



Rachel and Leah - Genesis 29-30

What Defines Your Life?

What defines your life? Your career, money, family? Or perhaps it is pain, or a broken relationship, or loss of hope. For a long time, Rachel and Leah allowed themselves to be defined by things out of their control – beauty, barrenness, and a chaotic family. But, over time, God began to heal them, and they found freedom and purpose in Him.

Rachel and Leah were two sisters caught in a whirlpool of envy and deceit. Their husband, Jacob, was known for living a deceitful life. Their father, Laban, thought nothing of tricking Jacob into marrying the wrong daughter so he could take advantage of them all. Their's is a complicated story filled with deep emotional pain.

Jacob, Abraham's grandson, was forced to flee home after stealing his brother's birthright. He traveled to his uncle Laban's home, where he fell in love with Laban's youngest daughter, Rachel. Laban forced Jacob to work seven years to earn the right to marry her. But Laban deceived them all and substituted his oldest daughter, Leah, at the wedding.

After the wedding, Laban agreed to allow Jacob to marry Rachel as well if he stayed and worked another seven years. What a complicated mess. Jacob suddenly found himself married to both sisters. He loved Rachel more, but she was unable to have children. However, Leah never felt Jacob's love, even though she ultimately had many children.

Suffering Becomes Praise

Leah shows us that God sees the overlooked and rejected. Genesis says that God saw she was unloved and he ultimately blessed her with seven children. We can see her spiritual growth in the names she gave her sons. The names of the first three revealed her brokenness. But the name of the fourth, Judah, meant, "This time I will praise the Lord."

For Rachel, watching her sister marry Jacob turned her own honeymoon dreams into a nightmare. But when Rachel's dream of marriage finally came true, she found she could not have children. If Leah's grief was feeling rejected and unloved, Rachel's grief was her barrenness, and it led to even more rivalry. Rachel and Leah seemed to be on a lifelong course of jealousy and pain. But slowly, they both began to seek God through prayer. At first, their prayers focused on their pain and frustration. But as God became more real to them, they both found reasons to praise Him rather than focus solely on their misfortune.

We see God's ultimate blessings on both sisters. Later in life, Rachel had two sons of her own - Joseph and Benjamin. Joseph was renowned for saving his people while in Egypt. Leah's son, Judah, was the ancestor of King David and the long line of kings whose lineage leads to Jesus Christ, the King of Kings.

This story is raw and messy. It does not have the fairy-tale ending of love and forgiveness we want. But through it all, we still see God work out His purposes through broken people and broken family dynamics. That doesn't mean He approves of every action. But it shows His purposes are not defeated by human weakness and sin. And that's good news for us.

Being Redefined

These women teach us that our identity cannot safely rest in what we have or do not have. Leah could not build her identity solely on her children. And Rachel could not build hers on Jacob's love. Peace begins when we stop measuring ourselves against other people or things and place our trust in the Living God, who sees and knows us intimately.

If you feel unseen and unloved like Leah, remember that God sees you and loves you as His own. If you feel like Rachel, waiting for a prayer to be answered while someone else seems to receive everything you want, don't forget that God has not forgotten you or turned His back on you. God's timing may be mysterious, but His love abounds.

When we bring Him the raw honesty of our hearts, He answers us. So don't try to hide your feelings behind fancy words or false hopes. The story of Rachel and Leah invites us to come to God as we are and to trust that He will understand even our most complicated emotions.

In the places where comparison has wounded you, let His compassion restore you. In the places where emptiness has defined you, let His presence fill you.



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