

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. And his soul was drawn to Dinah, the daughter of Jacob.

[20 : 13] He loved the young woman and spoke tenderly to her. So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, Get me this girl for my wife. Now Jacob heard that he had defiled his daughter Dinah, but the sons were with his livestock in the field.

So Jacob held his peace until they came. And Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him. The sons of Jacob had come in from the field as soon as they heard of it, and the men 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.

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. Make marriages with us, give your daughters to us, and take our daughters for yourselves.

You shall dwell with us, and the land shall be open to you. Dwell and trade in it, and get property in it. Shechem also said to her father and to her brothers, Let me find favor in your eyes, and 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 you whatever you say to me.

Only give me the young woman to be my wife. The sons of Jacob answered Shechem and his father Hamor deceitfully, because he had defiled their sister Dinah.

[21 : 41] They 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. Only on this condition will we agree with you, that you will become as we are, by every male among you being circumcised.

Then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters to ourselves, and we will dwell with you and become one people. But if you will not listen to us and be circumcised, then we will take our daughter, and we will be gone.

Their words pleased Hamor and Hamor's son Shechem, and the young man did not delay to do the thing, because he delighted in Jacob's daughter. Now he was the most honored of all his father's house.

So Hamor and his son Shechem came to the gate of their city and spoke to the men of their city, saying, These men are at peace with us. Let them dwell in the land and trade in it.

For behold, the land is large enough for them. Let us take their daughters as wives, and let us give them our daughters. Only on this condition will the men agree to dwell with us, to become one people, when every male among us is circumcised as they are circumcised.

[22 : 54] Will not their livestock, their property, and all their beasts be ours? Only let us agree with them, and they will dwell with us. And all who went out of the gate of his city listened to Hamor and his son Shechem.

And every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city. On the third day, when they were sore, two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, took their swords and came against the city, while it felt secure, and killed all the males.

They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house and went away. The sons of Jacob came upon the slain and plundered the city, because they had defiled their sister.

They took their flocks and their herds, their donkeys, and whatever was in the city and in the field, all their wealth, all their little ones and their wives, all that was in the houses they captured and plundered.

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.

[24 : 07] My numbers are few, and if they gather themselves against me and attack me, I shall be destroyed, both I and my household.

But they said, Should he treat our sister like a prostitute? God said to Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there.

Amen. And may God give us understanding as we come shortly to study that passage of his word. We'll sing again to God's praise, this time for Mission Praise 494.

Oh, for a closer walk with God. A clam and heavy fame. to shine upon the road that leads me to the love Where is the blessedness I knew when I tried to store the Lord?

Where is the soul refreshing view of Jesus and His Word?

[26 : 02] For peaceful hours I once enjoyed how sweet their memory still One day of death, a living light The world can never fill The eternal holy dumb return Sweet messenger of rest I gave the sins that gave Thee more And drove Thee from my rest

The dearest idol I have known What e'er the title be Help me to take him from thine throne And worship only O shall my walk be close with God Thou answer ye my claim So pure a light Shall mark the road That leads me to the love Let's pray as we turn back to this passage Our Heavenly Father, we thank You We thank You that You are God of grace We thank You that You are a God Who chooses to allow sinners like Jacob Sinners like us to walk with You And we ask Lord that You would help us to walk with You We confess as we sang that there are sins There are sins that we struggle with There are idols that we are often reluctant to smash Idols that sometimes we pick back up and stick back together And they come in between us and You And so Lord we ask that You would help us to be always repenting Always turning away from sin and from idols and turning to You to You And we thank You that as we do You are the God who promises to take us back into a close walk with You

So be at work Lord we pray in each one of our lives Speak to us Lord through Your Word Help us to understand Holy Spirit Apply this to each one of our lives We pray for us in the building here Thankful for the encouragement that we get from being together and seeing each other and knowing that as we meet with You we meet with brothers and sisters who are in Christ And we pray also for those who are watching at home just now those who may be ill and who would desire to be here but who don't have the health to be able to be here today we think of those in hospital as well We think of others who may be at home watching but have made the decision not to come for whatever reason And we ask Lord that You would speak to them as we pray that You would speak to us

We pray for Scott as he preaches in Calanish tonight Give him strength, give him the words to say and speak the gospel through him and guide him and Fiona and the family as they continue to seek Your will for this next stage as You lead them to the place that You will have them serve We thank You for Gordon and Julian being with us tonight Continue to bless them Lord uphold them we pray as they seek to follow You and walk with You and for Stuart and for Joyce and for Emily and for Anna we pray for them too as they follow You and seek to serve You where You will lead them So hear our prayers and help us as we look to You in Jesus name we pray for Amen I've only just started

[31 : 26] There's some stories that we read that we kind of wish we didn't have to read Even as we think about today there are stories of war stories of conflict stories of bloodshed stories of sacrifice and there are stories that we may read or watch on the television in documentaries or films that speak to us of what happened in the past and there are stories that we must not forget but in many ways as we think about wars and conflict and that manner of bloodshed in many ways we wish that what had happened we'd rather not have to read about it at all and Genesis 34 is a lot like that that I was kind of seeing coming on the horizon and it's a chapter that we wish was not in the print if we were honest in some ways we'd rather not read this and if the whole chapter actually was deleted from the book of Genesis we could actually still follow the story of Jacob if none of this was recorded we would see the consistent running of the story of Jacob just fine but God has determined that Genesis 34 be included in his word to us

God has determined that this be part of Scripture and as ugly as this story is it's history and it's here in the record I think in part to show us the mess that we can when we try to do things our own way without God first point for the evening as we step through the verses although I won't I won't re-read everything that I've read already tonight as I would normally do but I want to just look at the chapter in various sections and the first point the first thing we can note is just the absence of the name of God we can read through the whole chapter the whole grim record and God's name is nowhere to be seen in this chapter and we can actually rewind of Jacob's story and we can see a similar pattern at certain junctures at many points in Jacob's life about his walk with God at certain dark parts in Jacob's story we read nothing about prayer nothing about time that he took to worship God we read nothing about him looking to God for help and for direction we just have a record of Jacob doing what Jacob thinks is right and best for Jacob and that seems to be where Jacob has regressed to and that seems to be where Jacob's whole family are at this point at this point in the Genesis story as we read about Jacob's sons in this chapter there's no word of God there's no thought of God as far as we know there's no mention of God so it shouldn't really surprise us that

much and when things get messy it shouldn't really surprise us it shouldn't really surprise us when the name of God is deleted from this part of Jacob's experience it shouldn't really surprise us that everyone in the family seems to make bad decisions which leads to bad consequences and there's a lesson there for us a very simple straightforward lesson in the application as we think about the absence of the name of God at this point and the application when we turn away from God if we think nationally even when a country turns away from God and takes his name out of the public square takes his name out of schools and all these places used to be so prominent when his name is taken out and there is an absence of the name of God at the national level things turn dark and they get messy and confused and confused and people start to lose hope and in some we're living but if we think about it in terms of the individual when an individual or a family turn away from God very often what we see is bad decisions and inevitably painful consequences so that's a negative application from a negative chapter what's the positive application?

well the positive application is we are encouraged through this to turn to God we are encouraged through this grim record to ensure that we don't drift from God and we are encouraged if we have drifted from God to turn back from him the place that is dark and distant from him and come back into the light of his presence as we desire to walk close with him so the first thing to know is the absence of the name of God it's not what we see in the chapter it's what we don't see in the chapter the second thing we can see as we actually get into the text is the almost obedience of Jacob as Genesis chapter 33 concludes we read in verse 18 and 19 and 20 that Jacob he arrives in a place called Shechem and it is in the land of Canaan and that in the first hearing is good news because God had promised to take him into the land of Canaan and he is now into that general area but Jacob he arrives at this place called Shechem and he decides this is a good place to camp and so he camps there and he seems to like it good pasture good business prospects and then having camped there

Jacob decides that he's going to buy some land there he's going to settle down a little bit at least and he settles down according to the commentators for some considerable length of time in that place he even takes time to build an altar there Jacob doesn't neglect his religious duties at this point but the problem was Jacob should never have settled he's followed the Lord a long way from Paddan Aram to this point but in order for Jacob to be obedient to the Lord he needs to keep on going past Shechem he needs to carry on journeying for just another 24 hours just one more day's journey to that place called Bethel where God has said but Jacob having come almost there but not quite there decides he'll just stop short of it so he makes a decision right the way into Bethel but just to stop a little short so what we see here is the almost obedience of Jacob but the thing about almost obedience is almost obedience actually equals disobedience and there's going to be a whole lot of trouble that comes as a consequence of Jacob's almost obedience so if we pause to think about the application of this what's the application of this what's the application of this we sang the application what we are to do is to trust and obey the Lord not sometimes but all the time not just six days out of seven but seven days out of seven not in some areas of life but in all areas of life the Lord demands obedience it's very easy for to be like Jacob to be almost obedient but to hide some secret sins away in a dark place it's very easy to be almost obedient but to keep some of the dearest idols close to us a home for them and when we are nursing a sin or still holding an idol actually go through all the motions of religion as Jacob did we can be in church we can keep to the the daily routine of reading the Bible saying a prayer but if there is sin that we are not repenting of if there is some idol that we are refusing to smash even though it might seem like just a small thing it can cause huge damage huge damage in our lives and in the lives of the people

[43 : 26] so what are we to do we are to be always repentant! we are to be sure that we are always keeping on our idols so that we will have a close walk with God the almost obedience of Jacob the absence of the name of the Lord at this point in Jacob's experience the third point as we step through the story is the attack of Dinah and you have the account of that attack in verses 1-4 I am not going to read it again it is a painful account to actually read and think about Dinah Jacob's daughter is just a young girl probably mid-teens the commentators think she is in the wrong place she is in Shechem a place that she should never have been in she goes out one night like many of the the young women of that place did and a man who is in a position of power

Hamor the Hivite the prince of the land he wants her and he takes her and he uses all the power that he has to make sure that she belongs to him and whether she likes it or not and that's what

happens in a broken world that kind of thing but for Dinah it should never have happened because she shouldn't have been there in the first place she should have been in Bethel not Shechem so Jacob's disobedience as a father it didn't only affect him it affected the whole family in the most dark awful way and that's always how sin works we say we say when we're thinking about sinning and wrestling with temptation we say well if I do this thing if I sin in this way it's only myself but the thing about sin is it can never be contained it grieves God it grieves God and the ripples of our sin and the ripples of our sin always go much further out than we would ever expect!

so we see the attack of Dinah the fourth thing we see here is the apathy of Jacob and apathy is one of these sins that we seem to tolerate although we have no right to do this we in our own minds I think have classifications of sin we have class A sins and class B sins and I think most of us murder, stealing, adultery we would have them as class A sins we would expect people to challenge us if we're caught in that but apathy a bit of lukewarmness it's one of these sins that we've declassified or lowered the bar on we often overlook it but the apathy of Jacob leaves his family in a place of danger

Shechem where daughter Dinah is attacked and after Dinah is attacked and Jacob hears about it in verse 5 his reaction remains just appallingly apathetic he says nothing and he does nothing and he does nothing he waits nervously having heard the news of what happens to his daughter he waits nervously for his sons to get home and so what we see just if we recap for a moment is we see that Jacob is not going to be he fails to be fully obedient to God his apathy causes him to stop short of where God calls him to be he fails as a father because as Dinah goes out with the woman of the land verse 1

Jacob as a father should have been there to say you're not going out there not like that not like that and not into that place but he isn't there to dissuade her from going into a place because he's apathetic!

[49 : 04] and when his daughter is attacked Jacob seems to be just not too bothered he does nothing to bring her back and as we go into verse 6 he even has a what seems to be a very calm with the attacker's so as we think about the apathy of Jacob I think the apathy of Jacob as we just consider it it makes us sick sick and where Jacob's apathy leaves his family appalls us as we take a moment is it not true that apathy is found in our hearts and in our lives and yet we we live with it we accept it all too readily what does Jesus say about apathy and lukewarmness remember Jesus saw apathy he saw lukewarmness and this is what he said about it

Revelation chapter 3 he says to this church you're neither cold would that you were either cold so because you are lukewarm I will spit you I will vomit you out of my mouth of my mouth so what we learn Old Testament and very clearly in the New Testament is that apathy or lukewarmness not botheredness spiritually speaking is a sin that God takes very seriously it's a sin that can lead us it's a sin and those whom we love into places that we would never have expected to be found in it's a sin be repenting of and when you and I feel apathy as we do if we're honest when we really just can't be bothered being zealous for the glory of God where should we go or we should go back to the cross because when we see what Jesus did for us on the cross when we see the extent of his love for us surely our apathy will be displaced by love for Jesus by love for Jesus and the desire to glorify him the apathy fifth point avenging Dinah that's the next thing we read of point number five the avenging of Dinah and I'm not going to go through the text in any great detail

I'll just give you the the high level summary verse seven what we see is Jacob's sons they get home after having been out they've heard about what's happened to their sister and they're not apathetic they are super angry that's verse seven verses eight to twelve we see Hamor who is the attacker's father and he comes to try and calm things down he hopes to be able to negotiate with Jacob and secure an agreement for his spoiled son to get the bride that he wants for himself it's verses eight to twelve verses thirteen to seventeen we are let into this conversation between Jacob's sons Jacob's sons are chips off the old block they have learned the art of deceit and deception from their father so they listen to what Hamor has to say and they say to Hamor we'll do you a deal on one condition we want all your men to undergo a small surgery all your men need to take on the the mark of God's people and be circumcised if you do that the marriage can go ahead and we can all start to live and trade and live happily ever after together that's what they say that was their offer that was their offer Hamor listens verses eighteen to twenty-four and he responds by saying to Jacob and his sons it's a deal and he goes back to his people and the surgeons are called out and all the surgeries go ahead as all the men of the place are marked and then from verses twenty-five to verse twenty-nine

we see that all Hamor's men are sore post-surgery they are far from fighting and they are not and Jacob's sons know that so when their enemy and weak they strike and Dinah's brothers two of Jacob's sons they get their revenge they kill Shechem their sister's attacker they kill his father Hamor Hamor they rescue their sister and then they plunder the city appallingly and if we ask the question was what they did right the answer is it wasn't their job to exact this kind of revenge but that they were going to get revenge they were going to get revenge and as they get their revenge they drag the name of the Lord through the muck of all their actions of God's covenant so the whole thing is a dark mess where is Jacob remember this is Jacob's story how does he feel about all this well what we read is that Jacob he's gone from apathy and listen to what Jacob says when he hears about what his sons have done

[56 : 48] Jacob said to Simeon verse 30 you have brought trouble on me by making me stink to the inhabitants of the land and the Perizzites and if they gather themselves against me I shall be destroyed both I and my household my household so that's his reaction everything that's happened everything that's happened who is Jacob thinking about well he's not thinking about his daughter he's not thinking about the Lord but Jacob is thinking about me myself and I so that's the story so why do we have to why do we have to read this it's a difficult read difficult preach it's an ugly picture but it is at least in some measure a reflection of ourselves and our hearts this is a picture remember but of God's people and God's people if they forget about him as Jacob seems to have done if we turn away from God we can make a huge mess and the lives of other people we can end up in bad places that we would never have thought we can do bad things that we thought we would never do we can become as self-obsessed as Jacob seems to have been so I need to look at this because we can fall just like Jacob did so we see the avenging of Dinah and Jacob's reaction to that thankfully is the amazing grace of God of God if we weren't able to read ahead what would we expect to happen next if we didn't know the character of God what would we expect to happen next in this grim account well I think we might expect God to say

I'm done with these people I am just sick of Jacob I am just sick of Jacob and all the mess he causes and all the mess within this that is so dysfunctional and so prone to drift from me and turn in rebellion against me I'm sick of them I'm done with it we might expect that this would be the end of the road this would be the end of the relationship between God and his people and if we think about it we end relationships for much less than this we walk away from people for much less offences than what we read of here think about what God's people have done they have disobeyed him they have dragged his name through the muck they have shown no thankfulness for anything that he has done for them so we might expect God at this point to send judgment and blast them off the face of the earth it's what we would do but it's not what God does because the story of Jacob doesn't end at Genesis 34 there's a Genesis chapter 35 and what happens next well Genesis 35 verse 1

God said to Jacob arise go up to Bethel and dwell there and this is a demonstration of the amazing grace of God that after everything that's happened still he calls sinners home to him he is faithful to his promises after everything he is full of mercy and that should encourage us as we finish because the God of Jacob as we sang this morning is our God and no matter what we've done or no matter what we may still do no matter how far we've drifted no matter how low we have sunk still he calls us to himself as he called Jacob and as we come to him or return to him he shows us grace amazing grace amazing grace we might ask just as a final word shouldn't Jacob be judged because this is dark shouldn't Jacob's sin and his selfishness be paid for shouldn't Jacob's sin and his selfishness be paid for that's a reasonable question and the answer is yes it should be paid for and it was paid for and it was paid for but Jacob didn't pay for his offences because Jesus would but Jacob didn't pay for his offences because Jesus would

Jesus paid for them all on the cross so that Jacob and so that you and me can receive the amazing grace of God and it's offered tonight to all who will come to him let's conclude by saying the words of the final hymn your grace that brings this sinner home in our home just one moment do we have the words now we have the words let's stand to sing your grace that leads the sinner home from death to life forever and sings the song of righteousness by blood and not by merit your grace that leads the sky and might to let me try that nation has called my heart to enter in the joy of your salvation my grace I am redeemed the joy of your salvation my grace I am redeemed my grace I am restored and now I feel you walk into the arms of Christ my Lord my heart try and not be sweet not by my earthly wisdom the Prince of life without a sting the Prince of life without a sting was treated

for this sinner by grace I am redeemed by grace I am redeemed by grace I am restored by grace I
am restored and the life really walk into the arms of Christ my Lord my heart my heart my heart my
heart my heart let grace rise up and overflow my song my song will sound forever for grace for
grace will see me welcome to walk beside my Saviour by grace I am redeemed by grace I am
restored and will I freely walk into the arms of Christ my Lord
Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God
the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forevermore Amen