

Sermon 7.26.20 Pastor Jordan Gades **Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52**

Grace and Peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ Amen

So, Jesus says a lot of good things in our gospel reading. But I think we should start out today with something that's on all of our minds. The whole sister-wives situation going on with Jacob from our reading from genesis. This is a literal Sisters turning into wives of the same man through 14 years of work and trickery. Who is ok with all of this? What is going on? How is this normal? How is this in the bible? Is this making sense to any of you, because in all honesty its not to me.

Have you ever thought about selling you kids off? I know the bible was a "different time but let's see. Average income per year of an individual in us right now is 48,000 so...
 $48,000 \times 7 = 336,000$
 $48,000 \times 2 = 96,000$

Who would sell their daughter for that much? Who would sell 2 of their daughters like this? It sounds like we have crooks on every side of this deal. We see Jacob being tricked and being ok with it. And, while it's not in this section of Genesis, Jacob does up cleverly stealing almost all of Laban's herds of sheep over his 14 years of work. But then there is more to this story still! Both Leah and Rachel were given handmaids, and they bore Jacob sons as well! The guy had 12 kids with 4 women, only 2 of which he was married to. This is sounding less and less like the bible and sounding more and more like some crappy reality tv show or a soap opera. The twists just keep on coming! Tune in next week when this swindler decides it's in his best interests to get into a wrestling match with God. So, what are we supposed to do with this information?

At first, we look and see what is there, polygamy, stealing, lying. And that's not great. And then if we look a bit closer we discover something is missing. Did you recognize that small and yet very important thing which was missing from this part of this story in Genesis?

And, if you just thought of that answer that is always right in church and Sunday school, yes; Jesus is the correct answer.

God is missing from this section of the story. We hear nothing about God's judgement, help, condemnation, or blessing through this whole section. We don't here anything from God when Jacob does all these things. God is silent while this whole fiasco is going on.

And while maybe God is Silent; God is still at work, keeping the promise that he made to Abraham and to Isaac, that promise that God made to all of us to come and to all of us that ever will be . In the midst of everything that was going on, God was still working and creating the Kingdom. God was taking whatever was happening and working for the good of God's people.

This is always the end Goal for God, to raise up a new kingdom. To bring about the fundamental change in the universe that brings creation back to what it should have been. The kingdom of God is always being built.

We just tend to get in the way a little bit don't we. Whether it's by doing this kind of dumb stuff that Jacob gets into. Or whether it's just us being too weak or too human to live our mission that

we have been called into by our God. We have heard our call of Go and make disciples, Go and show the love of God to our neighbors, Go and build this new kingdom; and we have responded over and over again with apathy. It's not that we fight the call to love each other and build up this new place, this new home, this new life-giving joyous kingdom; we just stop caring. And when we stop caring, when we stop actively building this kingdom of God, this world falls apart, it turns to chaos and hate reigns.

But this will never be our fate because we march down this path with our everlasting father beside us and the Spirit of our Lord inside of us. I just got done telling all our kids that in the midst of our weakness, God is our Strength, God is our ally, God is our encourager to act for freedom for all those who are oppressed, to act in Love and kindness against all things that hate, to be strong for those who are weak. This is how we build the kingdom of God.

This is something we understand to our very core, this is what is written on our hearts at our baptism. We are not in some reality tv show or some insane drama with impossible twists. We understand what must be done and in crystal clarity understand why we are doing this. Our God has shown us the way.

And it's time to throw that net wide. Wider then we could ever have imagined. These cords of Love, gentleness, peace, understanding, respect, freedom, justice, understanding; these are the cords that we cast out to bring in more builders for the kingdom of our God. This kingdom that will have to end, this kingdom that will blaze eternal, this kingdom that we build today for all to join in forever. Amen.