feel toward your spouse depending on them...

- You can **let go of them as your lifesaver**, because Jesus is your lifesaver.
- You **won't need them to feel like you are loved**, or you have worth... you'll have that in Jesus.
- And then, for the first time in life you'll actually be free to love someone instead of using them!

4. You know you have learned the gospel when you stop striving to find love

- **When you rejoice in a love** that you don't have to earn; a love that **can't be taken away**.
 - **Like Leah**, your praise and **joy is not about how many sons you have**; or **whether Jacob** loves you—or how smart or pretty you are; *but it's your **covenant relationship with God** that makes you get your praise on.*
- **QUESTION: What does it take for you to get your praise on?**
 - Do things **have to be going right**, or is your **relationship with God, all by itself**, enough?
 - Can you say, "I don't have riches... or sons... or maybe a good marriage, but I have Jesus and he is enough."
 - Can you live as a Judah, or does your praise depend on Reuben, Simeon, and Levi?
- ~~((Write this down: **How well you understand the gospel is demonstrated by your ability to rejoice in all circumstances.** With or without the earthly love of your life; with or without money; with or without children.~~
- ~~**Illus. Broken down carriage**)~~

Conclusion:

Thank God for the beautiful story of ugly Leah! Because that shows me that he loves ugly sinners like me. ((Eph 2:8)) And you'll spend the rest of your life praising God for that!

((All other faiths have God at the top of a ladder. You climb these steps of virtue to get closer and closer to him... if you'll be moral, hard-working, make the right sacrifices, be generous to the poor, know your Bible, etc. If you do all these things well enough, then the gods will bless you. Literally every religion is like that.

- But the Bible **gives us a God completely opposite** of that. It tells us that **God loves Leahs**. Physical Leahs; moral Leahs.

Leah's who learn to sing...))

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!

"When you've been there 10K years..." it won't be enough. 10K lifetimes won't be enough!

