



GENESIS

Grace from the Beginning

22/23 September 2018

Vol. 40, No. 37

How God Functions in the Midst of Family Dysfunction

Genesis 29:31-30:24

English Services

(8 & 10:30 a.m., & 5:30 p.m.)

Prelude
Call to Worship
Worship through Praise
Worship through Fellowship
Scripture Reading
Pastoral Prayer
Worship in the Word
Pastor Larry Pabiona
Response Song
Worship in Giving
Benediction

Filipino Service

(3 n.h.)

Paghahanda
Tawag sa Pagsamba
Pagsamba sa Pag-aawitan
Pagkilala sa mga Bisita
Pagbasa ng Salita ng Diyos
Panalanging Pastoral
Pakikinig sa Salita ng Diyos
Pastor Sam Rendal
Tugon na Awit
Pagsamba sa Pagbibigay
Bendisyon

See inset inside for the **Traditional Service (Sat., 6 p.m.)** program.



How God Functions in the Midst of Family Dysfunction

Today's Message (22/23 September 2018) /
Genesis 29:31-30:24

CAN GOD
POSSIBLY
WORK HIS PLAN
THROUGH SUCH
DYSFUNCTIONAL
FAMILIES? HE
CAN, AND HE
DOES. THAT
SHOULD GIVE
ALL OF US
HOPE FOR OUR
FAMILIES.

This story is about the craving of human beings for love and recognition, and the cost of acquiring it. No doubt, Leah thought, "If I only had my sister's beauty and the love of my husband as she does." No doubt, Rachel thought, "If I only had sons like my sister." Beautiful or plain, we all have our burdens.

But the root of it all is that Jacob did not have a spiritual home. So his wives fought viciously and used him as a pawn (*Genesis 30:14-16*). We read of no altar in Jacob's life here, and the sad results are clear to see. Can God possibly work His plan through such dysfunctional families like this and others in Genesis? He can, and he does. That should give all of us hope for our families. God has the ability to transform our brokenness and use it to further His purposes. He also has a way of using our dysfunction to deepen our devotion to Him.

1. GENESIS 29:31-35: LEAH GIVES BIRTH TO THE FIRST FOUR SONS OF JACOB.

- Jacob never really loved Leah. Her deepest desire was that "my husband will love me now" (*Genesis 29:32, 30:18-20*). But her efforts apparently never worked.
- Leah prayed about her husband's rejection (*Genesis 29:33*) and God heard her. It is clear Leah named her children out of faith in God.
- There are two things you must realize. First, "the LORD saw that Leah was not loved." Her father did not think she was lovable enough and the community seemed to agree with him—so he marries her off by deceit. Jacob certainly thought she was not lovable from the start and preferred Rachel from beginning to end. The other thing you must know is that you will see Leah in heaven, where she *is* loved. That's a wonderful theme in Scripture—God loves His children who are unloved.

Traditional Service (Saturday, 6:00 p.m.)

Prelude
Call to Worship
Worship through Praise
Worship through Fellowship
Scripture Reading
Preparatory Hymn
Pastoral Prayer
Worship in the Word
Pastor Larry Pabiona
Worship through Giving
Response Hymn
Doxology
Benediction



How God Functions in the Midst of Family Dysfunction

Today's Message (22/23 September 2018) /
Genesis 29:31-30:24

2. GENESIS 30:1-13: THE CONCUBINES GIVE TWO SONS EACH FOR RACHEL AND LEAH.

- a. Bilhah gives two sons for Rachel.
 - Rachel repeats the error of Sarah—surrogate motherhood. Don't expect God to bless what you know is done the wrong way. God's silence is not necessarily God's approval.
 - Marital leadership requires saying no to obviously wrong decisions. Jacob should have prayed about the problem, as his parents did (*Genesis 25:19-23*). A family that loses its dependence on the Lord can expect turmoil and chaos until it becomes dysfunctional.
- b. Zilpah gives two sons for Leah.
 - Sadly, Leah wavers, and the "Game of Sons" is on at Jacob's home. Seeking the approval of man will be a never-ending quest.

3. GENESIS 30:14-21: LEAH GIVES BIRTH TO THREE MORE CHILDREN.

- Apparently, Rachel, as Jacob's favored wife, has the questionable privilege of deciding which of Jacob's wives or concubines could sleep with him.
- God listens to prayer. These births were in answer to Leah's prayers (*Genesis 29:33, 30:6, 17, 22*).

4. GENESIS 30:22-24: RACHEL GIVES BIRTH TO JOSEPH.

- God remembered Rachel and she became pregnant. Grace, not drugs, had met her need.
- It was in this unhappiest of marriages that the twelve ancestors of Israel were born. Perhaps Moses captured this to humble Israel, showing them that God's blessing was totally from grace, not anything in them or their forefathers. Once again, it is divine grace, not human effort, on which the hope of the world's salvation rests.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Can God possibly work his plan through desperately dysfunctional families like Jacob's? He can, and he does, and perhaps no one has borne more pain than Leah in this one. Leah represents the second choices of the world, those whom God has chosen, but men have not. They are the people not expected to make it, but somehow do. And when they do, some want them to fail because "they have no right to be there," and sadly, many Leahs live up to that repeated lie and *make* themselves fail.

But you can find significance in God's sovereignty and love despite your imperfections, and despite how other people treat and regard you—within a family or not. A perfect God can use your imperfect life for His perfect plan ■

Surely, regardless of our life situations, God has made it clear through His Word that we can always come to Him, in both the trials and the triumphs we experience in life. This is why we recall the words of the psalmist in Psalm 116:5-7: "The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. The Lord protects the unwary; when I was brought low, he saved me. Return to your rest, my soul, for the Lord has been good to you."

But while this is clear to many believers, then why is it that our prayer lives in our Growth Groups and even our personal lives seem dry, shallow, and lacking? While there are plenty of possible answers, our Young Adults retreat guest speaker made a simple yet profound observation by saying:

Sa church, alalahanin natin na hindi lahat makakasabay. Minsan pupunta ang tao sa church na masaya. Minsan malungkot naman sila. Ang maganda sa Panginoon? Lahat welcome sa kanya. Sa Panginoon, may mapupuntahan tayo.
– Dr. Rico Villanueva

As a rookie husband, a newbie father, and a young pastor, that was what I needed to hear from the Lord, and I thank God that he allowed me to experience him together with fellow young adults at our recently concluded Sabbath 2018 Young Adults Retreat, which was held last August 25-27 at Sinagtala Resort, Bataan.

LAMENT AND PRAISE IN VARIOUS LIFE SEASONS

Through the course of the retreat, we asked ourselves if we are in a season like the psalmist in Psalm 117, singing praises to God and rejoicing about God's love and faithfulness. Or instead, are we in a season like David in Psalm 13, lamenting, "How long, Lord? Will you forget me

forever?" Or are we in a season of being re-oriented, being prepared and renewed from calamity like Psalm 116, where the Lord responds to psalmists cry for help? Dr. Villanueva, our guest speaker, reminded us that through these seasons, we are to remember that God is with us. We can bring to him our joys, as well as our pains.

NOT JUST JOY, BUT SORROW, TOO

As I was taking down my personal notes from Dr. Rico's messages, I reminded myself, and you now, my fellow GC'ers that we, too, like King David and the other psalmists, can lament and not just rejoice in God. In prayer, I ought to honestly give to God not just the best, but also the worst in me. I learned that

- To lament to God is about experiencing the depths within me and the depths of who God is
- To lament is to cry out to God in prayer
- To acknowledge and admit of my failures, weakness and pain should be part of my prayer journey
- To lament involves a process which could take a long time
- To lament is to pray within and also for the community

It is my prayer that we learn this vital "discipline" of lamenting before God, which I believe is as important as giving Him praise. Let us say with the psalmist: "Sing the praises of the Lord, you his faithful people; praise his holy name. For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning" (*Psalm 34:5*) ■

Ablaze Devotional

**And when Jesus saw
their faith, he said to the
paralytic, "Son, your sins
are forgiven."**

—Mark 2:5 (ESV)

After going around proclaiming the good news in the towns of Galilee, Jesus returned to Capernaum. It is quite possible that he moved here from his hometown Nazareth. Word got around quickly. The scene turned into what seems like Jesus was a superstar stalked by the sick, the curious, and the suspicious.

Many people were pressing against Jesus's house that Mark describes that there is no more room "not even at the door." So there is this paralytic, carried by his four friends, seeking to be healed. Finding that there is no room for them to get through to Jesus, they made a way by breaking in through the roof—they ruined the roof of Jesus' house!

This scenario opens up a new understanding of what Jesus said to the paralytic. Imagine you were in the crowd inside Jesus house, how would you react? And how would you react when someone made a big hole in your own roof?

Here, we see that Jesus, who "saw their faith...said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.'" This forgiveness goes beyond domestic trespasses. Jesus, speaking with quiet authority, grants forgiveness that goes deep into the paralytic's soul.

It is no surprise that along with the crowd, there were scribes who felt uneasy with Jesus' declaration. They reasoned with their hearts that only God can forgive sin. Their reasoning was in conflict with Jesus's teaching. Only priests, as God's representatives, could declare forgiveness.

But just as in the previous healing of the leper, Jesus bypasses the law to free the man from not just his sickness, but also his offenses. Compassion for human life triumphs over status quo.

When needy people seem to threaten our security, are we able to respond in compassion just as Jesus did with the paralytic? ■

GCF PRAYER GATHERINGS AT THE CHAPEL:

The GCF Hour of Prayer
Tuesdays, 6-7 a.m.

Midweek Prayer Service
Wednesdays, 7-8:30 p.m.

Ministry Opportunities + Other Announcements

2018 CHURCH LEADERS ELECTIONS

Nomination Period: September 3-28, 2018

Election Days: December 8 and 9, 2018

Nomination forms are available at the Ministry Information Booth. For more information, please refer to the flyer inserted in this bulletin.

MEN: OVERCOMING AND WINNING

GCF Men's Ministry's Conference

October 6-7 (Sat-Sun) at CCT Tagaytay

Open to men aged 21 and above. Fee: Php 1,000

Please contact **0917 532 7740** for more details.

SENIORS' LUNCH FELLOWSHIP

*Know how to deal with your health issues
with Dr. Benjo Cruz*

October 20 (Sat), 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

at the Fellowship Hall

Please contact **0917 544 6823** to register.

I STILL DO

GCF Ortigas Couples' Retreat 2018

November 3-4 (Sat-Sun) at CCT Tagaytay

Fee: Php 2,000 per couple | Limited slots only.

Text **0917 532 7725** to register, then pay to confirm.

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

September 2018

| | September Budget | Received, Sept. 1-16 |
|----------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| General | 7,901,145 | 11,227,492 |
| Missions | 927,000 | 295,604 |
| | Jan. to Sept. Budget | Received, Jan.-Sept. |
| General | 78,316,916 | 67,794,453 |
| Missions | 8,343,000 | 7,448,680 |

Flower Ministry

*The flowers this week are given
with praise and thanksgiving to our
God by the Basilad family and the
Messiah College.*

Please call 632 1354 to 56 for inquiries on how to participate in this ministry.



Rest is found in God alone

by Jia Angeles Ramos

Resting, but not rested.

That, for me, was the three or four months leading up to the Sabbath Young Adults Retreat last August 25-27. I was trying to get as much rest as possible, in spite of everything that I needed to do. And my definition of rest was simple: Sleep, sleep, sleep. I would sleep whenever and wherever I could—in the car on the way to work, in the shuttle on the way home from work, even entire Saturday mornings or Sunday afternoons. And if I ever woke up before my alarm rang, I would actually be upset with myself. I wanted to get as much sleep as possible, because I needed to “rest.” But even though I was “resting,” I never felt fully rested.

When the weekend of the retreat came, I thought I would finally be able to sleep and rest. Instead—during the first plenary session—I was hit with a heavy realization: I had been idolizing sleep. I had become so focused on just sleeping, that I forgot to seek the One who gives rest and peace in spite of my circumstances or surroundings.

After the retreat, there have still been days that I really just want to sleep. But I make sure that sleeping does not get in the way spending time—in silence—in God’s presence and His Word. Because, as Pastor Rico Villanueva, the guest retreat speaker, said, rest is found in God alone.

Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him.—Psalm 62:5 ■

ON THE COVER: British painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s *Dante’s Vision of Rachel and Leah* (1855, public domain). In the poem *Divine Comedy* by the 14th century Italian poet Dante Alighieri, Leah says, “My sister Rachel never leaves her mirror, and sits all day. Her yearning is to see her shining eyes...She is content to look and I to labor.” This is portrayed in the painting. Rachel looks at herself in the well, while Leah is creating garlands out of flowers. Later Christian interpreters of Dante’s poem saw Leah representing action, and Rachel representing contemplation.

Join a

DISCIPLE-MAKING GROUP

New Growth Group (Mixed Group)

Topic: Counting the Real Cost of Being A Disciple

Sundays, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Rm. B124 (Growth Group Center)

Best Together in Christ

Group for Couples

Starting on September 30 (Sun)

9:30-11:00 a.m., at Rm. B508

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES

8 a.m.: *Ages 1-3, B415; Ages 4-5, B410; Age 6, B414; Age 7, B403; Age 8, B413, Ages 9-10, B411; Ages 11-12, B409; Transition Age 13, B406*

10:30 a.m.: *Ages 1-2, B412; Age 3, B415; Age 4, B408; Age 5, B410; Age 6A, B402; Age 6B, B403; Age 7, B401; Age 8, B413; Age 9, B411; Age 10, B414; Age 11, B409; Age 12, B405; Transition Age 13, B406*

3 p.m.: *Ages 1-5, B415; Ages 6-9, B402; Ages 10-12, B403*

5:30 p.m.: *Ages 1-5, B415; Age 6, B402; Ages 7-9, B401; Ages 10-12, B403; Transition Age 13, B404*

Nursery: *2nd flr. for nursing moms and babies aged one week to 11 months old*

Yayas: *8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., B404*

Sunday School Parents’ Class:

9:30 a.m., B406

If you are interested in joining any of the small groups above, fill out the tear-off form inside this bulletin, drop it in the offering bag or submit it to the Growth Group booth at the lobby. For more information, you can text or call us at 0917 532 7740.

3Q DMG LEADERS’ ASSEMBLY

Crash-Course on “How to Lead 40-Minute Bible Studies” with Ave and Dith Gaspar
September 29 (Sat), 3-5 p.m., Fellowship Hall



Greenhills Christian Fellowship

Know Christ and Make Him Known

Ruby cor. Garnet Roads, Ortigas Center, Pasig City 1605

Tel. Nos. 632 1354 to 56, 635 0078 to 80, 635 0082 to 83 | Fax No. 632 1357

Mobile No. 0920 961 2964, Mon.-Fri., 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

E-mail: email@gcf.org.ph • Website: www.gcf.org.ph

How may we SERVE YOU BETTER?

Fill-out this tear off form and drop it in an offering bag/box or at the Ministry Information Booth. Please check all that is applicable:

- ☐ I am a first-time guest.
- ☐ I prayed to receive Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord today.
- ☐ I would like to know how to become a Christian.
- ☐ I am interested in becoming a member of this church.
- ☐ **I want to join a Growth Group.**
(Specify age group: _____)
(Specify group composition: _____)
- ☐ I want to start a Growth Group.
- ☐ I want to host a Growth Group.

Please share with us some information about yourself:

Name: _____

Age: ____ Landline no.: _____

Mobile no.: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Year of membership: _____

Name of Growth Group (if you already have one): _____

Today is 22/23 September 2018, and I attended the 8 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 3:00 p.m., 5:30 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. (Sat) (encircle the time).

Write below *any* inquiry or prayer item that you want to ask or share.

For hospital or house visitation, dedication service, or funeral service requests, please call or text 0917 532 7794.

God's Way to Heaven

THE GOSPEL

"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."
(1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD

God is holy and righteous: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty, the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isaiah 6:3). **He requires holiness of us as well:** "Be holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16).

THE TRUTH ABOUT MAN

Man is sinful: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).
Sin demands a penalty: "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

THE TRUTH ABOUT CHRIST

Christ is the expression of God's love for us: "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). **Christ paid the penalty of our sins and died for sinners:** "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God" (1 Peter 3:18). **Through Christ, God offers man reconciliation:** "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them" (2 Corinthians 5:18).

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

Believe and receive Jesus as Lord and Savior: "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).

PRAYER: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner. I believe that you died on the cross in my place, to save me from my sins, and I accept you as my Savior, and the Master of my life forever. Amen.

Need someone to talk to?

Visit the Emmaus Road Counseling Center at the GCF Mezzanine floor or contact 632 1354 to 56, 635 0078 to 80 or 0917 532 7794 for inquiries.