

May 26, 2019

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## TIME OF REFLECTION

“The power of just mercy is that it belongs to the undeserving. It’s when mercy is least expected that it is most potent – strong enough to break the cycle of victimization and victimhood, retribution and suffering.”

~Bryan Stevenson, lawyer, activist in  
*Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*

“Everybody makes excuses for themselves they wouldn’t be prepared to make for other people.”

~Rebecca Goldstein, *Plato at the Googleplex: Why Philosophy Won’t Go Away*

“Christianity was also, to my surprise, radical – far more radical than the leftist ideologies with which I had previously been enamored.”

“Christianity, it turned out, looked nothing like the caricature I once held.... God wants broken people, not self-righteous ones. And salvation is not about us earning our way to some place in the clouds through good works. On the contrary; there is nothing we can do to reconcile ourselves to God. As a historian, this made profound sense to me. I was too aware of the cycles of poverty, violence and injustice in human history to think that some utopian design of our own, scientific or otherwise, might save us.”

~Dr. Sarah Irving-Stonebraker (PhD, Cambridge) Australian historian

“The letter of the law is too cold and formal to have a beneficial influence on society. Whenever the tissue of life is woven of legalistic relations, there is an atmosphere of moral mediocrity, paralyzing man’s noblest impulses.”

~Alexander Solzhenitsyn in his 1978 Harvard Address

“Power is perhaps humanity’s most dangerous drug.”

~Rebecca McLaughlin, (PhD, Cambridge) author and activist

**SERMON** – “The Redemption of Victims and Victimiziers” – *Pastor Don Willeman*

**SERMON PASSAGE** – *Genesis 33:18-35:4 (ESV)*

*Genesis 33*

<sup>18</sup> And Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, on his way from Paddan-aram, and he camped before the city. <sup>19</sup> And from the sons of Hamor, Shechem’s father, he bought for a hundred pieces of money the piece of land on which he had pitched his tent. <sup>20</sup> There he erected an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel.

*Genesis 34*

<sup>1</sup> Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the women of the land. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> And his soul was drawn to Dinah the daughter of Jacob. He loved the young woman and spoke tenderly to her. <sup>4</sup> So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, “Get me this girl for my wife.”

<sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> And Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him. <sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> Make marriages with us. Give your daughters to us, and take our daughters for yourselves. <sup>10</sup> You shall dwell with us, and the land shall be open to you. Dwell and trade in it, and get property in it.” <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> 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.”

<sup>13</sup> The sons of Jacob answered Shechem and his father Hamor deceitfully, because he had defiled their sister Dinah. <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> Only on this condition will we agree with you—that you will become as we are by every male among you being circumcised. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> But if you will not listen to us and be circumcised, then we will take our daughter, and we will be gone.”

<sup>18</sup> Their words pleased Hamor and Hamor’s son Shechem. <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> So Hamor and his son Shechem came to the gate of their city and spoke to the men of their city, saying, <sup>21</sup> “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. <sup>22</sup> 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. <sup>23</sup> Will not their livestock, their property and all their beasts be ours? Only let us agree with them, and they will dwell with us.” <sup>24</sup> 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.

<sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with the sword and took Dinah out of Shechem’s house and went away. <sup>27</sup> The sons of Jacob came upon the slain and plundered the city, because they had defiled their sister. <sup>28</sup> They took their flocks and their herds, their donkeys, and whatever was in the city and in the field. <sup>29</sup> All their wealth, all their little ones and their wives, all that was in the houses, they captured and plundered.

<sup>30</sup> 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.” <sup>31</sup> But they said, “Should he treat our sister like a prostitute?”

*Genesis 35*

<sup>1</sup> God said to Jacob, “Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there. Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau.” <sup>2</sup> So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, “Put away the foreign gods that are among you and purify yourselves and change your garments. <sup>3</sup> Then let us arise and go up to Bethel, so that I may make there an altar to the God who answers me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone.” <sup>4</sup> So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had, and the rings that were in their ears. Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree that was near Shechem.