

the GENESIS EXPERIENCE

Session 9/Genesis

29

Group Ice Breaker: Has anybody ever thrown a surprise party for you? What did you like or dislike about the surprise?

Read Genesis 29: 14b-35

Discussion

1. Identify the family dysfunctions displayed in this story?
2. From what we know about Jacob, what is the irony of Laban's deception?
3. Describe what we know about Leah and Rachel? How did Laban's plan affect them both?
4. What do the names of Leah's children reveal about her heart? What does this reveal about how God is meeting her in this journey?
5. How does God reverse Leah's experience from being the rejected one to becoming the chosen one? (What is significant about the line of Judah?)
6. How does the world's message influence your self-worth and purpose in contrast to what God says is true about you?

Inductive Study Questions

1. What might Rachel have been feeling at this point?
2. What was God doing in Rachel?
3. What does God want to do in you?

Prayer Exercise

The life of Leah exposes a condition that is as relevant today as it was to Leah. It is the experience of brokenness—more specifically the brokenness of the heart. There is immense pain in broken relationships. “The suffering that seems to be the most painful is that of feeling rejected, ignored, despised, and left alone.”ⁱ Henri Nouwen suggests that the response to brokenness is to step toward it and place it under God’s blessing as His child, His Beloved. This requires facing the pain of brokenness and embracing it rather than pushing away or ignoring.

In Psalm 34 we are reminded that God delivers the righteous from their troubles and is close to the brokenhearted.

Psalm 34:17-20

The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them;

He delivers them from all their troubles.

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

The righteous person may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all.

He protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken.

Briefly share with one another painful or broken relationships. Pray for each other, asking God to help you see how embracing brokenness is the means to joy and peace.

ⁱ Henri Nouwen, “Life of the Beloved,” Page 89