

MEN'S LIFE BLOOMINGTON & GOD @ WORK

Tuesday, May 24, 2016

Speckled, Spotted and Streaked

Genesis 29:31 – 31:3

Theme: *Finances*

Major Segments:

- Jacob's wives and children
- Jacob wants to leave
- The deal
- Jacob's wealth skyrockets
- Jacob leaves with God

Segment Questions:

- How do you think Rachel felt with her sister having all the sons with Jacob while she is barren?
- What do you think God is teaching each of the main characters – Jacob, Leah and Rachel – in this story of bearing and not bearing children?
- Jacob could have just left for his homeland, but decides to stay. Discuss the differences in Jacob's situation if he had left right after Joseph was born and his situation when he leaves at the end of the story? What are times of waiting in your life that God orchestrated for good?
- How do you feel about Jacob wanting to build up his wealth?
- In Matthew 10:16, Jesus says, "so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves." How do you think this verse relates to Jacob and Laban and negotiations in general?
- What do you think about the role of expertise which Jacob has in husbandry balanced with the role of God to do the miraculous? How does Jacob handle these two tensions? How do you typically handle them in your own life?
- How do you think Jacob feels as he leaves the place he has lived for 30+ years for "the land I gave to your fathers?"

Action Questions:

- A God story – How have you seen God protect you or provide for you?
- What is your responsibility with the abilities and wealth God has given you?
- Is God leading or prodding you to go or to do? Where is God telling you to go or what is God telling you to do?
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Genesis 29:31 – 31:3

From: www.btstories.com

Jacob worked for his uncle Laban a total of fourteen years to get his two wives. It was obvious that he loved Rachel more than Leah.

The Lord saw that Leah was unloved, so he kept Rachel from having children. After Leah had four sons, Rachel was so jealous that she yelled at Jacob, "Give me a son or I'll die!"

He said, "I'm not God. I didn't make you barren."

With this, Rachel gave him her maidservant. She said, "Sleep with my servant. She can have children for me." Jacob agreed and soon the servant started having children.

Suddenly Leah was unable to bear children. So she gave her maidservant to Jacob. Soon, with three women, Jacob had ten sons and one daughter. At that point God allowed Rachel to give birth to a son. She called him Joseph. He was the eleventh son.

At this point, Jacob went to Laban and said, "I want to return to my home. Give me the freedom to take my wives and children and go."

Laban said, "Oh Jacob, be kind to me and don't leave. I've learned that the Lord has blessed me because of you. I'll pay you whatever you want."

Jacob said, "You don't have to pay me anything. Instead, allow me to build up my wealth by keeping a part of the flock."

"I'll oversee your flocks, but I'll keep all the goats and sheep that are born speckled, spotted, or streaked. You keep the rest. In this way, you'll know if I'm stealing from you. Simply check my flocks and see if they all have the right markings on them."

Laban agreed to these terms. So they separated the flocks according to those markings.

Jacob had a way of making the lambs be born speckled, spotted, and streaked. Using this process, he made sure all the strongest of the flock were his, and all the weakest of the flock were Laban's. In frustration, Laban changed their agreement ten times in order to gain the advantage. Even so, Jacob became very rich over the years.

One day, he overheard a conversation between his brothers-in-law. They said, "Jacob has built his wealth by taking what really belongs to our father." He also noticed that Laban's attitude had changed towards him.

The Lord said to Jacob, "Go back to the land I gave to your fathers, and I'll be with you."