

99-12-26b

We're back now from our break, and when we left off in the first portion here this morning, I've led you down the path just a little bit in pointing out Jacob's actions in Sukkot, and then upon his arrival at Shechem, because there is a significance here to what takes place, especially in verses 18 through 20, when he comes to the city of Shechem, buys the land, and erects this altar, and names it. And it is a reminder to us of the importance of paying attention to our responsibilities before God, not just in one or two areas, but to try to do so in every different area of our lives. It is a principle that we've, in fact we've had a discussion recently, about the difference between having spiritual life and having a relationship with God as one of many facets of our lives, one of many parts of our lives, that sort of gets equal attention with a lot of others, as opposed to recognizing that every part of our life is in fact a place where our relationship with God can be expressed and can be reflected.

Because Jacob is doing something here that has significance. It has significance for him historically, it has significance for his family, it has significance from the standpoint of the covenant relationship that he has with God. If you'll keep your finger in Genesis chapter 34 here, turn back to Genesis chapter 12.

Anytime we find vocabulary, particular words or phrases used that seem to be a little bit unusual, there's a good reason for it. There's not a wasted word in the Scriptures, and the fact that this unusual verb is used for setting up the altar tells us that something's going on. Turn back to chapter 12 of Genesis.

You remember when Abraham first received the call, when he was in Ur of the Chaldees, he was outside the land, and God called him to get up out from his country, from his family, from his father's house. God says, go to a land that I will show you, and he goes on to detail the promise. I will make you a great nation, I will bless you, make your name great, and so forth.

I will bless those who bless you, I will curse those who curse you, in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. And in verse 4 of chapter 12, Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. Abram was 75 years old when he departed from Haran.

It tells who all he took with him there in verse 5, all the property which he had acquired in Haran to go to the land of Canaan, and they came to the land of Canaan. Where is the first place that Abram stopped when he arrived at the promised land? Look at verse 6. Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. This is in Hebrew, Alon Moreh.

You may have a New King James note to that effect down there. And the Canaanites were then in the land. This is the place where Jacob has come.

It's the very same place his grandfather came when he first entered the land. And what did Abram do when he got there? The Lord appeared to Abram and said to your descendants, I will give this land. So there he built an altar to the Lord who had appeared to him.

Then Abram moved on in verse 8 from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built another altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord. And Abram journeyed on from there.

But it's very significant in terms of the location here because when he has come to the land and has come to Shechem, as far as this terebinth tree, and this is, by the way, quite a famous tree which shows up later on in the Bible. The Canaanites are then in the land. This is where the Lord appeared to Abram.

And Jacob knows this. And Jacob, having stopped and spent his time in Sukkot after the wrestling match and built the barns and the strong back shelter for himself and his family, has obviously had time to give this a lot of thought. And he knows the history of his family.

He knows what happened when his grandfather came to the land. He knows where he went and where God appeared to him. So when he comes in, he goes to Shechem.

And even the narrator here reinforces this idea in verse 18 because it says, Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan Aram. And he harks back to Jacob's original departing point in the same way that Abram came from Ur of the Chaldees, Jacob has come from Paddan Aram. And he has pitched his tent here before the city.

And he bought this parcel of land where he had pitched his tent. And this is apparently the very same place where Abram had built this altar. And the reason we have that unusual verb there for erecting the altar instead of building the altar is because this is, as I said earlier, not something that Jacob built from scratch.

In the same way that you take a stone that's already existing and you turn it up on end, you erect it there. Well, he's taken this knocked down fallen altar that's who knows how many years old now that was built by his grandfather Abram and has reconstructed that. He has raised it back up and is worshiping there.

And he calls it El Elohei Yisrael. And it's a recognition that the God of his grandfather Abraham, the God of his father Isaac, is his God. And you have this threefold reference to God's name, El Elohei Yisrael.

You can see the three L's in there which are references in each case to the Lord God. So here in chapter 34 when we pick up, and by the way, the point of that, I guess I should say before we go forward, is this is a wonderful thing. You think about the care and the

thought process that went into this action on Jacob's part.

He has sought out and found the place of worship of his grandfather and is following consciously in Abram's footsteps. And this is a great thing. You think he's really starting to understand what's going on here, that this is the God of his grandfather and that these promises that he has inherited are real.

And he is doing well in spiritual things. But it's an illustration that has occurred to me many times before that there are a couple of different ways of looking at our lives. And it seems really common to have our spiritual life as one of many things.

It's like boxes on the shelf in the closet. And at certain times, whether it's Sunday or Wednesday or whatever the schedule our particular church is on, I subsisted for a long time on tapes when I was overseas or when I was in a place where I couldn't get to a church. And I would have a set time, usually in the evenings after supper, when I would sit down and listen to the Bible teaching that I knew that I needed.

And you can be located in a city where there might be Bible classes regularly scheduled, and you make it a point to go and to be there and to listen and to be exposed to the teaching of the Word of God. And I know that it's not unique to me that sometimes you can think, well, I've been doing this, and I know that this is the right thing. There's nothing more important than the Word of God and the life of a believer.

And I've given that its place. I've taken the time out of my day, and I've listened, and I've written my notes and thought about it a little bit there. But then a lot of times we close the notebook.

We stack it on top of our Bible and put it in its accustomed place. And then we go on to some other box on the shelf. We say, okay, that was spiritual life.

Now I've got this paper to write for school, or I've got this project to complete, or I've got a relationship with my family or with my wife, or I've got some TV to watch or whatever it might be. And that's just one of many sort of equally important areas of our life. And we just turn from one to the other to the other to the other.

And they're like little shoeboxes there. We take the lid off the shoebox and take that stuff out and work with it for a while, put it all away, go grab another box. And the problem with this is that it is convenient to pull out our spiritual life shoebox and do whatever it is we do.

There are cases where people will go to a church that has an aura or an atmosphere to it and music and robes and ritual and liturgy and so forth. And you come away from that feeling sort of like you've rubbed up against the divine and have been cleansed and you may take communion or something there. You say, okay, well, I'm back.

I've scored some points in the God area. And so then you put the lid back on that box and go on and live the rest of your life. And a lot of times there doesn't seem to be the connection that there should be between who we are before God and how we live our lives and how we think and how we set our priorities.

And really rather than having our spiritual life as just another area, another equal box on the shelves, really everything in our lives, if you could make an analogy from that illustration, our spiritual life really ought to be the closet or the whole house in which we keep those boxes. Everything ought to be a reflection and ought to be a part of the fabric of our lives as we live them before the Lord. And it's unfortunate that this is what we so often miss in Christianity as it is promulgated and put forward today, is that we think, well, to do something Christian or to do something that's pleasing in God's sight, we have to go forth and have an impact on someone or go forth and make a difference or do some obvious good deed rather than recognizing the potential in each different part of our lives.

It doesn't matter if we're doing the dishes or fixing the car or mowing the lawn, spending time with our children, having a conversation about a hobby or a mutual acquaintance or talking about family things or during the holidays, there's such a wide variety of conversation that goes on. We don't always have to be rolling our eyes skyward and quoting verses to each other to have the opportunity to reflect the character of Christ in everything that we do. And mundane things are invested with a divine quality.

The ordinary things of life can be a reflection of eternal fruit. And you can be side by side with someone who maybe is not a believer or maybe who is a believer that's completely indifferent to relationship with God and to living in a way that's pleasing to God. And maybe you're doing the very same thing.

Maybe you're the other half of a conversation or you're in the same household partaking of the same activities. But one is at best a dead branch with no fruit, if they're a believer at all, while another believer who is conscious of relationship with God and recognizes that every minute, every second is an opportunity. And in doing those very same things, it's not what we do, it's why and how we do them.

And if the power of God is active in our souls and if our affection and our conversation and our diligence is accomplished with a view toward our God and Father in heaven, it makes all the difference in the world. The most common ordinary things have an eternal quality. It is as though they have become radioactive by contact with the power of God in our souls.

And we miss that. We think, well, everybody has these things and everybody loves their children. Most people have some sense of a need for training their children and for spending time with them and for helping each other out in a time of crisis and so forth.

But there's a difference. And for us as believers, we know that whatever we do, if we do it heartily as unto the Lord and not unto men, whatever we do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. And if that is our motivation, if we have a desire to please God and recognize that there's an opportunity to please God in the smallest of things in life, it all is an expression and a reflection of the presence of God and the power of God in our lives.

And it's a great opportunity for blessing. It's a great opportunity for growth and for partaking of eternal things. But that along with that opportunity comes a responsibility because that means that we can't just look at one shoebox and say, you know, I took out my Bible and notebook for an hour and got that thing out of the way so the God thing is done.

I'm okay in the God area. Now I've got these 16 other areas I'm going to rotate through. Every minute we have a responsibility.

And we need to analyze and think, am I pleasing to God? Is the way I'm conducting this conversation or is this activity and the time I spend on it and the way I do it, is that pleasing in God's sight? And we have a 24-hour responsibility or at least every waking moment to be aware of whether or not we have a need for improvement. And this is where we come back to Jacob because Jacob, you can imagine him thinking, you know, I'm really starting to get it now. I've got this thing figured out.

And I've come back to where my grandfather Abraham built the altar. I bought the land for this enormous price, these 100 casitas of silver. And I've spared no expense in obtaining this and rebuilding the altar.

I've refurbished and come back to worship God in this place. And then he kind of sits on his laurels and there's another area of life which is in the area of monitoring his family and training his children and the responsibility he has to his daughter Dinah where Jacob is going to experience a great lapse. And that's what we find here in chapter 34.

Because it tells us, now Dinah or Dinah in Hebrew, which is from the same word as her brother's name Dan, which means to judge. Dinah, the daughter of Leah, whom she had born to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. There's only about seven places in Scripture where an individual's lineage is specifically linked to their mother.

And this is one of those places. Dinah, the daughter of Leah. And there's even some Jewish rabbinical comparison because the verbs that are used in what Dinah does here when it says she went out to see the daughters of the land, this echoes the verbiage that was used of her mother Leah a little bit earlier.

Because when it says she went out to see, obviously even in English here, to see is an infinitive and it's from the Hebrew verb ra'ah, which of course means to see. But the

construction here, because it has a direct object, the daughters of the land, and the way, to make a long story short in Hebrew, it's not clear whether this is an active or a passive use of the verb. And it's ambiguous.

And this is one of the things that God does so frequently. Hebrew language is so expressive. You can say two things with one phrase.

And this really probably should best be translated, she went out to see and be seen with and among the daughters of the land. She wants to go out and see them and she wants them to see her. She's got this need for social life.

She's a teenager. She's a maiden. We find a little bit further along in the account that she is described by the Hebrew word *na'arah*, which means maiden or woman of marriageable age.

That's N-A-A-R-A. There's a little guttural mark between the two A's in the first syllable there. *Na'arah*.

But she went out to see and be seen. And of course, all you have to do is look around. In any generation, and especially in the present day, when teenagers start to become conscious of one another and social life becomes supremely important, what do others think of me? What do I think of them? People start shopping for boyfriends and girlfriends and become aware of the opposite sex.

And Dinah has apparently reached this age. And she is tired of living in the dusty tent city outside the outskirts of the town. And she's seen these emissaries coming to and fro conducting business.

The emissaries from the household of Shechem have come out and they've transacted business. And her father Jacob has bought this land. But they're living out there in the sticks.

You see these things where teenagers, girls especially, might be living out there in the rural areas. They want to go to the big city and see what the nightlife is like and become a part of the stimulating life that is represented there. So she wanted to go out and see and be seen among the daughters of the land.

And Jacob doesn't do anything about this. She is apparently free to just pick up and go. He doesn't arrange for a chaperone.

He doesn't take any measures to ensure her safety or to protect her even against herself. We don't know what all might have been going on in her mind, how wild of a girl she felt like being or what her thoughts were once she gets to the town. But it tells us that Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, remember he's really the big cheese.

He's the police chief and the mayor and the governor and the primary businessman of the area all rolled into one. And you can imagine the heady experience. I'm sure Dinah was an attractive young lady.

And when she goes out and starts mingling and maybe she got invited to a little get-together there and Shechem happens to see her and she's strikingly beautiful, something a little bit exotic and different because she's racially going to be different from the Canaanites in that region. And he is smitten immediately. And on pretty much her first outing or two here, she suddenly finds herself the object of attention of a very powerful and influential man.

And it probably just bowls her head over heels. And Jacob is not there. It's his responsibility as her father to watch out for her and to protect her.

And where is he? Well, he's built the altar and he's bought the land and now he's kind of sitting back on his haunches and other things are happening within his family. Where have we seen this elsewhere in the Bible take place? You think about over in the later time of David. David is a great king and he's fighting battles and bringing in tabernacles and making preparations for the temple and doing many other things.

And he's so busy outside his home and he's writing psalms and being a great man after God's own heart. But there's an area of his life where he's completely tripped up off both feet and that's training and raising his children, taking responsibility for them. In fact, there are a lot of similarities between what's about to take place in Genesis 34 and an episode in David's life, which we'll return to in a moment.

But like David, Jacob seems to be taking comfort and sort of reassuring himself that all is well in his relationship with God. But he's neglecting an exceedingly important area of life and he's got 11 sons and you can tell from the narrative that not much time has been spent on Dinah. She's not even mentioned when they cross the Jabbok because as he crossed and sent over his 11 sons, he doesn't mention his daughter.

And we get the idea that she's been sort of overlooked. But she's important, as we will see. Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her.

He took her and lay with her and violated her. This word for violated doesn't necessarily mean that he took her by force against her will. This episode is often called the Rape of Dinah when Bibles are subtitled.

And a rape implies overcoming the woman's will and resistance by force. There's no indication here that she necessarily resisted this. She may have been swept away.

He may have whined and dined. Having been neglected in her father's house and being lost amongst the mingling throng of her 11 brothers, here's somebody that values her and recognizes her beauty and focuses all their attention on her. And she's swept away.

And there's no indication that she necessarily resisted. And this word doesn't imply resistance when it says he violated her. It sounds like something violent.

But really, this in Hebrew has the idea of something that was set apart being made common. It's used for rendering something unclean in the Law of Moses later on where it was clean and now it's unclean. If a man touches a dead body, he shall be unclean until evening.

This is the idea that she's been defiled or made impure or has been profaned might be a good translation. Because in having relations with her of a physical nature without going through the normal process of marriage, and there really wasn't a big marriage ceremony. It's not like they had to sew together a dress and invite guests and have a reception and do all the other things that we do today.

But there are formalities. There are things that make relationship of this nature legitimate. She needs to be taken to wife.

There are other parts of this transaction. Arrangements between the fathers need to be made. And this has not been done.

And this treats the woman as a common thing. That it's no big deal. When in fact it should be a big deal.

We've seen the marriage negotiations for Rebecca and for Leah and Rachel. And Dinah deserves that same consideration. All of this is bypassed because Shechem is a big wheel.

He's got lots of influence and power. He can see something and just take it. Notice the sequence of the verbs here in verse 2. Prince of the country, he saw her and he took her.

And this is ra'a again, to see. And lakak, to reach out and take. This is the same sequence that we find with Eve in the garden.

When she saw the fruit that it was beautiful to look upon and desirable to make one wise, she reached out and took. We see and then we take. And it's always a transaction that starts in the soul.

And this is the thing that we so often miss, is that we are evaluated. God judges us. The thoughts and intents of the heart are the issue.

Why do we do what we do? I was talking to a young man over the holiday break. And he had some questions about, well, what about right and wrong? Are there better spots in heaven and worse spots in hell depending on what you do? Can salvation really just be a one issue? It's just what you think of Christ. Can a really terrible person believe in Christ and be saved and go to heaven? And a really nice person who doesn't happen to believe

in Christ go to hell? In explaining or illustrating the fact that God is interested in what goes on in our hearts, I mentioned to him that we understand the difference between killing, like killing in battle, and murder, where there's premeditation.

And our law recognizes that there needs to be proven malice aforethought, that you intentionally went out with the design to take someone's life away for your own purposes. But we don't consider killing in the military service during wartime to be murder. But why is that? In reality, the fact that you have a uniform on and you go up to the bow of the destroyer and he was in the Navy, so I put him on the bow of the destroyer, manning a .50 caliber machine gun.

Here's somebody coming trying to board the ship and take it over, and you pepper away down into that boat and start killing people with that machine gun. It is still a matter of what's going on in your heart. It doesn't matter that it's wartime.

It doesn't matter that you're in the uniform of your country. If you're sitting there doing that out of personal hatred because these are the people who killed your buddy last week or you're on a vendetta and you have a naturally cruel soul and you've been pulling the wings off of flies and throwing cats against the wall ever since you were little and now you've just sort of got a legal excuse to go kill things and kill people. If you've got a murderous heart, every time you pull that trigger and kill the enemy, you're committing a sin.

It isn't justified just because you're in uniform, just because it's wartime. It's all about what goes on in your soul. For killing in warfare to be legitimate, you need to understand why you're doing what you're doing, that it is a right and just thing, that it is proper to defend your country, that it is pleasing in God's eyes.

And for a believer to be able to say, with David, blessed be the Lord who teaches my hands to war and my fingers to fight, and to understand why you're doing what you're doing, that's the measure. Nobody's going to get off the hook by saying, well, I was wearing a uniform. I was in war.

We were given orders. It's why we do what we do in the soul. And so here's Shechem and he sees this girl and I see it, I take it.

That's my goal. This puts us in mind of the same thing that we found when we went through Genesis 6. We pointed out at that time that in the same way that Eve saw and took, the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful, and they took wives of all whom they chose. And we pointed out at that time, well, how can this be a bad thing? They took them as wives.

They went through the procedures there. They even approached the fathers, and the fathers were complicit in arranging these marriages and things, but it was against the

will of God, and they knew it at the time. It was disobedience.

And to just go with impulse, this is the big problem, the instant gratification mode that we're in in our society. It's become a truism that, well, I want it now a generation, and we don't want to wait. We don't want to wait for water to boil.

We put it in the pot shot or in the microwave. We don't want to wait for things to grow in a garden. We go down and buy them at the store.

And children absorb this as they grow up because you've got an instant on TV. We can't wait for the TV to warm up. You remember in the old days when it had tubes, and you'd turn it on, and you had to wait, and it would kind of fade in, and all of a sudden there would be a picture.

When you turned it off, you got that little line in the middle and then the little fading dot in the center of the screen. But now we've got instant on, instant off. Everything right now, I need to find something out, just pop on the computer, go to the Internet.

There it is. I don't want to shop. I see it.

I get it. And sometimes we have to take conscious efforts to teach children that there is value in patience. There's value in looking ahead to the future and having a plan and working toward a plan.

I was very proud of our daughters. It's probably a bad thing to say, talk about your children. But I think it's a good thing.

You can buy a doll off the shelf, or you can get some cloth and cut out a pattern and do the stitching and do the stuffing and get the eyes and make the clothes and so forth. For projects and things like that, for children, you have to almost make occasions anymore to teach them that it's worth the wait. It's worth the effort to do things the right way.

Rebecca found out when she made her little doll that the material that she was using was already old, and when she stuffed it with split peas, the material was not capable of sustaining that weight. But these are good lessons. You get the idea here that Shechem, he's the big cheese.

What he wants he gets, and he wants the girl. So see the girl, take the girl. He does it.

He doesn't bother to observe the formalities. And then you think, well, but what if they're really in love? Maybe the premarital sex thing is okay. If they're really in love, love conquers all.

That makes a difference. If they're just using each other to do one thing, but they're really in love, well, Shechem was really in love. Look at verse 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.

It says literally in Hebrew, he spoke upon her heart. And this is a phrase that's used elsewhere in the Bible. And every time you find this phrase, spoke upon the heart of someone, it's somebody sort of making amends.

They've wronged them, and they're kind of trying to go back and see if they can make things right. But when you jump in and do something like this out of order and out of sequence and without following the procedure, a lot of times you can't go back and undo that. We can jump the gun on things, and of course it's real obvious in the area of sexual relationship among teenagers and young people today that once you go and step outside the boundaries of what God has designed, you can't unstep.

You can't take that back and do something different. Yes, God forgives, and yes, there's still potential in life, and you can still be blissfully happy in marriage and so on, but you still can't untake that step. It's something that's a part of the mark that you leave in the world.

And he says, I really do love you, and I really do want to make this right. He loves her, and he admires her for more than just her good looks. But this is not an excuse.

He has done what ought not to be done. But look at what he does in verse 4. Shechem spoke to his father Hamor. We know Hamor is just sort of the figurehead.

Shechem is really running the show here. But, you know, Hamor being the figurehead here, he says, Look, Dad, you go down there and get me, even the order here. This is good in English in the New King James.

It says, Get me this young woman as a wife. That's exactly the way it reads in Hebrew. It's an imperative.

It says, Get, and this is the word, same word, L-A-Q-A-C-H in Hebrew. This is in the imperative mood. And so he's basically telling his dad to do the same thing that he has done, but in a different area.

He saw and took the girl. Now he says to his dad, Take this girl for me as a wife. Go down there and do the paperwork and get her assigned over to me as a wife.

And he says, Get me this young woman. You can go over to Samson. Samson has a similar situation with the Philistine girl that he falls in love with.

And he goes to his father, and he says, Father, get this girl for me as a wife. But even Samson, in his somewhat wanton ways, he puts the girl ahead of himself. He says, Father, get this girl for me.

And the emphasis is on the girl. He really loves the girl. He says, Get this girl for me.

But Shechem says, Get me this girl. And he calls her a girl. It's kind of a deprecating vocabulary.

It's sometimes translated, child. Get that child. Get me that child.

And they don't use this when they come on over to talk to Jacob. Because Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah, his daughter. His sons were with the livestock in the field.

Remember the last time something bad happened with Laban? Laban had all of his people out in the field shearing when Jacob bugged out? Well, here's Jacob. Once again, he's having another echo of things that have gone before. He took advantage of the fact that Laban was out shearing the sheep with all of his sons and they were all elsewhere to bug out of Paddan Aram.

And now, his sons are all out with the livestock in the field. And Jacob held his peace. He didn't send runners.

He didn't assemble the clan. He didn't gather his militia and go in there and say, What have you done? He just sits. He does nothing.

He's passive. It reminds us of David and the rape of Tamar by Amnon, her half-brother. And David's inaction, his inability, we don't know what's going on in Jacob's mind.

Is he intimidated because Shechem is the prince of the land and he's trying to cultivate good relations? Oh my gosh, if I make a stink about this, bad things will happen. I need to figure out how to handle this. And he doesn't go tell the sons because he knows they're liable to go off half-cocked.

So he holds his peace. He does nothing. So then Hamor, the father of Shechem, went out to Jacob to speak with him in verse 6. And in verse 7, here come the sons of Jacob.

They came in from the field and when they heard it, the men were grieved and very angry. This is the proper reaction to have. These sons are doing better than Jacob.

They at least have a reaction. It doesn't say Jacob even got upset. He just held his peace.

He didn't do anything. Because he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter. And we say in Israel, is there a nation of Israel at this point? There's not.

But of course this story is being told from later history. And this has historically been true in the clan going all the way back before the time of Jacob. And granted the nation is in embryo form here, but still, in their family tradition, this is not the way things are done.

This is not proper. He has done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, a thing which ought not be done. But Hamor spoke with them, saying, The soul

of my son Shechem longs for your daughter.

Please give her to him as a wife. And make marriages with us. Give your daughters to us and take our daughters to yourselves.

Because see, this has opened the door now to what he's proposing is a merger. Let's merge the corporations. Let's blend the families.

Let's unite ourselves and become stronger. And he paints a good face on it. He says, So you shall dwell with us, in verse 10, and the land shall be before you, just think of the opportunity.

I mean, you're marrying into the most powerful clan in the region here. So you'll have carte blanche. You can go do whatever you want.

Our influence will be to your benefit. And you'll be able to dwell and trade in it and acquire possessions for yourselves in it. So Shechem says to her father and her brothers, you know, Dad has spoken his peace, but Shechem is really the prime mover here.

So he says, Dad, sit down. I've got something to say. Shechem says to her father and her brothers, Let me find favor in your eyes, and whatever you say to me, I will give.

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. Now he uses a rod.

He's using the nice phrase in talking about it. But when he was talking to his dad in private, he says, Get me the child. Get me the girl.

So we see that there are some little seamy sides to Shechem, even though he really does seem to love her. And it says his soul up there in verse 3. When it says he loved the young woman, it literally says his nephesh was attached to her. His soul clung to her, is what it literally says.

And so he's got to have her. He says, Name your price. I'll pay you anything.

So here you've got this attractive offer from the rich and powerful prince of the region. And so it's customary, and you may have seen this in movies and things, where in the Middle East, there's some time that passes. It's not an instantaneous exchange.

They would have had the formalities and the niceties and talked about other things and sat down in the tent and had some dainties and perhaps had some entertainment and smoked a pipe or something. Then Hamor would have come around to the issue at hand after they'd been there for an hour and a half or two hours. And he would broach this.

And then Jacob and the sons would go off and confer before they gave their answer. And so they go and have a powwow, and then they're going to come back and respond to

this. They wouldn't just speak off the cuff.

So when it says in verse 13, the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father, they've gone and conferred. They didn't just come up with this off the cuff. They've had a chance to plan and so forth.

But Jacob is strangely silent. We have no... Now this is between the sons. Hamor has sat down.

Jacob never did say anything. And it's the sons who are really working this thing out. So the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor.

In fact, in the Septuagint, it says Simeon and Levi answered. And whether this is an alternate text tradition or just someone reading backward, we don't know. But certainly Simeon and Levi are going to be the primary players as this goes forward.

They spoke deceitfully because he had defiled Dinah their sister. What they're figuring is these guys have breached protocol. They have done what ought not to be done.

They've done this disgraceful thing. So it's open season. It's kind of like the man on the bow of the destroyer.

Hey, it's wartime. I'm in uniform. This is what William Calley got in trouble for over in Vietnam in the My Lai Massacre.

Just because it's wartime, you don't have carte blanche to just do anything you want. It's not open season on anything and anybody. Why are you doing what you're doing? But here, the sons of Jacob, it's like they've been itching for a fight anyway.

Maybe they're resentful. Maybe they're jealous, whatever. But this gives them an excuse.

And so they say, it's going to be okay to lie now. It's going to be okay to do whatever because these guys have defiled our sister. By golly, you defile our sister.

Stand by. So they said to them, we cannot do this thing to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised. That would be a reproach to us.

But on this condition, we will consent to you. If you will become as we are, if every male of you is circumcised, 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. This is a flat-out, bald-faced lie.

Circumcision is the sign of the covenant between the house of Jacob at this point and God. And they're going to use it as an instrument of destruction. And they are making a promise that they have no intention of ever keeping.

They have no intention of intermarrying. They have no intention of giving their daughters. How many daughters are there in the house of Jacob at this point? The only daughter of marriageable age is Dinah.

If Reuben and Simeon and some of these others may have been old enough to get married and have a few children, they're going to be very small. Dinah is of marriageable age. She is naara, which in the Greek, the Septuagint translation, the word parthenos is used here.

Par means past and thane means growing in Greek. And so you have past growing. A young woman of marriageable age, she's past puberty.

And that's really all you can read into that word itself, parthenos. There's been a lot said about a virgin shall conceive and so forth and naara and alma. The word alma is used over there in Isaiah chapter 7, I believe it is, and the Greek translation parthenos when you find it over in Matthew.

And the word itself just means a young woman of marriageable age. In fact, when you read the Septuagint translation of this chapter, when Hamor is speaking here and saying my son loves your daughter and please give her to him as a wife and so on and they refer to her, it talks about her as a parthenos even though everybody knows she has already had sexual relations with Shechem, they still call her parthenos in this context. So that's just something to keep in mind when some people just get all wrapped around the axle about well, did it really mean a virgin would conceive and so on and they try to build the argument on vocabulary.

But that's not our subject this morning even though it is close to Christmas. But their words in verse 18 pleased Hamor and Shechem, Hamor's son. So they're going to go ahead and comply.

But here's the point. A wrong has been committed and it's Jacob's responsibility. So the young women are under the care and under the umbrella of authority and protection of their father until they're married.

And at that point, the father transfers that responsibility to the husband. That's why it is so important in a marriage ceremony that when the pastor stands up and says who giveth this woman to be this man's bride or whatever it is they say, the father is supposed to stand up and say I do. And you've heard me say before this idea well her mother and I do.

That screws up the whole picture because from a biblical point of view the father has the responsibility for his daughters. And it isn't supposed to be oppression. It isn't supposed to be mind control or keeping them under a thumb or oppressing or belittling or anything else.

It's supposed to be a part of God's gracious provision for protection and for watch care and to ensure that something like this does not happen. And Jacob has completely fouled this up. He didn't pay attention to what his daughter was thinking or what she was doing.

He didn't make any provision for her to have some experience of the outside world. He didn't chaperone her. He didn't keep an eye on her and this terrible thing has happened.

And now he doesn't know what to do as a consequence. And he's completely passive. He doesn't speak in this whole episode.

You don't see one word from Jacob in any of this. And that lack of taking up of responsibility creates a vacuum. And into that vacuum sin and evil are going to be drawn.

And the sons of Jacob are incensed and their anger flares up and it's righteous indignation. And there's nothing worse. Go back and study the history of the Crusades or the Inquisition.

There's nothing worse than righteous indignation. Because when people think they're right, this is why you have abortion clinics getting bombed. This is why you have doctors being shot by snipers who think I've got a just cause.

They're killing babies in there. Anything goes. And completely abdicating responsibility to evaluate what should I be doing in this area of my life to honor the Lord, to please the Lord.

Jacob isn't thinking that way and his sons aren't thinking that way. It's our goal, it should be our goal, and it's certainly our calling as believers to remember that our spiritual life and our relationship with God is not just one shoebox on the shelf. Every part of our life needs meditation, needs thought.

We need to evaluate it in the light of the Word of God. Our thoughts and intentions, and it's not all verses and quotations of godly things and walking around like a scriptorium around people. But remembering that the smallest actions, the common places in our lives have eternal weight attached to them because of who we are.

It's because the presence of God is here. He is present in us and with us. And His presence transforms.

His power transforms. And it doesn't matter if you're scrubbing a stain off the wall or whatever else it might be, a domestic task, what we do in work, the courtesy and the politeness and the fairness with which we treat people we come in contact with, the care in being willing to meet people's needs and be there for them when there's an opportunity to be beneficial. Lots of people can do that.

Unbelievers do that for their friends and their families and their acquaintances all the time. You see people chipping in and helping out someone in need. But it really is meaningless unless it is a part of the fabric of God's plan and purpose.

We can do those things and it has eternal significance. And to neglect areas of our lives is like poking holes in the fabric. It's like having that little doll that Rebecca put together.

The split peas are going to leak out because all of our life we need to be consistent in every area. And whatsoever we do in word or deed do all in the name of the Lord. When we have a lapse, if we don't focus our attention on it, if we don't seek it out, if we don't ask God to show us the blind spot that we may have in the way that we treat people, in our conversation, in our thought life, in the priorities that we've set in some particular area of life, that we're not just comforting ourselves that, well, in this area I'm really doing well so I'm good to go.

And we stop thinking. If we ask God to show us where we need improvement so that the light of the presence of God in our lives will shine in every different facet, we won't run into the problems that Jacob and his sons are going to encounter in the last half of this chapter. To evaluate all of the areas of our lives and ensure that we are seeking the power of God, seeking to reflect the glory of God in each of those areas.

Let's close in prayer. Father, we thank you for the privilege of studying your word today. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will help us to understand and apply these things in our lives and show us where we are blind, show us where we can do better in this area.

We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.