

022320 Growth Group Study

A Courtship Made in Heaven

Gen 29:1-20



Background: Jacob's heavenly encounter with God and angels at Bethel has energized him as he journeys to Haran with eager anticipation of what God might have in store. Approaching the city, he encounters a beautiful girl by a well, a typical scene in the Bible that initiates a betrothal. The story strikes a resonant chord in every man, who wants to be a "prince charming", and every woman who longs to be a beauty worth searching for. But deeper still, the story speaks to the longing of our hearts to be sought and courted by God.

Sermon Text: Gen 29:1-20 (ESV)

I. Jacob Meets the Shepherds in Haran

A. Jacob's arrival at the well (1-3)

1 Then Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the east. 2 As he looked, he saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep lying beside it, for out of that well the flocks were watered. The stone on the well's mouth was large, 3 and when all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place over the mouth of the well.

B. Jacob's encounter with the shepherds (4-8)

4 Jacob said to them, "My brothers, where do you come from?" They said, "We are from Haran." 5 He said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" They said, "We know him." 6 He said to them, "Is it well with him?" They said, "It is well; and see, Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep!" 7 He said, "Behold, it is still high day; it is not time for the livestock to be gathered together. Water the sheep and go, pasture them." 8 But they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together and the stone is rolled from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep."

II. Jacob Meets Rachel (9-12)

9 While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. 10 Now as soon as Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, Jacob came near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. 11 Then Jacob kissed Rachel

and wept aloud. 12 And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's kinsman, and that he was Rebekah's son, and she ran and told her father.

III. Jacob Meets Laban (13-14)

13 As soon as Laban heard the news about Jacob, his sister's son, he ran to meet him and embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his house. Jacob told Laban all these things, 14 and Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh!" And he stayed with him a month.

IV. Jacob Negotiates with Laban for Rachel (15-20)

15 Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?" 16 Now Laban had two daughters. The name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. 17 Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance. 18 Jacob loved Rachel. And he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." 19 Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me." 20 So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.

Discussion Questions

1. Preparation

- a. As you reflect on the sermon, what stands out to you most?
- b. What is one thing you hoped to talk about today/tonight?
- c. What question(s) did you come away with from the sermon?

2. Sermon questions

- a. Compare Jacob's **first love** with your first love.
 1. Where was your well?
 2. Was it love at first sight?
 3. Were there obstacles?
 4. Can you remember your first kiss?
 5. Did you feel like you had come "home"?
- b. Reflect on **God's courtship** of you.
 1. Where were you when he found you?
 2. How do you think he felt when he first laid eyes on you (Song 2:14; 4:9)?
 3. What gifts did he bring?
 4. What emotions did you feel?
 5. The woman at the well in John 4 goes away and points people back to Jesus like this: "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did" (John 4:29). If someone would ask you about Jesus, how do you explain what Jesus has done for you: "Come, see a man who _____"
- c. Reflect on your **present journey**.
 1. Can you still hear God's voice wooing and searching for you (Song 2:10-13; 4:8)?
 2. Where might you be resisting him?
 3. What would you like him to do for you now?