

SERIES TITLE: Disguised

PART 3: GOD'S BLESSING

TEXT: GENESIS 29

INTRODUCTION.

Genesis follows the work of God, moving from creation, to the entrance of sin, to judgment, to the selection of a family through which the nations will be blessed. The promises of God to Abraham were passed to Isaac, and now to his son Jacob. His story takes up half of the book of Genesis. Jacob is not an admirable character, but God is gracious.

DISCUSSION.

Can you share a time when there was something you were greatly looking forward to, and it ended in disappointment?

EXAMINATION.

29:1-14 Consider the reactions of Jacob, Rachel, and Laban. What stands out to you?

29:15-30 Why would Laban pull this stunt?

What are the indications that Jacob is obsessed with Rachel?

29:31-35 What does the naming of the sons reveal about Leah's longings and how her perspective is transformed?

Because God's promise comes through a son of Leah, what does this tell us about God, and his grace?

APPLICATION.

- How and why does God work through dysfunctional, deceptive people?
- Jacob's great longing was for sex with Rachel, Leah's longing was for her husband's love, and Rachel's longing was for a child. What are some other human things we long for that can be a driving force in our lives?
- Why can these things become disappointments, even if we achieve them?

- In what ways is it possible that “some of God’s greatest blessings come disguised as disappointments”?
- Of the three responses to disappointment:
 1. Keep chasing something better (Jacob, 29:25)
 2. Become a bitter cynic (Rachel, 30:1)
 3. Praise the Lord (Leah. 29:35)

Which one have you experienced the most and why?

- What do you think of these words from C.S. Lewis? “Most people...know that they want something that cannot be had in this world...Longings which no marriage, no travel, no learning can really satisfy....If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.”
- If your longings can only be satisfied by the Eternal God, how is that helpful in this life here and now?
- Fact: What is a key truth that you understood from this passage?
- React: What did you feel?
- Act: What are you going to do?