

The title of this morning's sermon is, "*Poor Spiritual Leadership.*"

We've paused our verse-by-verse study through Luke's Gospel for a special Father's Day message.

If you aren't a father, you could be wondering what application this has for you, but there is some!

- If you're a wife, you need to know what's expected of your husband so you can help him in his spiritual leadership.
- If you're a young man, hopefully you'll become a father someday, so this has application for you as that day approaches.
- If you're a young woman, you're probably going to get married, and you need to know what to look for in a husband and father of your children.
- And if you never marry, you will be in the Church with people who are married and you will have opportunities to encourage others in the one-another's listed for us in the New Testament.

So there's application for all of us!

Let's begin by looking at **Gen 31:13**...the context is God talking to Jacob...

Gen 31:13 I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now arise, go out from this land and return to the land of your kindred."

Jacob fled from his uncle Laban. God met him and told him to return to Bethel where he had his famous dream of the ladder stretching from heaven to earth w/ angels ascending and descending on it.

Now look at **Gen 33:18** to see if Jacob went to Bethel like God commanded...

Gen 33:18 And Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, on his way from Paddan-aram, and he camped before the city.

He settled in **Shechem**. This isn't Bethel, is it?

Where does it say Shechem is located? **In the land of Canaan**. Not a good place to be. The people are so evil, in a few centuries God is going to call for their extermination.

Now you could read this and say, "Well, he's just stopping here for a moment, and then he'll be on his way."

Not quite. Look at **verse 19**...

Gen 33:19 And from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, he bought for a hundred pieces of money the piece of land on which he had pitched his tent. 20 There he erected an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel (which means, "God, the God of Israel").

Jacob purchased land and pitched his tent. He wasn't planning on leaving any time soon. Instead of obeying God, he delayed, and this compromise caused real problems.

What's interesting is – in the middle of this compromise – it says **he erected an altar**. Jacob did something that all of us can fall susceptible to, and this brings us to Lesson 1...

LESSON 1: SACRIFICE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR OBEDIENCE.

God didn't want an altar. He wanted Jacob to get to Bethel. There was no amount of altars or sacrifices that were going to take the place of Jacob obedience.

1 Sam 15:22 “Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.

Sacrifices are no substitute for obedience!

This has application for us as fathers:

- There are lots of sacrifices we can make:
 - We can work hard to take care of our families...
 - We can pay our bills on time...
 - We can work hard around the house...
- But there's no substitute for obeying the primary commands God's given us as men:
 - **Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.** We can't work hard enough that it can ever take the place of loving our wives. Loving our wives IS the sacrifice God wants.
 - **Eph 6:4b Fathers...bring [up your children] in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.** God wants men to teach their children about Him. No matter how hard you work – no matter what sacrifices you make – nothing can take the place of praying with your children and reading the Word w/ them.

If Jacob would've obeyed God – instead of offering these sacrifices – we wouldn't have to read the terrible account in the next chapter. Look at **Gen 34:1**...

Gen 34:1 Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the women of the land.

Since **Dinah** was Jacob's only daughter – surrounded by 12 brothers – she probably went looking for female fellowship.

When it says **of the land**, what **land** is this? Canaan!

So let me ask you a few questions:

1. Should Dinah be going out and looking for female friends in Canaan? Is that the kind of fellowship she should have...w/ pagan women who are going to be destroyed in a few centuries b/c of their wickedness?

2. Second, should she be going alone like this?
3. Third, is this really her fault?

Jacob is in an area where he doesn't know the people – or worse HE DOES KNOW THE PEOPLE – and he still lets his daughter go walking around alone like this.

What could he have done instead?

- He could've forbid her from going.
- Or he could've sent her w/ one – or 12 – of her brothers.

And this brings us to Lesson 2...

LESSON 2: A FATHER'S COMPROMISE ENDANGERS HIS FAMILY.

Jacob settled in an area that endangered his family, and we see a number of men in the OT do something similar. For example:

- Abraham endangered his wife twice, in **Gen 12** and **20** when he went to Egypt and lied about her being his sister.
- Lot ruined – his family by settling in Sodom in **Gen 19**.
- Isaac endangered his wife, Rebekah, in **Gen 26** when he followed his father's example and lied about her being his sister.
- Elimelech took his family to Moab in **Ruth 1** and it had disastrous consequences.

Considering the number of times we see this in Scripture, we should take notice. As fathers:

- We don't want to follow the examples of these men and put our families in compromising or dangerous situations.
- We have to be intentional and purposeful leaders.
- We have to think about:
 - Where we take them
 - Where we let them go
 - Where we don't let them go

Young ladies, let me get you to look at me for a moment:

- If you have a father who would not let you do what Jacob let Dinah do...
- If you have a father who tells you, "No,"...
- If you have a father who encourages you to dress modestly, and makes you change if you don't...
- If you have a father who discourages you from keeping certain company...
- If you've ever said, "Well my dad doesn't let me..." and then fill in the blank...

You need to thank him! You have a father who's doing a better job w/ you than Jacob did w/ his daughter.

Since he didn't protect her, it didn't take long for something terrible to happen. Look at **verse 2**...

2 And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the land, saw her, he seized her and lay with her and humiliated her. 3 And his soul was drawn to Dinah the daughter of Jacob. He loved the young woman and spoke tenderly to her. 4 So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, “Get me this girl for my wife.”

5 Now Jacob heard that he (Shechem) had defiled his daughter Dinah. But his sons were with his livestock in the field, so Jacob held his peace until they came. 6 And Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him. 7 The sons of Jacob had come in from the field as soon as they heard of it, and the men (Jacob’s sons) were indignant and very angry, because he had done an outrageous thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, for such a thing must not be done.

8 But Hamor spoke with them, saying, “The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter. Please give her to him to be his wife. (Now notice this...) 9 MAKE MARRIAGES WITH US. GIVE YOUR DAUGHTERS TO US, AND TAKE OUR DAUGHTERS FOR YOURSELVES. 10 You shall dwell with us, and the land shall be open to you. Dwell and trade in it, and get property in it.”

Let me get you to think about something...

Jacob and his family are basically the entire nation of Israel. All 12 sons that will become the 12 tribes are represented here. And Hamor is trying to get them to become Canaanites.

And this brings us to the next part of Lesson 3...

LESSON 3: THE WORLD WANTS TO ASSIMILATE OUR FAMILIES.

One of the greatest responsibilities God’s people had in the OT was staying holy and set apart. You can see how the Shechemites are trying to destroy that separateness:

- They want their daughters to marry their sons.
- They want their sons to marry their daughters.
- They want them to become part of them.

Nothing has changed today!

One of the greatest responsibilities God’s people have in the NT is staying holy and set apart:

- The world wants to assimilate us and our families.
- Just like Jacob needed to keep his family separate and holy, we have to keep our families separate and holy.

Gentlemen, this is why we have to be aware of everything that influences our family:

- What our family watches...
- What our family listens to...
- How our family talks or jokes...
- What company our family keeps...
- How our family dresses...

- How our family spends their time...
- What our family does recreationally...

As a result, there are going to be times we're going to have to say no to things:

- It's going to be hard.
- We're going to be the bad guy.

But I don't see any other way to prevent our families from being assimilated by the world.

If I can address the children again, I would invite you to consider:

- It's hard being a dad.
- It's hard saying, "No."
- It's a lot easier to say, "Yes."

Just know that your dad is trying to make the best decisions he can for your family. He might be upsetting you, but he's making the decisions that he thinks are best.

And this is why we should see a verse telling us Jacob stood up and clearly said something like:

- *We will have nothing to do w/ you or your people.*
- *Leave us alone and we'll leave you alone...in fact, we need to be moving on to Bethel.*

But there's nothing like that, so look what happens next...

11 Shechem also said to her (Dinah's) father (Jacob) and to her brothers, "Let me find favor in your eyes, and whatever you say to me I will give. 12 Ask me for as great a bride-price and gift as you will, and I will give whatever you say to me. Only give me the young woman to be my wife." 13 The sons of Jacob answered Shechem and his father Hamor deceitfully (make sure you notice this, that Jacob's sons were lying), because he had defiled their sister Dinah. 14 They (the sons of Jacob) said to them, "We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that would be a disgrace to us.

Now I want you to notice something, and you're going to have to look at a few different verses, b/c it's a theme running through the account...

- In **verse 4** it says **Shechem spoke to his father**
- In **verse 6** it says **Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him.** Not to sound overly simple, but who does Hamor plan to speak with? Jacob.

Even though Shechem is a grown man, the ancient world was patriarchal, so it was expected the fathers – Hamor and Jacob – would arrange this marriage.

But then:

- **Verse 8** says **Hamor spoke WITH THEM.** Who is **them**? Jacob's sons.
- **Verse 11** also says **Shechem also said to her father (Jacob) AND TO HER BROTHERS.** He could tell by then that they were running things.
- **Verse 13** says **The sons of Jacob answered.**
- **Verse 14** says **They (the sons of Jacob) said...**

Who's in charge...and who's not in charge?

- Jacob’s sons are in charge, and it’s going to have terrible consequences.
- Jacob looks passive throughout the account. You don’t hear from him until the very end, after all the damage has been done.

And this brings us to Lesson 4...

LESSON 4: A FATHER’S PASSIVITY CAUSES PROBLEMS.

There are a number of examples of this in Scripture...

You can go back to the Garden of Eden. In **Gen 3:17**, God rebuked Adam...

**“Because YOU HAVE LISTENED TO THE VOICE OF YOUR WIFE
and have eaten of the tree
of which I commanded you,
‘You shall not eat of it,’**

We know the fall took place when Adam and Eve sinned, but God points out WHY the fall took place: because Adam obeyed his wife. He was passive.

Go forward a few chapters and you reach Abraham and Sarah...

Gen 16:2 Sarai said to Abram, “The Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her.” And ABRAM LISTENED TO THE VOICE OF SARAI (it’s the same words that God said to Adam).

We know this caused problems too.

And the situation w/ Jacob is another example...

Because of his passivity, before the chapter is over, his family pays a terrible price:

- His daughter ended up violated
- Two of his sons become murderers.
- Their reputation is destroyed.
- Jacob’s whole family is in danger b/c of potential retaliation.

The lesson for us as fathers, is just like it caused problems for Adam, Abraham, and Jacob when they were passive, it causes problems for us and our families when we’re passive.

Look at **verse 15** to see what happened b/c Jacob didn’t restrain his sons...they’re the ones speaking...

15 Only on this condition will we agree with you—that you will become as we are by every male among you being circumcised.

Jacob's sons acted wickedly, and something that makes it even worse is they used **circumcision** – which was the sign between God and his people – to carry out their evil plan.

16 Then we will give our daughters to you (this is a lie), **and we will take your daughters to ourselves** (another lie), **and we will dwell with you and become one people** (and another lie). **17 But if you will not listen to us and be circumcised, then we will take our daughter, and we will be gone.” 18 Their words pleased Hamor and Hamor's son Shechem. 19 And the young man did not delay to do the thing, because he delighted in Jacob's daughter. Now he (Shechem) was the most honored of all his father's house.**

There's something about this whole situation that looks very odd at first, but teaches us something important. Let me back up a little bit to get some momentum into the lesson...

We know Shechem did something terrible to Dinah, but it also says looks like he really cared for her:

- **Verse 3** says **he loved her and spoke tenderly to her.**
- In **Verses 11 and 12** Shechem said he would give anything to marry her: **“...whatever you say to me I will give. Ask me for as great a bride-price and gift as you will, and I will give whatever you say to me.”**
- **Verse 19** says he **did not delay [in being circumcised], because he delighted in [Dinah]**...even though we know this would've been excruciating for him.

Now I'm not defending Shechem's actions, but I am saying in his own pagan, worldly way, he seemed to care about Dinah. And it seems like – from the account – that Shechem's actions were – in his eyes and the eyes of his people – acceptable.

But Dinah still suffered.

The application for us is our families are going to be around worldly people who do things they think are right – things that are acceptable to them – but our families can still suffer.

And this brings us to Lesson 5...

LESSON 5: A FATHER MUST PROTECT HIS FAMILY.

Shechem's actions were acceptable in his eyes and the eyes of those around him, but they still damaged his family.

Can we think of actions the world engages in that are acceptable in their eyes, but can still damage our families?

Just think of what the world doesn't frown upon:

- Is drunkenness frowned upon?
- Is fornication frowned upon?

- Is divorce frowned upon?
- Is homosexuality or transgenderism frowned upon?
- Is foul language or crudeness frowned upon?

Just like Shechem's actions were acceptable in his – and his family's eyes – these actions are acceptable in the world's eyes:

- Jacob shouldn't have expected Canaanites to behave in a godly way.
- We can't expect worldly people to behave in a godly way.

And this is why – as fathers – we have to protect our children.

Briefly look back at the end of **verse 19**...

19b [Shechem] was the most honored of all his father's house.

Since Shechem was so respected, he was able to go back to his people and convince them to do something that I'm pretty sure would've sounded outrageous to everyone. Instead of reading all the verses, I'm just going to tell you what happened...

Shechem tells the men to be circumcised, and while they're recovering, two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, kill the men so they can take their wealth and flocks. It's really one of the darkest moments in the OT.

There isn't much we can learn from it, other than this...

- I've been telling you that people in the world can act in ungodly ways...ways they often think are acceptable.
- When we read these verses, what see God's people can also act in ungodly, and evil ways too.

We're going to skip down and read **verse 30**. Jacob hears about what his sons did, and I want you to notice there's one person he's very concerned about...

30 Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought trouble on ME by making ME stink to the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites and the Perizzites. MY numbers are few, and if they gather themselves against ME and attack ME, I shall be destroyed, both I and my household."

Did you notice the repetition of the words **me**, **my**, and **I**? 7 times to be exact. Jacob was very concerned about himself.

Jacob has been passive throughout the whole account, and when he finally speaks up, it's all about him. Considering what happened to his daughter and the people of Shechem, this has to be viewed as an unbelievably selfish response.

I didn't want to make this a lesson, but I will say as fathers, there's something wrong if the words "me, my, and I" are frequently coming out of our mouths.

Being the spiritual leader of our homes means more than making decisions and leading Bible studies. It means being like Christ, and that means putting our wives and children ahead of ourselves.

In **verse 30** look at the words **making ME stink to the inhabitants of the land**, and this brings us to the next lesson...

LESSON 6: SIN RUINS OUR WITNESS.

If you remember back in **Gen 33:20** it said [**Jacob**] **erected an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel** (which means, “God, the God of Israel”).

Jacob built this altar to reveal the God of Israel to the surrounding people. But sin destroyed and chance of him being a witness to the people.

Jacob blamed his sons, but he shared plenty of the blame too.

Since we’re focusing on fathers, let’s discuss the application for us...

We aren’t going to be good witnesses if there’s sin in our lives...and the question I’d ask is: to whom? To whom are we going to be bad witnesses?

We could say our neighbors, friends, or coworkers...but I’d say we need to be more concerned about our witness to our families:

- We’ll look like big hypocrites.
- We all sin, but if our lives are characterized by sin, which means if habitually:
 - We get angry...
 - We get drunk...
 - We mistreat our wives...
 - We mistreat our children...
 - We’re lazy
 - We look at things we shouldn’t...

What sort of witness are we going to have to our children? How much are we going to look like Christ?

- If we want our children to embrace the Gospel, they’ve got to see the Gospel working in our lives.
- If we want our wives to respect us, we’ve got to be respectable.

Very few things – if any – will be more damaging to our witness than habitual, unrepentant sin..

Now I know this has been a dark chapter, so I want to leave you w/ something encouraging...

Jacob does make it to Bethel, and he seems to have learned from this account, b/c he looks like a much stronger leader in his home. Look at **Gen 35:1**...

Gen 35:1 God said to Jacob, “Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there. Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau.”

The reason **Gen 34** was so dark is there’s no mention of God in any of the verses. There’s no mention of prayer. Nobody sought God and nothing in the chapter looked like God or the way God would do things.

You have to get to **Gen 35** to see God again. And when He shows up, we learn something important...

God’s Word doesn’t change!

What did God first say to Jacob in **Gen 33**? Go to Bethel. Jacob didn’t go to Bethel, and when God spoke to him again, what did He say? Go to Bethel.

We might not like what God says, but He doesn’t change His mind:

- Just b/c we’re disobedient.
- Or just b/c some amount of time has passed.

Now watch this leadership from Jacob...

2 So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, “Put away the foreign gods that are among you and purify yourselves and change your garments. 3 Then let us arise and go up to Bethel, so that I may make there an altar to the God who answers me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone.”

Jacob – and his family – have been through a lot recently b/c of his poor spiritual leadership. But he turned things around, and this brings us to our last lesson...

LESSON 7: (PART I) IT’S NEVER TOO LATE FOR A FATHER TO LEAD...

I don’t know if any fathers feel like Jacob might have felt after messing up his family, but this is why it’s so encouraging to see him leading NOW, versus having it all together from the beginning.

Look what he says:

- **Put away the foreign gods that are among you...**
- **Purify yourselves...**
- **Let us arise and go up to Bethel, so that I may make there an altar to the God**

He firmly called his family to repentance.

Jacob showed a level of leadership that we didn’t see throughout the previous chapter. He shows that it’s never too late to turn things around w/ our families and start doing things right.

Maybe you’re sitting here and you’re discouraged. You’re thinking:

- I haven't prayed w/ my family like I should...
- I haven't read the Word w/ my family like I should...
- I haven't been the spiritual leader I should be...

Let Jacob's example encourage you. It's never too late!

And look at this wonderful response from his family...

4 So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had, and the rings that were in their ears. Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree that was near Shechem.

And this brings us to the second part of Lesson 7...

LESSON 7: (PART I) IT'S NEVER TOO LATE FOR A FATHER TO LEAD (PART II) AND WHEN HE DOES, HIS FAMILY OFTEN FOLLOWS.

This included the idols that Rachel stole from her father, Laban. The reason I tell you that is they meant a lot to her. But when Jacob led, his family responded wonderfully, even giving up their treasured idols!

Let me share something interesting w/ you:

- The most common complaint I've heard from women is NOT: "*My husband wants me to submit. I hate this whole submission thing.*"
- The most common complaint I've heard is, "*My husband won't lead.*"

And this has application for husbands AND wives...

Gentlemen, hopefully we recognize the consequences of being passive in our homes. Let's be the spiritual leaders God's called us to be. This is the greatest responsibility we have on this side of heaven.

I think one of the greatest obstacles is fatigue:

- I know you work hard...
- I know you just want to get home and relax...
- I know it's tiring to pray w/ your family...
- I know it's tiring to read the Word w/ your family...

But our families need us to be spiritual leaders.

When you feel overwhelmed – especially when you're tired and weary – let me encourage you to remember what Jesus said...

Matt 11:28-30 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

The Lord stands ready to help us lead in our families in the ways He's commanded.

Ladies, maybe you've been listening to this, and you've been saying:

- *Amen!*
- *I hope my husband has been listening.*
- *I'm one of those wives who wants my husband to lead!*

Let me be honest w/ you...

When some women say, "I want my husband to lead," what they really mean is, "I want my husband to do what I want!"

- If you want your husband to lead, then let me tell you what not to do and what to do...
- Don't try to control your husband. Don't chop him off at the knees when he makes decisions.
- Instead, encourage him. You play a huge part in your his leadership in the home:
 - Most men are nervous at best – terrified at worst – to pray and read the Word w/ their families.
 - He needs your support!

Finally, children:

- Be a blessing to your father. Support the decisions he makes, even if you don't like them, and especially when he tells you, "No," b/c he's doing what he thinks is best.
- Thank him when he prays w/ you and reads the Word w/ you. Consider yourself to be very blessed if you have a father who does these things w/ you.

If you have any questions about this morning's sermon, or Pastor Doug and I can pray for you in any way, we'll be up front after service and we'd consider it a privilege to speak w/ you.

Let's pray.