

July 1, 2012

Jacob
Unquestioned Love
Genesis 29:15-30

Opening Words: My mother had one sibling, my Aunt Elaine. She married my Uncle Gary and they had four daughters, Elaine, Alice, Nancy and Roberta. They are my only female cousins. I have talked about them in the past. Each one is more annoying than the one before. Miraculously, they married four nice guys. I find myself praying for them from time to time. They illustrate the fact that love can be both deaf and blind. At some level I like them but I will also admit they are weird. They are the reason I had a hard time with this morning's text. Listen to what I am about to say.

Jacob's mother was named Rebecca. She had a brother named Laban. He had two daughters, Leah and Rachel. That makes them Jacob's first cousins. In the story for today we find Jacob married both of them. That makes him a polygamist. I am not a big rule guy but that even bothers me. Does it bother you that our hero in this sermon series committed polygamy when he married his cousins? Did you know Charles Darwin married his first cousin? The challenge for you today is that you have to look over the family relationships and look at the general theme. As you hear the story for today, don't think about your weird cousins. Instead, think about your one true love.

This is sermon number five in my summer sermon series on Jacob. To date, we have looked at his ancestry. His grandfather was Abraham and his father was Isaac. We have looked at his fraternal twin brother, Esau. He was the one who was born red and hairy. (He must have been a handsome lad.) He was the one that lost both the birthright and the blessing. We have looked at how those acts forced Jacob to leave his home. Removed from his nuclear family, he is now living with his extended family. Today, we learn Jacob finds his one true love, Rachel. He sacrifices a great deal to win her hand in marriage. May God give you ears to this morning's scripture lesson, Genesis 29:15-30. Let me call the message *Unquestioned Love*.

Genesis 29:15-30 15 Laban said to him, "Just because you are a relative of mine, should you work for me for nothing? Tell me what your wages should be."
16 Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. 17 Leah had weak eyes, but Rachel had a lovely figure and was beautiful. 18 Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, "I'll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel."
19 Laban said, "It's better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me." 20 So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only

a few days to him because of his love for her. 21 Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife. My time is completed, and I want to make love to her." 22 So Laban brought together all the people of the place and gave a feast. 23 But when evening came, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and Jacob made love to her. 24 And Laban gave his servant Zilpah to his daughter as her attendant. 25 When morning came, there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? I served you for Rachel, didn't I? Why have you deceived me?" 26 Laban replied, "It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one. 27 Finish this daughter's bridal week; then we will give you the younger one also, in return for another seven years of work." 28 And Jacob did so. He finished the week with Leah, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. 29 Laban gave his servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her attendant. 30 Jacob made love to Rachel also, and his love for Rachel was greater than his love for Leah. And he worked for Laban another seven years.

It is said that Cyrus, the founder of the Persian Empire, once had captured a prince and his family. When they came before him, the monarch asked the prisoner, "What will you give me if I release you?" "The half of my wealth," was his reply. "And if I release your children?" "Everything I possess." "And if I release your wife?" "Your Majesty, I will give myself." Cyrus was so moved by his devotion that he freed them all. As they returned home, the prince said to his wife, "Wasn't Cyrus a handsome man!" With a look of deep love for her husband, she said to him, "I didn't notice. I could only keep my eyes on you- -the one who was willing to give himself for me." Do you have anyone in your life that would die for you? The answer is, "Yes!" His name is Jesus! And all of God's people said, "**Amen!**" Let us look at the text together.

Several years ago I was out in my front yard raking leaves. I began talking to my neighbor Rich. At one point he looked at me said, "'Russ, do you ever get used to boys showing up to date your girls? " My two girls were a couple years older than his four. I said, "Yes, I kind of like it. " He said, "I don't like it. I wish these boys would just stay away." I responded, "Then you should have had ugly girls. The problem is your girls are all very pretty." If you can understand that simple story then you can understand the text.

The story is about two sisters, Leah and Rachel. According to verse seventeen, the older sister, Leah, had poor eyesight. Maybe it was from all the family inbreeding? The text doesn't say it but I believe it is true. Her problem is not limited to her eyesight. It was her general looks. She was one of those nice personality girls. She was nice to talk to but not so easy to look at. Even her name underscores the fact. Leah can be translated two ways. Leah can mean "cow" or Leah can mean "withered." In sharp contrast, we are told in verse seventeen Rachel was lovely in both form and beauty. What does that mean? That is the Biblical way of saying Rachel is hot. That is not rocket science. You can ask any red blooded American

male between the ages of twelve and one hundred and twenty years old, which woman you find more interesting? Would you like to date the nice personality cow like girl with the glasses? Or would you like to date the hot girl? The hot girl wins every time. (I am different. I am only interested in a woman's mind!) You can call it love at first sight. Jacob decided during his early days in Haran he was going to marry Rachel. This is where the story begins to relate to your life.

Jacob did not just like Rachel. Jacob did not just lust after Rachel. Jacob loved Rachel. He loved her deeply. How do we know he loved her deeply? We know because he sacrificed for her. The text says he labored fourteen years for her. He labored seven years for Leah; He labored seven more years for Rachel. Fourteen years is a long time but they passed quickly. Verse 20 says, *"So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her."* How can anyone question Jacob's love for Rachel? How much are you willing to sacrifice for the people you love? Consider these three things with me.

How much time do you sacrifice for the people you love? The one thing in this world you can not buy is more time. You are only in this world for so much time. How are you spending the time God is giving you? How much time have you sacrificed? Has anyone here ever sat through a dance recital on a beautiful day? Has anyone here ever sat through a television program that held no personal interest? Has anyone here ever gone to your spouse's family reunion? How many hours have you spent by the sick bed of a loved one? One of the best ways to express your love is to give some of your valuable time. If you think that is true say, **"Amen!"**

How much of your talent do sacrifice for your loved ones? God has designed each one of us for a specific purpose. There are just things you naturally do better than other things. How much of your natural talent do you give to help someone else? Has anyone here ever helped a child do their homework? Has anyone here ever cooked a sick neighbor a hot meal? Has anyone here ever filled out someone else's taxes? You are not just doing those things. You are expressing your love and concern for them. If you find some truth there say, **"Amen!"**

How much of your money do you sacrifice for your loved ones? In your lifetime you are only going to make so much money. How you spend your money says a great deal about your priorities. How much of your money do you spend on loved ones? Is anyone here not going to get a grandchild a Christmas present this year because you live on fixed incomes? Is anyone here not going to visit your grandmother in the home because the price of gas is still a little high? Is anyone one not going to encourage your spouse to get that heart test done because you still haven't met your deductible? Do I have to go on? How you spend your money reveals your priorities. If you find some truth there say, **"Amen!"**

In a few days America will celebrate her 236th birthday. Our country has changed through the years. Our country has changed a great deal in our lifetime. I don't want to rain on the parade but we live in extremely arrogant spiritually immature times. Think about it for a minute. How many people do you know sit back and judge God? They wonder why suffering occurs. They blame God for the suffering but they do very little to eliminate the suffering. They tell the world they are disappointed in God's behavior. This is the truth. God doesn't need our approval. God is God! Never forget, we live in Satan's playground. On the other hand, we have people who want to claim the promises of the faith without expressing gratitude. They may have accepted Jesus at some point in their lives. They know they are going to heaven and they know God loves them. However, that is where their spiritual growth stopped. They have accepted the gift without saying, "Thank-you." How you respond to human need expresses your appreciation to God for saving your soul. How are you thanking God for saving your soul? The world is filled with needs. Which one are you going to help? How much are you willing to sacrifice? This is the key question.

How much do you love Jesus? How much have you sacrificed for Jesus lately? How much **time** have you sacrificed lately? How much of your **talent** have you sacrificed lately? How much of your **money** have you sacrificed to God lately? We sacrifice for the people we love. How much do you love Jesus? No one could question Jacob's love for Rachel. He sacrificed for her. He labored fourteen years. Could anyone question your love for Jesus?

As we come to this communion table no one can question Jesus' love for us. He didn't just sacrifice some time. He didn't just sacrifice some of his natural talent. He didn't just sacrifice some of his money. He sacrificed it all! And all of God's people said, "**Amen!**"