

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

JULY 30, 2017



THE LESSON Genesis 29:15-28

¹⁵Laban said to Jacob, “You shouldn’t have to work for free just because you are my relative. Tell me what you would like to be paid.”

¹⁶Now Laban had two daughters: the older was named Leah and the younger Rachel. ¹⁷Leah had delicate eyes, but Rachel had a beautiful figure and was good-looking. ¹⁸Jacob loved Rachel and said, “I will work for you for seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter.”

¹⁹Laban said, “I’d rather give her to you than to another man. Stay with me.”

²⁰Jacob worked for Rachel for seven years, but it seemed like a few days because he loved her. ²¹Jacob said to Laban, “The time has come. Give me my wife so that I may sleep with her.” ²²So Laban invited all the

people of that place and prepared a banquet. ²³However, in the evening, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he slept with her. ²⁴Laban had given his servant Zilpah to his daughter Leah as her servant. ²⁵In the morning, there she was—Leah! Jacob said to Laban, “What have you done to me? Didn’t I work for you to have Rachel? Why did you betray me?”

²⁶Laban said, “Where we live, we don’t give the younger woman before the oldest. ²⁷Complete the celebratory week with this woman. Then I will give you this other woman too for your work, if you work for me seven more years.” ²⁸So that is what Jacob did. He completed the celebratory week with this woman, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife.

THE RESPONSE Psalm 105:1-11, 45b

¹Give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name; make his deeds known to all people!

²**Sing to God; sing praises to the Lord; dwell on all his wondrous works!**

³Give praise to God’s holy name! Let the hearts rejoice of all those seeking the LORD!

⁴**Pursue the LORD and his strength; seek his face always!**

⁵Remember the wondrous works he has done, all his marvelous works, and the justice he declared—

⁶**you who are the offspring of Abraham, his servant, and the children of Jacob, his chosen ones.**

⁷The LORD—he is our God. His justice is everywhere throughout the whole world.

⁸**God remembers his covenant forever, the word he commanded to a**

thousand generations, ⁹which he made with Abraham, the solemn pledge he swore to Isaac.

¹⁰God set it up as binding law for Jacob, as an eternal covenant for Israel, ¹¹promising, "I hereby give you the land of Canaan as your allotted inheritance."

^{45b} **Praise the Lord!**

THE EPISTLE Romans 8:26-39

²⁶In the same way, the Spirit comes to help our weakness. We don't know what we should pray, but the Spirit himself pleads our case with unexpressed groans. ²⁷The one who searches hearts knows how the Spirit thinks, because he pleads for the saints, consistent with God's will. ²⁸We know that God works all things together for good for the ones who love God, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹We know this because God knew them in advance, and he decided in advance that they would be conformed to the image of his Son. That way his Son would be the first of many brothers and sisters. ³⁰Those who God decided in advance would be conformed to his Son, he also called. Those whom he called, he also made righteous. Those whom he made righteous, he also glorified.

³¹So what are we going to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³²He didn't spare

his own Son but gave him up for us all. Won't he also freely give us all things with him?

³³Who will bring a charge against God's elect people? It is God who acquits them. ³⁴Who is going to convict them? It is Christ Jesus who died, even more, who was raised, and who also is at God's right side. It is Christ Jesus who also pleads our case for us.

³⁵Who will separate us from Christ's love? Will we be separated by trouble, or distress, or harassment, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶As it is written,

We are being put to death all day long for your sake.

We are treated like sheep for slaughter.

³⁷But in all these things we win a sweeping victory through the one who loved us. ³⁸I'm convinced that nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord: not death or life, not angels or rulers, not present things or future things, not powers ³⁹or height or depth, or any other thing that is created.

^{45a}Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls. ⁴⁶When he found one very precious pearl, he went and sold all that he owned and bought it.

^{47a}Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that people threw into the lake and gathered all kinds of fish. ⁴⁸When it was full, they pulled it to the shore, where they sat down and put the good fish together into containers. But the bad fish they threw away. ⁴⁹That's the way it will be at the end of the present age. The angels will go out and separate

the evil people from the righteous people, ⁵⁰and will throw the evil ones into a burning furnace. People there will be weeping and grinding their teeth.

^{51a}"Have you understood all these things?" Jesus asked.

They said to him, "Yes."

⁵²Then he said to them, "Therefore, every legal expert who has been trained as a disciple for the kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household who brings old and new things out of their treasure chest."

THE GOSPEL Matthew 13:31-

33, 44, 52

³³He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like