

## Introduction

On a Saturday morning in 1993, I was playing the third round of the Hartford Open, in Hartford, Connecticut. I happened to notice a young man wearing a sweatshirt standing outside the ropes next to our teeing area. His sweatshirt read, "College is where you learn to make good decisions." After I teed off, I went to my bag and pulled out a ball for a souvenir and an autographed copy of my personal testimony. I went over to the college student and handed the ball and my testimony to him. Then, I said, "College is where I made the two best decisions in my life. I made a commitment to Jesus Christ, and I met my wife." Those were the two most important decisions in my life, and I made them in college.

Last week, God revealed Himself to Jacob. Jacob vowed that the Lord would be his God and that he would begin tithing to the Lord. That was the most important decision in his life, and in any of our lives. In our passage today, Jacob continued on his journey to Haran to seek a wife from his relatives. He meets Rachel and it was love at first sight. He agrees to work for Laban for seven years as a dowry for Rachel. The seven years went by like a few days because of his love for Rachel. After serving his seven years, he asked Laban for his wife. Laban deceives Jacob, and gives him Leah. Laban tells him to finish the week and he will give him Rachel also if he will work another seven years. Jacob agreed to work another seven years and finally gets the love of his life. That was the second most important decision in his life. Jacob's path was very similar to mine. We both came into a relationship with God, and then we fell in love with the woman we wanted to spend the rest of our life with. The main difference in our two decisions was where we were at the time. I was at TCU, and he was enrolled in the School of Hard Knocks.

### 1. **Jacob Meets Rachel** (Gen 29:1-14)

(Gen 29:1-14) "Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the sons of the east. {2} He looked, and saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep were lying there beside it, for from that well they watered the flocks. Now the stone on the mouth of the well was large. {3} When all the flocks were gathered there, they would then roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the mouth of the well. {4} Jacob said to them, "My brothers, where are you from?" And they said, "We are from Haran." {5} He said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" And they said, "We know him." {6} And he said to them, "Is it well with him?" And they said, "It is well, and here is Rachel his daughter coming with the sheep." {7} He said, "Behold, it is still high day; it is not time for the livestock to be gathered. Water the sheep, and go, pasture them." {8} But they said, "We cannot, until all the flocks are gathered, and they roll the stone from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep." {9} While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. {10} When Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, Jacob went up and rolled the stone from the mouth of the well and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. {11} Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted his voice and wept. {12} Jacob told Rachel that he was a relative of her father and that he was Rebekah's son, and she ran and told her father. {13} So when Laban heard the news of Jacob his sister's son, he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his house. Then he related to Laban all these things. {14} Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him a month."

After God revealed Himself to Jacob at Bethel, and Jacob vowed to make the Lord his God and to tithe to the Lord, he continued on his journey. He had another 580 miles to go to get to Haran. Finally he arrived to the land of the sons of the east. He saw a well in the field and there were three flocks of sheep waiting to be watered. Jacob asked the shepherds where they were from, and they said, "Haran." There were no signs on the Interstate announcing that Haran was the next two exits. Jacob has never been there before and he is getting his bearings. He discovers that he has arrived at his destination.

His next question is whether they know Laban. Rebecca and Isaac have told him to stay with Laban, so he is looking for Laban's house. When they said they knew Laban, he asks how Laban is doing. They said it is well with him. The Hebrew word used in the question and answer is shalom. Jacob's sentence would be, "Shalom?" And their answer would be "Shalom!", meaning that things were well. Shalom means completeness, soundness, welfare, and peace. The word is used 236 times and in 186 of those occurrences it is translated as peace. That was the common way to greet, but it was also a way to ask how someone was doing. Then, the shepherds told him that Laban's daughter was coming with her flock of sheep. The Hebrew word for sheep is tsone, which could mean sheep, goats, flock, or small cattle. The root word means to migrate. So, these could have been either goats or sheep, or a combination of both. We also see some things about Rachel. First, she was a shepherdess. She was a worker. She was used to spending time by herself with the animals. She could probably fend for herself pretty well.

When Jacob saw Rachel for the first time, he was smitten with love. Something happened. The first thing that he did was to go roll this heavy stone from the mouth of the well and water her flocks. He served her. When a man is pursuing a woman, he will go out of his way to do things for that woman. I have often told people about the movie "Fifty first dates." It has some crude parts, but what I loved about the movie was that Henry (Adam Sandler) went out of his way every day to try and win Lucy (Drew Barrymore). She had an accident and has a memory loss so every day is new to her. The Hebrew word for cleave is dabaq, and it means to overtake through pursuit. I believe that men need to pursue their wives every day. This is not something that should stop once we get married. The real pursuit should happen after marriage. In reality, the pursuit begins before marriage. If there was no pursuit, there would be no marriage. Jacob's pursuit for Rachel started the moment that he saw her for the first time. He was smitten with love.

After he watered the flock, he kissed Rachel, lifted his voice and wept. The kiss that he gave her is not some romantic kiss. It is customary in that part of the world to greet one another with a kiss. When Laban meets Jacob, he kissed him and brought him to his house. It was a kiss of greeting, not a sensual kiss. Typically, the kiss would be to the cheeks of the other person. This practice of greeting one another with a kiss was still very prevalent at the writing of the new testament. In four of Paul's letters, he ended with an exhortation for them to greet one another with a holy kiss (Rom 16:16, 1 Cor 16:20, 2 Cor 13:12, 1 Thess 5:26). In Peter's first letter, he exhorted them to greet one another with a kiss of love. The kiss that Jacob gave Rachel and that Laban gave Jacob were greeting kisses. They were a kiss of love and affection.

(Rom 16:16) "Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you."

(1 Cor 16:20) "All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss."

(2 Cor 13:12) “Greet one another with a holy kiss.”

(1 Thess 5:26) “Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.”

(1 Pet 5:14) “Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace be to you all who are in Christ.”

In Iran, where I grew up, the men would greet one another with a kiss, but you would not dare give a woman a kiss, unless it was your wife. That would have been culturally unacceptable. However, it was very common for the Europeans that were living in Iran to greet one another with a kiss, and it was typically on the cheek. Here in America, hugs are much more prevalent. We have to be culturally sensitive about the way we greet one another, and in America different regions will have different ways of greeting one another. Our greetings should show love, affection, but be holy at the same time.

Jacob is obviously overwhelmed emotionally. He lifted his voice and wept. He is either overjoyed that God has brought him to his relatives, or more probable that God has directed him to Rachel. Next, Jacob told Rachel that he was a relative of her father and that he was Rebekah's son. She gets pretty excited about this and leaves her flock and runs to tell her father. I get the impression that she is fairly young by the fact that she ran back to town to tell Laban.

I want to pause for just a minute to talk about age. A few weeks ago I mentioned that the most of the commentaries say that Isaac was 137 and Jacob was 77 at this time. I felt like Isaac was probably around 100 and Jacob around 40. It didn't seem logical for Jacob to wait until he was 77 to consider marriage. I could not find any documentation to support the theologians view of their age. This week, I was ready Albert Barnes commentary of Genesis 31, and he gave the explanation that I was looking for. You have to move ahead in Genesis to get the dates. In Genesis 41:46, Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh. He was seventeen when his brothers sold him as a slave. He has spent thirteen years working for Potiphar and then in the prison. Nine years after the interpretation of the dream, his father, Jacob, comes and stands before Pharaoh. There were seven good years and the first two years of famine have occurred, and there are five more years of famine to come. (See Genesis 45:6.) When Pharaoh asked Jacob about his age, he tells him that he is 130 years old. (See Genesis 47:9.) Joseph is now 39, so that puts Jacob at the age of 91 when Joseph is born. (130-39=91) In Genesis 30:25, Joseph has just been born, and Jacob tells Laban that his fourteen years of service are up. When we subtract fourteen years from 91, we find that Jacob was 77 when he moved to Haran. We don't know the age of Rachel, but Jacob is 77 years old when he meets Rachel and Laban. He is no spring chicken.

After Rachel tells Laban, he runs out to meet Jacob. He embraced him, kissed him, and brought him to his house. Jacob then relates all these things to him. Our text does not say what all these things are. He could have told him about the dream of the ladders and how God revealed himself to him. He could have told Laban and Rachel about his mother and father charging him to go take a wife from her relatives in Haran. I don't know if he told them about his deception of Isaac and how he stole the father's blessing. We just don't know what all those things included. Laban's response to Jacob was, “Surely you are my bone and my flesh.” Laban welcomed him as a family member, and Jacob stayed with Laban for a month. Rebekah had told him to stay a few days, but he has already been gone five weeks. There was a week of travel and he stayed with Laban a month.

## 2. **Jacob Serves Laban For Seven Years For Rachel** (Gen 29:15-20)

(Gen 29:15-20) “Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my relative, 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} And Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful of form and face. {18} Now Jacob loved Rachel, so 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 to give her to another man; stay with me." {20} So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her.”

Jacob has served Laban for a month. At the well he demonstrated his knowledge about shepherding to the young shepherds. He told them it was not the time to gather the flocks and that they should be out pasturing them. Jacob’s grandfather, Abraham, was very wealthy and had a lot of goats, sheep, camels, and livestock. God had blessed Isaac and he was very wealthy in livestock. Jacob knows and understands the family business. He has come as a humble shepherd and servant, not as the heir of a wealthy estate. He has served Laban well for a month, and Laban asks him what his wages should be.

I don’t think that Jacob took any time at all to answer Laban. Jacob was smitten over Rachel at the well when he saw her for the first time. Our text does not give Jacob’s reply right away, but I believe that Jacob answered right away. He tells him that he will serve seven years for the youngest daughter, Rachel. Laban has two daughters, Leah and Rachel. Leah is the older one and Rachel is the younger. We don’t know if Leah is older by a few minutes or by thirty years. We just know that Leah was older. It says that her eyes were weak. The Hebrew word is rak, which means soft or weak. There is some discussion whether she had poor eyesight or whether her eyes were just not very distinct. Her appearance is contrasted with Rachel who was beautiful of form and face. Our text makes it clear that Rachel was the better looking daughter. I don’t think that this was the issue. I believe that Jacob was drawn to Rachel at first sight.

Jacob offered to serve for seven years. He did not send a telex home to send money for a dowry. He emptied himself of everything that he had at home and came as a servant. Jacob had nothing more than his service. He would serve Laban seven years for the younger daughter, Rachel. Seven years is a very large sum of money. I researched what the average income in America is in 2018, and it is \$62,175.00. So, in terms of today’s wages, Jacob was offering a dowry of \$435,225.00. That is a lot of money for a dowry. He ends up working 14 years for Rachel, so he ended up paying \$870,450.00 for Rachel.

Dowries were and are a common thing in the Middle East. A few years ago, Laura and I went to London for a conference. While at the airport, a man from the Middle East saw Laura and approached me about taking her for a wife. He pulled out a wallet with lots of money. He wanted to give me a dowry and take her for her wife. We don’t sell our daughters or demand dowries, although with seven daughters that would have been advantageous for me. Dowries were very common in that culture. In 1 Samuel 18, King Saul offered David one of his daughters. David said, “Is it trivial in your sight to become the king's son-in-law, since I am a poor man and lightly esteemed?” So, King Saul said that he did not desire any dowry except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines. That pleased David and he went out and struck down two hundred. He paid double the requested dowry, and he took Michal as his wife.

(1 Sam 18:22-27) “Then Saul commanded his servants, “Speak to David secretly, saying, ‘Behold, the king delights in you, and all his servants love you; now therefore, become the king’s son-in-law.’” {23} So Saul’s servants spoke these words to David. But David said, “Is it trivial in your sight to become the king’s son-in-law, since I am a poor man and lightly esteemed?” {24} The servants of Saul reported to him according to these words which David spoke. {25} Saul then said, “Thus you shall say to David, ‘The king does not desire any dowry except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king’s enemies.’” Now Saul planned to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. {26} When his servants told David these words, it pleased David to become the king’s son-in-law. Before the days had expired {27} David rose up and went, he and his men, and struck down two hundred men among the Philistines. Then David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full number to the king, that he might become the king’s son-in-law. So Saul gave him Michal his daughter for a wife.”

Something is valued by the price one is willing to pay for it. That is true in real estate. That is true in paintings, jewels and other collectable items. Jacob could have offered a lot less for Rachel, but he offered a very high price because he valued her greatly. One of the keys in relationships is to honor one another. Jacob began his relationship with Rachel by honoring her. He honored her by the value he was willing to pay to become her husband.

Laban agrees to Jacob’s offer and said it was better to give her to him than to another man. So, Jacob stayed with Laban and served for seven years. I love the next line; it is my favorite verse in the whole chapter. I think it is the key to the whole chapter. “Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her.” Jacob was not just smitten with love at the well, but his love grew stronger. He was passionately in love with Jacob.

Karen and I were discussing this at breakfast last week, and later on she shared something that Mike Bickel had said. “Lovers will always outdo workers.” When difficulties come, workers will stop or leave, but lovers keep working. The reason that many churches have a hard time with getting people to serve is that have lost their first love. We have to help people fall in love with Jesus. I have said the same thing about evangelism. If you have people that are passionately in love with Jesus, they will tell everyone about Jesus. You don’t have to push, pressure, or promote evangelism; it will happen. The woman at the well told everybody about Jesus. The demoniac told everyone about Jesus. Zacchaeus invited all his friends to come meet Jesus. When people are touched by Jesus and love him, they will tell others. Love is a powerful motivator.

This is also true about careers. If you are passionate about what you do, I believe you will be successful. Follow your heart. Follow your passions. I was passionate about golf. Nobody had to push me or make me practice. I worked hard. I pushed myself. I practiced when it was freezing outside. I practiced on weekends. As a teenager I would go to the golf course at 4:30 in the morning to practice while it was still cool. By cool, it was 90 degrees at 4:30, but that was cool compared to 125 degrees during the day. Young people, follow your passions.

In 1993, one of my amateur playing partners at the Bing Crosby (AT&T Classic), which is played at Pebble Beach, was Charlie Moritz. He was the CEO of Dunn & Bradstreet at the time. Charlie and I hit it off well, and he invited our family to stay with him during the Westchester Classic. He had a four-acre estate in Long Island, about thirty minutes from Rye, NY, where the Westchester Classic was played. During my week at the Moritz’s home, he cooked out on the

grill one evening. While standing by the barbecue pit, I asked him what he looked for when he hired people. He said he tried to find out what was in a person's heart. He wanted to know what they were passionate about. He was not concerned about what they knew. He said they could teach them what they needed to know for the job. But, he added that they couldn't teach passion. If a person was passionate about what they do, they don't need to be pushed to do a good job. They will work hard and do a great job because they are passionate about it. This is true in ministry, secular work, and in relationships. Jacob was passionately in love with Rachel, and the seven years seemed like just a few days.

### 3. **The Wedding Deception** (Gen 29:21-30)

(Gen 29:21-30) "Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my time is completed, that I may go in to her." {22} Laban gathered all the men of the place and made a feast. {23} Now in the evening he took his daughter Leah, and brought her to him; and Jacob went in to her. {24} Laban also gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a maid. {25} So it came about in the morning that, behold, it was Leah! And he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served with you? Why then have you deceived me?" {26} But Laban said, "It is not the practice in our place to marry off the younger before the firstborn. {27} "Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also for the service which you shall serve with me for another seven years." {28} Jacob did so and completed her week, and he gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife. {29} Laban also gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her maid. {30} So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and indeed he loved Rachel more than Leah, and he served with Laban for another seven years."

At the end of seven years, Jacob went to Laban and said, "Give me my wife, for my time is completed." Laban may not have been keeping track of time, but Jacob was. The Hebrew word used is yom, which means day or days. Jacob said his days were completed. There were 2,556 days and he had counted them down. The time passed quickly, but now his time had been completed.

He now asks Laban to give him Rachel that he can go in to her. Jacob had walked in integrity and purity. He and Rachel had remained morally pure. Sex outside of marriage was forbidden at that time, and it is forbidden by God at this time. In 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5, Paul wrote, "*For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God.*" God's will is our sanctification. His will for us is to live holy, consecrated lives. We are not to live like the world, in lustful passions. We are to abstain from sexual immorality. Jacob's life honored God, Laban, and Rachel.

Laban gathered all the men of the place and made a feast. The Hebrew word that is used is mishteh, which means a drinking occasion or party. (mishteh, Strong's H4960, drinking party, from shathah, Strong's H8354, to drink) We saw that word used in Genesis 21:8 when Abraham threw a party on the day that Isaac was weaned. This drinking party was not grape juice, it was fermented wine or drink. Laban knows what he is doing. He has a deceptive plan, and that plan was to swap out Rachel for Leah. He wants another seven years of service out of Jacob, and he planned to get Jacob so drunk that he would not know who he went to bed with that night, which

is exactly what he did. Laban got Jacob drunk and brought Leah to him that night. In the morning, he discovers that he had slept with Leah, not Rachel.

He went to Laban and said, “What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served with you? Why then have you deceived me?” There are several ways to look at this. First, Jacob is correct in everything that he has said. Laban has deceived him. Laban is at fault. Second, we must take the plank out of our own eye so that we can see clearly. Jacob had a log in his own eye. If he had not been so drunk, he would never have been deceived. He would have insisted on Rachel the night before and refused Leah. It is easy to blame others for our mistakes, rather than take full responsibility for our actions. Both parties are at fault, and I believe we need to look in the mirror at ourselves before pointing the finger at others.

A third way to look at this is through the principle of sowing and reaping. Jacob had deceived his father by pretending to be the older. Now, Jacob has been deceived by his father-in-law in giving the older for the younger. Jacob is reaping the consequences of his own deception with his father. He knows a little bit how Esau felt when he deceived his father and stole his birthright. Laban responded to the questions by saying, “It is not the practice in our place to marry off the younger before the firstborn.” If that were the case, he should have said that seven years earlier when he made the agreement with Jacob. In Psalm 15, we learn about who can abide in God’s tent or dwell on His holy hill. Those who are going to be in God’s presence are people of integrity. David gives a number of characteristics of a man of integrity. In verse four, he says that “*he swears to his own hurt and does not change.*” If Laban made a deal for Rachel, he should have stood by his word and not changed. Laban has not shown himself to be a man of integrity. It may or may not have been the custom to marry the older first, but that should have been addressed before the agreement was made.

Laban has also not addressed his own deception. He did not apologize for his deception; he made excuses. When people confront us about something that we have done wrong, we need to humble ourselves and apologize. We should say that we are sorry and we should ask for forgiveness. We don’t see any repentance in Laban’s response.

Laban continued his response by suggesting that Jacob complete the week-long marriage celebration and then he will give him Rachel also for another seven years of service. This was his plan all along. He knew that Jacob loved Rachel, and he knew that he would serve another seven years. Laban is shrewd, crafty, deceptive, and not a man of integrity. Jacob agrees to work another seven years for Rachel. So, at the end of the week, Laban gave his daughter Rachel to Jacob and he consummated his marriage with her also. Laban also gave Zilpah to Leah as a maid-servant and Bilhah to Rachel for a maid. These two women will come in play in our next section.

Our text today ends by saying that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah and served Laban another seven years. It does not say that he did not love Leah, only that he loved Rachel more. That stands to reason because he never wanted to marry Leah. From the time that he met Rachel, he was smitten with love for her. He worked seven years, weathering the cold, rain, sleet, snow, and extreme heat in the summers. He served for seven years for Rachel, not Leah. It seemed like just a few days because of his great love for Rachel. The wedding deception was not going to alter the fact that he was in love with Rachel.

God intended marriage to be between a man and a woman. God never intended for a man to have several wives. In Genesis 2:24-25, the “two” shall become one flesh. I struggle with how to reconcile this. Should Jacob have just stayed married to Leah and not have married Rachel? God also never wanted a man to marry a woman and her sister. Several hundred years later God gave the law to Moses. In Leviticus 18:18, God said, “You shall not marry a woman in addition to her sister as a rival while she is alive, to uncover her nakedness.” It was not God’s will for a man to marry two sisters. Paul wrote in Romans 3:20 that “*through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.*” At this point, the law was not given, so they did not have the knowledge that we have. I still struggle with this. The one thing that I come away with is that God works all things together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28) God would use Leah and Rachel and work things out for good in Jacob’s life. He did that for Jacob and he will take our mistakes and turn them into good in our lives.

### Conclusion and Applications

As we come to a close this morning, I want to share a few other things from this passage. I asked the Lord what He wanted our congregation to take away from this passage. The answer that I got was that Jacob loved Rachel like Christ loved the church, His bride. So, here are some of the insights about how Christ loved the church.

1. Jacob left his father to find a wife. Jesus left the Father and His position to get a bride. He did not flee His Father because of any deception or offense. He was sent by the Father to get His bride. He came to forgive and clear up an offense.
2. Jacob paid a huge price for the bride he wanted. He worked 14 years to purchase the bride of his choice. We saw he paid the equivalent of \$870,450.00. The price that Jesus paid for His bride was even more than that. He did not pay with silver or gold, but with His own precious life and blood. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 6:19-30 that we have been bought with a price. Jesus paid a hefty price for you. Jacob paid a high price because he valued Rachel greatly. Jesus paid a hefty price for you and I because He loves us and has placed a great value on you.

(1 Pet 1:18-19) “knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, {19} but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.”

(1 Cor 6:19-20) “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? {20} For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”

3. Jacob served for 7 years and they were as a few days because of his great love for Rachel. He gave himself up for her because he loved her. Then, he served another seven years for her. Paul wrote in Ephesians 5 that Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her.

(Eph 5:25-32) “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, {26} so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, {27} that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and



blameless. {28} So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; {29} for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, {30} because we are members of His body. {31} FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. {32} This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.”

4. Jacob endured seven years of labor because of the joy set before him – Rachel. Jesus loved the church, His bride, gave up His life for His bride. Jesus was willing to do what He did because of the joy set before Him. He endured the cross and the shame because of the joy, which is us, His bride.

(Heb 12:2) “fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

5. Jacob was from a wealthy family. He left everything and became a servant to Laban to secure his bride. He did not send a letter home to his father asking for money for a dowry. He did not use his family status, but he paid for his bride himself. Jesus, who existed in the form of God, **emptied Himself**, taking the form of a bond-servant to secure His bride. He gave up His wealth and position and paid for His bride Himself.

(Phil 2:5-8) “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, {6} who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, {7} but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. {8} Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

6. Jacob became a lowly shepherd, even though he was a wealthy man. The shepherd’s job was a dirty, smelly job. The shepherd stayed with the sheep at all times. The shepherd was out in the cold and the heat. Jesus came in a lowly manger. In John 10 we also learn that Jesus came as a Shepherd. He did not flee when the enemy came, but He laid down His life for His sheep.

(John 10:11) “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.”

The take-away from this is that God loves you very much. You are valuable, so valuable that He was willing to lay His life down for you. In Isaiah 62:5, God reveals His love for us. He said, as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so your God will rejoice over you.” Just as Jacob loved and rejoiced over his bride, Rachel, so God loves and rejoices over us.

(Is 62:5) “For as a young man marries a virgin, So your sons will marry you; And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So your God will rejoice over you.”

We celebrate Christmas as the time that He laid down everything in heaven and humbly came down to purchase His bride, the church. This morning, if you have never received Christ as your

Lord, I invite you to do that this morning. Pray something like this, “Jesus, thank You for emptying Yourself and coming here to reconcile us to Yourself. I believe that You came in the flesh, died for our sins, rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven. I want to receive You into my life, so I ask You to come in and be my Lord and Savior. I ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

## **Introduction**

1. **Jacob Meets Rachel** (Gen 29:1-14, Rom 16:16, 1 Cor 16:20, 2 Cor 13:12, 1 Thess 5:26, 1 Pet 5:14, Gen 41:46, 30:25)
2. **Jacob Serves Laban For Seven Years For Rachel** (Gen 29:15-20, 1 Sam 18:22-27)
3. **The Wedding Deception** (Gen 29:21-30, 1 Thess 4:3-5, Gen 21:8, Ps15:4, Gen 2:24-25, Lev 18:18, Rom 3:20, 8:28)

**Conclusion and Applications** (1 Cor 6:19-30, 1 Pet 1:18-19, 1 Cor 6:19-20, Eph 5:25-32, Heb 12:2, Phil 2:5-8, John 10:10)