

## Behold, It Was Leah!

Gen 29:15-25a

### Introduction:

1. Have you ever been struck with information that just made your heart sink?
2. It was like you had gotten punched in the gut. All the wind had been knocked out of you.
3. It was information that you could never have expected. You didn't know what to do.
4. That's what it must have been like for Jacob in the event described in Gen. 29:15ff.
5. Reading of 29:15-25a.
6. There are many things that I do not understand about this text. How could a man acquainted two sisters be so deceived that he could sleep with the wrong one on his wedding night? Was he intoxicated? Was it so dark he couldn't see? Was she so veiled that he could not tell them apart?

### Discussion:

- I. Jacob was no stranger to deception. With his mother's help he had deceived his father, Isaac, and stolen the blessing his father had meant to give to his brother, Esau (Gen 27).
  - A. Isaac, was nearing the end of his life and acting as a prophet, intending on predicting the future of his sons.
  - B. Esau was the firstborn and so by tradition he should have received the privileges associated with being the first and becoming the next patriarch of the family.
  - C. But Rebecca, his mother, preferred her son Jacob to Esau.
  - D. When it came time for Isaac to bless the firstborn, Esau, Rebecca and Jacob had conspired a plan.
    1. They dressed Jacob to appear as Esau. Isaac's eyesight was very poor. (I find it ironic that Leah's eyesight was also poor.)
    2. They put goatskins on Jacob's hands and on the smooth part of his neck.
    3. Jacob lied to his father and said that he was Esau.
    4. But Isaac said, "It is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau."
    5. Isaac, not yet convinced, smelled him. He was trying to use all of his senses to make a determination.
  - E. Gen. 27:27-29.
  - F. Jacob received the blessing and Esau received nothing.
  - G. Esau bore a grudge against Jacob. He planned to kill him after their father died (27:41) and so Jacob fled to the region from which Rebekah had come. That's how Jacob connected with Laban, the brother of Rebekah.
  - H. Now the deceiver has been deceived! And what a deception it is. He has worked for Laban seven years and has received the wrong woman. Now he must work seven more years for Rachael.
    1. You might say, "It was good enough for him. He got what was coming to him."
    2. You might say, "What goes around comes around."
    3. You might say, "You should not do to others what you don't want to have done to you. If you don't want to be deceived (lied to) then don't deceive others."

II. If you look at this episode from Jacob's perspective. . .

- A. He may have felt guilty being reminded of what he did to his father.
- B. He certainly felt betrayed by Laban. He asked, "What is this you have done to me?"
- C. I can only imagine how heart sick he must have been when he found out he had married Leah instead of Rachael.
  - 1. He probably felt betrayed by Leah. I would have asked her, "Why did you not speak up?" Can you imagine the tension this must have carried into this new marriage? It must have marred the rest of their life together.
  - 2. And where was Rachael in all this? Was she unable to do anything?
  - 3. It would seem that Jacob was completely alone. No friend came to give him the necessary information. Everyone had betrayed him.
  - 4. There was no escaping it. The situation would affect the rest of his life. The family plans and expectations that he had had would all now be different.
- D. Then he marries Rachael, too.
  - 1. Now, if things were not complicated enough already!
  - 2. "He loved Rachael more than Leah."
  - 3. Can you imagine the tension, the rivalry, the grief, the sadness in this family?
- E. Moses summarizes it with that punch in the gut statement: "Behold, it was Leah!"

III. If you look at this episode from Leah's perspective . . .

- A. She is unloved. She might have traced it all back to her "weak eyes" (v. 17). Sometimes there is a bodily feature, a particular event or series of events that affect us in powerful ways. Leah is unloved.v.v.
- B. What does a wife want from a husband? Cf. Eph. 5:25, 33.
  - 1. She wants to be loved.
  - 2. Not just loved, but loved as number 1.
  - 3. This is something Leah will never have.
- C. She wanted her husband to be "attached" to her (v. 34).
  - 1. She thought her having children would do it.
  - 2. No indication in the text that this worked.
- D. The only effect that the text mentions is that it made Rachael jealous.
- E. Leah is used by her father. Married to a man that loves her only as a secondary wife. Her sister is jealous of her. NOT a happy circumstance.

IV. If you look at this episode from Rachael's perspective . . .

- A. Yes, she was the one "beautiful in form and face" (v. 17). Sometimes there are difficulties and challenges in being good looking.
- B. Her sister had children and she did not.
  - 1. The jealousy led to the development of a competition—who could have the most (best, preferred) children.
  - 2. Rachael gave her handmaid to Jacob to produce children.
  - 3. She tried to "one up" her sister.

4. When Rachael's maid had a second son, Rachael said, "With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, and I have indeed prevailed."
  5. Then Leah gave her maid to Jacob in attempt to "one up" Rachael.
- C. This kind of thing went on again and again.
1. Each tried to figure out a way to get ahead of the other. Each wanted more and more. Both were unhappy and dissatisfied. Rachael called on Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die." Is she depressed? Suicidal?
  2. This is the way it is with carnal ways of thinking.
  3. I feel less. I feel diminished. I feel unloved. I try to get ahead of another, by deception (lies), having children, or by whatever means I can come up with.
  4. It just doesn't work. It is not God's way. But often we spend our entire lives in painful, unhappy and destructive ways.
  5. Often as we do this we instill jealousy, envy and competitiveness into the next generations. Our preferential treatment, our unjust treatment of an individual, a race, or a particular group creates intergenerational enmities that ought not be.
  6. Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery. Deceived Jacob into believing he was dead. Grief and anguish were perpetuated by worldly ways of thinking and acting.

V. If you look at this episode from God's perspective. . .

- A. What if they had followed God's way of thinking rather than the world's?
  1. We will never know, because they followed a different course and that was the reality.
  2. If they had followed God's intent for telling the truth instead of lying (Eph. 4:25). . .
  3. If they had followed God's plan for not showing partiality (Acts 10:34) . . .
  4. If they had followed God's plan for marriage (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:4-6) . . .
- B. The Lord was compassionate toward Leah the unloved and blessed her with children (29:31).
- C. He was kind toward Rachael and gave her a son (30:22).
- D. God is kind and compassionate toward those who are worldly in their thinking.

VI. There are many lessons to be learned from this text.

- A. Believing a lie can affect the rest of your life in powerfully negative ways.
  1. It may be a lie that perpetuated by a deceiver in your family or a lie perpetuated by the devil.
  2. You need to give careful attention to the truth of God (2 Thess. 2:11).
- B. Fleshly/worldly ways of thinking are destructive forces to your family.
- C. God values you whether you think you are beautiful of form and face or not. God values you if your "eyes are weak." God loves you even if you perceive yourself as unloved. There is no need for proving yourself worthy and important. No need for competitiveness. No need to try to get "one up" on another.
- D. God blessed Jacob and his family.
  1. Even though Laban changed his wages 10 times (31:7) God protected him.
  2. Even though others cheat you, deceive you and treat you with hostility, anger, jealousy and competitiveness you need to be faithful to Him and He will be faithful

to you.

3. If you have some “defect,” are unloved, childless, or consider yourself a reproach—if you are beautiful of form and face, are fleeing from a brother who wants to kill you, depressed, sad and grieved—The Lord God would bless you.

Conclusion:

1. How will you respond to Him?
2. Will you continue in your worldly and deceived way of thinking?
3. Or will you accept the Lord’s way?