

Intro:

Main Point of Text: The sinful affairs of Jacob and his wives in child bearing are used by God to build His nation.

Sermon Point: *God makes good out of your mess.*

Move 1: Women, you sure can make a mess of things when you meddle.

Wife rivalry over bearing children. Similar with Sarah and Hagar: Vss. 8, 15:

- Vs. 1: Wrong motive. Excessive emotion. Jacob rebukes for shirking providence: Vs. 2.
- Vs. 8: “Prevailed!” Focusing not on glorifying God with children, but competing with sister.
- Use servants. Vss. 3-4: Rachel gives Bilhah. Vss. 9-10: Leah won’t be outdone.
- Mandrakes: pleasant fruit still used by Arabs as superstitious means of promoting child bearing. Yet Rachel stays barren while Leah conceives.
- Not unlike Laban’s bargaining for their husband earlier. *Hiring* of husband! Vss. 14-15

Move 2: Men, the mess is always your fault for not leading.

In contrast to wives, Jacob’s only mention of God is negative, vs. 2. Vs. 16a, back from working, thinks his job ends there. Let’s rivalry happen. No leadership at home. Like Adam in Garden. Goes along w/ mess. Takes servants in tent. Hired for services!: Vs. 16b.

Move 3: Yet God always mercifully cleans up your mess.

God graciously involved in covenant families. Generously gives children in spite of rivalry: Vss. 6, 17-18, 20, 22-24. Names recognize God’s care by Leah, and finally by Rachel. He is not a distant Husband. Sympathetic: women also eager to bear children to birth Abraham’s nation.

Move 4: Your blessed Redeemer is building His Kingdom out of your rubble.

God always has other greater things in view, going on. He is in the process of building a mighty nation. Uses the last Patriarch who is the most *unworthy.* Makes clear it is His sovereign grace.

Rachel has been disciplined: Vs. 2, 6. First 10 of Jacob’s sons are not from her own womb. Finally humbled, then rewarded: Vs. 23. Joseph will save Israel from famine and be a major type of Jesus.

Conclusion:

“My times *are* in thy hand ...” (Psa 31:15)

God makes good out of your mess.