

Fleeing Laban

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[0:00] Please take your Bibles and open them up this morning to the book of Genesis. Book of Genesis. If you're just joining us for the first time or first time in a while, we have been working our way through the book of Genesis.

It's our normal practice to walk through books of the Bible, just one passage at a time. And we've made our way to chapter 30, and we will pick up where we left off last week in verse 25 of chapter 30, and Lord willing, make our way through the end of chapter 31.

So if you would, when you found that, let's stand in honor of the reading of God's Word. It's a little bit of a longer passage this morning, and so I understand if you need to sit down, that's okay, but we believe that the reading of God's Word is just as profitable, if not more profitable, than all the preaching that comes afterwards.

So we're going to stand and read the Word of the Lord. Please hear God's Word, Genesis 30, 25. As soon as Rachel had born Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, And 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.

[1:15] 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 had little before I came, and it 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? And Jacob said, You shall not give me anything. If you will do this for me, I will again pasture your flock and keep it.

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.

Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and black among the sheep, if found with me, shall be counted stolen. Laban said, Good, let it be as you've said. But that day Laban removed the male goats that were striped and spotted, and all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had white on it, and 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 Laban took fresh sticks of poplar and almond and plain trees, and peeled white streaks in them, exposing the white of the sticks.

[2:34] He set the sticks that he had peeled in front of the flocks in the troughs, that is, the watering places, where the flocks came to drink. And since they bred when they came to drink, the flocks bred in front of the sticks.

And so the flocks brought forth striped, speckled, and spotted. 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. Whenever the stronger of the flock were breeding, Jacob would lay the sticks in the troughs 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.

Now Jacob heard that the sons of Laban were saying, Jacob has taken all that was our father's, and from what was our father's, he has gained all this wealth. And Jacob saw that Laban did not regard him with favor as before.

[3:35] Then the Lord said to Jacob, Return to the land of your fathers, and to your kindred, and I will be with you. 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.

You know that I have served your father with all my strength, and 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 bore spotted.

And if he said the striped shall be your wages, then all the flock bore 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 the Lord said to me in the dream, Jacob, and I said, Here I am. And he said, Lift up your eyes and see. 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. Now arise, go out from this land, and return to the land of your kindred.

[4:49] Then Rachel and Leah answered him and said to him, Is there any portion or inheritance left to us in our father's house? Are we not regarded by him as foreigners? For he has sold us, and he has indeed devoured our money.

All the wealth that God has taken away from our father belongs to us and to our children. Now then, whatever God has said to you, do. So Jacob arose and set his sons and his wives on camels.

He drove away all his livestock, all his property that he had gained, the livestock in his possession that he had acquired in Paddan Aram, to go to the land of Canaan to his father Isaac. Laban had gone to shear his sheep, and Rachel stole her father's household gods.

And Jacob tricked Laban the Aramean by not telling him that he intended to flee. He fled with all that he had, and arose and crossed the Euphrates, and set his face toward the hill country of Gilead.

When it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled, he took his kinsmen with him and pursued him for seven days, and followed close after him into the hill country of Gilead.

[5:52] But God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream by night. And said to him, Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad. And Laban overtook Jacob.

Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country, and Laban with his kinsmen pitched tents in the hill country of Gilead. And Laban said to Jacob, What have you done that you have tricked me and driven away my daughters like captives of the sword?

Why did you flee secretly and trick me and not tell me so that I might send you away with mirth and songs, tambourine and lyre? And why did you not permit me to kiss my sons and my daughters farewell?

Now you have done foolishly. It is in my power to do you harm. But the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.

And now you have gone away because you longed greatly for your father's house, but why did you steal my gods? Jacob answered and said to Laban, Because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force.

[6:51] Anyone with whom you find your gods shall not live. In the presence of our kinsmen, point out what I have that is yours and take it. Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them. So Laban went into Jacob's tent and into Leah's tent and into the tent of the two female servants, but he did not find them.

And he went out of Leah's tent and entered Rachel's. Now Rachel had taken the household gods and put them in the camel's saddle and sat on them. Laban felt all about the tent, but he did not find them.

And she said to her father, Let not my Lord be angry that I cannot rise before you, for the way of women is upon me. So he searched, but did not find the household gods. Then Jacob became angry and berated Laban.

And Jacob said to Laban, What is my offense? What is my sin that you have hotly pursued me? For you have felt through all my goods, and what have you found of all your household goods. Set it here before my kinsmen and your kinsmen, that you may decide between us two.

These twenty years I have been with you. Your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried. I have not eaten the rams of your flocks. What was torn by wild beasts I did not bring to you.

[8:00] I bore the loss of it myself. From my hand you required of it, whether it's stolen by day or stolen by night. There I was, by day the heat consumed me, and the cold by night, and my sleep fled from my eyes.

These twenty years I have been in your house. I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times. If the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac had not been on my side, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed.

God saw my affliction and the labor of my hands, and he rebuked you last night. Then Laban answered and said to Jacob, The daughters are my daughters, the children are my children, the flocks are my flocks, and all that you see is mine.

But what can I do this day for these my daughters, or for their children whom they have borne? Come now, let us make a covenant, you and I, and it will be a witness between you and me. So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar.

And Jacob said to his kinsmen, Gather stones. And they took stones and made a heap, and there they ate by the heap. Laban called it Jagar Sahadutha, but Jacob called it Gilead.

[9:16] And Jacob said, This heap is a witness between you and me today. Therefore he named it Gilead and Mizpah. For he said, The Lord watched between you and me, and when we are out of one another's sight, if you oppress my daughters, or if you take wives besides my daughters, although no one is with us, see, God is witness between you and me.

Then Laban said to Jacob, See this heap and the pillar which I have set between you and me. This heap is a witness, and the pillar is a witness, that I will not pass over this heap to you, and you will not pass over this heap and this pillar to me to do harm.

The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us. So Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac, and Jacob offered a sacrifice in the hill country and called his kinsmen to eat bread.

They ate bread and spent the night in the hill country. Early in the morning, Laban arose and kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned home. Grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of the Lord endures forever. Father, we pray now as we open up this passage and look into your great faithfulness to your promises.

[10:32] God, would you remind us again of your commitment to provide and to protect for your people, especially so in Christ. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated.

All God's people said amen. Amen. I wonder if you paid attention to what we just sang together. No power of hell, no scheme of man can ever pluck me from his hand till he returns or calls me home. Here in the power of Christ we stand. That is a song of confidence, isn't it? And before that, we sang, when I fear my faith will fail, Christ will hold me fast.

When the tempter would prevail, he will hold me fast. I wonder if you caught the message of the songs that we sang together this morning.

And maybe a better question would be, I wonder if you believe it. There is a deep confidence in the heart of a believer, in the heart of a Christian that allows us to sing songs like that, sing words like that, and actually mean them and believe them with all of our heart that truly no power of hell can overcome you if you're in Christ.

[11:50] No scheme of man can overcome you if you are in Christ. And even our own fumbling and stumbling along the way cannot disqualify you if you

are in Christ.

He will hold you fast. Here's the main message from our passage this morning. I know it's lengthy and so we'll get right to it. And it's the root of all Christian confidence.

Here it is. God is so powerfully for you in Christ that no one and nothing can derail his plans to bless you and to protect you both in this life and in the life to come.

I'll say that again. God is so powerfully for you in Christ that nothing and no one can overcome his plans to bless you and to protect you both in this life and in the life to come.

Or we can say it in the words of Paul if God is for us who can be against us? If God has given us his own son how will he not also with him give us all things?

[13:02] This is Christian confidence. And I realize we're a far way off a long way off from the coming of Christ here in our passage in the Old Testament and Genesis but even so this morning what we see is that Jacob gets a taste of this deep commitment of God towards his people.

And what we've seen over the past several weeks is that God has given Jacob his promises. God has committed to be for Jacob and although Jacob is fumbling and bumbling his way through even so what we see is that God remains faithful to his promises and at every step the Lord holds him fast.

At every step the Lord continues to provide for Jacob and bless Jacob. At every step the Lord continues to secure and to protect Jacob every step of the way.

So let's take a look and what we see this morning are two ways that God blesses his people. This will be our outline if you're taking notes. Two ways that God blesses his people.

Number one first God blesses his people by providing for his people. God blesses his people by providing and we see this provision in two directions don't we?

[14:14] God provides to his people we'll see that in just a moment but we also see that God provides to others through his people and we see that provision through Jacob don't we?

Here at the start of the passage look there starting in verse 25 as we come to this section of Genesis Jacob has served Laban for about 20 years now and understandably he is ready to leave right?

You ever spend enough time with your in-laws and your family and all of a sudden the time comes it's time to go right? And so he says to Laban send me away that I may go to my own home and my own country give me my wives give me give me my children for whom I've served you that I may go for you know the service that I have given you it is time to go but look at what Laban says Laban responds and he says not so fast in fact I have learned by divination that the Lord has blessed me because of you so name your wages and I will give it now if I'm Jacob right?

I've heard that line before hasn't he? When did he hear that line before? If you remember from last time the first time that Laban said give me name your wages and I'll give it what was it?

It was when Jacob said I will work for seven years for your daughter Rachel and did Laban keep his end of the agreement? By no means he agreed to the agreement and he gave him instead Leah right?

[15:40] So Jacob works for 20 years for Laban and now at the end of it Laban is still unwilling to let Jacob go and we see clearly why don't we? The Lord is blessing Laban because of Jacob Jacob's presence there with Laban is a blessing to him 20 years of blessing 20 years of prosperity 20 years of abundance and Laban is now 20 years better off than he was before Jacob came around and church we shouldn't be surprised at this because God is committed to do this through his people isn't he?

God is often committed to provide for others and bless others through his people I mean you think about the promise that he made to Abraham what does he say? He says I will bless you and in you all the nations of the world will be blessed and of course that's a promise that's fulfilled ultimately in Christ Jesus Christ is the blessing to the nations but it's also a promise it's a pattern that's extended through the body of Christ God often blesses others through his people so for example Christian employees you ought to be a blessing to your employers you ought not join in with the grumbling and complaining that often takes place at the water cooler you ought not be thinking about ways to cut corners off of your work and do the minimum required effort no Christians ought to be the

hardest working employees in the workplace and your bosses whether they're excellent bosses or lousy bosses like Laban your bosses ought to prosper and be blessed because of your presence there in the workplace

Christian athletes ought to be the hardest working athletes on the team they might not be the best players on the team that's not the point but by their attitude by the respect that they show by the effort that they give they work hard they bless their coaches they bless their teammates Christian neighbors your presence there amongst your neighborhood that ought to be a blessing to them as you have them over for dinner as you care for their needs as you care for your own God often blesses others by way of blessing his people but we need to back up and understand why why is God committed to do this through his people why does God intend to bless others through us and it's not just so that we can do some good right in fact I'm sure you realize that anybody can do anything that we've just mentioned there are plenty of excellent employees that are not believers right excellent athletes excellent neighbors people who are kind and generous who do not believe in Christ but what's the difference the Christian does all of these things for one overarching reason it's because in doing so in blessing others in this way we seek to bring glory to God we pray that as God blesses others through us we pray that God might provide a platform for us to open our mouths and share what God has done for us

God blesses others through us in many ways so that he might bless others through us in the most important way which is that they might hear the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ and believe and so when you're asked well why do you work the way you do it's because I'm working for the glory of God and why do you why do you put in the extra effort when others slack off well it's because I want to honor him with my effort I want to give him my best why do you care for me the way that you care for me why do you why do you put my needs even above your own well it's because God has so cared for me in Christ that his love for me overflows in my love for you and we're called to let our light shine before others so that they may see your good deeds but don't stop there and give glory to your father who is in heaven so we see God is committed to use his people to bless others around them in order that opportunity may be given to share the good news of the gospel so Jacob says

Laban you know how I've served you and you know how your livestock has fared with me you had little before I came and look what you have now it's increased abundantly and the Lord has blessed you wherever I turned but now when shall I provide for my own household also it's time for me to go but again Laban pushes back so here in verse 31 Jacob offers up this idea he says you know don't give me anything here's what we'll do let me pass through all your flock and I will remove from it every speckled and spotted sheep and every black lamb and same with the goats speckled and spotted and mottled amongst the goats that's going to be my wages that way when you come back and you check you'll be able to see and make sure that I haven't stolen anything it's all all the speckled and spotted and black and mottled and all of that's going to be mine what do you think and it's interesting how this goes because it's kind of a mirror image to what we saw last week in chapter 29 so once again just like in chapter 29 once again this sounds like an incredible deal to Laban and so just like he did when Jacob offered up seven years of labor for Laban for Rachel

[21:25] Laban agreed immediately right and once again just like Laban did initially he right away gets to work hatching a plan to trick Jacob he goes and he removes all the male goats that are striped and spotted and he removes all the female goats that are speckled and spotted and everybody that had white on it every lamb that was black he put them in charge of his sons he puts a three day distance in between himself and Jacob and he leaves Jacob there to pasture the rest of the flock he is again setting up Jacob for failure isn't he but once again just as the Lord turned all of Laban's deceit into this incredible blessing for Jacob eleven sons one daughter and so now we see once again God's commitment to bless Jacob even in unexplainable and incredible ways doesn't he look there verse 37 and here we see

God's provision to God's people verse 37 says that Jacob he takes these sticks of poplar and almond and plain trees and he peels these white streaks in them and he sets up these sticks he puts them in the ground in front of the flocks where they go to get their water and they breed in front of these sticks and what happens they produce offspring that are striped and speckled and spotted

and then I guess he sees well this is working so now he strategically he starts to breed the stronger of the flock in this way he'd do this little trick with the sticks he'd peel them and he'd set them out and at the end of all of this it says Jacob has this abundance of strong and healthy flocks in verse 43 it says thus the man increased greatly and had large flocks female servants and male servants and camels and donkeys he is overwhelmingly blessed by the Lord isn't he how do you explain this I would love for somebody to raise their hand and explain this to me naturally I don't know if you realize this or not this is not how this happens just peeling some sticks and sticking them in the ground that doesn't determine genetically how the baby is going to come out does it there is no natural scientific explanation for any of this is there and so naturalists skeptics will look at passages like this look at this phenomenon and they'll say well see the bible can't be trusted this is ridiculous right this isn't how this works don't you know that sticking some sticks in the ground doesn't have anything to do without the babies are bred and they're right this is not how this works this cannot be naturally explained but that's exactly where they go wrong isn't it where they go wrong from the start is by assuming that everything that happens must be naturally explained and if everything must be explained by natural and observable scientific process well then from the very beginning you have ruled out an extraordinary supernatural sovereign all powerful

God that can do as he pleases within his creation haven't you this is why the bible starts where it starts it doesn't start in the natural does it how does it start Genesis 1:1 in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth God is sovereign ruler of all of heaven and earth and if you're thrown off by this just give me a couple weeks till we get to Easter I'll tell you about a guy that got up from the dead this is not natural provision that's exactly the point this is supernatural divine intervention a work of God on behalf of his servant to provide for him in fact we see Jacob's explanation later in chapter 31 he says the Lord told him in a dream to do all of this and clearly this is the provision of the Lord the Bible is not trying to explain this and present this as a natural and normal phenomenon the Bible is telling us

God is at work blessing and providing for his servant sometimes God will just show up and do this sort of thing even in our own lives won't he not all the time and not not if you just have enough faith I mean this is not some prosperity guarantee some prosperity promise but but sometimes friend God is pleased to bless and provide for his people in direct and even unexplainable ways isn't he you have any stories like that I remember one time when I was in seminary and we were we were broke as a joke y'all like we had no no money our little baby boy had just come I was working a few jobs on top of a full class load and an unpaid internship at our church and Amanda and I were driving and talking about how much exactly do we need to bridge the gap each month like to the dollar and we were tight what do we need and so I threw out a number and I kid you not

[27:01] Amanda gets a phone call from a girl at our church asking her if she would consider nannying her little girl and for how much and exactly exactly the amount that we needed is unbelievable I know the Kennys have shared recently right they had car trouble they they needed a vehicle and what does the Lord do he puts them on the heart of somebody they hadn't talked to in in months if not years and that person just happens to have a vehicle that they are willing to give and provide for their need I mean come on how do you explain that naturally you don't God is pleased to glorify himself by providing for his people often and unexplainable and surprising ways and sometimes sometimes it happens in these surprising ways but we should also know even in the more ordinary ways right your job your work your labor even in the ordinary explainable ways God is always the one who provides for us

Christians know that everything that we have in this life comes from him and more importantly than that we know that God has provided everything that we need for this life and the life to come in Christ his divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness this life and in Christ he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places what more could you need he is committed to provide for his people both for this life and the life to come not only this second we see God also blesses his people by protecting his people by protecting his people look there to chapter 31 we see here that Jacob has caught wind that Laban's sons are not too happy about all of this and they say Jacob has taken all that was our father's and from our father's stuff he's gained all that wealth that he has they are falsely accusing

Jacob they are falsely accusing him of weaseling his way and stealing all of their father's wealth and of course the truth is their father he's the one who's been trying to steal from Jacob but here they are wrongfully accusing falsely accusing Jacob and we should realize that is one danger that we face as God's people God protects his people from the accusations of the enemy Revelation chapter 12 says that we have an enemy Christian an enemy who accuses our brothers and sisters who accuses us day and night the only difference here is that when Satan accuses us before God and when Satan tells the Lord how sinful we are and when Satan tells the Lord how we have not honored God with our words and we've not honored him with our deeds and we've not honored him with our thoughts and we've not honored him with our lives you know what the difference is he is absolutely right we are not wrongfully accused we are rightly accused and we as sinners have no case to make in that argument except for this one little fact that God himself has stepped in to cover sinners like us with the perfect righteousness of his own son

Jesus Christ what is our argument when we stand before the living God and the verdict comes down we don't look at our own record of righteousness we have no record of righteousness our only hope and our only plea is the blood of Jesus that washes away every sin God himself has justified his people he himself has declared his people righteous not on our own merit but because of the perfect righteousness of Christ credit to us by faith so we say again with Paul if God has justified us who is there to condemn us Charles Spurgeon says that dragon voice revelation 12 is silenced by the blood of the lamb nothing else can ever silence the accuser's cruel voice but the voice of the blood keep reading we see another danger here and it's the attacks of the enemy the attacks of the enemy we see

God protects his people from the attacks of the enemy it says that Jacob could tell that Laban didn't treat him with favor like he did before you know how you could just tell right the vibe has shifted you don't even have to say anything you just know there's something something has happened here so verse!

[32:15] listen to what he says he says but the God of my father has been with me you know that I've served him with all my strength and yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times but look at this but God did not permit him to harm me if he said spotted I got spotted if he said striped I got striped so verse 9 thus God has taken away your father's livestock and given them to me you see how he recognizes the hand of God in all of this none of this is accidental none of this is random Jacob looks up and he sees God has been at work in all of this to provide for me and to protect me all along the way God did not permit Laban to harm Jacob Christian do you realize that no threat can come to you apart from the hand of

God do you realize that no danger can come your way no hardship can come into your life no trial can come into your life except that God says let it come do you realize that our God safeguards us in his own hand by his own power for his own purposes I have to share this story about John Patton y'all know who John Patton is John Patton was a missionary to the new Hebrides which we know now is the islands of Vanuatu which I wondered where I had heard that name before I don't know why I'm saying this but Survivor season nine was filmed in the islands of Vanuatu that's why it was kind of ringing in the back of my head but way back before that John Patton was a missionary there went to go share the gospel and you talk about boldness man this guy went to the New Hebrides shortly after the last batch of missionaries were killed and eaten by cannibals there but he was determined to bring the gospel to them he was almost constantly in danger from some sort of enemy some sort of threat but the

Lord was with him and the Lord protected him in spectacular ways and one of Billy Graham's books called Angels he writes about this story of John Patton here's what he said I'll read it to you he says when John Patton was a missionary in the New Hebrides hostile natives surrounded his mission headquarters one night intent on burning the Patton family out and killing them John and his wife prayed all during the terror filled night that God would deliver them and when daylight came they were amazed to see the attackers inexplicably had left one year goes by a year later the chief of the tribe converted to Jesus Christ and Reverend Patton remembering what had happened he asked the chief what had kept him and his men from burning down the house and killing them and the chief replied in surprise who were all those men you had there with you the missionary answered

there were no men there it was just my wife and

I and the chief argued that they had seen many men standing guard hundreds of big men and shining garments with swords drawn in their hands and they seemed to circle the mission station and they were afraid to God sent his angels to protect them and the chief agreed there was no other explanation God protected his servant but again we ought to ask why why we often pray don't we for the Lord's protection we often pray for health we often pray for safety but why God protected John Patton because he had a mission for him to complete if you have breath in your lungs Christian God sustains us for the sake of his mission because you have a mission to complete John Patton he would wind up staying and and continuing to share the gospel God continued to protect and to grant favor and eventually by the end of his ministry there he had translated the Bible into their language they saw converts to Christ in 25 of the 30 islands and today as of 2020 the last census there they report that over 93% of the population there identify as Christian we see here in the same way the Lord is protecting his servant Jacob why for his own purposes to fulfill his promises to bring about the Messiah Jesus Christ through Jacob exactly as he promised to bring salvation to the world to bring the gospel even to you this morning nothing can stop this plan of God so Rachel and Leah they respond in verse 14 and they say you know what you're right my father is lousy he traded us he left us with nothing whatever

[37:41] God says to you just do it we're with you Jacob so verse 17 Jacob gets all his stuff he gets all his property he gathers all of it he leaves except verse 19 tells us this little detail doesn't it says Rachel stole her father's household God can you believe that this is the third danger that we see here we see that God protects his people even from our own foolishness even from our own foolishness sometimes it just be your own people doesn't it Laban realizes that they have left he goes after them in pursuit but look at what God does yet again the Lord intervenes on Jacob's behalf verse 24 says God speaks to Laban in a dream he warns him don't say anything to Jacob don't even speak to him good or bad and then Laban comes he starts talking to Jacob he says verse 26 what have you done you have tricked me and driven me away from my daughters like captives of the sword why did you flee secretly and trick me and did not tell me so that

I might have sent you away with great celebration why don't you let me kiss my sons and my daughter y'all believe anything he's saying it's in my power to do you harm but God the God of your father spoke to me last night saying don't say anything to Jacob either good or bad Laban says I know why you're leaving I know you want to go back to your father's house I get all that but could you just tell me why did you have to steal my gods and that Jacob says man I got no idea what you're talking about I didn't tell you because I was afraid and I thought you might take your daughters back by force but as for your household gods I don't know what you're talking about anybody that you find here that has any of your household gods you can just kill them they can die and if you can find it anywhere just take it but Jacob doesn't know of course that Rachel his beloved wife not the one that he hates right his beloved wife

Rachel has taken them her sin has put him in great danger and herself in great danger and Jacob doesn't even know it he's not even aware of it is he so Jacob searches all the tents and he comes to Rachel's tent and now Rachel takes her turn tricking Laban it seems!

She stuff what'd you find nothing right he's clueless isn't he and then it all starts to come out 20 years of drama and I'll paraphrase here 20 years I've been with you your you's and your goats haven't miscarried I haven't eaten any of your food I've taken the loss when things went poorly I worked in the cold I barely slept for 20 years you keep changing my and if

God had not been with me the God of my father the God of Abraham the fear of Isaac if he had not been on my side surely now you would have sent me away empty handed but God saw my affliction God saw the labor of my hands God rebuked you last night you see Jacob's perspective on this whole thing Jacob sees rightly!

[41:38] and he explains to Laban the truth of the matter that God is with Jacob God is for Jacob and if God is for him then whatever Laban has to do it will not overcome God's commitment to prosper Jacob will it if God is for Jacob Jacob is invincible until God's purposes are done if God is for

Jacob then Jacob has everything he needs whether he has little or has much if God is for Jacob nothing no scheme of Laban can ever overcome Jacob early the next morning Laban rises he kisses his grandchildren his daughters goodbye they they make peace they make a covenant here they they wind up in a position of an agreement to separate and go their own way there is no natural explanation for how well this all went for Jacob is there other than the

Lord has been for Jacob Christian do you realize the good news of the gospel is that if you are in Christ by faith that God is for you in fact God is so powerfully for you in Christ that nothing and no one can overcome his plan to bless you and to protect you both in this life and in the life to come friend do you have this confidence if not then come to Christ come to Christ put your faith in Jesus and the good news for us is that if you are in Christ by faith you are protected from all accusations of the enemy true and false and if you are in Christ by faith you are protected from the attacks of your enemies if you are in

Christ by faith you are protected! from a million dangers all around you at all times that you have no if you are in Christ by faith friend you are eternally blessed both now and into the future you have everything you need both in this life and in the life to come our God is deeply committed to this and he shows his commitment to this at the cross of Christ doesn't he should you ever doubt his commitment to you in Christ look to the cross of Christ why would he shed the blood of his own son to save you and just let you perish why would he justify you just to let the enemy accuse you why would he redeem you and sanctify you and put his own spirit in you just to let you go and disqualify yourself by your own foolishness why would

Christ die to crush! the powers of sin just to let it destroy you why would Christ rise from the grave just to let death be the enemy that takes you out if you are in Christ friend you are safe in the hands of God so 1st Peter tells us that according to his great mercy he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance that is imperishable undefiled unfading kept in heaven for you does that sound secure if you ever wonder if you will make it there it goes on you who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time friend to know Christ is to know that there is confidence in life and death no power of hell no scheme of man no power of hell no scheme of man can ever pluck you from his hand he will hold you fast father we praise you for this good news god if it were up to us we would disqualify ourselves father we confess that we are are sinful and weak we confess how often we we don't look and credit you for our our provision and for our protection but god when we slow down and think especially think about the gospel of christ god we see you have provided all that we need in him both in this life and in the life to come we love you and we praise you for this in

Jesus name amen! Thank you.