

Sermon Summary | Sunday 23rd August 2026 | Rachel & Leah

Genesis 29 is a painfully honest story about comparison, longing, and the ache of being unloved.

Jacob has fled from home and arrives in Haran. There he meets Rachel and loves her deeply. He works seven years for her, and they seem to him *“but a few days because of the love he had for her.”* The Bible is not cynical about human love. It does not mock the longing to love and be loved.

But Leah is standing there too.

Leah is introduced in comparison with Rachel. Rachel is beautiful. Rachel is loved. Rachel is chosen. Rachel is worked for. Leah is not Rachel. Her pain is not simply the pain of being unloved in the abstract. It is the pain of being unloved while someone else is loved.

That is a very recognisable pain. Comparison does not merely say, “Someone else has something good.” It says, “Because I do not have what they have, perhaps I am less.” Many of us know something of that: feeling overlooked, second-best, unwanted, or not enough.

Yet Rachel herself is not secure. She is loved, but she is also used by Laban and later will ache because she has no children. Leah shows us the pain of not being Rachel. Rachel shows us that being Rachel is not enough. Human love is a precious gift, but it is a terrible saviour.

The story darkens when Laban deceives Jacob and gives him Leah instead of Rachel. The deceiver is deceived. But Laban’s deception does not only punish Jacob; it wounds his daughters. Leah is given to a man who did not choose her. Rachel is also drawn into the rivalry and sorrow of this household.

Then the Lord sees Leah. *“When the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb.”* But the names of Leah’s sons show that her ache continues.

Reuben: *“Now my husband will love me.”*

Simeon: *“The LORD has heard that I am hated.”*

Levi: *“Now this time my husband will be attached to me.”*

Leah has received gifts from the Lord, but she is still hoping Jacob will heal her deepest wound. We recognise that “perhaps now” instinct: perhaps now I will be noticed; perhaps now I will be valued; perhaps now I will finally feel loved.

Then Judah is born, and Leah says, *“This time I will praise the LORD.”* Her circumstances have not suddenly become easy. The family remains fractured. But there is a real moment of grace. Leah’s eyes lift from Jacob to the Lord.

And through Judah will come David, and finally Jesus Christ.

The gospel is not that God makes Leah into Rachel. The gospel is that the Lord sees Leah, hears Leah, draws praise from Leah, and brings Christ through Leah. Jesus is the true Bridegroom, whose love is enough for the unloved, the loved-but-restless, the overlooked, the envious, and all who have asked human love to bear the weight of their hope.

Human love is a precious gift. But it cannot save. Christ is enough.

Questions for personal reflection

1. Where do I most feel the pain of comparison — and what does that reveal about where I am looking for worth, security, or love?
2. What would it mean this week to lift my eyes from “perhaps now I will be loved” to “this time I will praise the LORD”?