

Deja-vu Without Condemnation
2-21-2016

Gen 20:1-14

From there Abraham journeyed toward the territory of the Negeb and lived between Kadesh and Shur; and he sojourned in Gerar. 2 And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. 3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, "Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife." 4 Now Abimelech had not approached her. So he said, "Lord, will you kill an innocent people? 5 Did he not himself say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this." 6 Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that you have done this in the integrity of your heart, and it was I who kept you from sinning against me. Therefore I did not let you touch her. 7 Now then, return the man's wife, for he is a prophet, so that he will pray for you, and you shall live. But if you do not return her, know that you shall surely die, you, and all who are yours." 8 So Abimelech rose early in the morning and called all his servants and told them all these things. And the men were very much afraid. 9 Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? And how have I sinned against you, that you have brought on me and my kingdom a great sin? You have done to me things that ought not to be done." 10 And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you see, that you did this thing?" 11 Abraham said, "I did it because I thought, There is no fear of God at all in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife. 12 Besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father though not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife. 13 And when God caused me to wander from my father's house, I said to her, 'This is the kindness you must do me: at every place to which we come, say of me, He is my brother.'" 14 Then Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and male servants and female servants, and gave them to Abraham, and returned Sarah his wife to him.

Like the great philosopher Yogi Berra said, "It's like deja-vu, all over again."

Abraham felt caught in time warp, 25 years earlier, committed nearly the identical sin.

- Trusted in deception to protect them instead of the Lord. Gen 20:1-2, 12:11-16, Mt 10:28

Sin always influences/hurts others around us.

- Sarah also lied & disobeyed God, this damaged relationship with Abraham.
- Abimelech and his household did not conceive & possibly death.
 - Pagan people at times have more integrity/morality than God's people. 1 Cor 5:1
- Abimelech's actions were based upon pure motive/custom & Abraham and Sarah's untrue statements.
 - It is still sin from God's perspective. 20:3-7, 1 Jn 1:9
 - Sin can be committed with no knowledge or no sinful intentions.

God lovingly exposes our sin to separate us from what will destroy us.

- Sometimes He uses unbelievers to rebuke us (boss, relative, neighbor).

We tend to excuse besetting sins and not confess and forsake them, but our excuses usually transparent to all but ourselves. Gen 20:9-13, 1 Cor 10:13, Jam 1:13.

- Situational ethics: forced to lie because there was no fear of God in Gerar
 - The real problem: Abe did not fear God & believe God could save.
- Technicalities: ½ truth meant to deceive = whole lie. Sister & wife
 - Allow wrong conclusions/impressions by withholding/bending/limiting the facts/evidence.
- Tradition: believing “It’s always done this way” or “this is just way I am.” Just an honest mistake
- Blame others/God. This was one of Adam & Eve’s excuses.

There is no indication the Abraham accepted responsibility for his sin or was sorrowful or repented.

- Abraham’s faithlessness no surprise, God’s faithfulness to Abraham’s failure is amazing.
 - He did not disown Abraham: He had the deceiver pray for the deceived! Gen 20:17-18
 - God uses us in spite of ourselves & our sin.
 - Nor did God shame Abraham: In the rest of the Bible God mentions his faith often, but never again this sin.

Abraham was saved, blessed, and kept not based on his faithfulness or his works but God’s.

- To serve God like that is a great joy & incentive be holy. Heb. 12:1

Yet we continue to sin. One day we will trust God, and the next we may be self-reliant, faithless, and rebellious.

- We may struggle w/alcohol, drugs, food, gossip, anger, slander, lust, bitterness, resentment, the love of money, or not give to Lord, waste time, or neglect time with God.
 - You may wonder how you can still count yourself as a Christian, but because of cross, God doesn’t deal with us according to our sins! Rom 7:18-8:1

• The Christian is eternally secure regardless of the struggles with besetting sins. Because the Holy Spirit indwells in Christians, we can experience consistent victory over besetting sin. 1 Jn 4:4, Pro 22:3, Jam 4:7, 2 Cor 5:7, 1 Tim 6:11-12a

- Plan not to sin! Avoid situations were you are easily tempted! 1 Cor. 10:12
- Resist temptation by God’s grace & power.
- Keep getting up and fighting: confess, repent & believe that God will not withdraw His grace/love/blessings because of your failure, sin, and faithlessness.
 - That is the kind of faith men desire; one that works even when we fail.

