

Jacob Gets Two Wives

(Genesis 29:1-30)

Introduction

Have you ever played a trick on someone? (Let the children tell a few instances of tricking someone or being tricked.) Was it a funny trick or a nasty trick? Sometimes when you play a trick on someone it is funny – but sometimes it isn't funny. Sometimes it really hurts.

Remember that Jacob tricked his brother, Esau, into selling him his birthright and then he tricked his father into giving him the birthright blessing instead of giving it to Esau. Those were not funny tricks, were they? Esau was so angry, in fact, that he planned to kill Jacob.

This morning we'll be learning that the tables get turned on Jacob and a very mean trick is played on him.

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

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

Lesson

We've been learning about the Fathers of our Faith. [Teacher, review the lesson series up to this point.]

Last week we left the story off with Jacob traveling to Haran to look for his uncle Laban.

Open your bibles to Genesis 29.

Genesis 29:1-3

Then Jacob hurried on, finally arriving in the land of the east. ²He saw a well in the distance. Three flocks of sheep and goats lay in an open field beside it, waiting to be watered. But a heavy stone covered the mouth of the well. ³It was the custom there to wait for all the flocks to arrive before removing the stone and watering the animals. Afterward the stone would be placed back over the mouth of the well.

Many different shepherds brought their flocks to this well for water.

Genesis 29:4-6

Jacob went over to the shepherds and asked, "Where are you from, my friends?" "We are from Haran," they answered. ⁵"Do you know a man there named Laban, the grandson of Nahor?" he asked. "Yes, we do," they replied. ⁶"Is he doing well?" Jacob asked. "Yes, he's well," they answered. "Look, here comes his daughter Rachel with the flock now."

God had guided Jacob directly to his uncle Laban's village. Isn't it wonderful to know that God is always leading us and guiding us through every day?

Genesis 29:7-9

Jacob said, "Look, it's still broad daylight--too early to round up the animals. Why don't you water the sheep and goats so they can get back out to pasture?" ⁸"We can't water the animals until all the flocks have arrived," they replied. "Then the shepherds move the stone from the mouth of the well, and we water all the sheep and goats." ⁹Jacob was still talking with them when Rachel arrived with her father's flock, for she was a shepherd.

Jacob, being a good shepherd himself, wondered why they were all waiting at the well when there was still daylight for feeding the sheep. They explained that they did not remove the cover from the well until all the herds had arrived.

Genesis 29:10-12

And because Rachel was his cousin--the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother--and because the sheep and goats belonged to his uncle Laban, Jacob went over to the well and moved the stone from its mouth and watered his uncle's flock. ¹¹Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and he wept aloud. ¹²He 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.

Jacob's eyes popped out when he saw how beautiful Rachel was; and when Jacob told Rachel he was her cousin, she ran home to get her dad. Laban came hurrying out to welcome Jacob and took him home.

Genesis 29:13-15

As soon as Laban heard that his nephew Jacob had arrived, he ran out to meet him. He embraced and kissed him and brought him home. When Jacob had told him his story, ¹⁴Laban exclaimed, "You really are my own flesh and blood!" After Jacob had stayed with Laban for about a month, ¹⁵Laban said to him, "You shouldn't work for me without pay just because we are relatives. Tell me how much your wages should be."

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

Genesis 29:16-18

Now Laban had two daughters. The older daughter was named Leah, and the younger one was Rachel. ¹⁷There was no sparkle in Leah's eyes, but Rachel had a beautiful figure and a lovely face. ¹⁸Since 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 for Rachel's hand in marriage.

Genesis 29:19-21

"Agreed!" Laban replied. "I'd rather give her to you than to anyone else. Stay and work with me." ²⁰So 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. ²¹Finally, the time came for him to marry her. "I have fulfilled my agreement," Jacob said to Laban. "Now give me my wife so I can marry her."

When the 7 years were up, Jacob could hardly wait to marry Rachel. So, Laban arranged for a great marriage feast, but he also planned to play a mean trick on Jacob.

Genesis 29:22-24

So Laban invited everyone in the neighborhood and prepared a wedding feast. ²³But that night, when it was dark, Laban took Leah to Jacob, and he slept with her. ²⁴(Laban had given Leah a servant, Zilpah, to be her maid.)

Imagine Jacob's surprise in the morning!

Genesis 29:25-27

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?" ²⁶"It's not our custom here to marry off a younger daughter ahead of the firstborn," Laban replied. ²⁷"But wait until the bridal week is over, then we'll give you Rachel, too--provided you promise to work another seven years for me."

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. You can imagine how angry Jacob was when he found that his bride was Leah!

But Laban told Jacob if he let Leah have the first week alone with him, he could have Rachel as his wife, too.

Genesis 29:28-30

So Jacob agreed to work seven more years. A week after Jacob had married Leah, Laban gave him Rachel, too. ²⁹(Laban gave Rachel a servant, Bilhah, to be her maid.) ³⁰So Jacob slept with Rachel, too, and he loved her much more than Leah. He then stayed and worked for Laban the additional seven years.

Let's discuss the story:

1. Where did Jacob first meet Rachel? (By the well, vs 2.)
2. When Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for Isaac, where did he meet Rebekah? (By the well!)
3. What did Jacob do to help Rachel water her sheep? (He rolled the stone away from the mouth of the well, vs 10.)

4. Jacob stayed with Laban and worked for him for about a month when Laban said it wasn't right for Jacob to work without wages. So, Laban asked Jacob what his wages should be. What did Jacob suggest as his "wages"? (He would work for 7 years without pay for Rachel's hand in marriage, vs 18.)
5. How long did Jacob have to work to get Rachel's hand in marriage? (14 years, vs 20 & 27.)
6. How long did Jacob have to wait to marry Rachel after he found out that he had married Leah? (7 days, vs 27.)
7. Why did Laban trick Jacob into marrying Leah? (Laban's excuse was that the older daughter should be married first according to the local custom, vs 26.)
8. Why didn't Jacob know he married the wrong girl? (According to custom, it was arranged that the bride should go in to the groom on the wedding night, veiled and perhaps when the room was in darkness. 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 probably dulled by the seven days of jubilee and the darkness.)
9. What lesson did God use Uncle Laban to teach Jacob? (Jacob learned how his brother and father must have felt when he tricked them. He found out that it doesn't feel good to be cheated! God wanted Jacob to see his own sin so he would be humble.)
10. Why was it that Jacob did not pay Laban back for the mean trick he played on him? (God was helping Jacob grow spiritually. He recognized his own sin and it caused him to be humble.)

Let's pray...

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, we don't want to follow Jacob and Laban's example of lying and cheating. Help us to be kind to everyone we meet along the path of each day. We always want to follow the Golden Rule and do to

others what we would have them do to us. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

GAME CENTER

Battle of Knowledge —

Materials: Masking tape, bean bag,

Procedure:

1. Cut out 8 red circles and eight black circles.
2. Write 16 Review questions.
3. Create a sixteen-sectioned grid on the floor with the masking tape, four sections wide and four sections deep.

●	●	○	○
●	○	○	○
●	●	○	○
●	●	●	○

4. Divide the class into two teams – the Reds and the Blacks
5. To win the game, your team must get four circles in a row. Taking turns each team throws the bean bag into an unoccupied square. If the team answers a Review Question correctly, they get to put one of their circles in that square. If the team answers incorrectly, the other team gets a chance to answer the same question. If the other team answers correctly, they get to put one of their circles in the square. Once a circle is in a square it cannot be removed.
6. Teams can work together to answer the question, but each team member must take a turn throwing the bean bag.

Or, use the following questions in another game of your choice:

Review Questions

1. Where did Jacob meet Rachel? (At a well in the field near Haran)
2. What was on the mouth of the well? (A large stone)
3. There were shepherds with their flocks waiting at the well. What were they waiting for? (When all the flocks were gathered together, they would remove the stone and water all of the flocks.)
4. What was Rachel doing when Jacob met her? (She was bringing her father's sheep to the well.)
5. What did Jacob do when he saw Rachel and the sheep? (He rolled the stone from the well and watered the sheep. Then he kissed Rachel, wept, and told her that he was Rebekah's son.)
6. How did Laban receive Jacob? (He ran to meet him, embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house.)
7. Laban had two daughters. What were their names? (Leah and Rachel)
8. Which daughter did Jacob love? (Rachel)
9. Jacob stayed with Laban and worked for him. What kind of work did he do? (He cared for Laban's flocks of sheep and herds of cattle.)
10. What did Laban agree to pay Jacob for his work? (Laban agreed to give Jacob his daughter, Rachel, for a wife.)
11. How many years did Jacob work for Rachel? (Seven)
12. Laban tricked Jacob. Whom did he give to Jacob instead of Rachel? (Leah)
13. What excuse did Laban give Jacob? (That Rachel could not be given in marriage until Leah was married because Leah was the firstborn.)
14. Laban gave Rachel to Jacob one week after he married Leah. How many more years did Jacob work for Rachel? (Seven more)

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