

THE LORD'S LOVE: JACOB AND RACHEL

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Readings: Genesis 29:1-13; Revelation 19:6-9; Conjugal Love 7

When Jacob came to the well in Haran, he saw a well with a great stone on it. Apparently it was quite a large stone, because the people there told him that they could not water the sheep until everyone was gathered together, and they could move the stone. It appears that the stone was there to protect the water but, for the sheep to be watered, it had to be moved away.

When Jacob saw Rachel something happened. He was moved and touched by the sight of her. We know that Rachel was very beautiful. Jacob probably saw how beautiful she was. He probably also saw how she was with the sheep, probably leading them along gently, perhaps calling them by name, taking good care of them. Maybe Jacob saw a kind of tenderness and love that Rachel had for the sheep. He decided to do something for her. He took hold of that huge stone on top of the well and moved it out of the way because of the love he had for Rachel. Then he watered all of her sheep.

You know that all of us are sheep, and the Lord is our Shepherd. In the Twenty-third Psalm, we read, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters" (verses 1-2). The Lord wants to give us everything we need. When Jacob saw Rachel with her sheep, he knew that they were coming for water. That is what they needed, and he wanted to give it to them. The Lord is like Jacob in this way. He wants to give us everything we need. He is especially moved when He sees people who are thirsty and want to know His truth—they want to know what the Lord says.

The well in the story is like the Lord's Word. Sometimes we go to the Lord's Word—to the well—and we do not understand it. It is confusing to us. But, if we ask the Lord, He will help us to understand. This is what the Lord has done for his new church. The Word was confusing to many people, and the Lord opened it up by revealing the spiritual sense to us. That opening up of the Word is something the Lord has done because He loves His people. It is as if the Lord has taken a large stone that was standing in the way and moved it aside so that He can give water or truth from the Word to all of His sheep.

The Lord's love for His church and for all its people is like the love of a husband for his wife or like the love of Jacob for Rachel. Because of his love Jacob did that great deed, moving the stone, that no one man could have done ordinarily on his own. But Jacob had that power from the love he had for

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Rachel. The Lord, too, has power from His great love, power to open the spiritual sense of the Word to us so we can go and find the truth we need to make our lives good.

Because the Lord has such great love for His people, He wants to give us precious gifts. One of the most precious gifts He gives us is true marriage love, the conjugal love that brings a husband and wife together. He gives that love to people who go to His Word and take the truth from it and live by that truth so they can do good things. These are like people coming to the well, and the Lord opens up the well and gives the water of life to everyone who is thirsty. And to everyone who does that, the Lord gives true marriage love. Now He does not give this love right away. You will not have it now, but perhaps when you grow up, and certainly when you finally become an angel, the Lord will give this precious love between a husband and wife to you.

In a song about marriage called “O Precious Sign” we sing about the Lord putting a crown on the brow of his bride and wife, which is the church. That crown is a symbol of the Lord’s love for His people, for His church. I want you to think about how the Lord loves us so much that He has opened up the Word in order to give us its spiritual meaning to change our lives and satisfy our thirst.

Amen.