

# 06. The Girl No One Wanted

## Genesis 27-30

1. INTRODUCTION
  - a. Catch up to speed
  - b. What is this God like?
    - i. 2 Peter 1 says we learn about his glory through knowledge of his promises
2. WHAT DOES THE STORY SAY?
3. WHY TEACH ON THIS STORY?
  - a. Leah, the girl no one wanted, was important to God.
    - i. Despite the way the world viewed her, he saw her worth and value. He even chooses her fourth child, Judah, to be the ancestor of Jesus.
4. WHAT DOES THIS STORY TEACH ABOUT GOD?
  - a. **God is defined by compassion and patience**
    - i. He is compassionate with Jacob...
      1. Despite the fact that God promised (before he did good or evil) Jacob to be the recipient of the promise, and despite the fact that Jacob still stole it (so to speak), God still reinforces his blessing on his life (Gen 28:3-4)
      2. Even compassionate w/ Esau still blessing/multiplying his descendants knowing they would forever be a thorn in Israel's side
    - ii. He is compassionate with Leah
      1. In her being unloved he gives her sons
      2. To allow her son, Judah, to be the chosen line of salvation
      3. He finds her beautiful even when no one else does
    - iii. He is compassionate with Rachel
      1. W/ all her nonsense, he still gives her a son
    - iv. Even during the great baby wars he is compassionate
      1. Leah and Rachel get into a baby war and they keep giving God credit for nonsense.
      2. "He honors me because I gave Jacob my maidservant..."
      3. "God has vindicated me..." b/c Jacob slept w/ Bilhah
      4. God wasn't honored by any of this. If I were God, I would deny them babies just to teach them a lesson. But that's not what God does.
  - b. Many people don't tend to view God as compassionate b/c bad things happen
    - i. We discussed in week 3 why bad things happen
    - ii. What makes God compassionate is not that he surrounds us with a bubble, but that he shows us compassion within the horrible messes that
      1. We create for ourselves

2. Others put us in (it wasn't Leah's fault that her dad gave her to Jacob, that he hated her, etc).
  - c. God doesn't need to be compassionate. Job knew this, "What is man, that you make so much of him, and that you set your heart on him, visit him every morning and test him every moment?" (Job 7:17-18)
    1. "What is man that you are mindful of him..." (Psalm 8:4)
    - ii. God's compassion is due, not to our merit, but to his character
    - iii. You say, "I don't see it"
      1. His compassion is evidenced in his promises
      2. God has always been for us and not against.
    - iv. He knows people are messed up... Not just these people, all people
    - v. His response isn't punishment, like we would do, but compassion and pity
    - vi. It is confirmed on the cross and by the empty tomb
      1. He delights in showing mercy to the evil and wicked
    - vii. He isn't seeking to catch you, trap you, trip you, smack you...
      1. He is seeking to show you compassion and mercy regardless of your history, your past, your current view of him
  - d. **God is compassionate.**
5. WHAT DOES THIS STORY TEACH ABOUT MANKIND?
- a. **We grow, primarily, over long periods of time and through trials, but our growth is tempered by God's compassion.**
    - i. God reinforces who he is and who Jacob is in Genesis 28:3-4
      1. Speaks to him in a dream (Gen 28:13-15)
      2. Jacob's response: "maybe he will be my God (v21)
      3. God spends the next 20 years showing compassion on Jacob even throughout terrible trials.
        - a. Wife wars
        - b. In law problems
        - c. Brother problems
        - d. Physical ailments
        - e. Daughter raped
        - f. Not that God did any of these things, but through his trials and suffering, God worked in him to mature him
        - g. Mercy: not giving Jacob what he deserved
      4. In chapter 35, God has him return to the same place
        - a. God renames him Israel and re-emphasizes promise
    - ii. How does this show God's compassion?
      1. Truly bearing w/ us in all our drama; not giving us what we deserve; not abandoning his promises; showering w/ mercy
    - iii. God changes us through the same processes as he did Jacob
      1. How often do we not reap what we deserve? All the time!

2. He is compassionate in our trials and even in the worst trials, the trials that rip out your heart, he points to the empty tomb and proclaims, "Behold, I am making all things new!"

**b. Our identity is not found in what we do (or don't do), but in who God compassionately says that we are.**

- i. Each character in this story struggles with massive identity issues
  1. Jacob defined by his name
  2. Esau constantly struggling to earn mom and dad (and God's) blessing
  3. Leah the ugly sister who nobody cares about
  4. Rachel beautiful and "the whole package" yet unable to bear kids → makes her into a laughing stock, ashamed
- ii. Over the 20 years leading up to chapter 35, we see Jacob's trials until God redefines him as Israel → representative of drawing ID from God
- iii. Leah's ID problems, however, are the most pronounced in this story
  1. From the morning after the wedding... What did Jacob say?
  2. Hated by Jacob, used by her father, jealous of her sister
  3. "Now my husband will love me..."
  4. "Because I am hated..."
  5. "Now this time my husband will be attached to me..."
- iv. The fourth son, however, we see a transition:
  1. "This time I will praise the LORD."
  2. I don't want to draw my value from my husband or my kids any longer!
    - a. Of course she still struggles. None of us conquer our identity issues overnight

**6. IF THIS IS TRUE, WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR MY LIFE?**

- a. Leah's struggle is very much our struggle, is it not?
- b. You must draw your worth, value, and identity from God.
  - i. Not people...
  - ii. Not your job...
  - iii. Not your hobbies...
  - iv. Not your kids...
  - v. Nowhere but who you are in Christ.
- c. An enormous part of that identity is realizing what God says about who you are
  - i. As people...
    1. Made in the image of God (valuable... important... all people...)
    2. Sinners... (broken... sinners... constantly stumbling... insecure...)
    3. Desperate for compassion... (from God primarily... from one another... )
      - a. God is kind to the ungrateful and the evil (Luke 6:35)
  - ii. As recipients of the promise (e.g. In Christ)...

1. Recipients of compassion... mercy... dearly loved... adopted... accepted... celebrated (not tolerated, celebrated!)
  2. Forgiven (past, present, future)
- d. Draw our identity from God, and then be freed to love others as he loved us, to be compassionate, to be merciful to those who don't deserve it
    - i. "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting NOTHING in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful..." Luke 6:35
  - e. Some of you struggle w/ constant rejection (parents, spouse, boyfriend, single)...
  - f. Some of you struggle w/ constant guilt of not measuring up...
  - g. Some of you struggle w/ feeling worthless, a waste...
  - h. We need to define ourselves not as the one nobody wants, or the sinner who just keeps messing up, or the mistake, or the waste of oxygen..
    - i. If you are in Christ, you are a new creation, the old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 2 Cor 5:17
      1. The new HAS come. It's already there if you are in Christ...
  - i. If you aren't a follower of Christ, you aren't here by accident. God wanted you to hear about his compassion. He's shown you mercy already even without you realizing it, and today he invites you → come to me all who are heavy laden and I will give you rest, I will shower you in compassion and mercy