

# “Content with God’s Blessing”

## Genesis 29:31 – 30:24

prepared by Scotty Neasbitt

for

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Moody once told a fable of an eagle who was envious of another who could fly better than he could. I imagine that the eagle spent his days gazing into the sky watching that other bird. One day the bird saw a sportsman with a bow & arrow, and said to him, “I wish you would bring down that eagle up there.” The man replied, “If I had some feathers for my arrow, I’d be happy to bring that bird down.” So, the jealous eagle pulled a feather from his wing. The arrow was launched, but it didn’t quite reach the high flying bird. So, the eagle on the ground pulled out another feather, then another, until he had lost so many that he himself couldn’t fly. Taking advantage of the situation, the sportsman turned and killed the naked bird.

Before the bird was killed, he could fly – he could hunt for food – he just couldn’t fly as high as his rival in the sky. This story could be your story. Does it describe your reaction to how God blesses you? If we are honest, we will admit that often we are not content with how God blesses us. In fact, we are so discontent with how He blesses us that we spend a great deal of energy comparing our blessings with the blessings of others.

This morning we are going to talk about being content with the blessings of God in our lives.

Turn with me to Genesis 29:31 – 30:24. Our text tells the story of the building of Jacob’s family. While it reads more like a genealogy, there are important lessons for us to learn about being content with God’s blessing. As in Jacob’s life, God has promises that are intended just for you. Our story this morning is a cautionary tale of the havoc we wreak when we allow discontent to enter our lives.

This morning our discussion will focus on three reasons why we should be content with God’s blessing in our life, and they all center on the character of God. So, why should we be content with God’s blessings?

Reason number one: God is a God of compassion. God had made a promise to bless Jacob.

As we will see, nothing would stand in God's way in building Jacob's family. In our text, however, it looks almost impossible that God would be able to bless Jacob with a family. Jacob didn't love Leah and Rachel was barren. And yet in his great compassion, God's favor rested on Leah – the rejected wife – and from her came Levi and Judah.

God favors the unfavorable. God, by virtue of your salvation, favors you. Now let's look at our text. Genesis 29:31-35 shows God's favor for the unfavorable. Leah was unloved and she knew it. Our text tells us that God did, too. "When the Lord saw that Leah was not loved, he opened her womb..." Leah not only gave birth to one child, but she gave birth to four sons in short order. In each birth, her gratitude for the blessing of children goes unmissed in the names she gives to Reuben (God has seen my misery, Simeon (God has heard that I am not loved), Levi (at last my husband will love me), and Judah (this time I will praise the Lord). Each name signifies one aspect of Leah's attitude toward the God who had given her love in a tangible way. As God seeks to bless those He wants to bless, He favors the unfavorable. Jacob wanted nothing to do with Leah, but God secured His promise by giving Leah four sons.

The truth is that Rachel had what Leah wanted – the love of Jacob. What is it that you want that God has given to someone else? What have you seen missing in your life that you've found in someone else's? If we are to be content with God's blessing for us, we must recognize that God is a God of compassion. God's compassion is not like ours. Think about it. Just the other day I saw a World Vision commercial with dozens of young children – stomachs bloated and distended from malnutrition – flies hovering around their eyes and noses. I had the luxury of changing the channel and grabbing a bite to eat from the refrigerator. God's compassion is not like mine. Is it like yours?

He saw that Leah was unloved, and He did something about it. He knows what your need is and he will do something about it. We can be content with God's blessing in our lives, because He is a God of compassion. We must only recognize that God has the perfect blessing – tailor-made for each of us, and then rest in His compassion.

God is a God of compassion. But that's not all. Why should we be content with God's blessing in our lives?

Reason number two: God has a sovereign plan, and He alone has the power to bless you. Our text beginning at 30:1 makes it clear that God's sovereign plan, not because of our scheming, but despite our scheming, shall come to pass. Our text says, "When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, she became jealous of her sister." Driven by jealousy, Rachel sets forth to grab a blessing that cannot be grabbed. She uses her maid, Bilhah and Leah, later in the chapter uses her maid, Zilpah, to bear children with Jacob. The irony in the story is that no matter how many maids Rachel would give to Jacob, had God's hand not been in it, even Bilhah would have been made barren. In fact, Rachel's attempt – and later, Leah's attempt – at using their maidservants only underscores the idea that blessings can only be given, not stolen. God, in His sovereignty made it possible for four more children to be born to Jacob through his wives' maidservants. Again, the names they give their children are very telling. Rachel names her two children Dan and Naphtali – both indicating the struggle and inner turmoil she felt in jealousy toward her sister. Indeed, the both sisters' manipulation only brought turmoil, BUT God's sovereignty brought children.

There is a story repeated time and time again in towns and cities across America. Two neighbors with different lifestyles. The first neighbor has the SUV, the vacation home, and three smart, beautiful children, a trophy wife. The second neighbor – not nearly as much material wealth,

but he has a loving wife and a sweet child. Sadly, he spends so much time attempting to grab – work for – what his neighbor has that he misses what God has already given him. Rachel had the love of Jacob, and she wasn't content with it. Leah already had four children from her womb, and she wasn't content with it. The question we must answer in our own lives is, "What are we missing that God has given us because we are so focused on what he has given others?" God has a sovereign plan, and He also has the power to make it happen. There is another portion to this part of the story beginning at 30:14.

Rueben comes in from the fields carrying mandrake plants, and upon seeing them Rachel says to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes." In true feuding fashion, Leah replies, "Wasn't it enough that you took away my husband? Will you take my son's mandrakes, too?" See, Mandrakes were a hot commodity in their day. The roots of plant were believed to have two very useful properties: one helped in the romance dept. and the other helped increase fertility. I'm thinking that one had something to do with the other. Nevertheless, the mandrakes were just the thing that each of the sisters thought they needed to help them grab their own blessing.

What a deal! Rachel got the aphrodisiac, while Leah got a night with Jacob. There was one problem though – God's plan didn't call for the use of Mandrakes. God blessed Leah with two more children, and Rachel remained barren despite her use of the fertility plant. Leah was blessed with children by the power of God himself in fulfillment of his sovereign plan. No amount of Mandrakes would have helped the situation. In fact, God uses their deal to seal his deal.

God is compassionate and God is sovereign. But he is also gracious – willing to restore those who have been disobedient, or rebellious, so that he might bless them, as well. Why should we be content with God's blessing in our lives?

Reason number three: Because God is gracious. God is willing to restore those who are rebellious so that he might bless them.

That's what he did in Rachel's case. She has spent most of the story envious of her sister, Leah. Filled with jealousy, Rachel executed a plan to grab God's blessing. But, God restored her, and eventually blessed her. With the same compassion he had for Leah, God graciously took away Rachel's disgrace (in 30:22) and gives her Joseph. She was rebellious – as all of us are. Yet, in the end, God blessed Rachel with the very thing she had been scheming to grab all along. She could have remained content with the love of Jacob, and waited for the blessing of God.

Are you like Rachel? Are you a blessing grabber? Do you seek to have your way right away? Do you plan and scheme and devise ways to get what you want, or do you wait for God? God is willing to restore us – to transform us from blessing grabbers to blessing receivers. Isn't that what blessing is all about?

Why should we be content with the blessing God has given us – why should we avoid jealousy and comparison and scheming? God's Word answers our questions: because God is compassionate, he has a sovereign plan for your life and the power to fulfill it, and God is a God of grace. So even those of us who have grabbed for what God hasn't yet given, He is willing to restore us and lavish on us the blessings he has had in mind all the time. Pray with me.