Genesis Chapter 31 Verses 1 – 2

* The last chapter until now comprises about six years of time and over those six years, Jacob’s flocks and herds, the spotted and the speckled and the streaked had continually increased. Whenever the stronger of the livestock conceived (it says there in the end of the last chapter) they birthed more and more animals that were rightly the property of Jacob under the agreement he had made with Laban. ***But envy again sets in***…this time not between Rachel and Leah but rather envy in the eyes of the Laban’s sons.
* And they grow angry and make this statement, *“Jacob has stolen what was our father’s…”* which is **entirely untrue** but that’s what ***unchecked envy*** will do to you…make you ***wrong***, stupid conclusions that are clouded with confusion. Envy is major man…at its root is dissatisfaction and we talked about that last week…*wars and strife* come from envy according to James Chapter 4…according to Matthew 27 envy was the cause of the hatred that put Jesus on the cross…***it’s major man…***
* But you know what we are by nature? ***Envious.*** And what is envy really? **Putting self first**…it is to be the *unbelieving believer!!* Living as a believer…and yet…apart from Christ! It’s crazy man…but what’s even crazier is that the aged believer is **MOST susceptible!** When did the Word of God become something to consider rather than *heartbeat!!??* When did Bible teachings become *“good”* or *“bad”* based on entertainment rather than food for the hungry soul?
* Listen man…being a believer walking in unbelief is a life that is **much more depressing and excruciating** then even being an unbeliever! At least unsaved there is no consciousness of righteousness…there is *pleasure for a season in sin*…but as a believer, now finding no longer a heart to love God and walk in His Word, ***you’re miserable*** because ***you have not the strength to live for God but you have not the heart to enjoy life apart from Him!***
* Check this out! Proverbs 14:30 says, *“A sound heart is life to the body, but envy is rottenness to the bones!”* How do we overcome…1 Corinthians 13 says ***love does not envy***…***love is the overcoming power of sin***…and to love God is to believe Him! That’s why the most important commandments are simply love… So do you believe Him? Was the cross enough or are you still working for righteousness? ***Listen, true believer, we do not live for Jesus…we participate in the life of Jesus!*** We are IN Christ…that will set you free if you can see it man…and **you** become a believing believer!
* Jacob starts to notice, the sons of Laban are disgruntled towards him and then he overhears their *clandestine accusatory aggression*…and he sees that Laban as well is impatient with him, *hyper-critical* and changed from before…and I love this, what does Jacob do? **Write a long email** blasting Laban and his sons? **Publish a blog**…post a passive aggressive Bible verse on Facebook? No. ***He goes to the Lord***…the Great Reliever, the Mighty Fortress, the Prince of Life…man when the unbeliever and the *unbelieving believer* is simply **irrational,** here is where to go! ***And the Lord speaks to him…***

Genesis Chapter 31 Verse 3 – 12

* *Oh man!* There are several nuggets of great truth in these verses. God said to Jacob, *“I will be with you.”* ***Is that enough for you?*** Is that enough for me? A big question I confront my heart with even **now.** Because in this life there is something in me that screams out for what I believe is *“fair”* and in me is a desire to *protect and prosper and even pamper* my own situation and circumstance in life…but actually, the truth is, if I am to honor God in my life…**I am to take up my own cross.**
* Accept shame, accept even the weight of the **condemnation** of the world and the people in it…Love suffers long and in the midst of suffering love is kind…but God says, *“I will be with you.”* Is that enough for me…? The answer is ***yes***…that’s the factual, eternal answer but the answer in my actions is so often…no. God help my unbelief. How can God Almighty not be enough for me!! ***Lord am I even saved!*** And God’s fatherly hand rests upon the shoulders of my weak and weeping heart…and He comforts me…, “You are My child…” and that love, that relationship stirs me to live for Him more now than then…more today than yesterday…***not because I am able and I am good but because He is to me all that I can never be to Him***…and I find my heart filled with adoration..., *“I will be with you,”* He says to me…and that’s enough.
* And I love that Jacob says to them, *“****YOU KNOW*** *that with my whole heart I have served your father…”* I love that he can say that!! Why? Because it’s obvious…I love the confidence and surety of that statement and there will be more of that in our next study…so hold that thought.
* Finally, a huge piece of comfort and encouragement, ***God sees all that is done to him***…***and all that is done to you!*** I love that, I love that, I love that…I can rest in that because this life IS unfair…fair does not exist…it is biased at best because *my fair favors me* and your fair favors you and so we are all wronged…but God sees it all…He is not on break…God’s hand is not slack that He cannot heal…and God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him!
* One more topic to broach because it’s been on my heart…if you’re one to feel that your life is unfair because ***folks are taking you for granted***…I just want to ask you, *what do you do for them*, perhaps your spouse or your boss or your kids or your church…what do you do for them that others ***could not*** do? What do you do that no one else can? Cook? Clean? Laundry? Run that report? Make ends meat? ***All kinds of folks can do that***…perhaps being taken for granted is justified and I’m not trying to be harsh…but if there is nothing that you do for them that is different than what anyone else can do…then being taken for granted is kind-of a ***given***…***put a little more heart into it…do it better, do it with Spirit…your whole heart…watch this whole taken for granted thing halt very very quickly!***

Genesis Chapter 31 Verse 13

* Twenty years ago…*Jacob was alone*, couldn’t go home, on an impossible journey to not only find a wife but also find favor in the home of *virtually a stranger*, he stops for the night…down and out he grabs a rock as a pillow, lays his head down and calls the place Luz or *“Separation.”* And God met him there…, *“Jacob, call this place Bethel, My House…I’m with you!”*
* And Jacob not only found ***favor*** but he found ***renowned success*** and he not only found a wife but he founded a **nation!!** God says, remember…and return. It’s as it was then…and I love that…just to return to where God first met me is certainly a place from where **I derive much strength** on many days…(Look at it today, it’s just a field…but it’s so much more to Jacob…what God does in your heart is what matters…not the field).

Genesis Chapter 31 Verses 14 – 21

* So Jacob splits and he does it suddenly. He’s had enough. His wives say, *“Let’s do this,”* and that’s enough for him to delay no further but something **very odd** just happened. *Rachel stole her father’s household idols.* **Weird.** Laban wasn’t a worshipper of God although he recognized and revered God…interesting statement in and of itself…but he had idols in his home…little gods and perhaps they were valuable, we don’t really know…we’re not given that information…they are certainly valuable to Laban…
* That may be the very reason that she took them. Jewish tradition says that Rachel removed the idols because she wanted to keep her father out of idolatry…we can’t be sure…but one thing I see and this is apparently something only I see because it’s not spoken of any of the commentaries I looked at…I see a **great parallel** to the church and to the world, the church being the wives and the world being Laban’s household…
* Jacob has come…a picture of Jesus and he has labored, worked to ***rightfully win*** his bride. Although he has many wives, he has **one family**…and those wives can’t seem to get along…they are a mess but each day, Jacob works in the field…he provides for them until one day he says, *“Let’s go…”* or better, *“Will you go?”* It’s time to leave this place…not a picture of death but a **picture of maturing in the Lord**…becoming a *believing believer*…still on earth, but no more of the house of Laban…now of the house of the promised one…Isaac…***the promised land living*** if you will…a picture of growing up in the Lord and leaving all and the world behind…being still in the world but absolutely no longer of the world…in heart or in action…
* And the wives say, *“We will go…there’s nothing for us here anymore…”* I love what Courson says, *“Without God, I can’t…but without me, He won’t.”* And yet as they go…idols remain…and eventually they have to be dealt with…we’ll see that next week, but the world pursues…and we will see that next week as well…*why have you taken them?! You have wronged me!?* But Jacob’s defense just as it is Jesus’, “I have paid for them…” More next week….