

Scripture Reading: [as background]

Genesis 28: “11 So [Jacob] came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. 12 Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. 13 And behold, Jehovah stood above it and said: “I am Jehovah God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. 14 Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. 15 Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.” 16 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.” 17 And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!” 18 Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it. 19 And he called the name of that place Bethel.”

Genesis 31:11 *[near the end of his service]*

“11 Then the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream, saying, ‘Jacob.’ And I said, ‘Here I am.’ 12 And He said, ‘Lift your eyes now and see, all the rams which leap on the flocks are streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted; for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. 13

I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar and where you made a vow to Me. Now arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your family.”

Genesis 35:1 *[and looking just ahead]*

“Then God said to Jacob, “Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother.” 2 And Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, “Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments. 3 Then let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone.”

"The Wandering Daughter"

Well this morning we come to another of those chapters that are not real popular! But as we saw with those portions that dealt with the sinfulness of sin before the flood, the failings of Abraham and Isaac or the many marriages of Jacob, there are lessons to be learned even here from these our ancestors in the faith!

- Remember, Paul said they are given as our examples and Jesus said they speak of Him!
- So Lord willing such will be what we consider today.

There are two very important lessons to learn:

- IF we are not where God wants us to be in life, we will likely get into a LOT of trouble.
- IF we do experience trouble we only end up with more trouble if we ignore it or take matters into our own hands.

And just where do we see Jesus?

- As the Shepherd we studied last week Who goes after the lost sheep!

Now I am going to base my understanding of this chapter on the belief that Jacob was a man in the wrong place at the wrong time.

This is why I read the passages that I did which come before and after chapter 34... Jacob was supposed to be in Bethel and that is not what we find at the end of chapter 33 which came at the end of our study a few weeks ago.

Genesis 33:15 “And Esau said, “Now let me leave with you some of the people who are with me.” But [Jacob] said, “What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord.” 16 So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. 17 And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, built himself a house, and made booths for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth. 18 Then Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan Aram; and he pitched his tent before the city. 19 And he bought the parcel of land, where he had pitched his tent, from the children of Hamor, Shechem’s father, for one hundred pieces of money. 20 Then he erected an altar there and called it El Elohe Israel.”

- **So even though Jacob had vowed to return to Bethel and God commanded him to return there we find Jacob settling in here at Shechem, & even buying some land.**

And with that setting we see chapter 34 opening with one of the simplest and devastating verses in the Scriptures...

“Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.”

We will soon see the devastating results, but first we need to consider the impact of what seems like pretty simple actions by Dinah...

- **At bottom it goes to the principle of separation!**

Now while it appears to be Dinah who gets the bad ball rolling, we need to remember that Jacob is in the wrong place doing the wrong things, like buying a piece of land and settling near that city of Shechem and opening the door to his daughter’s folly. A very important lesson in the Christian life for parents is that our children will make priorities of what we make priorities...

- **And their habits will often come as a result of our habits!**

If we think going to church is no big deal, we should not be surprised when they move out and don’t bother to find a good church.

If they don’t see us presenting our tithes and offerings, we should not be surprised when they grow up as pretty selfish people who cling to their material blessings never giving a thought to where they come from!

Men if you treat your wife as your old lady, don’t be surprised when your sons grow up having no respect for women.

And Ladies, if you have no respect for your husband then don’t be surprised if your daughters grow up as those who have no need for men!

I could go on and on, but I think you get the point and IF you think I am being a little over the top we need to see that not only did Dinah carry on where her father began, but took it to whole new levels... She did not just want to hang around near the city as Jacob was doing, but she wanted to get to know the city, its people & its culture!

- **And that is what leads us into one of the most uncomfortable chapters in the Scriptures.**

“2 And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her, and violated her. 3 His soul was strongly attracted to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the young woman and spoke kindly to the young woman. 4 So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, “Get me this young woman as a wife.”

It is important to see here that Dinah was not just going to the grocery store when she was grabbed by a rapist. As I said, she was in the wrong place at the wrong time, learning the ways of the daughters of the land, and opening herself up to serious sin.

It would be like a Christian man who went on a business trip and went to a notorious bar to see what the other business men found so interesting and then after far too many drinks found himself in the arms of another woman. Now we could blame the woman for seducing him, but he clearly put himself in harm's way. Of course he never intended to get into that much trouble, but such is often the case.

The other reason to see this as not simply a violent act against Dinah is the reaction and attitude of Shechem: He desires to have Dinah as his wife even though he began their relationship with sin... But is that not always the way of the world?

Verse two says that they had sex and that Shechem 'violated' Dinah which is also translated humbled or defiled and thus I think this speaks not just of the physical act, but the covenantal implications...

As the Apostle Paul warns us in II Corinthians 6:14 "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?"

Again we must see that this table was set by her father Jacob when he did not keep the separation that God wanted there in the land...

- **If our children see us being friends with the world, we should not be shocked when they do as well and in even more intimate ways!**

And I suspect that this is the reason that we have such a muted response from Jacob when he hears the news...

"5 And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter. Now his sons were with his livestock in the field; so Jacob held his peace until they came."

- **Now I mentioned that one of the important lessons we see is that just ignoring a problem, even if it is largely our own doing, is not helpful!**

It would have been far better for his sons, and certainly those in Shechem if Jacob had taken some leadership here with proper repentance and wisdom.

"6 Then Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him. 7 And the sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard it; and the men were grieved and very angry, because he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, a thing which ought not to be done."

I think we see here in the brothers the proper outrage at this two-fold sin that Shechem had committed: He had slept with their sister outside of marriage AND outside of the covenant! They are rightly angry and upset but here we see and should remember the second of our important lessons where we must not take things into our own hands.

These brothers and those who lived in Shechem would have been much better off if they had conferred with their father and sought the Lord with regard to how they should respond and deal with the sins that had been committed. But this is not the case and so we see a lot of 'human' negotiations as a result and it should thus not surprise us that things did not turn out well...

"8 But Hamor spoke with them, saying, "The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter. Please give her to him as a wife. 9 And make marriages with us; give your daughters to us, and take our daughters to yourselves. 10 So you shall dwell with us, and the land shall be before you. Dwell and trade in it, and acquire possessions for yourselves in it."

- As we often see with the world around us, Hamor understands about love and the importance of marriage. He desires this for his son, but knows nothing about covenantal faithfulness and wants to just blend everything together between their two peoples.

“11 Then Shechem said to her father and her brothers, “Let me find favor in your eyes, and whatever you say to me I will give. 12 Ask me ever so much dowry and gift, and I will give according to what you say to me; but give me the young woman as a wife.” 13 But the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father, and spoke deceitfully, because he had defiled Dinah their sister.”

- So Shechem is willing to offer anything and Dinah’s brothers are going to take full advantage of his desire, as well as his father.

Now there is much to speculate about in this chapter, but the Spirit leaves us with NO doubt about their deceit. And they are going to center their deceit around the very issue that should have been most troubling about this event: Covenant faithfulness and the reason Simeon and Levi are later judged so harshly regarding this event is that they are going violate the sign of that covenant as part of their deceit.

[explain their deceit]

“14 And they said to them, “We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that would be a reproach to us. 15 But on this condition we will consent to you: If you will become as we are, if every male of you is circumcised, 16 then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters to us; and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. 17 But if you will not heed us and be circumcised, then we will take our daughter and be gone.” 18 And their words pleased Hamor and Shechem, Hamor’s son. 19 So the young man did not delay to do the thing, because he delighted in Jacob’s daughter. He was more honorable than all the household of his father.”

Again the Spirit casts Shechem not as a rapist but one who fell into sin and is now doing whatever is needed to make things right with the woman that he is in love with... AND he is more honorable than his father because we soon see what a scoundrel he actually is...

“20 And Hamor and Shechem his son came to the gate of their city, and spoke with the men of their city, saying: 21 “These men are at peace with us. Therefore let them dwell in the land and trade in it. For indeed the land is large enough for them. Let us take their daughters to us as wives, and let us give them our daughters. 22 Only on this condition will the men consent to dwell with us, to be one people: if every male among us is circumcised as they are circumcised. 23 Will not their livestock, their property, and every animal of theirs be ours? Only let us consent to them, and they will dwell with us.” 24 And all who went out of the gate of his city heeded Hamor and Shechem his son; every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city.”

Now Hamor had a tall order convincing all the men of his city to be circumcised, but he has no problem selling it by promising them all the daughters and riches of Jacob...

- Not exactly how he had pitched it to Jacob and his sons.

So as we often see in Genesis we now have a thorny web of sin and deceit, but because the sons of Jacob have taken things into their own hands it will get much worse...

“25 Now it came to pass on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah’s brothers, each took his sword and came boldly upon the city and killed all the males. 26 And they killed Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem’s house, and went out.”

I imagine the relationship between Dinah and her brothers was a bit strained from that time forward, but our vengeful brothers are not yet finished...

They have already trampled on the Commands of God by killing all the males for the sin of one, but now they will also profit from their sin:

“27 The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and plundered the city, because their sister had been defiled. 28 They took their sheep, their oxen, and their donkeys, what was in the city and what was in the field, 29 and all their wealth. All their little ones and their wives they took captive; and they plundered even all that was in the houses.” 30 Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, “You have troubled me by making me obnoxious among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and since I am few in number, they will gather themselves together against me and kill me. I shall be destroyed, my household and I.”

- **As the chapter comes to a close we see those who were in the wrong place at the wrong time begin to make excuses and live in fear...**

Jacob’s fear is unfounded and it avoids his having to confront the boys on their real sin, which he will do later in life when he blesses his sons.

- **Truly we have there an example of our modern mindset where everything is all about me!**

No apology to Dinah for putting her in harm’s way.

No seeking justice with regard to the bloody vengeance his sons extracted and in fact no word about setting any captives free or the return the ill-gotten gain.

There are certainly no good players here and the boys put a cherry on top when they simply say:

31 “Should he treat our sister like a harlot?”

- **They wanted vengeance and they justify what they did by blaming Jacob’s inaction.**

I mentioned the various applications we need to see and apply as we went along, but I hope we can remember that it is NOT a good idea to be in the wrong place at the wrong time!

As we saw from the surrounding text Jacob should not have been settling down in Shechem but returning to Bethel.

His daughter Dinah should have been content with the people of God and not gone looking to be friends with the world and Jacob’s sons should have turned to God’s Law not vengeance!

- **And just where do we see Jesus in this mess?**
- **Right in the middle of it all, just as He is in our lives!**

Jacob’s enemies did not take advantage of their stupid acts and God would use their sin to help make Judah, the 4th born to Leah, the one who gets the blessings of the line of Christ.

And yes when we return to the Book of Beginnings we will find Jacob returning to Bethel and so the lost sheep, or the lost coin or the lost sons have been found and taken where they belong by the Good Shepherd.

So where do we belong today?

In Christ!

Where do we not belong today?

In the World!

And where do we get our guidance and wisdom?

The Word of God.

I know it has never been the first portion of Scripture to come to my mind in the past when I was reading the Book of Colossians, but I trust after we have pondered the lessons of Genesis chapter 34 we might remember it when we hear these glorious words from the Apostle Paul to the Saints at Colossi:

Colossian 2: “6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. 9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”

If we want to be sure we are in the right place at the right time, we must be in Christ and in His Word and with His people!

Or as we shall sing in just a moment:

➤ Through every age, eternal God: Thou are our rest our safe abode!

Communion Meditation: Genesis 28

**“16 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.”
17 And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!”**

18 Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it. 19 And he called the name of that place Bethel.”