

Wretched Families and God's Grace

Genesis 29:31 – 30:24

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Introduction:

Today we are returning to our sermon series in Genesis after a long break.

- We left off at Genesis 29:30 where Jacob had just finished laying the foundation for a miserable home.
 - It is a marvellous thing the way millions of individuals will set up trouble for themselves—sin is so irrational...
 - Pastors and elders often watch with horror as foolish plans are launched that are almost certain to bring trouble to those who launch them.

Jacob, of course, did not himself grow up in a happy or a godly home—

- If you don't have the advantage of having grown up in a family that pursues wisdom and that works out their problems, you have to be all the more earnest to look to the Lord for grace and help...
 - But we saw that Jacob, having gone to Haran to escape the hostility of his brother and very rightly to find a suitable wife did not seek the LORD when he arrived at Haran.
 - Even though the LORD had graciously met him on the way at Bethel, and had promised to bless him and to be with him,
 - Jacob seems to fall prey to the error of supposing that he does not need to seek the LORD because everything is working out and falling into place for him.
- In God's mercy, the first people he met when he came to a well were shepherds who knew his uncle Laban,
 - And even while he was talking to them, Laban's beautiful daughter Rachel came to the well to water her father's sheep.
 - But instead of expressing thanks to the LORD and praying for wisdom as Abraham's servant had done years before when he had gone to find a wife for Isaac, Jacob concluded that Rachel was the woman for him.
 - And as he had left his home in haste and was more or less penniless, he locked himself in to a seven year work term for his scheming uncle Laban.
 - Seven years was a long time to serve for a wife, but Jacob was so smitten with her that it seemed a very short time...
- And then you remember what happened—Jacob completed his seven years and Laban deceived him by giving him his older daughter Leah instead of Rachel...
 - In those days, the custom at a wedding was to feast all day (often with too much wine), and then when night fell, to present the bride to the groom, all veiled, that he might take her off into the bed chamber to consummate the marriage.
 - Laban took advantage of this custom and presented his older daughter Leah (heavily veiled) because he wanted to marry her off first,

- And when morning dawned, Jacob saw that he had consummated his marriage with Leah instead of Rachel...
- He immediately complained to Laban who rather callously told him that it was not the custom in his country to marry the younger first, and promised to give Rachel to him for seven more years of service if Jacob would finish out the week of wedding festivities with Leah.
 - It was a sinful proposal for Jacob to have two wives instead of one.
 - Laban's main motivation seems to be getting seven additional years of service out of Jacob, for he prospered greatly under Jacob's service...
- And the great folly of Jacob was to accept these terms!
 - Contrary to God's revealed will, he took two wives, and to make matters even worse, wives that were sisters!
 - In a culture where shame was a huge deal, Jacob knew that if he had refused to take Leah, Laban would have been highly offended and would never have given him Rachel—
 - And Jacob was so taken with Rachel that he agreed to these terrible terms.
 - If he had consulted the LORD, he would either have refused to take Leah (because marriage is only to be entered into by mutual consent) and suffered the consequences of likely losing Rachel...
 - or he would have accepted Leah as his only wife and would have learned to love her.
- The words of Gen 29:30 with which we concluded last time are ominous:
 - **Gen 29:30 Then Jacob also went in to Rachel, and he also loved Rachel more than Leah. And he served with Laban still another seven years.**
 - Here is a home on the wrong foundation—here is a home that is headed for trouble.
- Today we are going to read about Jacob and his miserable wives, but we are going to see how God's grace abounds in this sinful home.
 - We will see how God can use homes that are full of serious problems.
 - Our reading is from Genesis 29:31 to Genesis 30:24.

Genesis 29:31 – 30:24: When the LORD saw that Leah *was* unloved, He opened her womb; but Rachel *was* barren. ³² So Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben; for she said, "The LORD has surely looked on my affliction. Now therefore, my husband will love me." ³³ Then she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the LORD has heard that I *am* unloved, He has therefore given me this *son* also." And she called his name Simeon. ³⁴ She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have

borne him three sons." Therefore his name was called Levi. ³⁵ And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now I will praise the LORD." Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she stopped bearing. ^{30:1} Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister, and said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die!" ² And Jacob's anger was aroused against Rachel, and he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" ³ So she said, "Here is my maid Bilhah; go in to her, and she will bear a *child* on my knees, that I also may have

children by her.”⁴ Then she gave him Bilhah her maid as wife, and Jacob went in to her.⁵ And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son.⁶ Then Rachel said, “God has judged my case; and He has also heard my voice and given me a son.” Therefore she called his name Dan.⁷ And Rachel’s maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son.⁸ Then Rachel said, “With great wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, *and* indeed I have prevailed.” So she called his name Naphtali.⁹ When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing, she took Zilpah her maid and gave her to Jacob as wife.¹⁰ And Leah’s maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son.¹¹ Then Leah said, “A troop comes!” So she called his name Gad.¹² And Leah’s maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son.¹³ Then Leah said, “I am happy, for the daughters will call me blessed.” So she called his name Asher.¹⁴ Now Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, “Please give me *some* of your son’s mandrakes.”¹⁵ But she said to her, “*Is it* a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you

take away my son’s mandrakes also?” And Rachel said, “Therefore he will lie with you tonight for your son’s mandrakes.”¹⁶ When Jacob came out of the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, “You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son’s mandrakes.” And he lay with her that night.¹⁷ And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son.¹⁸ Leah said, “God has given me my wages, because I have given my maid to my husband.” So she called his name Issachar.¹⁹ Then Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son.²⁰ And Leah said, “God has endowed me *with* a good endowment; now my husband will dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons.” So she called his name Zebulun.²¹ Afterward she bore a daughter, and called her name Dinah.²² Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb.²³ And she conceived and bore a son, and said, “God has taken away my reproach.”²⁴ So she called his name Joseph, and said, “The LORD shall add to me another son.”

May the LORD bless the reading of His holy Word.

There is great encouragement for us in this passage...

- I will begin the exposition by looking at how, like many Christian families today, this family is a relational mess...
- But then we will look at how God is, nevertheless, very gracious to them...
- And lastly, at how God even uses them for the advancement of His glorious kingdom.

So let’s get underway with the first point...

I. That Jacob’s family, like many Christian families today, is a relational mess.

A. You have Leah who is the prime example of the unloved wife.

1. We do not need to merely surmise that she is unloved...
 - Nor was it just her opinion that she was unloved...
 - We are told in verse 31 that the LORD, who is very generous in judging His people, saw that she was unloved.
 - It seems that Jacob was embittered with her for taking part in the deception that Laban had pulled off on him, and that he did not get over it for years.
 - Leah and her sons were always treated (by Jacob) more like servants—and only Rachel and her sons were treated as family.

2. I have met many women over the years who are unloved by their husbands...
 - It is a very sad thing—they have Christian husbands who profess to know the Lord, but these husbands do not love their wives as Christ loved the church.
 - Alas, no husband measures up to that standard, but some do not even seem to try—they make excuses or they blame their wives or they ignore their wives because they are filled with distractions or they are embittered or they are filled with lust...it is a huge problem...and not just outside the church!
 - We are talking about women who are unloved and even hated (as it actually says) by their husbands.
 - God considers it hatred when a man, who is called to love his wife, does not love her—and again, God is very generous in judging His people so that when He says there is hatred, there is...
 - though most husbands will not own up to it.

3. Almost any woman in such circumstances will be quite miserable—whether she admits it or not.
 - a. God made women to be very relational beings—they are nurturers and caregivers and find delight in the loving care of a man.
 - In a day when people are so confused about sexuality, saying something like that will be labeled as sexist and perhaps even as hateful.
 - But it is true that God made male and female and that he made the woman to be a companion to the man and to bear children and nourish them.
 - Many women become so frustrated with the fallen men of this world who do not love them that they turn to deviant behaviour...
 - Many settle to be mere sex objects, trying to find satisfaction in gaining male attention by fornication...
 - Others turn to lesbian relationships to find mutual affection from their own gender.

 - b. We see poor Leah in her desperation pitifully hoping that Jacob will love her if she bears children for him.
 - 1) What she says at the birth of each of her first three sons is a sad testimony of her unfulfilled desire to be loved.
 - With Reuben she says, “my husband will love me now.”
 - With Simeon (Simeon means *heard*) she says, “Because the LORD has heard that I am unloved, He has given me this son also.”
 - With Levi (she names him Levi which means *attached*), and she says: “Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons.”
 - And finally with Judah, which means *praise*, she determines that she will simply praise the LORD; it seems that she has given up on winning her husband’s love.

 - 2) So many women will try to win their husbands to no avail.
 - As with Leah, all they get is a bitter response.
 - but we will return to Leah later with better things to say.

- B. But now I want to turn our attention to Rachel, the typical competitive woman.
1. As the second born, she appears to be the unloved daughter—her father obviously did not care much for her in giving Leah to Jacob instead of her...
 - In any case, we see Rachel trying to prove herself—trying to outdo her big sister.
 - She has Jacob’s affection, but that is not enough for her!
 - She wants to have children, it seems, more than anything, in order to keep up with her sister.
 - We are told in chapter 30, verse 1 that she envied her sister.
 2. Envy is far too common among women...
 - There is so much comparison—who is more attractive, who is a better mother, who has a better job, who has the best man...
 - And envy leads both to misery and to sin...as Solomon says, it consumes us as rottenness to our bones.
 - It sets us against others so that we cannot rejoice in their good and so that we try to bring others down as if they are competitors.
 - It breeds all kinds of folly and sin.
 3. And so it is with Rachel...
 - a. Instead of turning to the LORD as a barren woman as Sarah and Rebekah had done when they were barren,
 - She complains to Jacob and angers him, as if he were in the place of God as he so sharply tells her...
 - It is God who opens and closes the womb, but instead of resigning her case to Him, she complains to Jacob...
 - b. And then to make matters even worse, much worse, she decides to take things into her own hands...
 - She does what barren women did in those days and she gives her maidservant Bilhah to Jacob to have children by her...
 - The idea is that these sons would be adopted by her.
 - Since Bilhah was her maid, they would be sons that would look after her interests in the household if something happened to Jacob.
 - So now Jacob has three wives, and sure enough, Bilhah conceives two children...
 - And all Rachel can think about with the birth of these children is that she is gaining the upper hand on her sister (these children were likely born before Leah had all four of hers).
 - She is so competitive that she claims victory over her sister even though there are only two sons and even though they were adopted sons.
 - People will do that when they are super competitive—they will claim victory, say in a sporting event, even though they actually lost...
 - There was a bad call, or something....

- Look at verse 8 and you can see her claim of triumph:
 - She says: **“With great wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, and indeed I have prevailed.” So she called his name Naphtali.**
 - What a travesty to make the birth of sons a competition!
 - But this sort of thing is not uncommon!
 - Many kingdoms are built more out of envy than out of a desire to bring blessing to world!
 - Some people who work very hard in the careers do it more to prove that they are better than others than anything else.
- c. And to make matters even worse, Rachel’s envy draws Leah into this silly competition.
 - You know how that is—even if you are not competing with someone and you realise that they are competing with you, you can start competing.
 - Leah, who seems to have given up on winning her husband’s love by bearing children for him (and who had stopped bearing for a time),
 - now enters into this competition with Rachel to have more children, and ends up also giving her maidservant Zilpah to Jacob.
 - Now the unhappy home has Jacob with four wives and eight sons that will be regarded as second class citizens in the home.
 - We will see the trouble that comes of that in future sermons.

C. But now let’s take a look a Jacob himself in all of this!

- Jacob is the typical example of a man who does not lead his home!
- 1. He began as we have seen by taking two wives because of his infatuation with one...
 - He did not seek the Lord or follow the path of wisdom...and so he laid a terrible foundation for marital happiness.
- 2. Now he is adding to his troubles by refusing to let go of his bitterness against Leah.
 - If he was going to take her as a wife, he should have endeavoured to love her and he should have striven to avoid favouritism...
 - He knew the trouble that favouritism could cause from his own home,
 - but like so many of us, instead of repenting of the sins of his father and mother, he imitates these sins—all to his own hurt!
 - In Leah, he might have had a very affectionate and devoted wife, but instead, he has a miserable, love-starved wife.
 - Men, don’t do this to your home!
 - Colossians tells you not to be embittered against your wife!
 - Peter tells you that it will hinder your prayers.
 - Don’t make excuses—you are to love your wives and forgive them for their sins against you.

3. And besides this, we see Jacob's failed leadership in the way he deals with Rachel when she complains of her barrenness...
 - a. It is true that she does not approach Jacob in the right way when she says "Give me children or I die."
 - Her focus was off the Lord, but Jacob should have seen that she was deeply distressed and hurting...
 - But instead of responding in tenderness, he responds in anger.
 - A loving godly husband would have talked to her about her struggle and would have led her in praying to God for children.
 - And in seeing that her focus was not on the LORD, he would have investigated and found that she was filled with envy toward Leah—and would have helped her respond rightly.
 - That is what a godly husband would have done, but Jacob does not seem to have been looking to the LORD at this time.
 - b. And even worse, he exercises no leadership when Rachel and then Leah give him their maidservants to lie with...
 - He acts like an obedient little puppy dog who just does what he is told.
 - Did he not know all the trouble that Abraham and Sarah had when they did this?
 - Perhaps he thought it was neat to have yet another woman to lie with. It is hard to say...
 - but he is an idiot for once again just going with the flow when it was his responsibility to stand up for what was right!
 - All he is doing is adding to the fires that were already burning in his household—all to avoid having to deal with an angry wife if he refused to go along with her schemes.
 - Are you like that?
 - Do you go along with things that you know are wrong just to maintain peace in the moment?
 - Don't you realise that you will have to reap what you sow?
 - A great fault in our society is that we will do things like run up a big debt to make us happy today without thinking about the difficulty we will face in having to repay it.
 - We act like the future is not real—that it will all work out somehow.
 - That is how people can live their lives for the moment without even thinking about heaven and hell.

TRANS> Make no mistake about it—Jacob's household is a disaster and instead of working to make things better, he is doing what will make things worse!

II. Yet, it is also very clear that God is at work in this wretched home (as He is in all of His peoples' homes, whether they are wretched or not).

- Where sin abounds, grace far more abounds.

- A. The first thing that shows that God is at work in this family is that God is known in this family...
1. Both Rachel and Leah acknowledge the LORD in the birth of each of their sons, and Jacob asserts strongly that it is God who opens and closes the womb.
 - It is by God's grace that they recognise His hand.
 2. And though it was noted that prayer was not offered when it should have been, such as by Jacob when Rachel came to him in her distress,
 - there is indication that prayer is offered by Rachel at a later time—we will see that in a moment.
 3. The point is, that though they have many problems, they are a household that belongs to God and they have dealings with God in faith.
 - They truly are His people and they truly do know Him by His grace.

TRANS And now let's look at some of the specific ways we see how God works in this family...

- B. One of the most precious things we see is God's mercy to Leah...
1. As a loving heavenly Father, He chastens her by withholding the affection of Jacob from her that she so craved...
 - She had taken him as her husband in a wrongful manner and she has to bear the consequences of her actions.
 - God does this to teach her—and as we saw, it seems to work...
 - When her fourth son is born she names him *Judah* which means *praise*, declaring that she will praise the LORD.
 - She has learned to praise God, not only for what she hopes she might receive, but for what she has already actually received.
 - With the first three sons, she acknowledged God, but her gratitude seemed to be conditional upon her faulty expectation that *now* her husband would love her and be attached to her...
 - but when Judah is born, she simply praises God for what He has done in giving her another son.
 - So often, as believers, we will have something we want—and we will rejoice only when we think God is giving it to us...
 - We have not yet learned to praise God even if we don't have our dream job, or even if our spouse is still not all that we want him or her to be...
 - By withholding our desires, the Lord teaches us as He taught Leah to praise Him anyway.
 - To rejoice in what He chooses to give us instead of always focusing on what He has not given to us.
 - That is even something to do with our eating—learn to really rejoice in a reasonable portion instead of always wishing you could have more.
 - 2. But the thing that is even more precious that we learn about God with Leah is the way that even as He chastens her, He also is very tender toward her!

- Here is this woman who had sinned in taking her husband by deception...
 - God chastens her for this by leaving her as an unloved wife...He does not answer her prayers about this...as we have just seen, for her own good.
 - But it is as if the divine heart of God is grieved to see her suffer and is moved to temper her suffering.
 - It would not be good to give her the affection she is craving, but He gives her four sons—one right after another...
 - And our text shows clearly that He did this because He saw that she was unloved—He did it in compassion toward her.
 - He does not wish to crush her or to give her more than she can bear, so He assuages her with these sons...
 - What a kind and loving heavenly Father He is!
 - He tempers His judgements with blessings because of great tenderness toward us as His children.
 - He remembers that we are dust and takes pity upon us.
 - Isn't that wonderfully encouraging?
 - Even when you are being punished, His mercy does not cease.
- C. And there is yet more divine mercy in this text...mercy bestowed on contentious Rachel...
1. Here she is, entering into this foolish envy driven contest with Leah and God shuts her down.
 - a. We saw how in her pride she had declared herself to have triumphed over her sister when she had not triumphed at all...
 - But deep down she was not at all satisfied.
 - Even when envy really does triumph over an opponent, it does not satisfy...but how much more when it doesn't even triumph.
 - b. It was because she knew that she was not victorious that she went for the mandrakes.
 - What tremendous irony there is here!
 - She purchases the mandrakes from Leah in exchange for a night with Jacob (what a sad thing that Leah has to hire him out),
 - hoping that the mandrakes will cause her to conceive...that is what mandrakes were supposed to do...
 - but instead of conceiving, it is Leah who gave up the mandrakes who conceives!
 - c. Do you see what the LORD is teaching Rachel (and all of us)?
 - He is teaching her that He is the one who opens and closes the womb!
 - He is driving this point home to her.
 - All of her schemes fail—which is just what needed to happen for her to learn what she needed to learn!

2. And the result is that Rachel learns!
 - a. In verse 22 it says, **“Then the LORD remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb.”**
 - Notice how it says that God *listened* to her.
 - What does that show us?
 - It shows us that she had been praying to God for a child!
 - She was done with the mandrakes and done with the using her maidservant—
 - now she was praying to and God listens to her and answers her!
 - b. And now instead of making some foolish comment about beating Leah, Rachel acknowledges that God has taken away her reproach,
 - And she names her son *Joseph* (which means *he shall add*), looking to the LORD to give her yet another son.
 - She has learned that it is the LORD who opens and shuts the womb.
 - c. This does not mean, of course, that any barren woman is one who has not learned to trust God, else she would obtain children by prayer...
 - God has many different ways of working in His people and many different reasons for what He gives and does not give...
 - Leah never got what she wanted because that was what was best for her.
 - At the bottom of it all, we simply need to trust the wisdom of our heavenly Father who gives and withholds as He deems best.
 - We need to be assured that He has our best interests at heart.
 - There is none so wise, none so gracious.

TRANS> So you see how He faithfully works in His people!

- You may not be able to bear the children you want or get the affection you want or whatever else it may be,
 - but you can be sure that if you belong to Christ, He will work in you with all the tenderness and wisdom that belongs to divinity!
- I might add that He is also working in Jacob, surely humbling him as he continues to make foolish decisions in his own flesh...
 - but the fruit of God’s work in him will not appear until future sermons.
 - But what a comfort it is to know that even where sin and folly are so great, that the LORD does not abandon us, but continues His gracious work.
 - Where sin abounds, grace far more abounds!
 - That is the rule of God’s dealing with His elect people!
- But this by no means exhausts His gracious dealings with Jacob’s wretched family!
 - What we see next is perhaps the most marvellous thing of all!

III. That God uses this sinful family to bring about His everlasting kingdom!

A. Look at what He does!

1. Here is sinful Leah, the woman who ought never to have been Jacob's wife—the woman who was illegitimately thrust upon him...
 - And she becomes the mother of six of the twelve tribes of Israel plus the two others that were wrongfully brought forth by her maidservant...
 - This is the foundation of the whole church, the foundation of the people who are redeemed in this fallen sinful world!
 - This is, in that sense, our foundation—they are the root that bears us!
2. And look, this woman who sinfully became Jacob's wife is the one who brings forth Levi, whose sons would be the priests of Israel until Messiah came...
 - Those who offered sacrifices to God to show forth the suffering and death of the Messiah who was to come and make atonement for His peoples' sins...
 - And not only that, but she also was the mother of Judah from whom came David and the succession of kings that came from him...
 - And above all through whom Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, came.
3. Does God use sinners or does God use sinners!!!
 - Of course He does!
 - If He only used the righteous, there would no salvation—there never would have been a kingdom!
 - Perhaps sin was so obvious in Jacob's family that none of us would ever have grounds to suppose that anyone is in God's kingdom by our own merit!
 - Perhaps sin was also conspicuous here so that we might never say that the LORD cannot use us to build His kingdom because our sin is too great!
 - God is in the business of using sinners in this world to do His work!
 - Take heart Christian, take heart!
 - Your heavenly Father can use you too, despite what you are—He *will* use you if you are His!
 - Do you see what a mess you are?
 - Take heart if you have come to Jesus Christ and put yourself into His hands.
 - He knows what to do, and on the day of judgement, we will marvel when we see all that He has done and how He has used us both corporately and individually when we knew it not.
 - Take heart Christian, take heart!

B. But of course this does not mean that we should sin that grace may abound!

1. Paul makes it clear in Romans 6 that if that is your attitude, you have yet to be converted—you are still outside of a saving relationship with Jesus Christ...

- Because when He saves you, He changes you and makes you God's servants—so that you die to sin and live to righteousness...
 - But that does not mean, that as with Jacob and Leah and Rachel, there is not a lot of remaining corruption in us...
 - We are changed to be God's servants, we are in His house now, but there is much training that has to be done—
 - and it is that which we see Him doing in Jacob's family and in every family that belongs to Jesus Christ.
 - You might think of becoming Christ's servants as something like going to work for a new master...
 - You do not know very much, but your master is ready and able to teach you, and He will work in you just as He did in Jacob's family.
 - Of course you are not yet perfect, but you are in God's faithful hands and that is what matters...
 - You have come to Him to be saved and He will not fail you.
2. But let me add that we are called to be better than Jacob and his family.
- a. There was stubbornness in them that led to a lot of misery.
 - We are in a position to learn from their folly so that we need not walk in such folly and have so much misery.
 - There are many in scripture who were far more faithful—still sinners to be sure—but there were many who by grace faithfully walked with God (like Enoch) and enjoyed the blessings of that faithfulness.
 - You cannot do it in your own strength, but you can do it by the grace of God.
 - There is no reason to take the hard path—the Lord pleads with you.
 - b. Not only does rebellion bring misery, it is also entirely inappropriate...
 - For we who have the fuller revelation that Jacob and his family did not have, there is no excuse to go on in our folly...
 - We have seen what God did—how He sent His only Son to die on the cross for our sins!
 - What love there is this...what grace...what power!
 - How inappropriate it is for us, the face of so much grace, to go on in our own stubborn way...
 - No, no, the love of Christ constrains us—it grips us—it demands of us that give our hearts fully to the LORD.
 - He is ready to meet us with His grace...
 - He will help you, He will receive you!
 - c. Perhaps we might conclude with God's own words to His people through Isaiah the prophet when they were living in rebellion...

- **Isaiah 1:2-5: Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: “I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me; ³ The ox knows its owner and the donkey its master’s crib; but Israel does not know, My people do not consider.” ⁴ Alas, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away backward. ⁵ Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faints.**
- Our LORD will deal with us, He will chasten us...He is very faithful as we have seen to do whatever He must do to us...
 - But He calls us to something better...
- **Isaiah 1:16-20: “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, ¹⁷ learn to do good; seek justice, rebuke the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow. ¹⁸ Come now, and let us reason together,” says the LORD, “though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. ¹⁹ If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; ²⁰ But if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword”; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.**