



Naphtali: The Man and the Tribe (Part 1)

Genesis 30:1-8

Genesis 30:1-8

- When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister [Leah]. She said to Jacob, “Give me children, or I shall die!”
- ² Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel, and he said, “Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?”
- ³ Then she said, “Here is my servant Bilhah . . . she may give birth on my behalf, that even I may have children through her.”
- ⁴ So she gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife . . .

Genesis 30:1-8

- ⁶ Then Rachel said, “God has judged me favorably, and has also heard my voice and given me a son.” Therefore, she called his name Dan [which sounds like the Hebrew word for “judged”].
- ⁷ Rachel's servant Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son.
- ⁸ Then Rachel said, “With mighty wrestlings, I have wrestled with my sister and have prevailed.” So, she called his name Naphtali [which sounds like the Hebrew word for “wrestling”].

I. Naphtali the Man: A Failure to Speak Up

- **Rachel chooses expediency over faith**
- When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister . . .
- [Rachel said to Jacob]: “Here is my servant Bilhah . . . she may give birth on my behalf, that even I may have children through her.” ⁴ So she gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife . . . ⁵ And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son . . . Rachel's servant Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. (Genesis 30: 1,3-5, 7).

I. Naphtali the Man: A Failure to Speak Up

- **Naphtali is born into family conflict**
- ⁸ Then Rachel said, “With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister and have prevailed.” So, she called his name Naphtali. (Genesis 30:1,8).

The 12 Sons of Jacob and Their Mothers

Sons of Jacob	Mother
01-Reuben	Leah
02-Simeon	Leah
03-Levi	Leah
04-Judah	Leah
05-Dan	Bilhah (Rachel's servant)
06-Naphtali	Bilhah (Rachel's servant)
07-Gad	Zilpah (Leah's servant)
08-Asher	Zilpah (Leah's servant)
09-Issachar	Leah
10-Zebulun	Leah
11-Joseph	Rachel
12-Benjamin	Rachel

I. Naphtali the Man: A Failure to Speak Up

- **Joseph is sold into slavery** (Genesis 37)
- So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.
- ¹⁸They saw him from afar, and before he came near to them, they conspired against him to kill him. ¹⁹They said to one another, “Here comes this dreamer. ²⁰Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits [cisterns]. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams.” (Genesis 37:17-20)

I. Naphtali the Man: A Failure to Speak Up

- **Joseph is sold into slavery**
- But when **Reuben** heard it, he rescued him out of their hands, saying, “Let us not take his life.” ²² And Reuben said to them, “Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him”—that he might rescue him out of their hand to restore him to his father. ²³ So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the robe of many colors that he wore. ²⁴ And they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it. (Genesis 37:21-24).

I. Naphtali the Man: A Failure to Speak Up

- **Joseph is sold into slavery**
- Then they sat down to eat. And looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing gum, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. ²⁶ Then **Judah** said to his brothers, “What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? ²⁷ Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh.” And his brothers listened to him. ²⁸ Then Midianite traders passed by. And they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. They took Joseph to Egypt. (Genesis 37:25-28).

I. Naphtali the Man: A Failure to Speak Up

- **Lessons for Us: The Church is the conscience of society**
- Martin Luther King, Jr.: “The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state. It must be the guide and the critic of the state, and never its tool. If the church does not recapture its prophetic zeal, it will become an irrelevant social club without moral or spiritual authority.” (“A Knock at Midnight,” 11 June 1967)

I. Naphtali the Man: A Failure to Speak Up

- **Lessons for Us: Respect the sanctity of human life**
- Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I am bringing such disaster upon this place that the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle. ⁴ Because the people have forsaken me and have profaned this place by making offerings in it to other gods whom neither they nor their fathers nor the kings of Judah have known; and because **they have filled this place with the blood of innocents**, ⁵ and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal (Jeremiah 19:3-5).
- **Example**

I. Naphtali the Man: A Failure to Speak Up

- **Lessons for Us: Help those in need**
- For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? ³⁸ And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? ³⁹ And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' ⁴⁰ And the King will answer them, **'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'** (Matthew 25:35-40).

I. Naphtali the Man: A Failure to Speak Up

- **Lessons for Us: Help those in need**
- ¹⁵ I was eyes to the blind
and feet to the lame.
- ¹⁶ I was a father to the needy,
and I searched out the cause of him whom I did not know. (Job 29:15-16)

I. Naphtali the Man: A Failure to Speak Up

- **Lessons for Us: Help those in need**
- And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” ²⁶ He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” ²⁷ And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” ²⁸ And he said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.”
- But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “**And who is my neighbor?**” ³⁰ Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

I. Naphtali the Man: A Failure to Speak Up

- **Lessons for Us: Help those in need**
- ³³ But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, **he had compassion.** ³⁴ He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ And the next day **he took out two denarii** and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' ³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" ³⁷ He said, "**The one who showed him mercy.**" And Jesus said to him, "**You go, and do likewise.**" (Luke 10:25-37)
- **Example**

I. Naphtali the Man: A Failure to Speak Up

- **Lessons for Us: Power corrupts**
- Again, I saw all the oppressions that are done under the sun. And behold, the tears of the oppressed, and they had no one to comfort them! On the side of their oppressors there was power, and there was no one to comfort them. (Ecclesiastes 4:1)
- “Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely” (Lord Acton)

I. Naphtali the Man: A Failure to Speak Up

- **Lessons for Us: Speak truth to power**
- **12** And the LORD sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said to him, “There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. ² The rich man had very many flocks and herds, ³ but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children. It used to eat of his morsel and drink from his cup and lie in his arms, and it was like a daughter to him.
- ⁴ Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the guest who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.”
- ⁵ Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, “As the LORD lives, the man who has done this deserves to die, ⁶ and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.”

I. Naphtali the Man: A Failure to Speak Up

- **Lessons for Us: Speak truth to power**
- ⁷ Nathan said to David, “You are the man! Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. ⁸ And I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your arms and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were too little, I would add to you as much more.
- ⁹ Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. ¹⁰ Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’ (2 Samuel 12:1-10)

I. Naphtali the Man: A Failure to Speak Up

- **Lessons for Us: Lies are used to cover up cruelty**
- When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he tore his clothes ³⁰ and returned to his brothers and said, “The boy is gone, and I, where shall I go?” ³¹ Then they took Joseph's robe and slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. ³² And they sent the robe of many colors and brought it to their father and said, “This we have found; please identify whether it is your son's robe or not.” ³³ And he identified it and said, “It is my son's robe. A fierce animal has devoured him. Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces.” (Genesis 37:29-33)

I. Naphtali the Man: A Failure to Speak Up

- **Lessons for Us:** There is almost always a lie that covers up cruelty
- Ah, you who hide deep from the LORD your counsel,
whose deeds are in the dark,
and who say, “Who sees us? Who knows us?” (Isaiah 29:15)
- **Applications to:** King David, Abortion, Destruction of Foreign Aid

I. Naphtali the Man: A Failure to Speak Up

- **Lessons for Us: People believe a lie more easily than the truth**
- Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made.
- He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?” ² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. (Genesis 3:1-6)

I. Naphtali the Man: A Failure to Speak Up

- **Lessons for Us: People believe a lie more easily than the truth**
- The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. (John 1:9-11)

I. Naphtali the Man: A Failure to Speak Up

- **Lessons for Us: People believe a lie more easily than the truth—Speak the truth anyway**
- For my mouth will utter truth;
wickedness is an abomination to my lips. (Proverbs 8:7)
- My words declare the uprightness of my heart,
and what my lips know they speak sincerely. (Job 33:3)

I. Naphtali the Man: A Failure to Speak Up

- **Lessons for Us: do what the Lord requires of you**
- He has told you, O man, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8)
- May the Church to be the conscience of the state
- “Jesus cares and calls on us to care.”

**Let Us
Repent
and
Pray**

