

00-01-16a Genesis Custom

God has placed at our disposal resources in the person of His Holy Spirit, in the form of His Word. Now the power of God is available to us, and it challenges us to take these things and do something with them. So, in chapter 4 of this letter, Paul issues that challenge.

This is after what might be called the first three chapters, or the theological section, communicating the truth that tells us where we are and why we're here. Now in chapter 4, we have the call issued. What should we then do? How should we then live? And in particular, beginning in verse 17, This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart, who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus, that you put off concerning your former conduct the old man which grows corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man, which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, putting away lying, let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. Be angry, and do not sin.

Do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil. Let him who stole, steal no longer. Rather, let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give to him who has need.

Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. It is a tremendous challenge. It's a very high standard that has been set.

It's not just most of the bitterness. It's not just a majority of the anger that is to be put away. It's not just most of the corrupt words that formerly proceeded from our mouth.

The standard is absolute. All wrath, all bitterness, all anger, all clamor. No corrupt word proceeding from our mouth.

We don't have the ability to do this in and of ourselves. It is only through the power that

God has placed at our disposal. And God's power comes into the life of the believer through His Word and through His Spirit.

And that's why Paul, in the first three chapters of this letter, has talked about the truth. Has communicated the truth. And this is what will, according to verse 23, renew us in the spirit of our minds.

It takes an inner renewal. There's no form of counseling. There's no psychological manipulation.

There's no step program. There's no support group. There is no mentor.

There is no human way by which we can solve the problems that are in our soul. It takes the renewing power of God's Word and God's Spirit. And we have to cultivate both in equal measure to pursue an understanding of the Word.

Without understanding the ministry of the Spirit, we are going to fall victim to the knowledge that puffs up. If we pursue the Holy Spirit to the detriment of our understanding of God's Word, we are seeking a spirit that has no voice because the Holy Spirit doesn't speak from Himself. He takes the things of Christ and communicates them to us.

And the Word of God is the mind of Christ. And without exposing ourselves to the teaching of the Word of God, the Holy Spirit has nothing with which to dissect us. The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God.

And if we don't take in the Word of God, we leave the Holy Spirit without the tools to transform us. So these things are needful for us. And, again, we will come back to this truth a little bit later in our service because it is an integral part of the Lord's Table when we talk about partaking of Christ, His body and His blood.

This is part and parcel of our regeneration because we have no life. We have no purpose. We have no power apart from the Lord Jesus Christ.

And, strangely enough, even though it is a different dispensation and a different story, a different time in God's plan, when we turn back to Genesis 35 and resume our study of the life of Jacob, we find an anticipation of these truths that it does require a separation. It does require coming to God to be purified, to be sanctified, to be set apart for the purposes that God has assigned to us. We saw in our recent study of chapter 34 this rather strange chapter.

You could almost leave out chapter 34 and go straight from 33 to 35. Leave out the incident of Jacob's daughter Dinah and the massacre that follows her defilement by Shechem and think that nothing is particularly missing. Scholars have wrestled with why chapter 34 is here.

How does it contribute to the progress of the story of Jacob? You can see a narrative flow when Jacob is the younger brother. He big deals his brother out of his blessing and his inheritance. He then has to flee his brother's wrath and go up to Laban where he learns these lessons from the other side of the coin.

Now he is the one who receives deception when he wakes up on the first day of his new married life to discover the wrong woman in his bed. He receives the wrong end of manipulation and contrivance from his father-in-law Laban. He comes back and he's returning to the land.

He's claiming the fulfillment of God's promise to be with him and to bring him back to the land. And then we have this Dinah incident as he stops there in Shechem. Before we completely leave Genesis 34 behind I want to address the meaning of why this is actually here.

Jacob has learned a lot in the 20 years he spent up there in Laban country, up there in Paddan Aram, outside the land, during his sojourn. And we've seen that this figures for us our own sojourn here on earth. We have been given promises.

As I mentioned in Ephesians chapter 1 we possess all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. We also have been given a great covenant promise from God. And yet we are strangers and sojourners in this land and on this earth and we don't partake right now of those spiritual blessings.

What is God's purpose in delaying that? Why, once we're saved, do we not translate directly to heaven in the presence of God? Why does God leave us here after salvation to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune? The same reason Jacob goes outside the land to sojourn. It is to learn. It is to grow.

It is in the face of difficulties, in the face of trials and challenges, to learn to lean. We have that hymn, Learning to Lean. It is an opportunity to exercise and build up our faith.

To treat as reality unseen things. To treat the blessings and rewards and the promises of God as reality when we can't see them. When Thomas placed his finger in the wounds of the Lord Jesus after the resurrection, Jesus said, you've touched these wounds and you believe, blessed are those who not having seen, believe.

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. And God is glorified when we treat His promises as reality. Now that's wonderful as an ideal and it's a great thing to understand, but what does it mean in the daily grind of life? In the daily spending of our minutes and our hours? We come up against circumstances.

Not all of them are happy. We live in a fallen world, we have a fallen nature. You can't go more than an hour or two without being challenged in the area of joy and peace and patience.

There are frustrating things in the world. You can read the paper or watch the news on television and there are things that afflict the righteous soul. When you see gay marriages being condoned, when you see gays in the military, I'm on a gay kick now, I'm all upset with the homosexuals.

They seem to be making strides in our culture and in our society and they're trying to get laws changed and so forth. Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it. The Roman Empire lasted for hundreds of years, but when they began to not only condone but openly practice homosexuality, that was their last generation and that empire went out.

Just the evidence of history, even apart from the righteous law of God, that tells us that that sort of thing is an abomination. You have people who attend church and who carry Bibles and who have managed to somehow explain away the passages in the Bible that condemn that lifestyle and they are, according to their own account, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. They're church goers and everything else, but they think that this is just another expression of love and that it isn't something that's wrong.

Well, all of these things challenge us. We have our own failures to contend with. We have the failures of others in our periphery to contend with.

And God put us in this and left us in this situation on purpose. It is easy for us to have compartments in our mind. We have the Word of God and the call to holiness, the call to faithfulness, which we understand and when we're looking at our Bible, when we're in devotions or when we're in church or in Bible class, we recognize that and we acknowledge it and we assent to it.

But then, we get in the car and we drive away and we're back in the daily milieu of life and all of a sudden, here's an opportunity. And the hardest ones to get rid of are the ones that are a part of our habits. It's what we're used to.

It's what we've done for years. And anything that's habitual, we don't really think about anymore. Have you ever been getting ready to leave the house and you can't remember if you... I was looking for my glasses one morning.

I thought, oh, I've gone off several times and left my glasses, which I'm not used to because I only need them when it's dark and I'm driving home in the dark. I don't need them in the morning. I don't need them during the day.

I don't need them to read. Things far away get blurry at night. And so, I've often gone out without them.

And so, I was walking out the door and I thought, oh, I've got to get my glasses. And I looked all through the house and couldn't find them. Well, I had them on.

And I know I'm past 40 now and senility is setting in. But just by force of habit, apparently, I had picked them up and put them on. There's lots of things like that.

Sometimes I wonder, well, did I do some normal function? Where are my keys? Well, they're in my pocket. They're in my hand. And so, things that are habitual, we tend to assign to our subconscious mind and we don't really think about it anymore.

Well, this is the area of challenge for us because these old patterns, this is what needs looking at. This is what needs analysis in our life. Especially if we've been exposed to the Word of God for a long time.

Because the big things, I don't know about you, but for me, I do a lot better with the charge of the elephant than I do with the charge of the mosquito. Because I can recognize a big test when something big happens. There's a big challenge.

There's a big obvious. It just has test written all over it. And I say, oh, I see.

This is my chance to get angry. This is my chance to lose faith. If a job goes away or you find yourself dangling with no support and you say, oh, well, this is time to lean on the Lord.

This is time to claim the promises. My God shall supply all your needs and so forth. I can get those.

I've learned to recognize the big ones. But slapping mosquitoes has become sort of a reflex. And there are times when the annoyance factor slips up on me and trips me because I'm not watching for the small things.

I'm not looking for the little things. And I think all of us are susceptible to this. This is what we see in the life of Jacob as in many of the biblical characters.

But this whole episode with Dinah shows us something about Jacob. We don't have a lot of insight into his thinking and into his innermost heart. We see actions.

We see events that take place. But when Dinah decides that she wants to go out and see and be seen in the land and Jacob doesn't really care, she is defiled by a Canaanite man and Jacob doesn't really seem to respond. Why is this? Well, who is Dinah's mother? It's Leah.

Who's the beloved wife? Rachel. Jacob never has really cottoned much to Leah. He didn't ask to marry her.

It was a bait and switch on her father's part that he ended up with her at all. And you remember back when the sons were being born, all of the competition between Leah and Rachel was vying for the affection of Jacob. And Leah says, Surely now my husband will love me.

But he never does. And this is a flaw in Jacob's soul. It doesn't mean that he has to have romantic love.

It doesn't mean that he has to have infatuation and visions of grandeur like he does with Rachel. But she should be treated as a wife. You look at the New Testament.

We'll be back in Ephesians where husbands should love their wives as Christ loved the church. The Lord Jesus is not infatuated with us because of our wonderful personalities and our great attributes. The love of Christ for the church is based on who and what He is, not who and what we are.

And the love of a husband for a wife, when you have those other things, that's wonderful. It's icing on the cake. And many of us have a tremendous romantic love for our wives.

But there should always be the consideration and the care and the faithfulness and the loyalty to the wife by the husband, the same faithfulness and self-sacrificial loyalty that the Lord Jesus Christ has to us. And it's a relatively recent thing for people to go out and marry for love. In most of human history, marriages were arranged by parents.

And you got matched up with someone and you just made that work. And there's nothing in the Bible, all of the right man, right woman doctrines, notwithstanding, you don't find in the Bible, go forth and find the woman of your dreams and marry her and live with her. You know, this is a human concept.

The biblical concept is integrity, faithfulness, loyalty, love that is based on your own character. The wonderful thing about this is when you develop the character that can exercise this love and this loyalty, it works in every different area of life. And it is a reflection of our love for God and His love for us.

And it transcends human factors. People who fall in love romantically because they like the way someone's nose wrinkles or they love their little quirky personality, well, if that changes as time goes on, so does the love because it's based on a transient human thing. Our history, recent history even, is rife with stories of where someone has come down with a disease or someone has been maimed in some fashion and their spouse bugs out because, well, that's not the person I married.

I didn't sign up for taking care of somebody who's bed fast or whatever. You also have wonderful stories of people who it just intensifies and strengthens their love and is a demonstration of their love because even if their spouse becomes quadriplegic, because they love that person and the love is based on their own character, it transcends any circumstance of life and they stick with them and care for them and it becomes a wonderful reflection. In many of these cases, they are in fact believers.

So what we have here brought to light in the Dinah incident is a failure on Jacob's part in

his domestic life because it doesn't matter how it came about, Leah is his wife and he does not honor her. He does not love her in the sense of faithfulness and loyalty. He doesn't make any attempt to treat her equally with Rachel.

And by the biblical standard, Leah is his first and only lawful wife. The biblical model is one man, one woman, and Leah was there first. It doesn't matter how, that's where she is.

And through the grace of God, of course, all of the sons of Jacob, from all four women, are treated as equals in Israel. But you have a principle here that Jacob has been remiss. And every time you find someone failing to be loyal to their spouse in the Bible, bad things follow.

It doesn't matter how or why, but you can think about the life of David and others where this really comes back to roost. Here, because Dinah is the daughter of the unloved wife, Jacob doesn't really care. Even when Hamor and Shechem come and begin to make proposals of marriage and of intermingling their people with the people of Jacob, Jacob doesn't speak up.

The sons do all the talking. And which sons? It's the full-blood brothers of Leah, Simeon and Levi. They speak up.

They have greater loyalty to their sister than Jacob does. They do the talking. They do the negotiating.

Jacob is very strangely silent. And it's a demonstration of something. It is a demonstration of a failure on Jacob's part.

And it's going to come back to haunt him. Here's the thing. When there is a weakness like this, not only is it a lost opportunity to reflect the glory of God in our lives, but it is a crack in our armor.

It is an Achilles heel. And this is where the enemy will attack us. If there is a gap, if there is a weakness, this is a standard principle of military operation.

If you can find a weakness in the enemy, that's what you want to exploit. You want to drive a wedge into it and open it up. You want to divide and conquer by finding this kind of thing.

And what is the threat here? If you think about it, the threat is to intermarry with the Canaanites and partake of their idolatry. This is the thing that God warns Israel against. When they come back to the land as a people and as the incumbent nation a few hundred years later, this is what God is going to warn them against.

So, if you look, for example, back in Deuteronomy 7, verse 3. Deuteronomy 7, verse 3.

What is the command that God gives to Israel? Right at the beginning of the chapter, chapter 7, verse 1, when the Lord your God brings you into the land which you go to possess and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you. And when the Lord your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them nor shall you make marriages with them.

You shall not give your daughter to their son nor take their daughter for your son. Why? Look at verse 4. For they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods. So the anger of the Lord will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly.

But thus shall you deal with them. You shall destroy their altars, break down their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images and burn their carved images with fire. For you are a holy people to the Lord your God.

The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples. But because the Lord loves you and because he would keep the oath which he swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

Therefore know that the Lord your God, he is God. The faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love him and keep his commandments. And he repays those who hate him to their face to destroy them.

He will not be slack with him who hates him. He will repay him to his face. Therefore you shall keep the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which I command you today to observe them.

So the last thing the people of God need to do is to intermarry with the Canaanites. But this is the offer that's being made. And you get the idea here through Jacob's silence that he's considering, well, this might be an option.

Maybe this is the way God's going to fulfill his promise of giving me possession and so forth. Because what do Hamor and Shechem promise? They say in verse 9 of 34, if you make marriages with us, give your daughters to us and take our daughters to yourselves, you can dwell with us and the land shall be before you. You dwell in it.

Trade in it. Acquire possessions for yourselves in it. Isn't this exactly what God has promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? To possess the land, to dwell in it, to prosper in it? This reminds us of Satan going to the Lord and offering him all the kingdoms of the world if he'll just make this one compromise.

Bow down and worship me and you won't have to go to the cross. You can have all of these things that your Father has promised you. Just think what good you could do as king of the earth.

Why have to go through this cross business if you have the rulership of the world? You wonder, what is the attraction when Satan offers the kingdoms of the world to Jesus? At first you think, well, that's such an obviously bad idea. It wouldn't be much of a temptation. Why would Satan think that that would be attractive to the Lord Jesus? Well, what is his purpose? He says, I've not come to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

I've not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. And to think that if I could get the throne of the world, if Satan would relinquish his power over the earth and give it to me, if I could go and sit in Jerusalem on the throne of David and rule, I could dispense justice. I could teach.

I could heal. I could bring people to the Father with that power. We've got elections coming up and we tend to think, boy, if you get the right people in government, just think how much good could be done.

We could get rid of this trash on television and we could stamp out pornography on the Internet and we could get abortion off the planet and we could do this, that, and the other. We could do all these wonderful things. And it's an attractive idea.

Jacob has to be thinking, boy, here's possession of the land. He is obviously afraid of all these people in the land. He says so later on after his sons go in and massacre them.

Remember what he says down in verse 30? Jacob says to Simeon and Levi, you've troubled me by making me obnoxious among the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites and the Perizzites. These are some of the peoples that God spoke about. Jacob doesn't want to be a stench in their nose, which is what this is literally in the Hebrew.

You've made me a stench to them. And since I am few in number, remember what God tells Israel down in Deuteronomy 7? You are the least of all the peoples, but I've driven out all these mightier nations before you. This is part and parcel of the promise of God that He's going to drive these people out and give this land to Jacob.

But Jacob was looking at it from a human viewpoint. He says, you've made me odious to them. They outnumber us.

They're going to gather themselves together against me and kill me. I shall be destroyed, my household and I. This weakness, because Jacob is not paying attention in an area of his domestic life. You think, well, how much does his treatment of Leah and his treatment of Dinah have to do with his fate as a believer, his part in the plan of God? It has everything to do with it because he that is faithful in that which is least will be

faithful also in that which is much.

And if we are unfaithful in some of these lesser things, it's going to lead to unfaithfulness in the greater things. And this laps on Jacob's part because he does not honor his wife Leah and her daughter Dinah. Isn't it astonishing that he's silent through this whole thing? When he finds out that she's been defiled, he doesn't say anything.

He doesn't even send messengers to the sons. They find out when they come back. They are the ones who are angry.

They are the ones who are incensed. And he doesn't check their anger either. He says, well, let them take care of it.

This is very similar to what happens with David when Amnon rapes his half-sister Tamar and then you have Absalom getting upset. Absalom is the one that's furious. Absalom bides his time and then two years later calls a feast and slaughters Amnon.

And the disunity and the tearing of the fabric of the family that results from that is going to lead to the Absalom revolution. And David is going to be driven off the throne and out of the land because of the rift between himself and Absalom. And what was the beginning of that rift? It was David's apathetic leadership in the family.

He wasn't keeping close track. He should have known what was going on with Amnon. He should have done something when Amnon crossed that line and physically overpowered his sister.

And David did nothing. And we tend to think, well, it's the charge of the elephant that I really need to pass. That's the important test.

If I fail these small ones, well, sometimes we don't even look for the small areas of failure in our life. But those are going to lead. That is the crack that's going to lead to a break, that's going to lead to a great defeat.

That's what happens with Jacob. And Jacob, we're going to discover when we get to chapter 35, that there's been quite a bit more that Jacob has not been paying attention to. And to his credit, as a result of this lapse and this failure, which seems to be growing and snowballing in his life, he's going to have something of a recovery here, but he's not going to truly learn his lesson.

And this is going to lead us into the Joseph section of Genesis. Really, in the book of Genesis, when it comes to the stories of the patriarchs, which we really started toward the end of chapter 11, when we saw Abraham come on the scene, we have three great sections in Genesis. We have Abraham, or the Abraham cycle.

We have Jacob, which we're rapidly drawing to a close. And we have Joseph. And there

are similarities here, even structurally, in Genesis 11, 27, where it says, this is the family history of... That phrase introduces these three sections of Genesis.

Three sections in the lives of the patriarchs. Genesis 11, 27. This is the genealogy of... These are the generations of Terah.

And beginning here, we move into the Abraham cycle. And it's going to end in chapter 25, verses 7 through 10, for Abraham. Because in 25, 7, it says, this is the sum of the years of Abraham's life, which he lived, 175 years.

He breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man full of years, and was gathered to his people. So from 11, 27 to 25, 7 through 10, that's pretty much the Abraham cycle. Then we move into the Jacob cycle.

In 25, 19, these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son. Or this is the generation of Isaac. And this actually introduces the Jacob cycle.

And it ends over in what we're going to see here in chapter 35 of Genesis. 35, 28 and 29. The days of Isaac were 180 years.

So Isaac breathed his last and died and was gathered to his people, being old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob married him. Isn't it interesting that the Abraham cycle is introduced with the generations of Terah? The Jacob cycle is introduced with the generations of his father Isaac.

And when we get to the Joseph cycle, which is going to begin in chapter 37, verse 2, what does it say? These are the generations, *eleh toledot*, this is the history of Jacob. We've already studied Jacob for the past many chapters, and we're beginning the story of Joseph, but it says this is the history of Jacob. Joseph, being 17 years old, was feeding the flock.

And we go on with the story of Joseph. And the result, the seed or the offspring of the father is what is in view. And this Joseph cycle is going to end over in Genesis 49, 33 through 50, 26 with Jacob's deathbed blessings and deathbed declarations.

He gives the blessing to each of the sons and foretells what their role will be in the history of Israel. So, these large sections that are clearly marked, these are the generations of, or this is the family history of Tira, of Isaac, of Jacob, and then the death notices of each one of those gives us these three large sections. And we see many parallels in the sojourn and in the trials and in the testing and in the learning process that each of these cycles portrays for us.

Abraham as he learns and grows, Jacob as he learns and grows, and now we're moving up into Joseph. But the defiling of Dinah that brings this lapse to light, this was a thing which ought not to be done, it tells us. And we're going to see this in each of the three

cycles.

We saw it in Abraham's life when he went down to Egypt and tried to pass off his wife as his sister. And even Isaac does this in his day. But here, when Shechem defiles Dinah, it says in verse 7 of chapter 34 that when the sons of Jacob came in from the field, when they heard it, 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.

And this phrase, something which ought not to be done, this is generally used of crimes that warrant death. You can look, for example, at Deuteronomy 22, verse 21. If a woman is married and it turns out that she wasn't a virgin when she got married, they say, Then they shall bring out the young woman, this is Deuteronomy 22, 21, to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones because she has done a disgraceful thing in Israel to play the harlot in her father's house.

And so you shall put away the evil from among you. So when a disgraceful thing is done, the penalty in Deuteronomy 22 is stoning with stones. You go over to Joshua 7, verse 15.

Joshua 7, verse 15. Achan takes of the dedicated things. God said, Don't take any plunder, don't take any spoil when you attack the cities of the land.

And when they attacked the city of Jericho, Achan took things for himself and buried them in his tent. And so it says in Joshua 7, verse 15, It shall be that he who is taken with the accursed things shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he has done a disgraceful thing in Israel. So, disgraceful seems like kind of a mild term when you look at the punishment that God ascribes to this sort of action.

You can go to Judges, chapter 19, verse 23. Judges 19, verse 23. When Gibeah, remember it's a parallel of what happens in Sodom and Gomorrah when the two, actually in Sodom, when the two messengers come to Lot and stay in his house and the people are outside beating on the door, they say, bring out these two men, we want to have our way with them.

And we came over to Judges 19 where there was a similar episode that happened in the days of the judges where a man comes and visits in the city of the Benjamites there. And the certain men of the city in verse 22 of Judges 19, perverted men surrounded the house and beat on the door. They spoke to the master of the house, to the old man, saying, bring out the man who came to your house that we may know him carnally.

But the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, No, my brethren, I beg of you, do not act so wickedly. Seeing this man has come into my house, do not commit this outrage. This is, here's my virgin daughter, the man's concubine, let me bring them out now.

Humble them and do with them as you please, but to this man do not do such a vile thing. And, of course, the result of this terrible outrage that they commit with the concubine is that the Benjamites are almost wiped out in Israel by their brethren, because this is a disgraceful thing. When you get over to chapter 20, verse 6, the man says, I took hold of my concubine, I cut her in pieces and I sent her throughout all the territory of the inheritance of Israel, because they committed lewdness and outrage in Israel.

And he calls to Israel to come down and avenge this disgraceful thing in Israel by exterminating the Benjamites, which they almost do. We could go on, you may note, just for your own reference, 1 Samuel 25.25 and 2 Samuel 13.12. These are other examples of where a disgraceful thing in Israel is assigned the death penalty. Jacob, what we're getting at here is Jacob should have been outraged.

This is a disgraceful thing. And all of our examples, of course, are later and stem from the law of Moses, but these things were known just as the clean and unclean animals and the methods for sacrifice and many of the other ordinances of God that are written down in the law of Moses were known for generations before that. And even the narrator here in Genesis says this is a thing which ought not to be done.

And Jacob knows this. It's a sin worthy of death. And he says nothing.

He does nothing. He doesn't even notify the brothers. It's a lapse.

And it's a lapse that is going to be exploited. And to his discredit, even after the brothers, and this is a case, there are so many applications you can make from this passage, but when Simeon and Levi go, and they do exact the death penalty, and you think, aha, well, maybe they're on a better track here than Jacob is. But they don't stop there, do they? They use their anger and their wrath and their sense of outraged self-righteousness to not only kill Shechem, but they kill his father Hamor, and they kill all the males in the town.

And there's no place in the Bible that says because one man commits a rape that you wipe out the whole town. But that's what they do. And you find this sense of vindictiveness and self-justification in a lot of areas today.

People who bomb abortion clinics and shoot doctors and harass and pick at people's individual homes. Someone finds out that there's a doctor that performs abortions, and so they sit outside his home, and they persecute him and taunt him and torment him and make his life miserable because our cause is just. People who go in and massacre towns in war because it's the enemy.

This is not right either. And so you have in Jacob's case a failure to act. You have on the brothers too much action.

And in either case, it's wrong. But then you have in verse 30 of chapter 34, Jacob saying, you have troubled me by making me a stench among the inhabitants. Well, this word for troubling me is much stronger than that.

It probably ought to be translated, you have brought ruin on me. This phrase is used in Joshua 7.25 where in connection with that same sin of Achan, Joshua says, why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day. This is what he says to Achan right before they stone him.

It was a lot more than trouble. They suffered a military defeat over in Ai because of Achan's sin. And the last words that Achan hears on this earth, why have you brought ruin on us? The Lord will bring ruin on you this day.

It's the very same phrase that Jacob uses. You find the same thing over in Judges 11, in verse 35, where Jephthah's daughter comes out to meet him after the battle. He's made this vow, the first thing that greets me, I will sacrifice.

When he saw her, he tore his clothes and he says, Alas, my daughter, you have brought me very low. You are among those who trouble me. Well, this is a lot more than troubling.

It's ruined. Jephthah is devastated by this. And this is what Jacob is saying.

He says, you have ruined me. Well, who is he looking at and what is he looking at? Jacob. He's looking at his circumstances.

He's looking at the number of the people. Where's the faith? Where's the claiming of the promise of God? I will bring you back to the land in peace. He says, you people have ruined me.

My sons, you've made me a stench. They're going to gather together and kill me. That's not what God said.

God said, I will bring you back to the land in peace. And Jacob says, well, you've messed up the promise of God. Jacob is not doing very well.

We thought he had learned so much, and he was making his way back to the land of promise, and crossing the Jabbok, and wrestling with the man, and getting the blessing. But he's still got a ways to go. Where is the Achilles heel? It's in the small things that the enemy uses as a wedge to open us up and lead us into fear instead of faith.

And that's Jacob's problem. We need to examine ourselves and see if we are in the faith. Not only when it's the charge of the elephant, but do we have patterns in our conversation? Do we have patterns in the way we treat one another, where we're callous, we're insensitive? Do we have a pattern of gossip? Do we have a pattern of

tearing others down? Do we have a pattern of self-deprecation? Do we have a pattern of inadequacy or insecurity that we don't look at and we don't address? Jacob's feeling very inadequate and insecure here, isn't he? Why? Because he's not claiming the promise of God by faith.

He's not recognizing who he is in the plan of God. And what God has made him by choosing him and blessing him, he's all covered up with fear. He's all covered up with circumstances.

And it all started because of problems in his domestic life. We need to look closely at the small things, at the details of our lives, and make sure that we're exercising the same faith there that we do when the large tests come along so that there isn't a crack in the full armor of God that we are to wear. Let's pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we're going to move into chapter 35 and see Jacob return to Bethel. And to his credit, he is going to learn a little bit from this. He's not going to learn everything, but he's going to make another step of progress.

And we hope that we can do the same.