

The Dinah Disaster (Part 2)

Text: Gen. 34:1-31

Introduction:

1. In our previous message we considered the tragic event that took place between Shechem and Dinah. Now we continue our study of the account and the aftermath and fall out from that event. The previous message focused on the problem of moral purity. This message will focus more on the problem of anger.
2. We have divided the chapter into **5 sections** for our study as we seek to learn the lessons God has for us from this sobering and yet necessary chapter.
 - The Danger at Shechem (Vs. 1)
 - The Defilement at Shechem (Vs. 2-7)
 - The Deception at Shechem (Vs. 8-24)
 - The Devilry at Shechem (Vs. 25-29)
 - The Damage at Shechem (Vs. 30-31)

I. THE DANGER AT SHECHEM (VS. 1; 33:18-19)

There was the danger of:

- A. Closeness to the World (Gen. 33:18-19)
- B. Conformity to the World
- C. Companionship with the World (Vs. 1)

II. THE DEFILEMENT AT SHECHEM (VS. 2-7)

The danger to Dinah became a sad reality in her life as recorded in these verses.

- A. The Temptation leading to Dinah's Defilement (Vs. 2-3)
- B. The Perversion of Dinah's Defilement (Vs. 2b; 13, 27)
- C. The Reaction to Dinah's Defilement (Vs. 4-7)

III. THE DECEPTION AT SHECHEM (VS. 8-24)

A dialogue and a negotiation now take place between Jacob's sons, Hamor and his son Shechem. Hamor and Shechem enter into the negotiations in good faith not knowing that Jacob's sons were actually plotting treachery. This is where Jacob's sons begin to err in their response to the situation. Remember, God holds us responsible for how we respond to things in the Christian life.

A. The Deception Presented (Vs. 8-17)

1. Hamor's proposal (Vs. 8-10)
 - a. The request for Dinah (Vs. 8)
 - b. The request for amalgamation (Vs. 9-10). The offer went way beyond the request for a wife for his son. Hamor proposed a merger of the two peoples – the Israelites and the Shechemites. This proposal was incompatible on multiple levels for Jacob and his family so to pretend to go along with it was wrong in itself. We ask again at this point, "where is Jacob in all of this?!"

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Hamor's underlying motive is revealed in verse 23. He saw it as an opportunity for material gain.

2. Shechem's offer (Vs. 11-12)
 - a. Shechem adds his own generous offer. He was willing to pay whatever dowry they would require in order to marry Dinah.
 - b. While Shechem's sin was wrong as noted above, the Bible does say he was "more honourable than all the house of his father" indicating he did have some character.
3. Jacob's sons' counterproposal (Vs. 13-17)
 - a. Jacob's sons' answer Hamor and Shechem 'deceitfully'. They were intent on murderous revenge, not a peaceful and spiritual resolution to the situation.
 - b. They misuse the sacred rite of circumcision, a sign of the covenant between God and Israel, in their deception. What a wicked thing to use something sacred as a cloak for a sinister plot. "The Shechemites must be circumcised; not to make them holy...but to make them sore" (Henry)
 - c. They lie to Hamor and his son that they were willing to consent to the proposal on the condition they and the other men of Shechem be circumcised. In reality, they did this not because they were concerned to try and make the Shechemites godly but because they knew that the surgical procedure would make them weak and vulnerable to attack on the third day when the pain would reach its peak (Vs. 25).

B. The Deception Accepted (Vs. 18-24)

1. The proposal was joyfully accepted by Hamor and Shechem (Vs. 18-19). It again highlights the cruelty and treachery of Jacob's sons in what they were doing. These men did not know the One True God of Israel.
2. The proposal was willingly accepted by the Shechemites (Vs. 20-24). Notice that Hamor and Shechem state that Jacob and his sons were "peaceable with us". Sadly, it couldn't have been further from the truth.
3. The actions of Jacob's sons are a reminder that you do not correct a wrong by engaging in wrongdoing yourself. That is not God's way!

IV. THE DEVILRY AT SHECHEM (VS. 25-29)

The sons of Jacob now carry out their devilish plan. We will look at their outward actions and their inward motivations.

A. Their Outward Actions (Vs. 25-29)

1. They Slaughtered the Shechemites (Vs. 25-26)
 - a. The moment of the massacre (Vs. 25a). They took advantage of the Shechemite's vulnerability on the third day after their circumcision when they would be most incapacitated because of the pain.
 - b. The men carrying out the massacre (Vs. 25a). Simeon and Levi were the two brothers who carried out this cruel massacre. They were Dinah's full blood brothers and they took the matter into their own hands and allowed their anger to drive them to carry out this murderous revenge.

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- c. Note: There is a hint of hypocrisy with Jacob's sons as some of them would go on to commit similar sins (e.g., Reuben and Judah).
 - d. Note: Bloodshed and violence are often fruits of immorality. David's immorality with Bathsheba brought about the death of Bathsheba's husband Uriah. Amnon's immorality with his half-sister Tamar resulted in Amnon being murdered by Tamar's brother Absalom. The immorality of Herod and Herodias led to the bloody death of John the Baptist. "Governments say we need more money to stop crime, but the Bible says we need more morality. Governments say we need more programs to stop bloodshed, but the Bible says we need more purity." (Butler)
2. They Spoiled the Shechemites (Vs. 27-29)
 - a. Simeon and Levi were the principal perpetrators of the slaughter of the Shechemites but the other sons of Jacob were happy to come along afterwards and join in the looting.
 - b. They took everything of value from the field (livestock) and the city (possessions). They even took the women and children as booty.

B. Their Inward Motivations (Vs. 7; Gen. 49:5-7)

1. Rage was clearly the driving force behind the viciousness and violence perpetrated by Dinah's brothers. Anger at the sin that had been committed was appropriate and had they stopped there and left the Shechemites in God's hands, the story would have ended a lot better. But they allowed revengeful rage to take over their hearts.
 2. Never underestimate how much you can hurt others in word or action when you allow the fires of anger to burn unchecked in your life. It is frightening what we are capable of!
 3. Jacob, Simeon and Levi's father, exposed the darkness of their (Simeon and Levi's) hearts in this matter and condemns it in no uncertain language. Genesis 49:5-7 "Simeon and Levi *are* brethren; instruments of **cruelty** *are in* their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their **anger** they slew a man, and in their **selfwill** they digged down a wall. Cursed *be* their anger, for *it was* fierce; and their wrath, for it was **cruel**: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel."
 - a. Jacob is on the record at the end of his life that in no way did he have a part in Simeon and Levi's evil plot.
 - b. Jacob draws a clear link between his son's cruelty and their fierce anger. Instead of yielding to God's will in the situation, they were self-willed.
4. The arm of the flesh is never the answer in situations such as these. When anger against an injustice/sin turns into murderous rage and a pursuing of revenge against individuals, a line has been crossed. You don't right the wrongs by committing a wrong yourself!
 5. There are some helpful truths in Romans 12 for handling such situations. Romans 12:14, 19-21 "Bless them which persecute you:

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bless, and curse not...Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”

- a. We are to bless them and not curse (Vs. 14) We think of Christ’s words in Matthew 5:44-45 “**But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.**”
- b. We are to leave justice in God’s hands (Vs. 19)
 - i. ‘avenge’ = to vindicate one’s right; taking the law into your own hands
 - ii. “give place” = to give the place occupied to another, to make room for. We are to step aside in the situation and leave matters in the hands of the Judge of the universe who will always do right.
- c. We are to repay ill treatment with kindness (Vs. 20-21)

C. The Bible and Anger

Since this is one of the prominent examples of unrighteous anger in the Bible, we would do well to pause for a few moments and remind ourselves of some of the key Bible lessons on anger.

1. The Causes of Anger

There are at least three flames that can get anger boiling in my heart and life:¹

- a. **Hurts** – injustices and mistreatments in our lives or in the lives of those we love. The case in point is a prime example! When our rights are violated or the rights of those close to us, the temptation to choose bitterness over forgiveness is very real. This doesn’t mean we have to endorse sin. We should be angry and wickedness but then be careful that this does not turn into malicious, revengeful rage against the individual.
- b. **Frustrations** – the agitation that results from thwarted goals (e.g., my schedule gets interrupted or my wants and wishes don’t get fulfilled).
- c. **Fears** – the uncertainty of how things will turn out (anxieties).

2. The Consequences of Anger

Anger, if left undealt with can lead to:

- a. Hurting others – Proverbs 27:4 “**Wrath is cruel**, and anger *is* **outrageous**; but who *is* able to stand before envy?” The word ‘outrageous’ has the idea of ‘overflowing’ (e.g., as in a flood). In

¹ Adapted from Jim Berg’s “Quieting a Noisy Soul”.

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fact, the same Hebrew word is translated “the overflowing of waters” (Job 38:25) and ‘flood(s)’ (Ps. 32:6, Dan. 9:26, 11:22, Nah. 1:8). Webster defines the word as meaning “violent; furious; exorbitant; exceeding all bounds of moderations; as outrageous villainies; outrageous talk; outrageous abuse.” If you allow anger to dam up in your life, eventually it will burst out like a flood and wreak havoc and damage in the lives of others. Overflowing anger is exactly what we see in Simeon and Levi’s actions.

- b. Acting foolishly – Ecc. 7:9 “Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of **fools**.”
 - i. Prov. 14:17 “*He that is soon angry dealeth **foolishly**: and a man of wicked devices is hated.*”
 - ii. Prov. 14:29 “*He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but **he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.***”
 - iii. How many times have you made an unwise choice when you lost your temper?
 - c. Causing division
 - i. Prov. 15:18 “A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but *he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.*”
 - ii. Prov. 29:22 “An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression.”
 - d. Corrupting others – Prov. 22:24-25 “Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.”
 - e. Living wickedly - Prov. 29:22 “An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man **aboundeth in transgression.**” An angry person uses their anger to justify all kinds of sins.
3. The Cure for Anger
- a. Be slow to anger – Prov. 16:32 “*He that is **slow to anger** is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.*” James 1:19-20 “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, **slow to wrath**: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”
 - a. Deal with it promptly – Eph. 4:26 “Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:” Keep short accounts with the Lord and with others. The quicker you confess it and put it right, the better. If you leave anger to smoulder in your life, it can turn into malice and bitterness.
 - b. Put it off by God’s power. If you have an anger problem, don’t leave it undealt with in your life. Actively seek God’s help to change.
 - i. Eph. 4:31 “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, **be put away from you**, with all malice:”

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- ii. Col. 3:8 “But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.”
- iii. Remember the emphasis on being “in Christ” in both Ephesians and Colossians. Because you are “in Christ”, you have all the resources you need in the all-sufficient Christ to overcome sin.
- c. Yield to the Holy Spirit. You don’t have the power to overcome anger yourself but there is Someone who dwells in you if you are saved Who does! His Name is the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” Wrath is one of the fruits of the flesh (See works of the flesh in Vs. 19-21). Patience and self-control are fruits of the Spirit. When you recognize anger boiling up in your heart, pray and ask God to quench your anger and to sweeten your heart. If you ask, He WILL help you!

V. THE DAMAGE AT SHECHEM (VS. 30-31)

The wicked actions of Jacob’s sons caused:

A. Damage to Jacob’s Testimony (Vs. 30a)

1. Jacob rebuked Simeon and Levi for their ungodly actions, charging them that their ungodly actions would make his name ‘stink’ amongst the inhabitants of the land.
2. Henry Morris writes, “Instead of being a witness for truth and love, their name would become associated with deception and cruelty. They had become an actual stench to the other Canaanites in the land, with their vaunted moral purity becoming an excuse for murder and pillage rather than an example of God’s holiness and mercy.”
3. Wiersbe adds, “What good was it for Jacob to build an altar and worship the true God before his pagan neighbours if his children were going to act like pagans?”
4. Anger in the unsaved is a stench but they don’t have the Lord and His Word in their lives. Unrighteous wrath in the lives of God’s people brings a terrible stink upon the Name of Christ. Before you entertain boiling anger in your life, pause and think about your testimony!

B. Damage to Jacob’s Family (Vs. 30b-31)

1. Vulnerability (Vs. 30b) – Jacob and his family were now in danger of reprisals from the other heathen nations around them.
2. Unity (Vs. 31) – Simeon and Levi’s curt response to their father’s rebuke highlights the disunity that this sad event caused in the family. Remember. If tragedy comes to you your family in one form or another, anger, hatred, bitterness and disunity are never the answer!

Conclusion: How do you respond to difficult situations in your life? The hot water doesn’t create the contents of the tea bag, it merely reveals them. Do you have an anger problem in your life? Will you seek God’s help for victory over it?