

MEN'S LIFE BLOOMINGTON & GOD @ WORK

Tuesday, January 27, 2015

The Title Goes Here

Genesis 31: (*story compiled from selected verses*)

Major Segments:

- The reasons for leaving
- Laban's dream and his meeting with Jacob
 - A) God's protection
 - B) Laban's idol
- Jacob's work history and Jacob's declaration of God's vindication.

Segment Questions:

- What were some of the circumstances leading up to Jacob's leaving? What was the main reason he left? Laban's dream is a major part of this chapter....why? Wouldn't you think this dream would have an impact on Laban? Really, wouldn't you think the whole encounter of Jacob in his life make a difference in the life of Laban?
- Jacob said he rushed away because he was afraid. Should he have been? Was is fear transferred to his wives? (next question)
- Most scholars say the idol was for advice, protection, and/or possession of the idol played an important role on who would control the inheritance.....why do you think she stole it? Was she showing a lack of trust in God?
- Jacob tells of his time working for Laban and all he did for Laban. Is there bitterness there? Jacob tells Laban God vindicated him last night when God appeared to Laban. Why does this seem so important to Jacob?

Action Questions:

- Jacob, left when God told him it was time. How do we make decisions on when to leave or stay in a job, a city, an uncomfortable circumstance?
- God told Jacob " I will be with you." But he left in the middle of the night because he was afraid. Can we relate? Why do we sometimes act like we don't believe God is with us? Do we need our extra "idols" to give us assurance?
- Jacob seemed to work beyond the call of the job description. Do we give more than expected from us? Are we OK when we are not recognized for all we do? Do we want vindication?
- Jacob's actions had to impact his relatives for good. They had to see God in his life. How about us, do our non-believing relatives see God in our lives? Are we making a difference to them?

Genesis 31 the story from selected verses.

From: www.btstories.com

Laban's sons were grumbling that "Jacob has robbed our father!" Jacob was gaining wealth at the expense of Laban. Jacob noticed a considerable cooling in Laban's attitude towards him. The Lord said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your father and grandfather and to your relatives there and I will be with you." This was fine with Jacob's wives as they had felt betrayed by their father and recognized how he had mistreated Jacob and that God was with Jacob.

So without telling Laban, Jacob took all that he had, and started driving his herds toward Canaan. Before they left, Rachel stole her father's family idol.

Three days later, Laban heard that Jacob had left. He immediately took a group of his relatives and chased after Jacob. It took seven days to catch up with him. The night before, God appeared to Laban and said, "Watch out! Don't do anything to Jacob, good or bad."

The next day, Laban met Jacob and said, "Why did you do this to me? You left like a thief in the night, and took my daughters and grandchildren like they were prisoners. If you had told me, I would've put on a grand party and sent you off with a flair."

"Now you've disgraced me, and if I wanted to, I could destroy you right here. But last night, the God of your fathers told me not to do anything to you.

"I suppose I can understand your being homesick and wanting to go home. But why did you steal my family idol?"

Jacob said, "I rushed away because I was afraid; I said to myself, 'He'll take his daughters from me by force.' I didn't steal your idol. Look for yourself. Go ahead. Search our tents. If you find it, let that person die." He didn't know that Rachel had taken it. He said if you find anything that belongs to you, I swear before all these relatives of ours I will give it back.

Laban searched the tents belonging to Jacob, Leah, and the two maidservants. He then went into Rachel's tent. She was sitting on her camel seat, where she had put the idol. She said, "Father, please forgive me for not standing. I am having my monthly period." Laban looked throughout her tent and didn't find his idol.

At this point, Jacob became angry. He said, "You've chased me here like I was a criminal. You've searched everything I have. Have you found anything that belongs to you? Bring it out and put it in front of your men.

"No, you haven't found anything! I worked for you for twenty years. I endured the extreme heat in the day, and the frost at night. I worked without much sleep, so you could prosper. I endured these hardships, and you still mistreated me through it all. I never touched a ram of yours for food. I replaced animals that were killed, or stolen to your flock and I took the loss. You reduced my wages ten times. But God has seen your cruelty and my hard work. That is why he appeared to you last night and vindicated me.

Laban replied these are my daughters and grandchildren and these flocks are all mine. Laban suggested they make a peace treaty. They did and Jacob presented a sacrifice to God and invited everyone to feast. Laban got up the next morning and kissed his daughters and grandchildren and blessed them. Then he returned home.