

Genesis 34 — Date Rape

June 26, 2016

Every once in a while I run across a part of the Bible that is hard to preach. I don't mean it is hard because it is hard to understand. I mean it is hard to preach because it is hard core. It has lots of blood, guts and violence.

Today we have one of those texts. If you like Jason Bourne movies and lots of body bags, this is your Sunday.

As a church we are working our way through the book of Genesis. Today we find ourselves in Genesis 34. The only way to understand this tough chapter is to understand the backstory that came before. Let me set the scene. Jacob and Esau were fraternal twin brothers. They didn't get along. Jacob ended up running for his life after tricking his brother and his father out of the family birthright and blessing. These were worth lots of money and power. Jacob was out of town for 20 years after he ran for his life. While the first seven to fourteen years out of town were rough, God slowly turned things around. Twenty years later Jacob had four wives, a dozen kids plus God gave him a sizable investment portfolio consisting mostly of spotted and speckled sheep and goats. Now, 20 years later, God told him to return home to the Promised Land.

The first thing he did when he returned to his country was the high-risk move of reconciling the broken relationship with his brother, Esau, the brother from whom he stole and cheated. What made this so risky is Esau was a professional terrorist that had his own army. When you are at the top of Esau's hit list, and he hunts and kills professionally, it is high-risk reconciliation. Last

week Jacob took the risk and God graciously allowed the relationship to restore. Genesis 33 was one of the high points in Jacob's life in his walk with God. Today, in Genesis 34, it is one of his lowest points.

Last week we glossed over some important details at the end of chapter 33. Twenty years before, when Jacob ran from home, God appeared to him at the city of Bethel. This was where grandfather Abraham first built an altar to God. This was the location where Jacob had his vision of Jacob's ladder, a stone staircase with angels traveling up and down the staircase from heaven to earth. Jacob promised that if God brought him back to the Promised Land he would build an altar at Bethel and worship God at Bethel. God kept his end of the deal. Jacob should have kept his. He should have been traveling to Bethel. That isn't what happened.

Jacob found himself distracted.

Let me show you this on a map. Last week, after reconciling with Esau in



Peniel, he lied to Esau and went to the town of Succoth.

He settled down in Succoth and built pens for his animals and a little ranch home. The point is he wasn't supposed to be in Succoth. He promised God to go to Bethel. He stopped short.

He eventually moved a little west and built a another homestead just outside the city of Shechem. On paper this looked like a good idea. He could have all the conveniences of the city of Shechem just a hop-skip-and-a-jump away from his home in the countryside just out of town. It looked like the perfect place to live. The problem is he wasn't obeying God and keeping his word. It wasn't Bethel. Shechem was 20 miles north of Bethel.

What was wrong with him almost keeping his promise to God? What could be wrong when it came to living outside the prosperous city of Shechem? I am sure Jacob loved the city of Shechem. It had all the conveniences. I am sure it had better cell phone coverage than rural Succoth.

Here are the problems. Shechem was a Canaanite city. If you have studied the Bible with us for a while, that should raise a flag. The Canaanites were some of the inhabitants of the Promised Land that God eventually told Moses and Joshua to completely wipe off the face of the earth. Take no prisoners. Kill all of them. Why was God so committed to their complete destruction? Leviticus tells us they were an extremely sexually perverse people. They practiced premarital sex, extramarital sex, sex with relatives and even sex with animals. That was an extremely wicked group. Deuteronomy 7 told the Israelites to not intermarry with them because they would turn their hearts after other Gods. You don't date them. You don't make them your friends. You stay away from them because their love for a perverted lifestyle will rub off on you and destroy you. Hanging with the Canaanites is like playing with spiritual rat poison. It will kill you.

That is the neighborhood Jacob moved into with his family. Jacob wanted the prosperity and comfort of the city more than he wanted full blow obedience to God. Jacob settled close to Bethel but not in Bethel because he was content to live a life of partial obedience. He rationalized himself into partial obedience. Everything that happens in this chapter to Jacob and his family could have been avoided if he had gone to Bethel in the first place. Bethel wasn't a exciting metropolis like Shechem, but it was where God wanted him to go. When it comes to obeying God, partial obedience will come back to bite you.

As Moses wrote Genesis for the Israelites, it was a book to help them know their history as they entered the Promised Land. The message that came screaming out of this chapter is that partial obedience will get you into trouble. Trying to mix with the Canaanite culture around you will not help you, it will destroy you. If it doesn't destroy you, it will destroy the lives of your children. The warning of this chapter is to avoid partial obedience. Sometimes it carries the same consequences as full-blown rebellion.

Let's dive into our chapter.

Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the women of the land. 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. 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." Genesis 34:1-4 (ESV)

Dinah was the daughter of Leah. Dinah means justice in Hebrew, which is quite prophetic given what's about to happen in this chapter. It says she went out to visit the women of the land. If you do the math you find she was approximately 16 years of age. Her older brothers were in the 20s. She was a

believing Christian girl who grew up in a decent home but she was tired of hanging around the house living with her brothers. At age 16, she wanted independence and to make her own choices. She could see the city of Shechem in the distance. I am sure when the wind was still at night she could hear the sound of the music and laughter from the city carrying through the air. On a clear day, in the distance she could see the brightly-colored fabrics brought into the city by the traveling merchants. In the distance, just out of her reach, was a life of fun, parties and excitement. She was 16 and longed to be a part of it. She wanted excitement, fun and her independence. Can you picture the scene? She was in that rebellious stage where she was convinced her parents were overprotective.

The Hebrew implies she rebelled against her parents' wishes. She ran away for the day to see the women of the land. She probably told them she was going to the stream to do laundry, when in reality she ditched her brother's dirty socks behind a rock and made a break for the city. She was tired of her parents conspiring against her to hold her back and ruin her life.

I am sure some of the teenage girls here this morning feel the same way. You are convinced your parents are overprotective. You don't know why they won't let you drive around in a car at night with your friends. You think they are treating you like a child when they insist on meeting your friends' parents before they let you sleep over at someone's home. You are convinced your parents are incredibly restrictive and controlling.

The reality is your parents love you very much. They are trying to prevent a repeat of Genesis 34 in your life.

Dinah ran to the city without her parents' permission. She was a 16-year-old and trying to make her first big splash on the social scene. I picture her strutting into the town wearing the Hebrew equivalent of a mini-skirt, high heels and skimpy clothing — the kind of clothing that only fits when you are age 16. She was probably wearing makeup too so she could look older and more mature. She probably gave Tami Fay Baker a run for her money. What she didn't realize is she was not strutting her stuff around home anymore. This was in a Canaanite city. A city filled with sexual perverts with little sexual restraint. She was naive to the danger.

Some young ladies are just like her. In the name of fashion you think there is nothing wrong with wearing skimpy, revealing clothing. Your friends wear it. You want to be popular, so you wear it. The reason you don't see the danger of dressing this way is because you probably grew up in a good Christian home. You weren't exposed to men intent on sexually exploiting a woman. Nobody explained to you how men with lots of testosterone think. A young girl dressing skimpily in front of young men is the rough equivalent of putting blood in the water around the sharks. It is just a matter of time until you get bit.

Young ladies, you need to understand that when you dress immodestly men are thinking about one thing, and it is not your personality.

While Dinah was galavanting around town making her big social splash and trying to get noticed, she caught the eye of Prince Shechem, the son of the

king in the city. He couldn't get his eyes off the beautiful 16-year-old Dinah innocently strutting around town trying to get some attention.

He introduced himself as the prince and she was swept off her feet. She couldn't believe the handsome prince was interested in her. Nobody at home gave her that kind of attention. She was emotionally swept away. One thing led to another. He paid for her dinner. He bought her a drink. He invited her over to his home. He offered to show her the view from the balcony of his bedroom window and she naively thought he was just interested in the beautiful landscape.

The Hebrew is very clear about what happened next. He took her and raped her. It was date rape. Against her will he forced himself on her. He violated her.

Fathers, let me put in a word of advice. Every young girl wants to feel she is special. She wants a man in her life that loves her. In this chapter, Jacob's love for Dinah was completely absent. When she didn't find love from her father she went looking for it elsewhere. As fathers, it is our job to love our daughters and treat them like ladies, especially when they are coming of age. If we don't love our daughters and make them feel special, there are plenty of young perverted guys, just like Shechem, who will be glad to fill the love tank in her life. The problem is they will violate your daughter when they do it and crush her heart.

After Shechem date raped Dinah, she felt humiliated. Her entire sexual world was shattered. She felt dirty. She wanted a shower. Next, Prince

Shechem did something she never expected. He wanted to marry her. This was not good. Ladies, if a guy rapes you on a date then says, “I love you” and “I want to marry you”, the answer you give him is, “No way!” If he violated you against your will on a date and didn’t treat you with the respect and love you deserve before you are married, what makes you think it will get any better after you are married? A guy like Shechem is an egotistical control freak. He is the kind of man that abuses his wife. Young ladies, if you meet a guy like Shechem, run for your life. Don’t get stuck with a guy like him for the next 50 years and let him become the father of your children.

Later in the story more of Shechem’s perverted character shows up. After he raped Dinah he kept her locked in his castle while he tried to get the rights to marry her. He never let her go home because if she did, he knew she wasn’t coming back. He was a egotistical controlling woman beater who saw a girl as nothing more than an object used to satisfy his desires. Ladies, that is not the kind of guy you want to marry.

How did this terrible date rape of Dinah begin? It all started with the partial obedience of her father. His partial obedience led him to move the family next to the perverted Canaanite city of Shechem, which led to his daughter wandering around this unsafe city, which led to her rape. Partial obedience can have the same consequences as full-blown disobedience. Be very careful of deceiving yourselves to think otherwise.

Now Jacob heard that he had defiled his daughter Dinah. But his 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. Genesis 34:5–7 (ESV)

Jacob got the news. The million dollar question is, "What is dad going to do now that his daughter was raped?" The Bible tells us he did nothing!

If this was my daughter and a guy raped her and was holding her under lock and key in his home, I would be on the phone with my lawyer. I would be on my way over to Shechem's house to get her back. I would transform into Rambo pastor and do anything to get her back. Jacob didn't do anything. He didn't take leadership. He didn't make a plan. He didn't do what a good father should do and ride to his daughter's rescue.

Here comes the problem. If your daughter was raped and her 11 brothers were coming home from the field and they are all redneck farmers that like to fight and when they come in the door, you don't have a plan, what is about to happen? If you don't have a plan, they will make a plan, and it will not be pretty. If you are a leader and you don't have a plan in a crisis, somebody will make one for you. It will probably be one you don't want. That is what's about to happen.

Jacob's sons took leadership. They were furious. Their sister was raped. She was held hostage in the castle. They knew sex before marriage was wrong. They knew rape was especially wrong. They knew that if you are not married to a girl, you keep your hands off the girl. That is the standard in the Bible. It is not just a New Testament thing that we see in Ephesians 3. It is all the way through all the Bible. Sex is to be saved for marriage. That means date rape and fornication are against God's will for your life.

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 whatever you say to me. Only give me the young woman to be my wife." Genesis 34:8–12 (ESV)

Don't you love the way Hamor and Shechem approach them? Hamor said, "I know my son raped your daughter on their first date and he has her locked in our house, but he really likes her. Can we make this official and turn his rape into a wedding?" Do you think marriage would have fixed a dysfunctional guy like Shechem? Absolutely not! Dysfunctional Shechem would only get worse after marriage, not better. Over time Shechem would just continue abusing Dinah.

To sweeten the deal Hamor said, "We should make this more than a marriage. We should make it a chick-swap. We will bring our young perverted girls to you so you can marry them. You can bring your young godly girls to us and we can marry them and defile them. That way we can lock up more of your girls in our homes and abuse them. We will even let you own land and do business in our community."

In some ways this sounds like a good idea. Jacob's sons would get part of the Promised Land for free plus they would get a bunch of young girls. The problem is it would leave their sister hostage and it would wipe out the young nation of Israel. This whole thing was a trap by Satan to try to wipe out the people of God.

Many people fall to this same temptation. The Bible is very clear. It tells us to make sure that when we date and marry we are not to be unequally yoked.

This means only date and marry someone who passionately loves God, not just somebody that went to church twice in the last two years. That means you only date somebody who believes the Bible like you believe the Bible. Many people go for the cute girl or the cute guy instead of looking to date only a man or woman that truly loves Jesus. It is easy for people place their sex drive over their love for Christ. That is the option presented to these young men. Shechem would get to keep their sister and in exchange they would get lots of girls and money.

Shechem had the hots for Dinah. He threw in a line that got him in trouble. He said, “Ask whatever bride price you want and I will pay it.” In that day a bride price was already a fixed amount. He essentially said, “How much money do you want to make this problem go away? You give me a number and I will write the check. We can solve this problem right now. How much money do you want to let me have her as my wife?” Shechem was trying to buy Dinah like a baseball card. She was nothing more than a body to be sold. Her brothers, which were God’s men, didn’t view their sister that way. She was not a trading card. She could not be bought for money. It didn’t matter how big a check Shechem could write. You could not buy them off with money.

The sons of Jacob answered Shechem and his father Hamor deceitfully, because he had defiled their sister Dinah. 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.” Genesis 34:13–17 (ESV)

The boys were thinking. They had an idea. “You think that you can write a check to cover emotional damages and make this whole thing go away? I don’t think so.” They had a little plan up their sleeves. They answered Shechem deceitfully.

Where did they learn to be good liars? Their father. Isaac deceived Jacob. Jacob deceived Isaac. Now Jacob’s sons were deceiving the men of Shechem. Here is what you need to know. If you have a particular sin hangup, it will be replicated in your children, but they will take it to the next level. That is where Jacob’s kids learned how to lie and deceive, their daddy.

Here is their gig. They said, “We will be happy to mingle and marry with you guys. We can’t wait to get your young girls. The only problem is we have a weird cultural hangup called circumcision. It is a big deal to us. If you guys will be circumcised, we are happy to join with you. If you won’t follow our little practice, we will move on.”

Circumcision is an adult man’s worst nightmare. This was before the invention of Novocain. Morphine was not an option. All they had was a sharp rock! I don’t know how Dinah’s brothers kept straight faces on this one. I don’t know how they tricked a bunch of men into doing this to themselves. You know they were loving the idea of tricking an entire city of men into hurting themselves in this very private and sensitive area. You know Dinah’s brothers were praying these guys didn’t use sterile rocks and they would get an infection.

After Shechem agreed to get circumcised, I think Dinah’s brothers were dying in laughter when they realized they convinced Shechem to injure himself

on the very part of his body that he used to injure their sister. They were thinking the punishment definitely fit the crime.

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. 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. Genesis 34:18–24 (ESV)

Prince Shechem was so excited to make it official with Dinah, he didn't delay circumcision. If that was me, I would have delayed it a long time, but he didn't. As I was thinking about this I remembered what it was like to be 20 years old and in love.

The best picture I have of this is something that happened when I was pastoring in Michigan. There was a guy in his 20s desperately in love with his girlfriend. He proposed to her and to his shame, she said, "No!" He begged her and he pleaded with her. Finally he told her that he had to have her. If she wouldn't marry her, he would kill himself. The girl wisely stuck to her guns and said, "No way!" Lovesick and heartbroken, right in front of her he ran into the street and threw himself in front of a car. As he was dying on side of the road his final words were, "Why did I do that?" When you are 20 years old and madly in love, you will do crazy things to get the woman you want. That was Shechem. Circumcision? No problem. He was so enthusiastic about this that he convinced the rest of the town to join him.

Notice Hamor and Shechem didn't give their town the same story they gave Jacob and his sons.. Their plan was to not to bless Jacob and his sons but to take them over and turn them into a bunch of perverts.

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. Genesis 34:25–29 (ESV)

On the third day these guys were in completely unbearable pain. At this point not a man in the city could get out of bed. They were all biting washcloths and had tears running down their faces because of the pain. All the men of the city were immobilized.

Simeon and Levi, two of Dinah's older brothers had a plan. They went through the city going door to door likes vacuum cleaner salesman. "Hello, is Henry home?" His wife said, "I am sorry, he is in bed. He was just circumcised. He can't even move." They said, "That's perfect. I will let myself in. Henry, you thought the first cut hurt. The next one is worse. Here is my sword and it is going through your heart." Then they went to the next house. "Is George home?" One by one they killed every male in the city. They saved Shechem and Hamor at the castle for last. They rescued their sister and took her home. I told you this is like a Jason Bourne movie. The girl was saved in the end and there were a lot of body bags along the way.

After all the men were dead, the rest of the brothers leapt on the spoils like ravenous wolves. They took the children, wives, the loot and plunder, all of it, wiping the city off the map.

While the young men took things too far, Jacob — as an old man — had the opposite error. He did nothing besides worry about himself.

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. 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?” Genesis 34:30–31 (ESV)

Jacob didn’t even talk about his daughter. He was never upset or outraged when she was taken. He didn’t run to her, hold her and weep over her when Levi and Simeon brought her home safely. All he could say was, “How could you do this? Now my reputation stinks. People won’t do business with me. People could attack me. My image is tarnished.”

For his sons, it didn’t matter. They would rather die with dignity than live with the shame of their sister being treated like a prostitute.

Applications

I want to point out four applications.

1. **Partial obedience has consequences.** All of this disaster, the rape, the slaughter of the men of Shechem and all of this family pain was put in motion by Jacob because he was content with partial obedience. He never went the last 20 miles to Bethel but chose to live next to the pagan city of Shechem. Partial obedience can have the same consequences as full-blown disobedience. Every time you think of compromising your obedience to God’s Word and saying close enough is good enough, remember this story.

2. **Don't be a passive leader and avoid uncomfortable situations.** In this story, Jacob's second major sin was passive leadership. He didn't weep for the rape of his daughter like he would weep in the future for the loss of his son Joseph. He didn't come up with a plan. He didn't step to the plate in the crisis. If we don't take godly leadership in a crisis, someone else will take leadership and they may take things in a direction we don't want them to go.
3. **Don't do the right thing the wrong way.** What I love about Dinah's brothers is, unlike Jacob, they got mad at sin. They were angry. They defended her honor. They did the right thing, but they did it the wrong way. They moved from seeking justice for the sin against Dinah to seeking vengeance against the whole city and killing every male. In the future, Jacob would not give Simeon and Levi an inheritance because of this cold-hearted sin.
4. **The hero of the story is Jesus.** Every place we look in this story we see sin. There is no hero in this story. While there is no hero in this chapter, there is a hero in this book. His name is Jesus. He came to take away the sin that has been done to us and the sin that has been done by us. There are some women here this morning and you can identify with Dinah. Terrible sin has been done to you. You were sexually violated and exploited. You feel dirty and full of shame. Jesus died to take away the guilt and shame that you carry from the sin done against you. With Jesus, the Bible says God literally makes us into a new creation. Your former shame is gone because Jesus washes it away. Others of you can identify with Jacob's sons. In your anger you have said and done some terrible things. You are filled with shame because your

anger led you to do some terrible sin. The hero of this book, Jesus, came for your sin too. He died on the cross to take away the guilt and shame of the sin done by us. When God looks at us through Jesus he doesn't see our sin, he sees our sins washed away and Jesus' purity given to us. It doesn't matter how dark the sin is that was done to you or even how dark the sin is that was done by you. Jesus came to forgive us of our sin and, as it says in 2 Corinthians 5:17, to make us into completely new creations.



Dr. Kurt Trucksess is ordained in the Evangelical Free Church of America. He enjoys reading, writing, time with his family and wrestling with his sons. His favorite topics are preaching and ancient rhetoric. Feel free to contact him at www.Christ2RCulture.com (www.c2rc.com)

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