

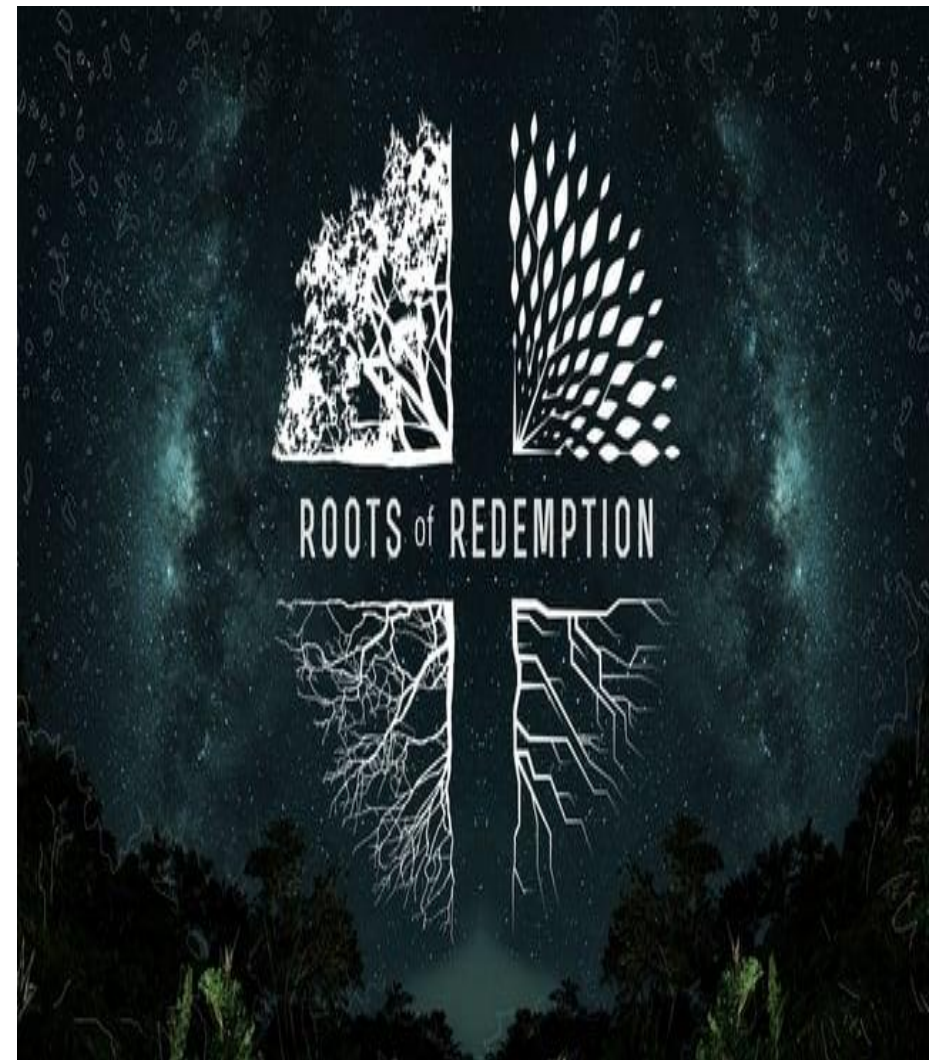
## Life Group / Reflection Questions

As we journey through life with Jesus, we find that we wrestle with where we have come from and where we are headed to. Each area has impact on how we live now, especially when hardship comes our way. As we look at the life of Jacob and his family, we see ourselves and we see the Grace, Power and Love of Jesus working to help us trust him with all these areas. Enjoy your time in God's word this week.

1. How did your family of origin deal with stress/hardship? Do you respond the same way, or have you altered tactics?
2. Laban's deceitfulness towards Jacob seriously impacted the rest of Jacob's life, as well as that of Rachel, Leah and their children. Have any of your plans or dreams been utterly side-railed? How did that affect your belief in what God was doing in your life?
3. According to the following verses, what are some things that can God do in the midst of our experiencing hardship?

- Hebrews 12:7-10
- I Peter 4:12-16
- I Peter 4:19
- Romans 5:3-5

Which of the 5 areas of common struggles are you dealing with now? (Taking a spouse, Broken Relationships, Having Children, Figuring Out Finances, Heading Home) Is there anything you think you should change in your approach, or in what you believe about God?



**Sunday, November 8, 2015**  
***"The Blessings of Hardship"***  
**Week #3**  
**Wave Church SD**

## Two Major Factors Impacting Hardships

### 1. ORIGINS

### 2. EXPECTATIONS

Jacob's struggle with God's Promise comes from UNBELIEF

<sup>23</sup> "If you can't?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for one who believes." <sup>24</sup> Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" (Mark 9:23-24, NIV)

Jacob's unbelief results in DECEIT & MANIPULATION

God works on Jacobs character to get him to trust in God not himself  
<sup>7</sup> "Look," he said, "the sun is still high; it is not time for the flocks to be gathered. Water the sheep and take them back to pasture."  
<sup>8</sup> "We can't," they replied, "until all the flocks are gathered and the stone has been rolled away from the mouth of the well. Then we will water the sheep." (Genesis 29:7-8, NIV)

## The Hardships of Jacob

### 1. The taking of a wife

<sup>16</sup> Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. <sup>17</sup> Leah had weak eyes, but Rachel had a lovely figure and was beautiful. <sup>18</sup> Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, "I'll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel."  
<sup>19</sup> Laban said, "It's better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me." <sup>20</sup> So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her. (Genesis 29:16-20, NIV)

### 2. The retaking of a wife

<sup>21</sup> Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife. My time is completed, and I want to make love to her."  
<sup>22</sup> So Laban brought together all the people of the place and gave a feast. <sup>23</sup> But when evening came, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and Jacob made love to her. <sup>24</sup> And Laban gave his servant Zilpah to his daughter as her

attendant. <sup>25</sup> When morning came, there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? I served you for Rachel, didn't I? Why have you deceived me?" (Genesis 29:21-25, NIV)

### 3. Having children

Genesis 29:31-30:24  
Four Wives – 13 children

### 4. Figuring Out Finances

Genesis 30:25-31:21

### 5. Heading Home

Genesis 30:22-55

<sup>1</sup> Jacob heard that Laban's sons were saying, "Jacob has taken everything our father owned and has gained all this wealth from what belonged to our father." <sup>2</sup> And Jacob noticed that Laban's attitude toward him was not what it had been. <sup>3</sup> Then the Lord said to Jacob, "Go back to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you." (Genesis 31:1-3, NIV)

## Character Shaping Lessons from Jacob's Experience

1. God is HOLY but His followers ARE NOT

2. We often REAP WHAT WE SOW

3. God Can Use Bad CIRCUMSTANCES for Good ENDS

## With whom do you identify in the story?

Laban –

Jacob –

Rachel –

Leah –