

When to Sever Ties with Toxic Family Members?

- All right, in just a minute, I'm gonna preach. I'll just tell you, this one's gonna hurt. This one's gonna hurt like crazy, all right? Here's the question. The question is, when do you need to sever ties with toxic family members? And if you're a first time guest and a relative brought you, now you know why. Okay, and if you're like, "I don't have any toxic family members," it's you. I'll just give you a moment to process, just to process that emotion, all right? So we find ourselves in this incredible book of the Bible, Genesis, and it's this multi-generational case study in marriage and family. And what tends to happen is we tend to put up with things from our relatives that we would never put up with anyone else. And we tend to endure a lot longer and a lot more. But eventually, there comes a point, oftentimes in a relationship with friends, but oftentimes with family, where we're asking the question, "Is this the time to walk away? Are we done now? Is this where we go our separate ways?" We find that in the life of a guy today named Jacob. So here's the case study. He comes from a really complicated family. His mom and his dad gave birth to him and his brother, they're twins. His dad favored his brother and his mom favored him. So he was over mothered, over parented, mama's boy, stayed at home, bossed around, never made a decision, didn't really grow up, classic underachiever. Think of a guy in his forties whose mom is still cooking his breakfast and putting beer in his sippy cup. And that's about where Jacob is at. He's not really full grown man. He steals or takes the birthright and the blessing from his brother. His brother's tough guy, man's man, hunter-gather-type dude. And so his brother's gonna kill him for stealing from him and conning him. So he obeys his mom. He runs for his life and his mom tells him, "Go find your uncle's house and just go stay with your uncle." Well, he does that. Now his uncle is worse than his mom. His uncle's name is Laban. Laban, horrible, terrible, awful human being. Jacob shows up and he sees this gal, Rachel. She's beautiful. He's like, "That's my girl." He wants to marry her. And so he has to work for seven years to pay the bride price to marry her. So they have the wedding. They go into, presumably, a tent or something. They have the honeymoon. I don't know if it's dark. She's wearing a veil. He's had a few drinks. I don't know. But he wakes up the next day, not with the gal that he married, but her older sister. Ruh-roh. So now he's married to the wrong girl, a girl he doesn't love. The dad and the daughters tricked him and they set him up for this horrific deception. And then Laban, his father-in-law now, says, "Well, if you wanna marry the girl of your dreams, the one that I originally told you you could marry, you're gonna need to work for another seven years." 14 years of hard labor, treated like a slave, not owning anything, being used and abused continually by his father-in-law. At this point, he has now been under the auspices of his demonic father-in-law for 20 years. 20 years, he's put up with this nonsense. And now, he's got 11 sons and one daughter with four different women. Massive complicated family dynamics, Family life is together. Business is together. He's living on his father-in-law's land. He's working in his father-in-law's company. His father-in-law has tricked him, has stolen 20 years of his life. It's just a total complete disaster. Here's the big idea. There's three kinds of people, wise, foolish, and able. Thus far in the story, nobody's wise. Laban is just evil. I mean, he uses and abuses his own daughters for his own profit.

- [Congregation] Right.

- And now Jacob, he's just foolish. He doesn't know what he's doing. He can't make a decision. He's constantly tripping over his own feet and being controlled by the women in his life and their father. But what's starting to happen here, Jacob is gonna start to get a little bit wise, not super wise, just a little bit. And finally, he's gonna start to stick up for himself and he's gonna push back a little bit, and he's gonna let his feelings, in a healthy way, be known. Well, of course, this is gonna lead to a lot of drama and conflict. But here's the big idea. Then we'll jump in. For the good to start, the bad must end. Okay, and oftentimes people are like, "I just wish I could get into a better season or a better rhythm." Well, for good to start, bad must end. And sometimes with relationships, with work, with family, we need to end the bad so that we can start the good. So here's what we're gonna do. We're gonna start at the end of Genesis chapter 30, then we're gonna go through chapter 31. Now I'll just tell you right now, I've got way too many verses. Usually I've got two pages of notes. I have four. Four, okay? So this is gonna be the best breakfast sermon you've ever had, okay? And I'm gonna read a lot of the scripture 'cause it's one unit of thought. And we're gonna cover, I think, more verses than any sermon I've ever preached, but I think this could be one of the most helpful that I've ever preached, okay? So first, we'll just start with a murderous spirit. Here's Laban, Genesis 30:25-43. "As soon as Rachel had born Joseph," he's the youngest son, there's one more coming down the road, and they'll be the 12 Tribes of Israel, so this is the 11th son, "Jacob said to Laban," so he says to his crazy evil, father-in-law, "Send me away. It's time to walk away. We're done. I'm outta here. "That I may go to my own home and country." He's been away from home for 20 years. His parents have never even met their grandkids. "Give me my wives," and if you're new, that's too many, okay? That's too many. But again, Laban set this up. He wanted to marry Rachel. And then Laban like, created this Groupon, threw in another wife. You know, now he's got two wives, which is too many. "Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you." He's been working for 20 years, no paycheck, no ownership, "that I may go for you know the service that I had given you." But Laban said to him, "If I have found favor in your site, I'm such a good guy. You know, I love," he's totally manipulative, flatterer, high control. He knows that Jacob is a great income source and he doesn't wanna lose that. He says, "I have learned by divination," that's demonic activity. People either live by the flesh, the Spirit or the demonic. He lives by the demonic. What he's saying is, "I was talking to my demon." And other religions will have other gods. Those other gods are demons pretending to be God. That's what he's doing. So he's demonic. "I have learned by divination that the Lord has blessed me because of you." So God's blessing is not on Laban, but it's on Jacob. And as long as Jacob is in Laban's life, God's blessing is present. Here's the big idea. Sometimes your company is blessed because there's a believer there. Sometimes your ministry is blessed, 'cause believers are there. Sometimes your family is blessed because a believer is there. So what he says is, "Name your wages," Up until this point, for 20 years, he's not gotten any wages, "and I will give it." Jacob said to him, "You yourself know how I have served you. I've worked very hard and how your livestock has fared with me. You had little before I came. I showed up, you were broke and it has increased abundantly. Now you're rich 'cause I worked hard and the Lord blessed. And the Lord has blessed you wherever I turn. But now when shall I provide for my own household? I do have four women. You know, 12 kids. At some point, I'm gonna need to buy a house and get my own income." He said, "What shall I give you?" Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything." If

someone is evil, if someone is controlling, if someone is demonic, if someone is toxic, if they give you something it's so that they can manipulate and control you. So you take nothing, okay? He's gonna trust God to provide. "Don't give me anything. If you will do this for me, I will again, pastor your flock and keep it. I'll work for you a little bit. And then I'm leaving. Let me pass through all your flock today, removing from it every speckled and spotted sheep and every black lamb." And see we read this, and we don't, how many of you are like, "I don't know about the sheep and the lamb"? This is a business. Keep this in the most simple category. This is a business. And what he's saying is, "I'll work for you. And I will take the lowest performing aspect of the business. You can have the highest performing aspect of the business." That's what he's saying. "And that shall be my wages. So my honesty will answer for me later when you come to look into my wages with you. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs if found with me shall be counted stolen." Laban said, "Good, great deal. You wanna take the worst performing asset in our portfolio. That sounds like a great deal to me. Good. Let it be as you have said." But that day, Laban, he's gonna cheat. He's dishonest. He's cheating his own son-in-law, which means he's stealing from his own daughters, which means he's stealing from his own grandkids. This guy doesn't see people. He sees assets. He doesn't love people and use money. He loves money and uses people. "That day, Laban removed all the male goats that were striped and spotted and all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had white on it, and every lamb that was black and put them in the charge of his sons, and he set a distance of three days journey," he's cheating, "between himself and Jacob, and Jacob pastored the rest of Laban's flock." Laban's like, "I'll take everything in the business that's profitable, and I'll give you all the things that are losers." "Then Jacob took fresh sticks of poplar and almond and plane trees, and peeled white streaks in them, exposing the white of the sticks. He set the sticks that he had peeled in front of the flock through the troughs," that is the watering places where the flocks came to drink. "And since they bred when they came to drink, the flocks bred in front of the sticks. And so the flock brought forth stripes, speckled and spotted. Jacob separated the lambs and set the faces of the flocks toward the stripe and all the black in the flock of Laban. He put his own droves apart and did not put them with Laban's flock. Whenever the stronger of the flock were breeding, Jacob would lay sticks in the trough before the eyes of the flock that they might breed among the sticks. But for the feebler of the flock, he would not lay them there. So the feebler would be Laban's, the stronger Jacobs. Thus, the man increased greatly God's blessing." Let me say this. We live in a world where some people are like, "Rich people are bad." Well, some of them are blessed, because then they can bless others. Not everybody who generates wealth and revenue is evil. And sometimes, those who overly tax them are. I'm just throwing that out on the side. "Thus, the man increased greatly and had large flocks, female servants, male servants, and camels and donkeys." So here's basically the deal. Let me just summarize it. This is a business. Think of it in terms of a business. Set all the sheep and the flocks off to the side, just think of it as a business. There are certain revenue streams that are very profitable. And then there are others that are really, they're losers. And so, he goes to his father-in-law, he says, "You've never paid me. I've been working for free for 20 years. I've built you this massive organization, company, empire, you've profited greatly, and I've received nothing. And you've actually stolen from your daughters and your grandkids. You're a horrible human being. I'll work for you for a little bit, just

so that I can make enough to get the heck outta here. I wanna leave. So here's what I'll do. I'll take the worst performing part of the business. You take the best performing part of the business, and we'll see what happens." And what does God do? Blesses him, blesses him, because he's acting in faith, and God is going to act justly in his defense. So he becomes very wealthy and profitable. So let me say this. Jacob tricked his brother, and then he went to Laban, and he got tricked by Laban, so he reaped what he sowed. Now Laban tricked Jacob. And now Jacob is gonna trick Laban, you reap what you sew. The big idea I want to communicate here is that Laban is a man with a murderous spirit. Let me explain these people to you. And I'm gonna use a lot from this book. It's called "When To Walk Away." It's by Gary Thomas. It's a great book. He's a good teacher, good Bible guy. He's got good marriage stuff, good relationship stuff. This is a particularly helpful book, and it doesn't pertain to the story. But this story serves as a case study of, the subtitle here is, "How to Find Freedom from Toxic People." And what happens in our day, in clinical language, they'll talk about toxic people, counselors, therapists, psychologists. in the Bible, the word evil, evil doer, or the wicked will be used, but it's speaking of the same person. Now, here's where we see with Laban, he's got a murderous spirit. Jesus says in John 8:44, that Satan is a murderer. Anything can kill, he's gonna kill it. Any anyone he can hurt, he's gonna hurt 'em. All he brings is just pain and death and destruction. Now, he'll promise great things, but he delivers only pain. What happens with someone that has a murderous spirit, Gary Thomas says it this way, "A heart that loves to hate, that defines them." Now a healthy heart loves to?

- [Congregation] Love.

- Loves to love. A murderous spirit, a really sick and broken heart, loves to hate. They're always looking for an enemy. They're always looking to attack. They're always looking to steal. They're always starting to fight. They always got something negative to say. They always got, they always got somebody that is their opponent, that they need to conquer. It's just constant for these people. Let me tell you a little bit about a murderer spirit, and what Jacob is dealing with here with Laban, is a murderous spirit. Number one, their mission. Here's their mission, your pain. That's their mission. The worse you feel, the better they feel. Your bad day is their good day. They take, you give. They win, you lose. They inflict pain, you endure pain. That's how it works. Their mission is to hurt you. That's their whole thing. They're motivated by it. In addition, they're methods, they use people. Laban has, for 20 years, used Jacob. They drain people. At this point, Jacob has been exhausted by Laban. Just 20 years of just take and take and take. These people drain you. Another tactic or another method is they discourage you, criticism, backhanded comments, attacking your character. always making sure that you don't have any sort of real hope for your future. And that you seem very dependent on them. They're gonna discourage you. In addition, they're just gonna grind you down. They almost seem to have an unrelenting amount of energy. It's because Satan and demons, I'm gonna freestyle a bit here, Satan and demons aren't like human beings. Satan and demons don't get the flu. They don't get sick. They don't get tired. They don't get dehydrated. So they can go day and night. When you're dealing with somebody who's demonic, it's like, "Do you ever take a day off? Do you ever get off the internet? Do you sleep? Like, do you go to the bathroom?" I mean, there's like a

super human energy and you're just like, "I've reached the limits of my humane. Like, I can't argue anymore. I can't fight anymore. I can't respond to anymore text. I can't read anymore social media. I can't, I can't, uncle." And that's the point. They're trying to grind you down so that you surrender so that they can control you. And here's what then they'll do. As soon as they get you to the breaking point, they're gonna try to make you feel like you're the crazy one.

- [Congregation] Oh, yeah.

- You seen this? 'Cause here with Laban, like, his sons and his daughters are like him. His employees are like him, his extended families is like him. Jacob's the only guy in this relational network that's like, "He's a bad guy." And they're all like, "No, he is great." They're like, "I don't agree with him." They're like, "Well, you should." So here's what Jacob is wondering, "Am I the crazy one? 'Cause everybody thinks he's great except for me." And this is what happens with people that have a murderous spirit. They're gonna drive you crazy and then make you think you're the crazy one. And oftentimes, the people who support and surround them are the family that they have disciplined to be murderous and crazy. And so that's all he has around him are these crazy people with a murderous spirit, which means he's gonna have a hard time wondering whether they're the problem or he's the problem. Well, since it's a murderous spirit, what do they murder? Well, first of all, they're gonna murder you. They'll kill your joy. They're gonna kill your hope. They're gonna take your health. They're gonna take your time. They're gonna take your money. If you're married, they're gonna murder your marriage. If you got kids, they're gonna murder your kids. If you got a business, they're gonna murder your company. If you got a ministry they're gonna murder your ministry. They may even call that their ministry is murdering your ministry for everybody on the internet. There you go. Okay. So, but this is the world we live in. Murder, murder, murder. Today we call it cancel culture. Murder, murder, murder, murder, murder, murder. If we can't kill 'em, let's kill everyone and everything that they love. Steal, kill, and destroy. One of these people at work can ruin a whole company. One of these people in a church can destroy a whole church. One of these people in an extended family can implode an entire family. And here, so that's their mission, their methods, their murder. And here's why they're tricky and sneaky, their manipulation. Here's Laban, "Oh, if I found favor in your sight, can you do me a solid? We're family. I love you. You got my grandkids. I mean, win-win." No, it's like Judas betraying Jesus with a kiss. Oh, he loves Jesus. No, he doesn't. No, he doesn't. That's the kiss of death. That's the kiss of betrayal. That's the kiss of murder. Around people that have a murderous spirit, constant conflict, constant factions, constant divisions, constant drama. It's just constant. Around Laban, it's always something. If you disagree with them, they can't just disagree. A healthy human being, you're like, "Well, we disagree." A person with a murderous spirit is, "I need to silence you and/or destroy you because if you don't agree with me, I need to murder you." They can't just disagree. So Jacob looks at Laban, he's like, "I wanna go." Laban's like, "No." And then you're gonna see his murderer spirit causes him to chase his own son-in-law and his daughters and his grandkids with swords. Talk about trauma for the kids. Here comes grandpa armed. "Can't we just disagree?" "No, you can't disagree with me. If you disagree with me, I will murder you." In addition, these people tend to find unholy alliances. They find other people who agree with

them. That's exactly what Laban's gonna do. He's gonna grab his sons. He's gonna grab extended family, his employees. And they all come together. This is what happens. People with a murderous spirit form unholy alliances with other people who have a murderer spirit. So some years ago, one of my pastors, I love him. He's one of my spiritual authorities and appreciate him. And when he tells me something, I do it. So we were talking one time and he's like, "Have you ever noticed that, like, you can have two people in a church or a ministry that are just, just dangerous, they've never met, but they always find each other?" I was like, "Yeah. No, yes! I have noticed that. It's weird." "They can go to different services. They can have different friend groups. I mean, they could, but they always find each other." I was like, "That's, yeah." He's like, "Do you know why?" I was like, "Obviously, I don't 'cause I've been doing this a long time and it's still happening. So, you know, tell me why?" He's like, "Well, the people don't know each other, but they're demons do, so they introduce them." Murderous spirit, murderous spirit, hey, let's bring you guys together. So now we got two barrels on the gun. So that when we attack, we cause more damage. So they're always looking for unholy alliances. And let me tell you this, in the day of the internet, oh, oh, oh. Let me just tell you right now, the Holy Spirit rarely gets the lion's share of attention online. Like just take the fruit of the spirit: love joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, gentleness, faithful, and self-control, and then click onto anything, and you're like, "Yeah, it's never been here. It's never been here." In addition, these people can be very self-righteous. They love this game of, "Law for you, grace for me."

- [Congregation] Oh, yeah.

- So you're gonna see this in a moment. Laban is gonna tell Jacob everything that he's done wrong. And Laban doesn't admit that he's ever done anything wrong. He's very self-righteous. These people always see themselves as right. And if someone disagrees with them, they're the victim. Now they want sympathy. They don't have sympathy or empathy for others, but they want a lot for themselves. In addition, these are the people that will weaponize your faith against you. They will. Laban, we just learned, he's not a believer. He's demonic. Jacob is the believer. These are the people, if they have a murderer spirit, they'll weaponize your faith against you. "You said you're a Christian. Christians are supposed to love people. You're not, I mean, what kind of Christian are you? You know, you expect me to pay you back. I mean, come on. I thought you people were generous. So, you know, okay, I've made a mistake, but you know, hey, you're the forgiveness people. You need to forgive me. Hey, you know, God doesn't reject anybody and you shouldn't reject." They're gonna weaponize your faith against you. Like, "Well, where does this say that in the Bible? You know, did you pray about it?" Okay. Is it this just me? Or do you guys experienced this?

- [Congregation] Yeah.

- Okay. It's bad when these people with a murderous spirit attack you privately. It's really bad when they attack you publicly. You're gonna see that in a moment. Laban gets everybody involved, okay? And this is where, if you're a healthy, functioning, human being and you have a problem with someone, especially if they're family or friend, you deal with it privately. As soon as

you make it public, you prove you have a murderous spirit.

- [Congregation] That's right. That's right.

- 'Cause you're not trying to fix the relationship. You're trying to crucify the person. So you're out on the internet looking of for all of the other murderous spirit people that have bitterness and vengeance to join your unholy crusade, to destroy them.

- [Congregation] That's right.

- You know, as soon as somebody takes something private and invites the universe in, I know they have a murderous spirit. I just know. 'Cause those people are not part of the solution. They're only here to be part of the problem.

- [Congregation] That's right.

- To inflict more pain. So here's what I'm gonna do now. I'm gonna read all of Genesis 31. So if you're like, "Pastor Mark, that's too much." Yes, I agree that you are discerning. And I won't put it all on the screen 'cause literally it would take eight hours and it'd be eight hours well spent, but I'm gonna read and I'm gonna verbal process a little bit as we go. And then I'm gonna share with you some very important things at the end. So Genesis 31. "Now Jacob heard that the sons of Laban were saying, 'Jacob has taken all of that was our fathers. And from what was our fathers, he has gained his wealth.'" So here's the first thing the sons do. "Jacob stole everything from our dad." Is that true?

- [Congregation] No.

- No, he worked for free for 20. You don't own anything. You don't get paid anything. Finally, after 20 years of being abused, you negotiate a business deal that you are clearly going to lose unless God does something supernatural.

- [Congregation] That's right. That's right.

- God does something supernatural, and they can't say, "Well, God blessed him." Instead, "He's a cheater. He stole."

- [Congregation] That's right.

- They're lying. People with a murderous spirit, they'll also murder the facts. They'll murder the narrative. They'll murder the truth.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- So just be careful in this, friends. There's a little line of Proverbs that says, "The first person to speak sounds right until you hear the other side."

- [Congregation] That's right.

- So they were like, "Jacob stole!" Like, "Oh, my gosh!" You hear Jacob, you're like, "Oh, that's not how it went out. That's that's actually not the facts. Your demonic dad has been ripping me off for 20 years, and now God blessed me and he wants to steal what God blessed me with." "And Jacob saw that Laban did not regard him with favors before." Now Laban's like, "Yeah, Jacob's a problem. He used to just be a good little boy. Do whatever I told him. But now he's got opinions. Now he's got a voice and he's saying no and he's pushing back, and I don't really like this kid anymore. Seems like he's growing up and becoming a man. And there's only room for one man in this family." "Then the Lord said to Jacob," here's the good news. God speaks to him. Isn't that nice?

- [Congregation] Yeah.

- When you're in the middle of crazy, family is involved, extended family, business, ah! God's like, "I'll talk to you." Thank you Lord, okay? The good news is God can talk to you and he could tell you what to do. Here's what I would tell you. That's the only way to get through it.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Like, if God doesn't tell you what to do, you're in trouble. So you gotta hear the voice of God. You gotta heed the voice of God. God speaks to him. "The Lord said to Jacob, 'Return to the land of your fathers and your kindred. And I'll be with.'" He's like, "Get outta here, move to Arizona, get a U-Haul, change your number, delete your social media, you know, get a new email and don't forward any mail. Like, just go. Just go." And he says, "And I'll be with you." See, the point is this. If God goes with you, you're gonna be okay.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- So, because Jacob be like, "Okay, if I go what happens?" God's like, "I'm not gonna tell you what happens. I'm just gonna tell you this, I'll go with you."

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Think of it this way. Think of this, it's dark. It's late at night. You're, you know, say you're downtown Tempe or Phoenix, or something, kind of a sketchy neighborhood, you feel, you're like, "Oh, I feel a little uncertain." Then all of a sudden, you're walking with military escort. You walk different. Yeah. "I hope something goes down now. You know, I wanna see it." When God goes with you, you walk differently, okay? And God goes with his people. "'Return to the land.' So Jacob called Rachel and Leah into the field where his flock was." He's like, "I gotta talk to my

girls." And he's gonna do it away from the family and the home. This is private. 'Cause see, when there's a dysfunctional family system, there's no separation between your family and their family. Everything's one big convoluted, messed up family, controlled by the most unhealthy, murderous, domineering personality. And so he's like, "We're not involving your brothers. We're not involving your dad. This is a conversation for our family, not their family, their extended family." He's finally starting to exercise some leadership. "And he said to them, 'I see that your father does not regard me with the favor as he did before. But the God of my father has been with me. Your dad's against me. But my Heavenly Father is for me.'" Here's his courage. His strength comes from his relationship with God. "'You know that I have served your father with all my strength. I've been working 20 years. Yet, your father has cheated me.'" That's true. "Changed my wages 10 times." This is like, your boss is like, "Okay, your own commission. You're gonna get 15% of everything you sell." You sell a lot, and he's like, "Make that 7%." Wait a minute. Every time God blesses him, Laban changes the deal terms and cheats him. And he's got his own daughters and grandkids in the hostage negotiation. "But God did not permit him to harm me. See, he was trying to hurt me, but God was trying to protect me. If he said, 'The spotted shall be your wages,' then all the flock bore spotted. If he said, 'The stripe shall be your wages,' then all the flock bore spotted, bore striped. Thus, God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me." He's like, "God kept blessing. Your dad kept changing the deal and God kept blessing." This is just, this would be an opportunity for Laban to say, "You know, maybe I'm doing something wrong. Seems like everything he does gets blessed. And the only way I can get anything is to steal it from the guy who's being blessed. Maybe if I changed my own heart, repented at my own sin, worshiped his God, maybe He'd blessed me too so I don't need to steal from the guy that God blesses." but he never thinks about that.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- "In the breeding season of flock, I lifted up my eyes. I saw in a dream." So God spoke to him and gave him a dream. That the goats that mated with the flock were striped, spotted, and mottled. Then the angel of God," it's probably Jesus. Angel means messenger. When it says, "An angel of the Lord," it's usually an angel. When it says, "The angel of the Lord's, it's usually Jesus. "The angel of the Lord said to me in a dream," God speaks. God speaks to him. When he is awake, God speaks to him when he is asleep. "He said, 'Jacob,' Jacob said, 'Here I am.' And he said, 'Lift up your eyes and see. All the goats that mate with the flock are striped, spotted and mottled for I've seen all that Laban is doing to you. I am the God of Bethel where you anointed a pillar and made vow of me.'" He said, "When you were moving away from your father's house to your uncle's house, 20 years ago, you stopped. You remember that day I came down and I met with you." Jacob's ladder. The angels came up and down. "And I was present with you, and you built an altar, and you worshiped me. You remember that day?" See what's amazing is he's a believer, but he's not really matured much in 20 years, but now he's gonna get activated. Some of you grew up in religious homes, some of you grew up in Christian schools, some of you grew up surrounded by believers, and it's not that you were unbeliever, you were an inactive believer. But it's never too late to get active. And says, "Hey, I was there 20 years ago. We had, you know, hey, I'm willing to pick up where we left off. You've kind of been driving

into cul-de-sac for 20 years, but you know, I love ya. Let's turn the blinker on and go somewhere else." "I'm the God of Bethel, where you an anointed a pillar, made of vow. Now rise, go out from this land, and return to the land of your kinder." "Go back to your mom and dad. Go back to where your father, Abraham, grandfather, Abraham, settled." "Then Rachel and Leah answered and said to him..." So now he's gotta talk to his wives. Up until this point, these girl's primary loyalty was to their dad, not their husband. Let me say this. When you get married, your relational priorities shift from your family to your new family. So I, you know, I've got two kids that are married. I would never look at them and say with their spouse there, like, "Hey, remember, I'm the priority." 'Cause then they would just play my sermons and remind me that I'm not, okay? Like once you're married, you're a new family. You're not joining a family. You're starting a family. And so these daughters now, they gotta decide, "Okay, there's conflict between my dad, my husband." They gotta pick. They make a good choice. Their dad's the one who's caused all their pain. He's the one who's schemed up the swapping out on the honeymoon. He's the one who's taken advantage of their husband. He's the one who's impoverished their family. So all of a sudden, what's interesting, the most domineering, unhealthy, murderous-spirit person in a family controls the narrative. And everyone thinks like them, until someone pushes back, and is like, "Ah, I don't see it that way." And then all of a sudden, other people say, "Well, oh, well, from this angle, yeah, you're demonic and evil, dad. Yeah, we want that Father of the Year mug back. We want that back. While you're at it, hit yourself with it, dad." So the girls have a change of perspective. "Then Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, 'Is there any portion or inheritance left to us in our father's house?'" Now they're looking at it. They're like, "You made our dad, he was poor when you showed up. business boomed, he's rich." But here's what dad did. He spent everything. He didn't leave anything for his kids or his grandkids. There's something profoundly broken in the soul of every man who sees their children as a means to wealth and then spends it on himself. Every time I see on the back of a car, "We're spending our grandchildren's inheritance," I have to pray not to rear end that car. As a man, it should be, "I wanna bless my children and my children's children."

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Okay, that's the heart of a healthy man. Proverb says, "A wise man leaves an inheritance for his children's children."

- [Congregation] That's right.

- And where taxes are, you gotta be really smart to figure that out. He goes on, "Are we not regarded by him as foreigners?" "He doesn't even treat us like daughters. He treats us like slaves and employees, but not daughters." "For he has sold us." "He sold us, bride price to you. And he's devoured our money. That was our trust. That was our inheritance. That was for us. And he spent it all on himself." "All the wealth that God has taken away from our father belongs to us and to our children." Now these gals are seen clearly, right? Now had Jacob never stood up to his father-in-law, they would've never seen their father-in-law, their father, ultimately, for who he is. This is a difficult day. "Now then, whatever God has said to you, do that." That's a

good answer. "Okay. Like, if God told you, do it. Do whatever God told you to do and we're with you and we're for you."

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Amen.

- "So Jacob arose and set his sons and his wives camels." He's like, "We're going right now. I already got the U-Haul loaded up. We're rolling." "He drove away all the livestock, all the property that he had gained, the livestock in his possession they'd acquired in Paddan-aram to go to the land of Canaan, his father, Issac. Laban had gone to shear his sheep." So he is away for a few days. Good time to move. And some of you were like, "When's a good time to move?" When they're on vacation, all right? They come back, like, "Where are you?" And you're like, "Gone." "Laban gone to shear sheep. Rachel stole her father's household god." Let me just say this. If your God can be stolen, I'm not impressed. You're like, "9-1-1." "What happened?" "We've been robbed." "What did they take?" "God." Probably not a real good God you got there. If we can get it at the pawn shop, it's probably not the creator God we met in Genesis 1, amen? But a God is this, it's superstition. This is like a dream catcher. Or this is like witchcraft, or this is like some sacred object, or crystals. We got our own version. If you're in Sedona, everything, in Sedona. "And Jacob tricked Laban, the Armenian, by not telling him he intended to flee. He fled with all that he had, and rose. He crossed the Euphrates, set his face toward the hill country of Gilead. One of us told Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled, he took his kinsman..." He's gonna get the family involved. People with a murderous spirit always bring family into the fight.

- [Congregation] Yeah.

- And the family and people are like, "Blood's thicker than water, and family first. And that's in first and second nonsense. That's nowhere in the Bible. I always say this to my kids, "I'm not for you or against you. I'm for what's right. If you are doing right, I'm for you. If you want to do wrong, I can't be for you." My loyalty is not to family, it's to God. And my hope is that my family would be loyal to God so we'd all be on the same side. But a murderous family, a murderous spirit family, they will defend one another even when they're doing evil.

- [Congregation] That's right.

- So, goes on. "When it was told Laban on the third day he had fled, he took his kinsman with him, pursued him for seven days". This is a chase. This is like a military campaign. He's got a few day head start, but he's got wife, kids, livestock, and here come the men, sword strapped to the side. They're gonna come and potentially attack their own family. "Followed him close into the hill country of Gilead, but..." This is awesome. "God came to Laban in a dream." So here's Laban, he's demonic, sleeping. God shows up. He's like, "We got a problem, and I'm not it. Laban, every other time somebody says they have a problem with you. you say they're the problem. I'm God, we have a problem. I'm not the problem." God can even show up and put a

little bit of, little bit of fear into an unbeliever. Here's what God tells him. It's awesome. Said to him, "Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, good or bad. Watch what you say. You watch what you do. You mess with him, I might need to get involved. By the way, your god got stolen." All right, we're gonna have a gun fight. And you got a Nerf gun. My guess is, this is not gonna end well. "And Laban overtook Jacob. Now, Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country. And Laban, with his kinsmen, pitched their tents in the hill country of Gilead." So here it is. The big conflict. "Laban said to Jacob, 'What have you done?'" It's always blame shifting.

- [Congregation] Oh yeah.

- Excuse making, scapegoating. "Look at all the problems you've caused." "No, no, no. I was leaving the problem." "What have you done that you have tricked me?" Wait a minute. You tricked him for 20 years. One day he woke up. He's like, "I'm gonna try it." And now, he's an evil human being, 'cause he tricked you once. You've tricked him every day for 20 years. These are the people that, if you do what they do, they'll, "Oh, my gosh. I can't." All right, that's so . Okay. I just make it up as I go. "You've tricked me and you've driven away my daughters like captives with a sword." So, can you imagine if this was today, because today, this would be Laban on the news, on social media, "My son-in-law joined a cult. He hears from God. He sees dreams. He's taken my, he's robbed me. He's taken my grandkids captive. He's got a knife of their throat. He's taken my daughters and they fled to another country!" Not true. But I'm telling you right now, oh, on the internet, click, click. It doesn't need to be true. It just needs to be profitable, then it'll be said. This is all just not true. He doesn't have his wives, you know, sword to their throat. None of that. "Why did you flee secretly and trick me, and did not tell me?" These are the people always like, "You need to tell me. You need my permission. You need to run that by me. I'm in charge. You didn't ask." It's like, "I'm grown. I don't have to ask." One of the benefits being grown is making decisions. Jacob, here, is an old man. He's much older than me. Let me just tell you this. If you get your AARP card, you don't have to run stuff by your father-in-law. I'm just gonna throw it out there, okay? And here's what he says. This is awesome. "Why did you flee secretly and trick me, and did not tell me, so that I may have sent you away with mirth and songs, with tambourine and lyre?" "I was gonna hire a mariachi band. We're gonna have a queso fountain. I had sombreros for everybody. I'm a great guy. I could have made this so, you ruined it. You robbed me of the opportunity to bless you." You think that's true?

- [Congregation] No.

- No. It's like, "No, what? You weren't gonna hire a band and throw a party. We've been doing this 20 years." "And why did you not permit me to kiss my sons and my daughters?" Now he's a heartfelt, emotional guy. "You know, I love my daughters and my grandkids, and I'm super relational, and I just wanted to kiss 'em and bless 'em." Well, you could have done that for 20 years, you jackelope. You know, what I mean. All right, anyway, so... "Now you have done foolishly." Here's what he says, "It is in my power to harm you." Is that a threat?

- [Congregation] Oh, yeah.

- Oh, yeah. This is like your father-in-law, he's got his hand on his gun and he is like, "Just remind yourself." This is intimidation. This is threatening. "But the God of your fathers," he's like, "Ah!" And then the God that didn't get stolen, showed up, "Spoke to me last night saying, 'Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.'" What's basically saying is, "I was gonna hurt you. Then your God said he's gonna hurt me. So I'm on the horns of a terrible dilemma." "And now you have gone away because you long greatly for your father's house, but why did you steal my gods?" Multiple gods. "Jacob answered and said, 'Laban, because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force. You'd slit my throat to get your way. Anyone with whom you find your gods shall not live.'" Jacob doesn't know that his wife has stolen her father's gods, so he is like, "We didn't steal anything. We certainly didn't steal your god." He doesn't know. His wife is not super honest, not super ethical. She's a lot like her old man. She's a work in progress. "In the presence of our kinsman, point out what I have that is yours and take it." He's like, "All right, here's the deal. Go to the U-Haul truck. Take everything out. We'll just wait. If there is a cup in there that belongs to you, I'll apologize, and you can have it. I haven't taken anything." He goes on, "Now, Jacob did not know that Rachel has stolen them." So daughter stole the gods. "So Laban went into Jacob's tent and into Leah's tent." His own daughter. He can't just look at his daughter and say, "Honey, can I ask you a question? Okay. I trust you." Nope. He's willing to break the relationship with his daughter for the possibility of getting possessions. "And he went into the tent of her two female servants, but he did not find them. He went out a Leah's tent, and entered Rachel's tent." His other daughter. I got two daughters. "Honey. I'm your dad. Tell me the truth. Okay, I trust you." "Nope, I'm going in. Go through all your stuff." "Now Rachel had taken the household gods, put 'em in the camel's saddle and sat on them." There is humor here. She's sitting on god. Where's god? Sucks to be God, right? So, uh, . So between the woman and the camel, like, "There you go, Lord." "Laban felt all about the tent." He went through everything. "And she said to her father, 'Let not my Lord be angry that I cannot rise before you for the way of women is upon me.'" This is amazing. She's sitting there and her dad's like, "Well, I need you to get up and check. She's like, "I would, but I have my period." He's like, "Errr!" Now this is thousands of years ago, and sometimes you read the Bible, and you're like, "Well, I don't understand what's going on." This has worked for thousands of years. This works today. Like, "Hey, babe, can I get the remote?" "I have my period." "Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa." It's like kryptonite for a man. Here we go! I'm not saying it's right, but I'm saying it's affective. That's what I'm saying, okay? Where was I? "So then Jacob became angry and berated Laban." Jacob was like, "I'm done. Enough already." "Jacob said to Laban, 'What is my offense? What is my sin? You've hotly pursued me? You went through all our stuff. You haven't found anything. Everybody's here. There's nothing we've done. These 20 years, I've been with you. Your ewes, your female goats have not miscarried. I have not eaten the rams of your flock. What was torn by beast, I did not bring to you. I bore the loss myself.'" What he is gonna say is, "When I worked for you, I didn't get paid. I didn't get housing. I didn't get food. And anytime there was a loss, you made me pay. You're not a father-in-law, you're slave master." "Therefore, I was by day in the heat and it consumed me. Cold by night. Sleep fled for my eyes. These 20 years, I've been at your house, I served you 14 for your two

daughters, six years for your flocks. You've changed my wages 10 times. If the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had not been on my side, surely now, you would've sent me way empty handed. But God saw my affliction and the labor of my hands. And he rebuked you last night.' Then Laban answered and said to Jacob, 'The daughters are my daughters.'" Oh, this is worse. "The children are my children." Murderous spirit. "The money's mine. The girls are mine. The grandkids are mine. Mine, mine, mine. It's all mine and your mine. And if you don't agree, I'm gonna murder you." This is not the father heart of God. This is the heart of Satan and the demonic. Goes on, "What can I do this day for these daughters or for their children whom they have born? Come now, let us make a covenant, you and I." Laban realizes Jacob ain't backing down. This is a fight to the finish. And now, the daughters, they're with their husband. They're against their dad. So what he says is, "Let's just let's agree to walk away." "'Let us make a covenant. Let it be a witness between you and me.' Jacob took a stone, set it up as pillar. Jacob said to his kinsman, 'Gather stones.' They took stones, made a heap. They ate by the heap. Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha." I don't know, he's Klingons. "And Jacob called it Galeed. Laban said, 'The heap is a witness between you and me today.' Therefore, he named it Galeed and Mizpah. For he said, 'The Lord watch between you and me when we are out of one another's sight. If you oppress my daughters or take any wives beside my daughters...' Don't you love this?

- [Congregation] Oh yeah.

- The dad's like, "Don't go around marring another girls. The four I gave you, that's all you get 'cause I have standards." Sometimes, the most wicked people make the weirdest rules. It's weird too, we never hear about his wife. She's probably at home drinking. I mean, you know, she's probably at home drinking. He says, "'God is a witness between me.' Then Laban said to Jacob, 'See this heap and pillar, which I have set between you and me, the heap is a witness and the pillar is a witness, that I will not pass over this heap to you. You'll not pass over this heap to me. The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us.' So Jacob swore by the fear of his father, Isaac, and Jacob offered a sacrifice in the hill country and called his kinsman to eat bread." They eat, they spent the night. Early in the morning, Laban kissed his daughters, his grandkids, and they walked away. What they did, they set up, literally, a boundary. You'll hear people like, "We need boundaries with relationships." Sometimes it's like, "You can't call me and just start yelling. You can't just send me nasty texts. You can't light me on fire on social media. You can't just assume we're coming over for Thanksgiving. You can't just expect us to show up for Christmas. You can't expect us to put up with the drunk, crazy uncle just 'cause he's family. Like, there's some boundaries." Here, they literally make a boundary. It's a heap of stones. And Laban is like, "I'm gonna go here." Jacob's like, "I'm gonna go here." And Jacob says, "I'll never pass over." And Laban says, "I'll never pass over. It's a boundary. We're done. We're done. We're done." So let me unpack this. Relationships with toxic, evil people. How do you know that someone is toxic, clinical term, evil, biblical term? They keep you from becoming the person that God has called you to be, and doing the things that God has called you to do. Ultimately here, Jacob has a conflict with Laban, but the real conflict is between Laban and God. 'Cause here's what toxic people with a

murderous spirit have, the demand to be Lord over your life. Now God is Lord over Jacob's life. So God tells Jacob, "Move." Jacob's like, "Okay." Layman's like, "No." "Well the Lord said..." "I'm the Lord." Ultimately, Laban wants to be Jacob's Lord. He wants to rule and reign, command and demand. He wants all authority. And ultimately, Jacob can't yield to Laban. To do so, he would be denying his Lord. Toxic, evil people with a murderous spirit, they will keep you from being, becoming, who God wants you to be and doing what God has called you to do. For 20 years under Laban, Jacob is a believer, but he's not maturing and growing. He's not becoming the man that God intended him to be. He doesn't even start that journey until he says no to Laban, so he can say yes to the Lord. And God has told him to go. And Jacob is now having a fight with his father-in-law, who's trying to forbid him to obey God. These people are small in number, but they are great in pain. One of these people can just wreck your life. Their tactics include their very domineering. For the first 20 years, Laban totally domineering. Because ultimately, let me say this, for people with a murderous spirit who are toxic and evil, control, control, control, control, control. And if I'm not in control, I'm gonna murder you so I can regain control. Very domineering. Then they use guilt. If domineering doesn't work, it's guilt. "Oh, you're not being very nice. That's not very loving. What about my grandkids? Da, da, da, da, da," Manipulation. "Well, let's negotiate a deal. Let's renegotiate our deal terms. I'm sure we can meet in the middle. Let's compromise." Then when they don't get their, you're like, "No," then they attack. This had to be a traumatic day. Here comes grandpa with a sword, with uncles with swords, coming full force at dad, and the grandkids are watching. Sometimes when you're dealing with evil, toxic, demonic, murderous-spirit family, your thought is, "We'll just wait and see what happens." Add kids, it doesn't get easier. This had to be a traumatic day for the kids. "Why does grandpa pull his sword on dad? Why do the uncles pull their sword on dad? Like, what the..." Now the kids are involved. They become overly needy. See, Laban can't succeed without Jacob. "But I'll fail. My business will fail. I need you. What do I?" But here here's the thing, it's always about them.

- [Congregation] Yeah.

- And they're crazy, and they create all kinds of drama. I mean, here we have an entire family with weapons drawn and grandkids present. Let me say this. Our relationship with God is different than a relationship with Satan. Satan controls people. He enters Judas Iscariot and controls him. It's what it means to be demon possessed. The demon controls you. God doesn't control us. He gives us the Holy Spirit so we can practice self-control. He changes our nature. He changes our desires. He changes our mind. And he sends the Holy Spirit to give us the fruit of the Spirit, which is self-control. If you have the Holy Spirit, you don't need somebody to control you. You need the Holy Spirit to teach you to practice self-control.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Let me say, these people lack all empathy and sympathy.

- [Congregation] That's right.

- Laban, the whole time, he's not like, "Hey, Jacob, I'm sorry. I'm sure that was probably some rough years." Or, "Daughters, you know, I feel bad." Or "Grandkids, you're crying. Sorry I showed up with the sword and the soldiers." No sympathy, empathy. It's always, "Look at how I feel. Look at what's happened to me. Look what you've done to me." Compassion needs to be a two-way street. Not just a one-way street. And if you tell them no, whoa, they get angry. They get very angry. And then, the religious people who are toxic, evil, controlling, murderous spirit, they're the worst. 'Cause they'll quote, they'll weaponize the Bible. They'll quote Bible verses to control you. They don't quote them right. I mean, I had a guy, it was funny. I think it's funny. He's like, "You're not biblical." I'm like... "Actually, I have won. You know, like... And I've been teaching it for 26 years, and you just quoted one verse out of context. You don't get to win. I mean, because that's not what it means. That's what you want it to mean. But that's not what it means." And what they'll do, they'll be like, "You're not like, Jesus. Jesus never rejected anybody." Hell's full, like full. Like, it's like an overbooked flight. Like, "We're gonna have to put him in the overhead bin. There's so many." "Jesus was never mean to anybody." Then why'd they kill him? "Well, Jesus never gave up on anybody." Sure he did. 41 times, in the four gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, Jesus either walked away from somebody or he let somebody walk away and he didn't chase him. Over two dozen separate, unique occasions where Jesus either walked away or let somebody else walk away. The times that he'd let people walk away, the rich, young ruler. He's like, "I wanna go to heaven." He's like, "All right, well, we got a lot of stuff. You can't love your stuff more than God." And he's like, "Oh, man, I love my stuff." And he left sad. Jesus wasn't like, "Let's talk about it. Let's hug it out. Let's negotiate. Let's get a counselor." He's like, "Go." There's an occasion in John 6, thousands of people walk away. Jesus is like, ♪ So long, farewell, da, da, da, da, da ♪ All right? Judas Iscariot, he looks at Judas, he's like, "You wanna murder me, go do it." There are other times, so there are times that Jesus also walks away. The Pharisees, the religious guys, keep trying to attack him and crucify him. Says he slipped away. He got away. He walked away. There are times he gets in a boat. He didn't just walk away. He sailed away. He's like, "These crazy people keep chasing me. I'm getting in the boat. That's what I'm doing. I'm out." Just look at all the times that Jesus gets in the boat to get away from these people. It's not an accident. They weren't sitting on the shore going, "Hmm, He never gives up on anybody. He's gone. I think he's done." Yeah. So what would Jesus do? Walk away or let them walk away. So let me close with this. And that doesn't mean we're at the end. It just means I want you to pay attention. So here's a question. The question is, should you walk away? Should you walk away? Gary Thomas says this, "I can't save you from yourself, but I can save them from you." I mean, imagine if Jacob would've stayed and let his grandkids get raised in this family. Like, "Hey, Laban, I love ya. You're a horrible human being. I don't wish any evil to you, but I don't want my kids to think this is acceptable." No, this is generational curse that needs to be broken. So family's the hardest, amen? You're like, "Ah..." So the first question is, is there any imminent danger? Let's say, you know, mom and dad have a couple kids. One kid grows up, gets married, has kids. The brother ends up being a drug addict or criminal, gets outta prison, moves back in with mom and dad. Should you send the grandkids over to grandma and grandpa's house?

- [Congregation] No.

- No, not a good idea. Grandma and grandpa get very emotional. "Well, you can't deny us the grandkids." "Well, I tend not to let the grandkids hang out with drug addicts and convicted criminals. It's just a thing, you know?" "Well, they have the same last name." "Oh, well, then they, well, then, oh, oh, okay. If you're in a cartel, but if you have a last name, well, that's, you know, I that's fine, you know?" It's like take the last name out and just judge the character. Is it dangerous, you know? Is it dangerous? Couple of things. First, you need to have a clarifying conversation, then a closure conversation. Clarifying conversation is, "Hey, this ain't working. Here's the boundaries." Jacob had that with Laban, and Laban wouldn't abide by the boundaries. He's like, "Okay, here's our deal." Laban's like, "No, I'm gonna steal everything and attack you." He was like, "Okay." So if the clarifying conversation doesn't work, you need to have a closure conversation. Jesus had a clarifying conversation with Peter, "Hey, you denied me, betrayed me, disowned me. I love you. If we're gonna have a relationship, it's gonna be like this, not like that." Jesus has a closure conversation with Judas, who has a murderous spirit, he's a toxic evil person. What he says is, "We're done. We're done." This is the talk to never talk again. This is the meeting to never meet again. This is the end. That's where we find ourselves here. Start by forgiving. Don't make decisions outta bitterness. Don't just get emotional in a moment, and say, "Pastor Mark said I get to buy matches and set the bridge on fire. Hallelujah." Don't just get emotional in a moment. Calm down, repent of anything you've said or done. Forgive whatever they have done. You gotta hear from God. You gotta confirm it by wise counsel. And then you've got to write out what you wanna say. Either send it to them, don't post it on the internet, or meet with them and read it and give them a copy. But here's what you always do, bring a witness. Because if you have a private conversation, do you think that their version is gonna be accurate?

- [Congregation] No.

- No. Now let me close with some encouragement. Since we've not had any for an hour and four minutes. God doesn't want you just to walk away from bad, but He wants you to walk too good.

- [Congregation] Amen. You're alive. There's breath in your lungs. There's days on the calendar. God's blessing, God's grace, God's provision. It may be after the bad ends that the good begins. I'll close with this story. My wife, Grace, and I, we were in a season surrounded by some people with murderous spirit. Hardest season of our life. God spoke to us, said, "You're released," we were in two different rooms of the house, at the same time. Like, "Okay, God, well, what do we do?" And guess what? God told us to go, so we went. And He went with us. And He blessed us. It's the best season of our whole life. Happiest ever been, right? You know, we gotta church. I get to teach the Bible. My five kids all love and serve Jesus, and are marrying believers. Everybody in my family loves Jesus, and walks with Jesus, and we serve Jesus. And I tell you what, sometimes for the good to start, the bad needs to end.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- So we're gonna spend some time worshiping, and I'm gonna bring the band up. I'll bring some students up and then we'll close online. Thanks for hanging in there for a long sermon. What we're doing is really exciting. We're gonna baptize a bunch of students that gave their life to Jesus. And what they're saying is, "This is awesome." Jesus died so we can be forgiven. And He rose, walked away from the grave so that we can walk with Jesus into a new life. And what they're saying is, "I'm walking away from maybe some bad friendships, some bad dating relationships, some bad habits, some bad patterns. And I'm walking into a season of blessing, and I'm walking into it with the Lord Jesus." And I want you guys to cheer and celebrate and encourage, because man, for Jacob, it took him 20 years before he finally got on his own two feet. Isn't it much better to do so when you're in high school.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Father, thanks for an opportunity to teach. And God, I pray that nobody would weaponize this sermon, but that we would utilize it in a healthy and appropriate way. And God give us wisdom for all our relationships. And God just thank you, that sometimes, sometimes for the good to start, the bad must end. And ending the bad can be painful, but enjoying the good can be wonderful. I thank you for the best season of our whole life. And I pray that you would speak to these dear people and help lead and guide them into a prosperous future, in Jesus good name, amen.