

LIVING IN THE BLESSING

Part 5 of Foundations 260 - OT. Genesis 30:25-43.

Peter Foxwell. The Cornerstone Church. February 8, 2026.

Dismiss the Middle School

TWO KINDS OF BLESSINGS

There are two kinds of blessings in life. They are very different, so if we get them mixed up, it leads to all kinds of problems.

The first kind of blessings is what we might call “creation” blessings. God designed the world to operate according to natural laws that bless us: sunshine, oxygen, food, friends, immune systems, intelligence, government, and the like.

There are many examples of creation blessings in the book of Proverbs. For example:

Proverbs 10:4 (CSB) Idle hands make one poor, but diligent hands bring riches.

Working harder and smarter generally leads to many benefits. Or, when we take care of our health, we are usually healthier. When we are positive, honest, and friendly, we make more friends. And so on.

Theologians call these creation blessings “common grace.” They ultimately come from God, but often through human means such as wisdom, hard work, and social structures.

Common grace is available to everyone, but it is not 100% guaranteed. Common grace sustains our lives, but it does not save or sanctify anyone.

The second kind of blessings is what we might call “covenant” blessings.

Covenant blessings are promised and poured out by God to advance his plan of redemption or salvation.

Theologians call these blessings “special grace.” These are unearned and undeserved. They are the gracious gifts of God, and they are only available to people who trust God and his promises.

And, amazingly, they are 100% guaranteed by covenant. God never fails, never lies, and always keeps this word.

NEVER CONFUSE CREATION AND COVENANT BLESSINGS

It is really dangerous to confuse creation and covenant blessings. For example:

If we name and claim, or believe for, or demand, or expect every creation blessing, we’ll eventually be disappointed and mad at God. Creation blessings are not 100% guaranteed.

God does not promise wealth, success, popularity, health, or absence of suffering in this age to everyone, all the time. If we expect something like that, and it doesn’t happen, it may lead to spiritual disaster.

Which brings us to today’s teaching passage: Genesis 30.

Genesis 30 is a passage about covenant blessings, not creation blessings.

Jacob’s prosperity wasn’t because of his wisdom, good character, or hard work. It was an undeserved gift from God. It was based on God's covenant promises to bless Abraham, his descendants, and the world through them.

GENESIS 30:25-43 (CSB)

After Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, “Send me on my way so that I can return to my homeland. 26 Give me my wives and my children that I have worked for, and let me go. You know how hard I have worked for you.”

27 But Laban said to him, “If I have found favor with you, stay. I have learned by divination that the LORD has blessed me because of you.” 28 Then Laban said, “Name your wages, and I will pay them.”

29 So Jacob said to him, “You know how I have served you and how your herds have fared with me. 30 For you had very little before I came, but now your wealth has increased. The LORD has blessed you because of me. And now, when will I also do something for my own family? ”

31 Laban asked, “What should I give you? ”

And Jacob said, “You don’t need to give me anything. If you do this one thing for me, I will continue to shepherd and keep your flock. 32 Let me go through all your sheep today and remove every sheep that is speckled or spotted, every dark-colored sheep among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the female goats. Such will be my wages. 33 In the future when you come to check on my wages, my honesty will testify for me. If I have any female goats that are not speckled or spotted, or any lambs that are not black, they will be considered stolen.”

34 “Good,” said Laban. “Let it be as you have said.”

35 That day Laban removed the streaked and spotted male goats and all the speckled and spotted female goats — every one that had any white on it — and every dark-colored one among the lambs, and he placed his sons in charge of them. 36 He put a three-day journey between himself and Jacob. Jacob, meanwhile, was shepherding the rest of Laban’s flock.

37 Jacob then took branches of fresh poplar, almond, and plane wood, and peeled the bark, exposing white stripes on the branches. 38 He set the peeled branches in the troughs in front of the sheep — in the water channels where the sheep came to drink. And the sheep bred when they came to drink. 39 The flocks bred in front of the branches and bore streaked, speckled, and spotted young. 40 Jacob separated the lambs and made the flocks face the streaked sheep and the completely dark sheep in Laban's flocks. Then he set his own stock apart and didn't put them with Laban's sheep.

41 Whenever the stronger of the flock were breeding, Jacob placed the branches in the troughs, in full view of the flocks, and they would breed in front of the branches. 42 As for the weaklings of the flocks, he did not put out the branches. So it turned out that the weak sheep belonged to Laban and the stronger ones to Jacob. 43 And the man became very rich. He had many flocks, female and male slaves, and camels and donkeys.

This story exemplifies covenant or special grace, as God graciously and freely poured out abundant blessings on Jacob to advance his plan of salvation. His family line would eventually produce Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.

And that has profound implications for how we read and apply Genesis 30 to our lives. Before we discuss those implications, let's try to understand the story. The story conveys two main points:

1. Jacob received God's covenant blessings.
2. Jacob did not deserve God's covenant blessings.

JACOB RECEIVED GOD'S BLESSINGS

God blessed Jacob abundantly.

- He gave Jacob eleven children (see chapters 29-30).
- His father-in-law got rich because of the blessing on Jacob.

Genesis 30:29-30 (CSB) So Jacob said to him (Laban), "You know how I have served you and how your herds have fared with me. 30 For you had very little before I came, but now your wealth has increased. The LORD has blessed you because of me.

- The passage comments on Jacob's abundance:

Genesis 30:43 (CSB) And the man became very rich. He had many flocks, female and male slaves, and camels and donkeys.

- God did this because he promised to do it (12:1-3; 17, 22, 26, and 28).
- God came to Jacob in a dream and confirmed the promise:

Genesis 28:13-15 (CSB) The LORD was standing there beside him, saying, "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac.... 14 All the peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. 15 Look, I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go. I will bring you back to this land, for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

- It's true that Jacob worked hard for 14 years to pay the dowries for his wives and another six years to grow his flock (that was his wages, 30:28). However, his success wasn't the result of his hard work or common grace. It was a gift from God, given according to his promise. It was undeserved, special grace. It was a covenanted blessing despite Jacob's many shortfalls. Let me show you ...

JACOB DID NOT DESERVE GOD'S BLESSINGS

Jacob was morally and spiritually compromised.

- He lived up to his name; Jacob means “heel-grabber” because he grabbed his twin Esau’s heel during birth. The name became a metaphor for deception.
- He stole his twin’s birthright - Abraham’s blessing (Genesis 27:35-36).
- His father-in-law was a mean, greedy, lying, awful man. He cheated Jacob in so many ways. But Jacob was more than a match. He was equally deceptive; a high-order schemer.
- Jacob was an adulterer and a polygamist. He mistreated his wives. He also abused his power by taking advantage of his servant girls, Bilhah and Zilpah (Genesis 30:3, 9). His family was a mess.
- He counted on “magic” to grow his flock, using folk remedies to produce speckled sheep and goats. Maybe he had adopted the local religion and worldview (Laban was an occult polytheist - Genesis 30:27; 31:19).

Jacob knew that he was blessed by God in a unique way. He was “special” and at the center of God’s plans.

Sadly, however, Jacob lived as if it were all up to him to bring about the blessings God had promised. It’s as if he believed God needed his help.

OK. So how does Jacob’s story relate to us?

HOW DOES JACOB'S STORY RELATE TO US?

Jacob's story relates to us in two important ways:

FIRST, THE STORY PROMPTS US TO READ THE BIBLE INTELLIGENTLY, according to its literary style or intention. In Genesis 30, we must recognize that its intention is to be descriptive, not prescriptive.

- ON THE ONE HAND, it's not telling us how to live, so don't follow Jacob's example, which leads to a messed-up life. He is the model of what **NOT** to do.
- ON THE OTHER HAND, the story shows us we should rely on God's covenant faithfulness. God always keeps his word. His promises are unbreakable. Just as Jacob received blessings based on God's covenant with Abraham, so we receive blessings based on the New Covenant.

SECOND, THE STORY PREPARES US TO COUNT ON NEW COVENANT BLESSINGS.

The New Covenant that we receive through faith is sealed by the blood of Jesus Christ. His promises are eternal and unbreakable (Hebrews 9:15-22; 10:29; 13:20). God will do what he said he will do.

It's all covenanted grace, absolutely a gift, 100% guaranteed to flawed people like us. We cannot earn a single New Covenant blessing. Just as Jacob's flocks are exponentially in spite of his pagan tactics, so God blesses us in Christ even when we flounder and fail in godliness.

What has he covenanted to do? So much ...

Take just one passage as an example: Ephesians chapter one.

I tell myself the opening lines of Ephesians 1 most days as a reminder to live in God's blessing. Count them as I read:

*Ephesians 1:3-8 (NIV) Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has **blessed us** in the heavenly realms with **every spiritual blessing in Christ**. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love, 5 he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— 6 to the praise of his **glorious grace**, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8 that he lavished on us.*

It's all God's grace; covenanted, certain, guaranteed in spite of us.

We can rest in this amazing grace. Covenant blessing helps us fight anxiety and spiritual depression. We're always blessed, always loved, always adopted, always forgiven, and always free from condemnation. God is always our Father, and he is always fiercely for us, not against us. By glorious grace as a gift.

ONE FINAL WORD

Remember: Our God is more willing to bless than we are to receive blessings. He loves to bless. He is gracious and generous. Jacob went from pauper to prince. We go from cross to crown.

Live in the blessing every day.

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Review

- Review Peter's February 8th teaching and study guide.
- What were the main insights of Peter's teaching?
- What questions do you have about the passage or Peter's teaching?
- What were the main applications or takeaways for your life?

Discuss

1. What are some examples of "creation blessings" you experience every day? Which blessings do you now recognize as "covenant blessings" in Christ?
2. Do you think Jacob's success with his flocks was more about his effort or God's special, covenanted grace? Why? Look up Genesis 28:4, 14; and 31:9 for helpful insights. What reasons might have led Jacob to "help" God's promises along? What are some examples of us trying something similar?
3. When life doesn't go as planned, how can remembering God's covenant blessings stabilize your faith? How does this teaching challenge "prosperity gospel" ideas that tie blessing to performance or faith levels? What are some methods to remain mindful and assured of covenant blessings?
4. What does it mean for you personally to "live in the blessing every day"?

Prayer Focus

- 247: "Lord, please add daily to the Cornerstone those who are being saved."
- Pray for more grace to rest in the New Covenant blessings daily.