**“And they seemed only a few days…”**

*Genesis 29:20*

**Introduction**

1. Isaac instructed Jacob to go to Padan Aram and take a wife from the house of Laban his uncle.
2. As Jacob came into the land, he met Rachel, Laban’s daughter, at a well, and she went to Laban and told him Jacob, his relative, was there.
3. Jacob served Laban for the hand of Rachel in marriage – **Genesis 29:15-30** – the avaricious Laban tricked Jacob by giving him Leah, but Jacob served another 7 years for Rachel.
4. Notice Jacob’s love for Rachel – **Genesis 29:29** – the love he had outweighed the seemingly burdensome condition for having her hand in marriage.
5. Consider some lessons from the strength of Jacob’s love for Rachel.
6. The Power of Love
7. “The service of love [is] the consecration and consummation of human energy.” (Pulpit Commentary, Homilies by R.A. Redford)
8. **2 Timothy 1:7** – Paul encouraging Timothy in the face of adversity for the Gospel’s sake.
   1. **Power** – that of the gospel – knowledge of the gospel empowers us to do.
   2. **Sound mind** – the state of mind which promotes self-control, and evenness in trial due to its proper evaluation of the spiritual over the physical.
   3. **Love** – the motive of his service in preaching.
      1. “Nothing will do more to inspire courage, to make a man fearless of danger, or ready to endure privation and persecution, than ‘love.’ The love of country, and wife, and children, and home, makes the most timid bold when they are assailed; and the love of Christ and of a dying world nerves the soul to great enterprises, and sustains it in the deepest sorrows.” (Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Bible; 2 Timothy 1:7)
9. What love brings such power and motivation?
   1. “This is to be understood, as *C. a Lapide* observes, “not *affective*, but *appretiative*,” i.e., in comparison with the reward to be obtained for his service.” (Keil & Delitzsch)
   2. I.e. not a merely affectionate love, but one of sincere evaluation of its object.
   3. 7 years “seemed only a few days” to Jacob in COMPARISON to the value he placed on Rachel.
   4. Mere affection is apt to grow cold, but this greater love can always be sustained as long as its possessor continues to rightly evaluate the object of his love.
10. Jesus’ encounter with the scribes – **Mark 12:28-34**
    1. **(v. 32)** – understanding the singularity of God – ONE TRUE GOD – none like Him, thus, transcendent in value.
    2. **(v. 33a)** – understanding, then, the proper response – love.
       1. ***“On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 22:40).***
       2. Such a view of God will motivate love that does everything He says.
    3. **(v. 33b)** – neighbor – those made in the image of God should naturally be recipients of such love – transcendent in value compared to all created things.
11. Proper love has great power. God, the Almighty, is self-described as love **(1 John 4:8).**
12. Committed Love in Marriage
13. The love Jacob had for Rachel was committed. His willingness to work 7 years shows this, and even more so the final 7 years due to Laban’s trickery.
14. The actions of Jacob, especially the description of his evaluation of the 7 years, is a romantic sentiment. However, it was more than romanticism which kept Jacob working.
    1. “This is to be understood, as *C. a Lapide* observes, “not *affective*, but *appretiative*,” i.e., in comparison with the reward to be obtained for his service.” (Keil & Delitzsch)
    2. Jacob’s service for Rachel’s hand stemmed from the honor he had for her. She was worth it, and he demonstrated he would go to tremendous lengths for her.
15. A choice of commitment – **Genesis 2:24** – comments in the historical record for continuing application.
    1. Adam and Eve had no father and mother.
    2. Their being joined set the precedent for times to come.
    3. “*dabaq* (דָּבַק, 1692), “to cling, cleave, keep close.” Used in modern Hebrew in the sense of “to stick to, adhere to,” dabaq yields the noun form for “glue” and also the more abstract ideas of “loyalty, devotion.” (VINE)
    4. ***“leave his father and mother”*** – dependency, but also devotion, service.
       1. Some remain more committed to the family they are to leave than to the one they create with their spouse.
       2. God created marriage as the greatest earthly commitment to engage in.
16. Commitment of Ruth – **Ruth 1:14-17** – Naomi leaving Moab to go back to Judah because famine had ended. Tells daughters-in-law to not go with her.
    1. Tie between Ruth and Naomi – either Mahlon or Chilion (Naomi’s sons) – both died.
    2. Bond between Ruth and Naomi – but cultivated first by the bond of marriage.
    3. Had Ruth not been committed to Naomi’s son she would not have been committed thus to Naomi after his passing.
17. We need the commitment of this sort in our marriages:
    1. **Galatians 5:13** – service through love.
    2. Committed leadership of husband, and trusting submission of the wife – **Ephesians 5:22-25**
       1. Husband – committed to do what is best for the wife at his own expense.
          1. Though not truly at his own expense.
          2. **(vv. 28-29)** – as own body – nourish, and cherish.
       2. Wife – committed to submitting to and revering **(v. 33).** (Requires trust, but also sacrifice in another way.)
    3. Committed exclusively to each other for help through life – **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12**
18. Ultimately, we should be imitating the love of Christ in our marriages – **John 13:34**
19. Christ’s Love for the Church
20. ***“So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed only a few days to him because of the love he had for her.” (Genesis 29:20)***
    1. The cross was not the only sacrifice Jesus made.
    2. **Philippians 2:5-9** – Jesus first sacrificed the glories of heaven and became a man before sacrificing Himself on the cross.
       1. Jesus started ministry about age 30, and crucified about age 33.
       2. Jesus left eternal glory in heaven and spent 33 years on earth as a man.
          1. **John 6:51** – come down from heaven to give self for life of world.
21. Experienced hunger, thirst, weariness, sorrow, frustration, disappointment, temptation, pain, anguish, and death.
22. Why did He do it?
    1. **John 15:9, 12-13; 1 John 3:16** – He loved us.
    2. **Hebrews 12:2** – for the joy – a joy which included our fellowship/salvation.
    3. **Ephesians 5:25-27** – to sanctify, cleanse, present holy w/out blemish – the church.
23. “Why did my Savior come to earth, and to the humble go? Why did He choose a lowly birth?...Why did He drink the bitter cup of sorrow, pain and woe? Why on the cross be lifted up? Because He loved me so!...He gave His precious life for me…because He loved me so!” (“He Loved Me So,” J.G.Dailey)
24. Our Love for Christ
25. Our service to Christ is motivated by several things – reverence, duty, incentive (heaven), fear (hell), etc.
26. However, the greatest motivating factor should be His love – **2 Corinthians 5:14-15**
    1. The chief response to His act of love is a reciprocation of love.
    2. We live for Him because He died for us.
27. “The service of love [is] the consecration and consummation of human energy.” (Pulpit Commentary, Homilies by R.A. Redford)
    1. **Matthew 22:36-37** – all heart, soul, mind – summation of human energy.
       1. Consecrated – set apart and dedicated specially to the service of God.
       2. Consummated – the purpose of human energy realized in love.
    2. **Matthew 22:41-46** – Jesus’ necessary inference derived from the text – HE/CHRIST IS GOD.
       1. Implication – Love HIM (JESUS) with ALL heart, soul, and mind.
    3. **John 14:15** – keeping His commandments.
28. Such service of love is not always easy, but sacrificial:
    1. **Mark 8:34-38** – taking up our cross to follow Him.
    2. LIFETIME COMMITMENT.
    3. In the end – **2 Timothy 1:12; 3:6-8** – “And they seemed only a few days…”
    4. Our lifetime of serving love for Christ, as much sacrifice as it may demand, will be as only a few days when eternity is realized – **Revelation 22:1-5**

**Conclusion**

1. The love Jacob had for Rachel was impressive and serves as an object lesson on many levels.
2. Let our required love all our relationships be manifested as such, and let us always recognize the depth of love Christ has for us.