

the Purpose *and* Promises of God

God's Purpose and our Shame

Summary

In this passage we again see God's sovereign grace in the fact that he keeps his promises even though his covenant people fail so miserably. Sin and the messiness of people is so prevalent. Yet God's grace is more powerful still.

We see a lot of brokenness and shame in this passage. We see it in Jacob and Laban but even more explicitly in Rachel and Leah. We tend to react to our shame by trying to hide and cover it up just as Adam and Eve did after they sinned. However, shame can only be rightly healed by our promise-keeping God. God will keep his promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and bring his blessing to all nations through them. In that blessing he will ultimately deal with the shame of his people.

Outline

Introduction

Ed Welch wrote: "Shame. You feel worthless, rejected, dirty and exposed. Sometimes you feel it because of what you have done [or] from something that has been done to you." Shame speaks to our identity and always makes us feel broken and worthless. It permeates our culture and is present in our church. I want to talk about shame this morning but I want to put it into a context that I'm rather excited about – a God-shaped context. I believe that our shame can move toward healing and wholeness only when we bring it before God and his people. God wants to take our shame and heal it.

Notes:

Personal Application:

Potential Areas of Shame: Professional, Financial, Digital, Abuse, Emotional, Sexual, Relational, Body, Relational, Past.

Reflection Questions

1. Why do you think God is insistent on keeping his promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob even though they seem to blow it so badly?
2. Read Genesis 28.13-15. How is God fulfilling his promise to Jacob in Genesis 29.1-30.24? What does it teach you about God that he chooses to use the sin in this passage to bring about his promise to Jacob?
3. Put yourself in Jacob's shoes. What do you think God is doing in him through the events in this passage? How might God be maturing Jacob through these events?
4. Consider Leah and Rachel. Describe how you think they are feeling throughout these events. At what points in the narrative can you point out brokenness and shame? If you were their friend what might you have said to them? What might you have said to Jacob?
5. How and where does shame show up in your life? Consider the areas listed in the sermon: Professional, Financial, Digital, Abuse, Emotional, Sexual, Relational, Body, Relational, and our Past.
6. Do you tend to try to hide or cover up your shame? Why is that our attempted remedy for shame at times?
7. If Adam and Eve ran from God and hid, what does it practically look like to run to God and allow him to speak into your shame?
8. What has changed in the way you think and/or want to live in the weeks ahead as a result of this study and discussion?