

# Whom God Blesses

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Date: 07 July 2024

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[ 0 : 00 ] As soon as Rachel had born Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, send me away that I may go to my own home and country.! Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served you, that I may go.

For you know the service that I have given you. But Laban said to him, if I have found favor in your sight, I have learned by divination that the Lord has blessed me because of you.

Name your wages and I will give it. Jacob said to him, you yourself know how I have served you and how your livestock has fared with me.

For you have little before I came and has increased abundantly. And the Lord has blessed you wherever I turned. But now, when shall I provide for my own household also?

He said, what shall I give you? Jacob said, you shall not give me anything if you do this for me. I will again pasture my flock and keep it.

[ 1 : 11 ] Let me pass through your flock today, removing from it every speckled and spotted sheep and every black lamb. And the spotted and speckled among the goats.

And they shall be my wages. So my honesty will answer for me later. When you come to look into your wages with you, everyone that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, if found with me, shall be counted stolen.

Laban said, good. Let it be as you have said. But that day, Laban removed the male goats that were striped and spotted and all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, everyone that had white on it, every lamb that was black, and put them in the charge of his sons.

And he set a distance of three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob pastured the rest of Laban's flock. Then Jacob took fresh sticks of poplar and almond and plain trees and peeled white streaks in them, exposing the white of the sticks.

He set the sticks that he had peeled in front of the flocks in the troughs that he, that is, the watering place, where the flocks came to drink.

[ 2 : 49 ] And since they bred when they came to drink, the flocks bred in front of the sticks, and so the flocks brought forth stripes, speckled and spotted.

And Jacob separated lambs and set the faces of the flocks toward the stripes, and all the blackened the flock of Laban.

He put his own droves apart and did not put them with Laban's flock. Did not put them with Laban's flock.

Whenever the stronger of the flock were breeding, Jacob would lay the sticks in the trough before the eyes of the flock, that they might breed among the sticks.

But for the feebler of the flock, he would not lay them there. So the feebler would be Laban's and the stronger Jacob's. Thus, the man increased greatly and had large flocks, female servants and male servants, and camels and donkeys.

[ 3 : 59 ] Thank you very much, Michelle. Sometimes the Lord does things in such a way that it becomes clear to us and everyone else watching that his hand and his hand alone has done it.

We see this throughout the pages of Scripture. For example, when the Lord decided to have a person of faith, to choose someone who would be this person of faith, he chose Abraham, an old man whose wife was unable to have children.

And then when God blessed them with a son, they knew and everybody else knew that God alone had done it.

God was the reason that Abraham and Sarah had a son by the name of Isaac. And in this passage that we have come to this morning, as we continue our sermon series in the book of Genesis, this is why God blessed Jacob in the way that he did and in the circumstances that he was in.

God wanted to make it clear, abundantly clear, that he alone was the source and the reason for Jacob's blessings. And this morning, by God's grace, this is what I hope to show from this passage before us.

[ 5 : 45 ] So let's take a moment first to pray. Father, we're so grateful for the privilege of having your word that you have preserved over the ages.

And Lord, the things written in your word that you have preserved are for our encouragement and for our good. I ask, O Lord, that you will speak to us now from the pages of your word.

Lord, you know each of us and where we are. You know what we need to hear. Would you, by the power of your spirit, speak to our hearts?

Lord, would you enable me to be faithful and to stay within the four corners of your word and to faithfully bring your word to your people.

Pray that you be glorified in all that is said and done. In Jesus' name, amen. Let me begin by giving a little bit of context that I believe will help us as we consider what is an unusual passage that we have come to in our study in Genesis.

[ 7 : 02 ] Jacob had fled the land of Canaan, his homeland, and he'd come to his uncle Laban in Paddan Aram because his brother Esau wanted to kill him.

Jacob had cheated his brother out of his birthright and his blessing. And when he came to Paddan Aram, his eyes lit upon Rachel, the daughter of his uncle Laban, and he fell in love with her.

Laban promised that he would give Rachel in marriage to Jacob. If Jacob would work for seven years and Jacob did, but at the end of seven years, Jacob tricked, Laban tricked Jacob and gave him the eldest daughter instead, Leah, and not Rachel.

And to make it up, Laban said, if you'll work for another seven years, I will give you Rachel as well as your wife. And he agreed, and he worked for seven years to have Rachel as well as his wife. And last week, we saw how during those seven years of working for Rachel, how Jacob's family multiplied. He, at the end, he had four wives.

[ 8 : 23 ] He had two wives and two concubines, and he had 11 sons and one daughter. In the passage we have come to this morning, we see Jacob at the end of those seven years.

It begins with the end of the seven years when he had finished working for Rachel, and he's looking at his large family. He is mindful that he's not at home, and he realizes, I need to do something for myself and for my family.

And so, he has this burden, he has this concern to share with his uncle his situation, that he has nothing, and that he wants to return home.

And we're able to see how selfish, and how heartless, and how greedy his uncle Laban was. This is not a stranger that Laban is dealing with.

And you'd have thought that all that Jacob went through, that Laban would say, hey, you know, take this and go, and kind of set him up to be able to take care of his family.

[ 9 : 41 ] But he doesn't do that, and so Jacob says to Laban, just send me away. Send me away, so I can go back to my homeland and my own country. And this request by Jacob sets up this account that we're considering this morning.

And this morning, I want to consider this account under three particular headings. This account of Jacob wanting to do what any man would want to do to care for his family, I want to consider it under three headings.

The first is Jacob's plan to provide. This is his primary motivation for wanting to go home to Canaan, to provide, because he saw that he was making no headway with his uncle.

Notice again verses 25 and 26. As soon as Rachel had born Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, send me away that I may go to my home and country.

Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you that I may go, for you know the service I've given to you. Again, you would have thought that as his uncle, and not just his uncle, as his father-in-law, as the one who is the father of his wives, Rachel and Leah, the one who is the grandfather of his 12 children at this particular point, that Laban would have had some compassion, some mercy on him, and just give him something for the sake of his own blood, if not for the sake of Jacob.

[ 11 : 26 ] He doesn't do that. And what makes it worse is what he says to Jacob. In verses 27 and 28, he tells Jacob that he has learned through divination that the Lord blessed him, Laban, because of Jacob.

And Laban's motivation is he doesn't want to lose the blessing that has come to him through Jacob, and he wants Jacob to stay with him. He doesn't want Jacob to go.

He wants Jacob to stay, not because he wants to help Jacob, but because he wants Jacob to help him. And these words of Laban helps us to see the darkness of his soul and the degree of corruption of his nature.

I want you to notice something in verse 27. Notice that the word Lord is in all caps. Whenever you see that, that refers to the proper name of God, Yahweh.

that's the covenant name of God. And so Laban is referring to God by his covenant name. He doesn't say your God or use the generic word for God, but he calls God by his covenant name, and then he says he learned by divination, which is a corrupt, wicked, occultic practice that is forbidden by God among the people of God.

[13:01] And so he's saying I learned by this occultic practice that Yahweh has blessed me because of you. And so his motivation is I want you to stay, and I want you to stay because if you go, I know my blessing will stop.

And the only reason that Laban offers this deal to Jacob to say, look, name your wages. He basically says, here's a blank check, write on it what you want on it.

There's one reason he did that. He had no intention of keeping it. Whatever Jacob was going to ask for, Laban was going to do whatever he wanted.

And Jacob already experienced the dishonesty of his father-in-law, and he responds to him in a very cutting way in verses 29 and 30.

Look again at what he says. Jacob said to him, you yourself know how I served you and how your livestock fared with me. For you had little before I came, and it is increased abundantly, and the Lord has blessed you wherever I turned.

[14:21] And now, when shall I provide for my own household? Jacob basically says to him, listen, he says you don't need divination to figure out how you were blessed.

It is obvious to you how you were blessed. You shouldn't have to go and consult some occultic person to determine that to you.

He says, but, I need to provide for my household. When am I going to do that? When are you going to allow me to do that? And you would even think at this particular point that Laban would be hit with conviction and give a parting gift to his nephew on behalf of his daughters and his grandchildren.

But Laban doesn't do that. In verse 31, Laban says, what should I give you? What do you want me to give you? And starting in verse 31, the latter part of verse 31, Jacob lays out for Laban a proposal by which he would provide for his family.

And let's look at his proposal again. Jacob said, you shall not give me anything. if you will do this for me, I will again pasture your flock and keep it.

[15:44] Let me pass through all your flock today, removing from it every speckled and spotted sheep and every black lamb and the spotted and speckled among the goats, and they shall be my wages.

so my honesty will answer for me later when you come to look into my wages with you. Everyone that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the sheep, if found with me, shall be counted stolen.

Now this proposal by Jacob was the most unusual proposal. It's a strange proposal by any measurement.

Commenting on this strange proposal that Jacob gives to Laban, theologian and Bible scholar Bruce Waltke writes the following.

He writes, normally, a shepherd, normally, the hire of a shepherd is 20% of the flock. And rarely, if ever, would the speckled population be such a large percentage.

[17:00] So he's saying that in that day, typically, the way shepherds were hired was, the person hiring them would say, listen, you can take one out of every five.

One out of every five, that's your, that, that's your wages. 20%, that's your wages. And Waltke says that just the nature of how these animals would breed, it was unusual for the animals to have an odd color.

The way it was, sheep were just normally all white, goats were solid color, black or brown. But every now and then, you had variations between them.

But you had the sheep would be black or you'd have the goats not fully brown or not fully black. They were aberrations. And it wasn't even such a high percentage as 20% would be with these different colors.

So it was unusual for Jacob to go with this proposal that would be less than him saying, look, just, just give me 20% and I'll work for you.

[18:15] He takes what is a much, much lower percentage than 20% because far less than 20% of these sheep and goats would be oddly colored.

But what's clear is that Jacob wanted some means of distinguishing what was his and what was his uncle's. He knew his uncle was crooked.

He knew his uncle couldn't be trusted. And so he gives him this proposal. He says, listen, all the ones that are normally colored, all the white sheep, all the brown and black goats, they're yours. But all the ones that have variations, spots, speckled, they belong to me. That was Jacob's proposal to care for his family.

It was a proposal he was determined to keep. He was so determined to keep it, he said, listen, if you find any among my own that are solid white sheep or black or brown goats, I stole them.

[19:23] He was determined that wasn't going to happen. And he felt sure that his uncle couldn't change this arrangement. husband. But as we see in the account, Jacob underestimated the greed and the depth of depravity of his uncle Laban.

And this brings me to my second point, Laban's plan to cheat. Again, Laban didn't care what wages Jacob proposed because he had no intention of keeping it.

But to Jacob's face, he agrees. And look at what he says in verse 34. Good, let it be as you have said. But look at the very next verse.

The very next verse, we see Laban again schooling Jacob. Now remember, Jacob himself was a schemer. Laban. And he ran from elementary school scheming to university scheming when he came to his uncle Laban.

His uncle Laban is going to give him another lesson in scheming and dishonesty and deception. Look at what it says starting in verse 35. But that day, that same day that Laban made the deal with him, that Laban agreed to give him those wages, Laban removed the male goats that were striped and spotted and all the female goats that were speckled and spotted and everyone that had white on it and every lamb that was black and put them in charge of his sons and set a distance of three days journey between himself and Jacob and Jacob pastured the rest of Laban's flock.

[21:12] Laban ensured that there was no humanly possible opportunity for Jacob to go after these sheep and goats that were his wages.

He was determined that Jacob was going to start from zero, even though he agreed that that was going to be the arrangement. Jacob said, allow me to go through the flock today and take them out. But before Jacob had the opportunity to do that, Laban heartlessly and dishonestly took them out, trying to ensure that Jacob would get nothing.

And he didn't have to do that. He had more than enough livestock. He had an abundance. abundance. And what Jacob asked for was less than what he would normally pay.

But Laban was hard-hearted, he was greedy, and he was selfish. His hard-heartedness and his greed and his selfishness blinded them to the fact that he was even doing that against his own daughters and against his own grandchildren.

[22:25] And so he dishonestly removed Jacob's wages that they had agreed to from among the flock and put it far away.

I wonder if you've ever faced a situation similar to this, where someone openly and dishonestly, without apology, used you, abused you, and took advantage of you.

Perhaps you made a verbal agreement with someone, and they just dishonestly refused to keep it. Dishonestly refused to honor it to your detriment. Maybe it was a boss or supervisor who promised you, because of your hard work, because of your diligence, you'd get a promotion, or you'd get an increase in pay, and it didn't happen.

Perhaps the person did it more than once, as Laban did to Jacob. Maybe you experienced some other kind of dishonesty or mistreatment.

How did you respond? What did you do? Did you bear up under it and entrust yourself to the Lord? Or did you take Madison to your own hands and say, I'm going to fight fire with fire?

[ 23 : 55 ] Maybe you stopped working as hard. Maybe you decided to cut corners. Maybe you decided to steal what you thought belonged to you.

The truth is that most people tend to resort to fighting fire with fire. fire. They cheat and in turn they try to gain what they believe they've lost.

And sadly, some who name the name of Christ follow this way as well. They resort to fighting fire with fire.

fire. In the providence of the Lord, it would not surprise me if there are some of you this morning who are the objects of someone's dishonesty, someone's maltreatment, very similar to the way Jacob was handled by Laban.

And God has brought you here this morning to hear from his word how you should respond.

Hopefully, you're responding in the right way, but if you're not, by the end of the sermon, I believe you would see how the Lord would have you to respond.

[ 25 : 22 ] How does Jacob respond? There's no clear mention of Jacob confronting Laban. There's no mention of him going to his uncle and saying, you cheated me.

You went against your word. I was supposed to go and take out those animals and you took them out. There's no evidence that he confronted Laban, that they exchanged words.

But what is clear from the remainder of this account is that Jacob decided to fight fire with fire.

Jacob was determined to provide for his family and he was determined to make Laban keep the deal that they made.

But what is even clearer in this account, the remaining part of this account, what is even clearer is that in the midst of Laban's dishonesty and in the midst of Jacob's efforts to get even, God fulfilled his purpose to bless Jacob.

And this is my third and final point. God's purpose to bless. Clearly Jacob was upset with Laban.

Whether they exchanged words or not, because you know sometimes when you're upset with someone, sometimes you exchange words with them and you communicate to them in no uncertain terms how you're upset with them.

[ 27 : 01 ] And then other times what you do is you show how you're upset with them. You don't say anything. You just show them by actions how you're upset with them. It seems like from the account Jacob took the latter.

You know, especially when you have already confronted a person about their behavior after a while you just get tired talking. And it seems like Jacob was just tired talking to Laban, exchanged no words with Laban.

This is the way the account seems to read. Notice in verse 37. Immediately after telling us about Laban's dishonesty, the narrator who is narrating this story, the first word is then.

Then. And it almost sets up a tit for tat conversation. kind of a situation. What we see is in verses 37 to 42, Jacob engages in three manipulative schemes to get back at Laban.

Three schemes he engages in to get back at Laban. His first scheme is outlined in verses 37 to 39. He goes out and he selects three kinds of trees.

[ 28 : 28 ] Poplar, almond, and plain. He cuts these branches and he slices pieces of them off and exposes the white on them.

And then he puts them in the watering trough where the flock would come to water. water. And I've been really helped by Bruce Waltke's commentary as we work through Genesis.

And he insightfully points out that Laban's name means white. The Hebrew word is the word for white. But he also points out that the word for poplar, this type of tree, one of the types of trees that he uses, is also white.

And when both words are pronounced, they're very similar, not exact words, but they sound exactly the same. So the Hebrew word for poplar sounds just like Laban.

And I can imagine Jacob just taking that plane and saying, this is Laban. I would deal with Laban. How many of you, when you were younger, your parents had some instrument and they had your name on it.

[ 29 : 44 ] That was your, your name was on that. You knew what that meant. And I think he was just really going to teach Laban a lesson by what he was engaged in.

Now, clearly, Jacob was involved in some kind of superstitious practice. He believed that you could take these sticks and peel off a part of the bark and expose the white and you put them in front of these animals as they are breeding, that they're going to have offspring that resembled these sticks

with spots and speckles and not coming out in some kind of a solid color.

Now, if you think that's really strange, you know that we have superstitions like that today. There are people who really believe that they are children who are born with certain birthmarks and it has to do with what their mother was craving when she was pregnant.

How many of you never heard that? If you never heard that, just raise your hand. You never heard that. Okay, yeah. Okay, see, some people say it's true.

I don't know, but Laban, certainly, Jacob thought this was true and this is what Jacob set out to do.

[ 31 : 07 ] He developed this scheme where he thought if he would just put these stripped wood in the drinking troughs when the animals were breeding, they would produce off-colored offspring.

That's his first scheme. His second scheme is in verse 40. Look at it again. And Jacob separated the lambs and set the faces of the flocks toward the striped and all the black in the flock of Laban. He put his own droves apart and did not put them with Laban's flock. Now, this is a confusing verse. It's not easy to follow what is happening in the verse, looking at the verse alone.

And the reason is that Laban is not supposed to have any striped or black animals in his flock. But yet, what we see Jacob doing is it says Jacob separated the lambs and set the faces of the flocks towards the striped and all the black in the flock of Laban.

And he put his own droves apart and did not put them with Laban's flock. again, I rely on Bruce Waltke, his insight into this, pointing out that it appears that what happened is Laban changed the arrangement.

[ 32 : 41 ] And this is hinted at a little later, we'll get to this next week, but in Genesis 31 verses 6 to 8, we see that Jacob refers to how Laban kept changing the arrangement.

We won't see this in chapter 30, but we see it as we look ahead. So look at what he says to Rachel and Leah as he's making a case to them as to why they need to leave Paddan Aram.

He says to them in verse 6, you know that I have served your father with all my strength, yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times.

Now when we look at the account in chapter 30, we don't see any account of Laban changing the wages, but Jacob says this is what he did.

He was changing the wages. Verse 7, yet your father cheated me and changed my wages ten times, but God did not permit him to harm me. If he said, the spotted shall be your wages, then all the flock bore spotted.

[ 33 : 48 ] And if he said, the stripe will be your wages, then all the flock bore striped. So the appearance of it is that these animals were producing the offspring that were in Jacob's favor so much that Laban would keep stepping in and changing the arrangement and changing the arrangement back and forth.

His third scheme is in verses 41 to 42. In verse 41 to 42, we see what he does is he practices what you may call selective breeding.

He says, whenever the stronger of the flock were breeding, Jacob would lay the sticks in the troughs before the eyes of the flock and that they might breed among the sticks. But for the feeble of the flock, he would not lay them there.

So the feeble would be Laban's and the stronger would be Jacob's. So Jacob was watching the flock and the feeble ones, he would just let them breed on their own.

And the ones who were stronger, he would try to manipulate the kind of offspring that he felt that they, that he thought they would give, which would be off-colored ones which would belong to him.

[ 35 : 08 ] notice the conclusion that we see in verse 43. It says thus, or therefore, the man increased greatly and had large flocks, female servants and male servants and camels and donkeys.

This is the conclusion after six years of laboring with Laban for his flock. We know that it's six years because again, we'll see this in chapter 31 when Jacob is confronting Laban and he's saying to him, I served you 14 years for your daughters, I served you six years for your flock.

In verse 43, it's easy though to miss how much wealth Jacob really amassed. Jacob not only had a large amount of livestock at the end of six years.

He had female slaves, he had male slaves, he had camels, and he had donkeys. And so he would have traded, he would have sold animals to get these slaves, to get the camels, to get the donkeys.

This is an incredible amount of wealth that he accumulated during that six-year period. I think if you'd asked Jacob, Jacob, what do you want at the end of six years?

[ 36 : 37 ] All he would have wanted was a starting amount of livestock that he knew he could breed over time. That's all he would have wanted.

But at the end of six years, in his wildest dreams, he could not have imagined that he would have the wealth that he had. Slaves, donkeys, camels, and abundance of livestock. Someone shouted from the back that when women crave particular foods or other things, that it marks their children.

I'm not sure if that was a joke or they really believed that. But I want to ask you this morning, who among us believes that Jacob's vast wealth that he amassed over the six years came from his three schemes that he employed, especially the one where he peeled the sticks and put them in the drinking troughs for the animals to look at as they made it?

Who among us really believe that that's the way that Jacob amassed this wealth to purchase all the slaves that he did, all the donkeys that he did, all the camels that he did?

[ 38 : 00 ] Hopefully nobody believes that. Hopefully no one believes that this superstitious trick that he engaged in brought about that wealth.

As a matter of fact, I would say it this way. Even if you believe that he was able to manipulate the color of the goats and the sheep through this scheme, how do you account for such massive wealth in that six-year period?

How do you account for that? Brothers and sisters, the wealth that Jacob amassed, he amassed for one reason and one reason alone, and that reason is God.

Jacob's flock and his wealth multiplied because God caused them to multiply. And this is Jacob's own account. Jacob later acknowledges this.

We'll look at this next Sunday, but let's jump ahead and see what Jacob himself says. Chapter 31, starting in verse 4. It says, So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah into the field where his flock was and said to them, I see that your father does not regard me with favor as he did before, but the God of my father has been with me.

[ 39 : 27 ] You know that I served your father with all my strength, yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times. But God did not permit him to harm me. If he said the spotted shall be your wages, then all the flock were spotted.

And if he said the striped shall be your wages, then all the flock were striped. Thus God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me.

In the breeding season of the flock, I lifted up my eyes and saw in a dream that the goats that mated with the flock were striped, spotted, and mottled.

Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, Jacob, and I said, here I am. And he said, lift up your eyes and see that all the goats that mate with the flock are striped, spotted, and mottled.

For I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. I am the God of Bethel where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me.

[ 40 : 31 ] Now arise and go from this land and return to the land of your kindred. Notice that Jacob refers to a dream that he had that involved this oddly colored, these oddly colored goats mating with the flock.

work. And there's no way to be certain about the timing of this dream. Was it before he gave this proposal to Laban? Or was it after he had given the proposal to Laban?

And both options have things in their favor. Both options have strength. But as I considered it, I learned on the side of the view that he had the dream before he gave Laban the proposal.

I don't think that he just randomly thought, I'm going to do this. I believe that it was this dream that he had that caused him to give Laban this proposal because he saw that there was some divine activity that God was revealing to him that was taking place or going to take place.

And on that basis, he offered the proposal to Jacob that the off-colored offspring of the flock would become his.

[ 42 : 00 ] But once Laban removed all the off-colored goat and sheep out of the flock, I think Jacob then said about his schemes to make his own way and to provide for himself.

But God had purposed to bless Jacob and this was revealed in the dream as well. He purposed to bless him. When he had that encounter at Bethel in Genesis 28, God promised that he was going to be with him wherever he went.

God promised that he was going to bless him. He was going to make him a blessing that the nations would be blessed through him. And that's exactly what God did.

God blessed Jacob in keeping with his promises, in keeping with his purpose to bless him. Jacob's scheme did not produce the wealth that Jacob amassed.

blessed. And when we think about what Laban did, when Laban went through and took out all of those oddly colored sheep and goats, although that was Laban's intent to just be dishonest and greedy, God was the one who was behind that.

[ 43 : 20 ] God was the one to ensure that Jacob understood that he was the reason he was blessed. God wanted Jacob to start at zero.

So Jacob would have nothing, so that Jacob would do what he later does, and he acknowledges that everything that he has belongs to the Lord. He does this later in chapter 32.

We'll come to this, but let me just read what he says in one verse. He is preparing to meet his brother Esau, and he's terrified, and he's pouring his hollow to God, and he prays, this is what he prays to God.

He says, I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant. For with only my staff, I crossed the Jordan, and now I have become two camps.

Jacob recognized that he had nothing, and God was the one who blessed him with all that he had. God blessed Jacob again, not because of Jacob, but in spite of Jacob.

[ 44 : 28 ] God blessed Jacob because it was his purpose in covenant to bless Jacob, covenant that he made with him, and there was nothing that Laban could do to thwart the purposes of God to bless Jacob.

God. There's nothing he could do. And brothers and sisters, we need to rest in this. If God is determined to bless you, there's no one on this earth or outside of this earth who can thwart the blessings of God that he has purposed and determined to come your way.

No one can bring harm to you, no one can take away from you, if God is determined to bless you. We don't need to resort to schemes and tricks.

We don't need to go to soothsayers, to fight fire with fire with those who go down that road. No, we can put our trust in the living God, the God who blesses those whom he determines to bless, and that is what he did with Jacob.

I'll tell you this, before Jacob began to work for those flocks, Laban knew that God was blessing him.

[ 45 : 49 ] At the end of those six years, Laban could not help but admit and acknowledge only the blessing of God could produce what this man has, because despite my best efforts to cheat him and steal from him, God has still blessed him above and beyond anything that I could have imagined.

And so, brothers and sisters, maybe you've been cheated, maybe you are being cheated, maybe your advantage is being taken, whether at work or in a business arrangement, maybe in a family arrangement, trust the Lord.

And don't resort to trying to make your own way. whatever God has for us, he will bring to us. We don't need to try to help him out.

Whom God blesses, no one can curse. And one of the reasons that I wouldn't, there are some who believe that literally what Jacob did produced the wealth that he got, that takes the glory away from the Lord and gives it to Jacob and his schemes.

And God will share his glory with no one else. And sometimes what God does is God puts us in such dire straits like he did with Jacob where he had nothing. And we sometimes think that it is really the people who are doing things with us.

[ 47 : 22 ] And yes, humanly speaking, they are. But ultimately it is the Lord who is positioning us in such a way that anyone who has eyes to see will know this is the blessing of the Lord, this is the doing of the Lord whom he blesses.

No one can curse. And so brothers and sisters, let's trust the Lord. Maybe you're not in a situation of having your advantage taken now, but maybe it will come to you in the days ahead.

If we live long enough, we all experience people sinning against us. Let's trust the Lord. God will bless in his time and in his way. We just need to wait and we need to trust him.

If you're here this morning, this is the way God cares for his people. But if you're here and you don't know the Lord, the good news is that Jesus Christ has come into the world to save sinners.

The good news is all those who come to him, he will turn none of them away. Not in the moment of coming, never. He will forgive them of their sins and he will reconcile them to God.

[ 48 : 41 ] And they will be children of God. If you don't know Christ today, I pray that you would turn to Jesus, you would come to Jesus, and what you would find is a Savior who is merciful and who is quick to pardon your greatest sin.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you that those whom you bless know and can curse.

We thank you that you're the God who keeps your covenant, and you keep all of your purposes, Lord, and not one of your purposes can be thwarted.

I pray, Lord, that this would be the conviction of our hearts, and that as we live life in this world, and as we experience injustice, as we experience mistreatment, we would entrust ourselves to you, Lord, and we would trust you to bless in your time and in your way.

I pray, Lord, if there's anyone who finds him or herself in this situation, would you fill their hearts with faith and the assurance that you will do all that you've promised to do.

[ 50 : 02 ] Would you do this, Lord, in Jesus' name? Amen. Let's thank our closing song.