

The Defiling of Dinah: Preserving the Purity of the People of God

Genesis 34

Intro: Are you Outraged Over Sin?

How do the actions of Shechem toward Dinah make you feel? Repulsed? Livid? Outraged? Disgusted? That's how you should feel. This story, as horrific as it is, is included in the book of Genesis to help the original readers (the people of Israel), not merely feel the moral outrage of what was done to Dinah, but to warn them of what happens when God's people intermingle with the world.

Listen to what God told them in Deut. 7,
“When the LORD your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you..., and when the LORD your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them. You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods...”

That's what the original readers of Genesis were commanded to do as they took over the promise land: "Don't intermingle!" How, then, do you think they would've read this account in Genesis 34? Who are they gonna side with? Jacob?—Mr. Passive Dad who just wants to keep everyone happy and is willing to tolerate intermingling? Or Jacob's sons who will not tolerate any injustice or impurity that defiles their people, especially their little sister?

God really cares about preserving the purity of his people. He cares about holiness. He cares about our commitment to not tolerate or overlook unrepentant sin. God really cares about the purity of his people. And the defiling of Dinah is a picture of what happens when's God's people tolerate intermingling with the world. It compromises their purity as a people.

And therefore, the moral outrage you felt when you read of Dinah's defilement should be the same feeling you have towards your own sin, AND the toleration of *unrepentant* sin in the church.

I'm gonna make the case that the brother's response to the defilement of their sister is not portrayed by the author of Genesis as *entirely* wrong. They're off on some things, but the author is painting more of a negative picture of Jacob's passivity. And his point is: *The temptation of intermingling can lead to defiling, so it mustn't be tolerated.*

In that main point there is 1 Resolution we must have ("Do not tolerate intermingling") and 2 Reasons ("It can lead to defiling" and "It can be tempting"). Let's begin with...

Reason #1: Intermingling Can Lead to Defiling [v1] Remember, Jacob finally gets his family to the land of promise (Canaan), and he settles in Shechem, probably for too long. He was supposed to Bethel, where his father Isaac still lived. But he seems to have gotten a little too comfortable. Remember what happened in **[33:18-19]**

So last week, we were introduced to this guy named Shechem (a prince of the city of Shechem) and his father Hamor. And it

appears Jacob has already gotten a little too buddy-buddy with them. That comfortability rubs off on his daughter Dinah who wants to make some friends, so she heads to the city.

This is a problem because girls her age shouldn't go unchaperoned into the city. Dinah was still young. So who's to blame for her foolish action here? Jacob! Her dad. His passivity leads to a horrific event. **[v2]**

That should really bother you. The language here is eerily familiar: he “saw” and he “seized/took.” What’s the remind you of? “Eve *saw* the fruit was desirable...and she *took* it.” Gen. 6, wicked men “*saw* the daughters of man were attractive and *took* any they chose.”

Shechem is acting like those who came before him—people driven by the lusts of their heart. The term “lay with her” is not the best translation. “Lay *with*” implies consent. There was NO consent on Dinah’s part. That’s made clear when it says he “humiliated her,” a word capturing the violent shaming of his actions.

The author is intentionally painting a picture of the outrageous injustice of Shechem's behavior towards Dinah. I want those of you who have experienced something similar (or know of someone who has) to hear that. This is wrong. What Shechem did was wrong. What was done to you was wrong. And if you have not yet been able to work through the injustice done to you, no matter *when* it happened, talk to one of the pastors, so we can get you the care you need to find comfort in Christ.

We are intended to feel the moral outrage of Shechem's brutish behavior towards Dinah, so that when we hear what he does next, we can see it for what it is. **[v3]** What do we make of that? Did he "love" her in the sense that he sacrificially put *her* desires *before* his own? Of course, not! That's not how the word "love" is used here. This is a picture of Shechem's selfish *obsessive* feelings for Dinah. He just wants more of what he already got from her.

Which, BTW, the language of v3 indicates that he continued to see her. This wasn't a one-time thing; it's continuous. Which tells us, he

somehow still has access to her. Where is she? Hold onto that thought. For now, we're meant to see Shechem's obsession. His soul was DRAWN to her. The same word used when Laban "pursued" Jacob and his family. He relentlessly chased them, not for their good! It was an obsession on Laban's part.

Shechem is obsessed. And therefore, his "tender speaking" is meant to feel weird. This is an unstable man. You know how those ruled by extreme selfishness can be? One moment they do something unimaginably harmful and the next moment they're being kind and gentle—perhaps to make up for what they did rather than to repent and admit wrong (which Shechem NEVER does!).

They'll do whatever they can to get what they want, which is why Shechem is not satisfied with NOT having Dinah all for himself. **[v4]** You hear how demanding he is, even to his dad? The verb "get me..." is the same verb used to describe what he did to Dinah in v2, "he seized/took/got her." This man feels entitled to take whatever he wants.

And he doesn't even give her the respect of saying her name! "Get me this *girl*." (In fact, the word "girl" indicates she was still young.) Shechem is a terrible person and there shouldn't even be the slightest temptation to intermingle with someone like that. But the temptation is offered. That takes us to...

Reason #2: Intermingling Can Be Tempting

[v5] He heard about it! He knew about it. But he kept quiet. And he was waiting for his sons to come home from tending their flocks! He didn't feel the need to go get them! "We gotta do something about this!" He didn't do anything. We are meant to feel frustration with Jacob's passivity. In fact, we don't hear Jacob SAY anything, until the very end of the story! And even then, he doesn't express any concern for his daughter. He's just expresses concern for himself.

Meanwhile, Hamor (Shechem's father) wants to arrange a wedding. **[vv6-7a]** Heard of what? What was done to their sister? Notice the difference between them and Jacob. As soon as they heard about it, they leave work to

come deal with the matter right away,
whereas Jacob tried to wait until they were off
work before he was gonna say anything. How
do the brothers feel about it? **[v7b]**

I want you to notice, v7 is NOT Jacob's sons
talking. It's the author's description of how
Jacob's sons feel about the situation, AND it's
a description of how the author feels about it.
See that? He says the sons "indignant and
very outraged," that's a description of how
THEY feel. And then he gives HIS evaluation.

[v7c] That's Moses's assessment. "This kind
of thing must not be done in Israel!" Note this:
when Shechem *did* this to Dinah, Israel as a
people wasn't formed yet. But when this event
was WRITTEN down many years later, it was
written for the people of Israel coming out of
Egypt. So *Moses*, the author, is saying to the
people of Israel who read Gen 34, "This kind of
thing should never happen among you!" **[v7c]**

Why would he say that? Because Israel was
about to take over the promised land and they
were commanded by God not to intermingle

with the pagan peoples of the land so as to let God's people become defiled. "Don't let this happened! Such a thing must not be done!" Moses tips his hand on whom he thinks has the right evaluation in this story—Jacob's sons, not Jacob. And therefore, when the offer from Hamor of intermingling is presented, it should be immediately dismissed.

Look at his offer. **[v8]** No apology for what he did. Only the request for what he wants. Hamor is an enabler AND he's opportunist because he requests more than Dinah's hand in marriage for his son. **[vv9-10]** What does that offer sound like? It sounds awful lot like the very thing God told Israel NOT to do in Deut. 7, "You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons..." Why? "For they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods..." It's clear as day!

Can I speak to the non-marrieds here? It should not even be a fleeting thought that you would consider marrying a non-Christian! The Bible so obviously forbids it. And yet, so many

Christians get lured into marrying someone they shouldn't because it can be so enticing.

What Hamor offers Jacob and his sons is enticing/tempting. Why? It would've been a shortcut to inheriting the land of promise, but not in the way God intended. He did not intend for his people to inherit the land through intermarrying with the pagans of the land. They were to be a distinct covenant people, set apart unto God! And this offer, though tempting, would've ruined that.

The same is true for the church today. We must not become one people with those who are outside the covenant people of God. What does that mean for us? There's a reason we read 2 Cor. 6 earlier, "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers." Do you know that means? A **yoke** was a wooden beam that connected two animals so they can pull a cart to plow a field. If you yoke an ox and a donkey together, they would be *UNEqually* yoked—the donkey would just get dragged by the strength of the ox and plowing would've been

uneven. So you need two oxen or two donkeys of equal height and strength, to make it work.

Do you know what Paul specifically has in mind in 1 Cor 6 when he says, “Do not be unequally yoked?” He’s talking about *church membership*...bringing INTO the fellowship of believers those who are not equally yoked with those believers.

How can unbelievers and believers be partner together in fellowship as one church? This is what church member IS. We’re not talking about church attendance. We love for unbelievers to come to our church. If you’re not yet a non-Christian, we want you here! But we won’t bring you into covenant membership until you trust Christ. **[Explain]**

So how does a church remain “equally yoked.” One way is to practice meaningful church membership, but it’s also to practice meaningful “church discipline.” If someone is brought into membership as a professing Christian, but through their ongoing, hard-hearted, *unrepentant* sin, they show

themselves not to be a genuine Christian, it is the church's responsibility to remove them from membership...which, BTW, doesn't necessarily mean that they can't attend anymore. Ordinarily, we'd want them to keep sitting under the preaching of the Word.

BUT we would not treat them as a fellow believer, covenant member. Do you know the way that's demonstrated? At the Lord's table! This is the outward sign of our fellowship (our "equally-yoked-ness") in Christ.

You can read about this in 1 Corinthians 5, where a man was caught in gross unrepentant sin, and the church did nothing! And Paul says, "Why are you tolerating this sin? Let him who has done this be removed from among you." And he says, "Do not even EAT with such a one," which is referring to the Lord's Supper.

It really is tempting to intermingle, even in the church, perhaps to grow our numbers, to have an open membership, to get as many people here as possible, removing any distinctness of who KABC really is.

But that would be unfaithful to the Scriptures. (If you have more questions about what it means to be a Christian or be a member of a church, talk to me later.)

So this offer from Hamor of intermingling would've been tempting. And Shechem, his scoundrel son, tries to make the offer even more appealing. **[vv11-12]** A bride price was normal. What's not normal is offering a bride price AFTER what he did. He's a scoundrel.

Moreover, he's offering a price of *any* value AND a gift of *any* kind that Jacob and his sons might want. This would've been tempting for them! BUT it shouldn't be because he's treating Dinah like a prostitute to buy pleasure from her. It's no wonder the brothers, say this very thing at the end of the story, "We're not gonna let him treat our sister like a prostitute!"

There's no acknowledgement of the heinous sin Shechem committed, let alone any inkling of a remorseful, repentant heart. And the brothers see right through it. They will not tolerate it. Which takes us to the...

Resolution: Intermingling Must NOT Be Tolerated. It can lead to defiling and it can be so tempting, so don't tolerate it! Notice how Jacob's sons take over the conversation. **[v13]** The word "deceitfully" is the same word used in ch27 for what *Jacob* did to *Esau*! The apple doesn't fall far from the tree. Look at their *deceptive* plan. **[vv14-17]** Where is Dinah in all this? Jacob's sons said, "We'll *take* our daughter," implying she's still being held captive in Shechem!

So their plan is to use the covenant sign of circumcision to get them to think they are becoming one people when they're really not. There was certainly room for those outside of ethnic Israel to come into the covenant people *through faith* and receive the sign of circumcision. But that's not what's going on here! The sons are deceiving them into thinking they will become one, which is a disgrace to the covenant sign.

Why is this their tactic? Look how the story unfolds. **[vv18-24]** So all the men of Shechem get circumcised because they were told

they're gonna get wives and livestock and property if they become one with Jacob's people. But *clearly* they have no desire to enter the covenant people through faith in the one true God. They just want to do whatever they can to get their stuff, and Shechem just wants Dinah! And their greedy desire backfires big time. **[vv25-29; read/comment]**

Wow. Now do you see why they had all the males get *circumcised*? This was a war-strategy! The third day is when the pain was at its worst. These guys were totally defenseless and vulnerable, though they *felt* secure because of the deal that was made. So can you see why the brothers did this? There's a lot of irony here. One person said, "The part of the body used by Shechem in his violent passion [became] the source of his own punishment." (Sarna, 236)

BUT punishment comes, not just upon Shechem, but on ALL the men of the city. Is this a bit excessive on the part of Jacob's sons? I'm not convinced it is. Think about this: All the men of the city were responsible for

this defilement because they didn't hold Shechem responsible for it. They still held him in high esteem. AND they were complicit in holding Dinah captive. So this wasn't just retribution for what Shechem did, it was a war strategy to rescue their sister!

But not only this, the author of Genesis (Moses) clearly leans toward the side of Jacob's sons more than he does Jacob. The author's comments throughout show us that he was just as morally outraged as Jacob's sons were. Though he does not agree with their *deceitful* tactics, I think he does agree that Shechem needed to be wiped out. Why?

This story served as an example to the original readers—the people of Israel on the brink of taking the promise land...who were told in Deut. 7 NOT to intermingle with the pagan people of the land, but to be instruments of God's judgment upon them. Genesis 34 was meant to be a picture of how Israel should deal the sin that defiled them. They shouldn't tolerate it. Notice the difference between Jacob and his sons in this regard. **[v30]**

Did you hear how many times he uses the singular pronoun *I/me*? **8 times!** Jacob is way too concerned for himself and not nearly concerned enough for the injustice brought on his own daughter AND the danger of defilement that comes when God's people intermingle with the pagan world!

But the brothers won't have it. **[v31]** That's how this story ends. It ends on a question. "Should he treat our sister like a prostitute?" What's the answer, "No!" The fact that this story ends on a question we all know the answer to indicates the author is siding with Jacob's sons, not Jacob! As one writer said, "The whole sorry episode could have been avoided if Jacob had maintained an appropriate distance from the people of the land in the first place." (ESV, 303)

Conclusion

That's the message for the people of Israel AND for us. The outrage the brothers felt over the defilement of their sister should be what we feel over the unrepentant sin in our lives that would defile us.

Do you feel about your own sin the way Jacob's sons felt about Shechem's wickedness? You should. I'm not saying you go on a killing spree to deal with it, at least not the same kind of killing spree the brothers went on. But you do go on a killing spree! A killing of your own sin!

We must take our purity/distinctness as those part of the covenant people seriously! We must not look/ act/ talk/ think like the world. We're different!

Do you know Jesus laid down his life, NOT ONLY to forgive us of our sin, but to transform us into a holy/distinct people. **[Gospel]**

That doesn't mean you need to be a Monk and remove yourself from the world. No, we do exactly what Jesus said, "Be IN the world, but not OF the world." So I ask: Are you tolerating any unrepentant sin in your life? Are there signs of spiritual fruit that show you've been changed by the Spirit? You're new! You're set apart for God!

I can say this with great joy, that this is true of KABC. This church takes sin very seriously, not in a self-righteous judgmental way, where we have a bunch of sin-police. No, I mean, we really care about our distinctness as a church and that's why we take seriously putting to death our own sin first.

- This is why we need to be in each other's lives. Get into a d-group. It's a fight club where you're helping one another kill sin.
- Show up on Sundays consistently. This gathering is the fuel we desperately need to kill our sin for that week. We need this weekly repetition of singing and praying and preaching about the glorious grace of God in Christ so that our hearts are not drawn away from him.
- Get into the Bible daily! Use our church app to read through Bible in a year. It's our sword to kill sin!

The church is a distinct people bought by the blood of Christ and therefore, we should not tolerate anything that would defile us. So let us whole-heartedly commit killing sin and preserving the purity of the people of God.