

Jacob Gets Two Wives

(Genesis 29)

Introduction

Do you know the saying, "You reap what you sow?" This is farming terminology. The word "sow" means to plant and the word "reap" means to harvest. If you plant pea seeds in the ground what do you expect to harvest? (Peas!) It would certainly be a surprise if you planted corn and pumpkins came up!

It's a natural law to reap what we sow in farming. And, it's true in other areas, too. Every action has results. If you plant to please your own desires (that is, if you are selfish), you'll reap a crop of sorrow and evil. For example, if you gossip about your friends, you will lose their friendships. If you plant to please God, you'll reap joy and everlasting life.

The Bible says, *You can't ignore God and get away with it: a man will always reap just the kind of crop he sows! If he sows to please his own wrong desires, he will be planting seeds of evil and he will surely reap a harvest of spiritual decay and death; but if he plants the good things of the Spirit, he will reap the everlasting life which the Holy Spirit gives him. So let us not get tired of doing what is right, for after a while we will reap a harvest of blessings if we don't get discouraged and give up. That's why whenever we can we should always be kind to everyone...* (Gal 6:7-10 TLB.)

This morning we'll be learning about how Jacob reaped what he sowed.

Opening Prayer

Lord, thank You for giving us these interesting stories in the Bible. Help us to learn the lessons You have for us this morning as we study Your word. Don't let us go away from here without changing us in some way. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. (Gal 6:9)

Lesson

We've been learning about the children of Israel.

Let's review:

1. Who was the first Jew? (Abraham)
2. What was the promise God made to him? (That his descendants would be a great nation)
3. Who was Abraham's first descendant? (Isaac)
4. Who were Isaac's descendants? (Esau and Jacob)
5. Which one of the twins did the promise go to? (Jacob)
6. Did Jacob deserve to be blessed by God? (No!)
7. What's that a picture of? (How none of us deserves God's blessings, but we get them anyhow because God chooses to love us, in spite of the fact that we fall short of perfection.)

Last week we left the story off with Jacob going on his way to Haran.

8. Why was Jacob going to Haran? (His brother, Esau, wanted to kill him.)

One night on the way to Haran, Jacob camped along the way and had a beautiful dream. God promised that He would always be with Jacob and that He would bring Jacob back home. This was a great comfort to Jacob. He knew God loved him and forgave him of his sins.

But as we shall learn today, sin has consequences. Jacob reaped what he sowed...

Jacob continued his journey and after many days of traveling, he came near Haran. Some shepherds were waiting by the well with their sheep. Jacob asked them if they knew his Uncle Laban.

Genesis 29:4-6

Jacob went over to the shepherds and asked, "Where are you from, my friends?" "We are from Haran," they answered. "Do you know a man there named Laban, the grandson of Nahor?" he asked. "Yes, we do," they replied. "Is he doing well?" Jacob asked. "Yes, he's well," they answered. "Look, here comes his daughter Rachel with the flock now."

Jacob looked and saw a beautiful girl coming to the well with her flock of sheep and goats. He came forward and removed the heavy stone that covered the mouth of the well. Then he told her who he was.

Genesis 29:12

He explained to Rachel that he was her cousin on her father's side—the son of her aunt Rebekah. So Rachel quickly ran and told her father, Laban.

So Laban came hurrying out to welcome Jacob and take him home.

After Jacob had helped Laban for about a month, Laban offered to pay Jacob.

Genesis 29:15-17

Laban said to him, "You shouldn't work for me without pay just because we are relatives. Tell me how much your wages should be." Now Laban had two daughters. The older daughter was named Leah, and the younger one was Rachel. There was no sparkle in Leah's eyes, but Rachel had a beautiful figure and a lovely face.

Leah had bad eyesight, but Rachel was beautiful and Jacob fell in love with her and he asked her dad for her hand in marriage.

Genesis 29:18

Since Jacob was in love with Rachel, he told her father, "I'll work for you for seven years if you'll give me Rachel, your younger daughter, as my wife."

It was customary in those days, and in that culture, for a man to present a gift to the family of his future wife. This was to pay the family for the loss of the girl. Since Jacob had no money he offered to work for Laban for seven years without pay.

Genesis 29:19-20

"Agreed!" Laban replied. "I'd rather give her to you than to anyone else. Stay and work with me." So Jacob worked seven years to pay for Rachel. But his love for her was so strong that it seemed to him but a few days.

When the seven years were ended, a great marriage feast was arranged.

Genesis 29:22

So Laban invited everyone in the neighborhood and prepared a wedding feast.

But Laban played a trick on Jacob!

Genesis 29:23

But that night, when it was dark, Laban took Leah to Jacob, and he slept with her.

So while it was dark, Laban brought Jacob his bride. But when the next morning dawned, Jacob found that the woman he had married was not Rachel, but Leah, Rachel's older sister.

In those days, and in that culture, a wedding feast was a men's party; the bride was not present. The festivities lasted seven days and there was much drinking and merry making. Jacob's senses were dulled by the seven days of jubilee and the darkness.

Genesis 29:25

But when Jacob woke up in the morning—it was Leah! "What have you done to me?" Jacob raged at Laban. "I worked seven years for Rachel! Why have you tricked me?"

Jacob was furious. He'd worked seven years for Rachel. Now he understood what it felt like to be cheated!

Genesis 29:26

"It's not our custom here to marry off a younger daughter ahead of the firstborn," Laban replied.

Laban said it wasn't their custom to marry off a younger daughter ahead of an older sister.

So Laban told Jacob he could also have Rachel if he worked yet another seven years. So Jacob agreed to work another seven years and he became married to both sisters, but he always loved Rachel more.

Have you ever been tricked by someone? How did it feel? Did you get angry? Did you want to get back at that person? Being angry and trying to pay them back makes us unable to learn the lessons God wants us to learn.

Notice that although Jacob was tricked by Laban, he kept his part of the bargain; he didn't try to get even with Laban. That's because when Jacob was tricked by Laban, he realized that his sin against his brother and his father was just as bad as Laban's sin against him. That was a humbling experience for Jacob and it allowed him to learn a valuable lesson in life: **sin has consequences**.

God forgave Jacob and Laban, but they both had to live with the problems their deceptions caused.

The question I have for you this morning is: "What kind of seeds are you sowing in your life?" Are they seeds of blessing or sorrow? Whenever we can, we should always be kind to everyone.

Let's pray...

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, we don't want to follow Jacob and Laban's example of lying and cheating. Help us to remember that sin does have a way of coming back to haunt us. We want to sow seeds of blessings wherever we go. Help us to be kind to everyone we meet along the path of each day. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

CRAFT CORNER

Seed pictures

On heavy paper or card stock write at the top, "*We reap what we sow!*" At the bottom print the memory verse, "*Let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.*" (Gal 6:9).

Have the children glue patterns of different types and colors of seeds. Talk about the kinds of seeds and what they produce. Be sure to emphasize the fact that just like seeds produce predictable results, so our actions do, too. If we are selfish, we'll cause sorrow and evil. If we are kind and loving, we'll cause joy and contentment in life.

GAME CENTER

Use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

Review Questions

1. What does the word "reap" mean? (To gather or bring in a harvest)
2. What does the word "sow" mean? (To plant)
3. What does it mean, "You reap what you sow?" (Every action has results. If you are selfish you cause sorrow and evil. If you are kind and loving you cause joy.)
4. What did Jacob have to do to get Rachel for a wife? (Work seven years without pay for Laban)
5. What trick did Laban play on Jacob on his wedding day? (He brought Leah to Jacob instead of Rachel)
6. What lesson did Jacob learn when Laban played that trick on him? (He learned how his brother and father must have felt when he cheated them; that it doesn't feel good to be cheated!)
7. Why did Laban sneak Leah in to Jacob? (It wasn't their custom to marry off a younger daughter ahead of an older sister.)
8. What did Jacob have to do to get Rachel? (Work another 7 years)
9. What kind of "seeds" are you sowing in life? (Seeds of blessing)

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