

GENESIS 20

The Cow Pile and the Rose

Have you ever heard the expression, "He could fall in a cow pile and come out smelling like a rose."? Ok, how many of you need clarification on just what a cow pile is? At any rate today, as we go through chapter 20, we will see that Abraham is going to do just that. He is going to step right in it and come out blessed beyond belief. This happens more often than not to the Christian.

If you have been born again then you are already blessed beyond anything you deserve, because we all deserve to go to Hell. God has taken that away. But on a day-to-day basis, if we are honest, we have to say that more good comes our way than bad. We have to say that we get more blessings than we deserve.

This morning we find Abraham moving south, most likely as a result of his herds. While Abraham has a base of operations in Hebron, he is a Bedouin by trade, meaning he has to move to graze his massive flocks. This is what caused the separation between he and Lot. So today we pick up the story with Abraham as he moves south in order to find pasture and decides to stay in Gerar while his herds graze.

Gen 20:1 *And Abraham journeyed from there to the South, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, and stayed in Gerar.*

Gen 20:2 *Now Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.*

Gen 20:3 *But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, "Indeed you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife."*

Gen 20:4 *But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, "Lord, will You slay a righteous nation also?"*

Gen 20:5 *Did he not say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she, even she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands I have done this."*

Gen 20:6 *And God said to him in a dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her."*

Gen 20:7 *Now therefore, restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours."*

Abraham is still in the habit of trying to pass Sarah off as his sister, and she is 89 years old.

- If he is going to be this paranoid he should have considered marrying a less attractive woman.
- I love to show off my wife.
- Look at how much trouble this one little half-truth (whole lie) has caused.
- Many times a lie is seeded in fear. Fear is a lack of faith.
- Abraham is like most of us. Our faith meter goes up and down depending on circumstances. Abraham has faith when it comes to fighting kings and their armies, but he has almost no faith when it comes to being able to protect himself and his wife from those that may want her.
- Our faith should grow to the point that it is even-keeled. The needle on our faith meter should be steady no matter the circumstance.
- We should also just tell the truth! If your business travels and relationships put you in the position of lying about your marital status, then you should do some soul-searching. If you are claiming that you are married when you're not, or claiming that you're single when you're married, chances are that you are putting yourself in a position in which a Christian should not find themselves.
- Men, we should never put our wives in a position like this. We should never put our wives in a bind. Abraham's fear has placed Sarah in a bad position. He has also made her an accomplice to his lie. We are to

protect our wives with our lives, not place them in harm's way due to our fear!

God intercedes

In verse 3 God intercedes on Abraham's behalf.

Gen 20:3 *But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, "Indeed you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife."*

Wow! You might say! When God gets involved He really gets involved! The truth is that God is intervening all the time. It just happens that this time He intervenes more supernaturally than at other times. God doesn't do it this way all the time. Why not?

I can't say why in the broader sense other than to say that God uses people (us) the majority of the time. However, in this instance He intervenes because He has promised that a child is to be born to Abraham and Sarah within the year and He can't have another man enter the picture.

- Notice that in verse 4 Abimelech refers to God as Lord. This knowledge of God would most certainly have come at least in an indirect way if not directly from Abraham. While it is good to see the influence Abraham has had on his surroundings, we must understand that this is a bad witness here.
- When people know you are a Christian and then you pull a bone-headed stunt such as this, you have lost credibility in the eyes of those around you. We have to be aware that we are being watched.
- There are some Christians that don't want the word to get out that they are Christians because they don't want to live in a fish bowl, but we are not to hide our faith. We are to be a light to the world.

Mat 5:13 *Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.*

Mat 5:14 *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.*

Mat 5:15 *Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.*

Mat 5:16 *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

Mat 5:17 *Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*

- We can't think of Abraham's lack of faith here as an isolated event. God's promise to him is interconnected with his entire life. Abraham's lie in this situation could seriously effect the birth of the child he has been promised. And this isn't just any child. He is the one that is to continue the genealogy to Jesus. This of course didn't take God by surprise.

Gen 20:8 *So Abimelech rose early in the morning, called all his servants, and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were very much afraid.*

Gen 20:9 *And Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? How have I offended you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done."*

Gen 20:10 *Then Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you have in view, that you have done this thing?"*

Gen 20:11 *And Abraham said, "Because I thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will kill me on account of my wife.*

Gen 20:12 *But indeed she is truly my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.*

Gen 20:13 *And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her, 'This is your kindness that you*

should do for me: in every place, wherever we go, say of me, "He is my brother." ' ' "

- Abimelech heard from God and then passed on the word to his council, or his elders. Apparently he was very convincing. It is always good to seek council, even if you know you have heard from the Lord.

Pro 11:14 Where there is no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counselors there is safety.

Pro 15:22 Without counsel, plans go awry, But in the multitude of counselors they are established.

- In verses 9-13 Abimelech confronts Abraham.
- How many times have we felt that someone has done us wrong? Probably many times. We are to forgive them. But we are also to take the problem to them instead of going all over town about it. This can nip the problem in the bud. Running around to everyone in order to vent usually is done so that we feel someone else is on our side. You know what they say, misery loves company.

Mat 5:24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

- *verse 11 - Abraham claims that he told the lie because he felt that the fear of the Lord wasn't in Gerar. He misjudged or prejudged the people there.*

-

Joh 7:24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

verse 12 - I only told you a half lie. Half is less than a whole. Therefore a half-truth is a whole lie. Abraham tried to deceive Abimelech. Just be straight-forward with the truth.

Mat 5:37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

Verse 13 - Guys, we should never put our wives in a position like this. We are to protect them at all costs! We are to love them as Christ loves the Church. He gave everything for us, the church. He didn't come to put us in a bind! He came to break the yoke of bondage. Don't put her in a bind! Don't hide her away! I want folks to know who my wife is!

Gen 20:14 And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and womenservants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife.

Gen 20:15 And Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before thee: dwell where it pleaseth thee.

Gen 20:16 And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver: behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and with all other: thus she was reprov'd.

Gen 20:17 So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare children.

Gen 20:18 For the LORD had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife.

- Abraham came out of this cow-pile smelling like a rose. How many times has God blessed us in spite of us? That's what grace is, unmerited favor! Anytime He blesses us, He is blessing us in spite of us. God can intercede in our circumstances, but many times we don't ask until it's too late. Many times we don't ask because we know that we were doing something He wouldn't approve of anyhow. We are just like our children aren't we? WE are God's children. Just as we would run to get our child out of harm's way, we also let them learn

lessons when they get into certain situations. God does us the same way.

- In verse 16 Sarah gets rebuked for her part in the conspiracy. Abraham is given 1000 pieces of silver for her part. In essence she is told to buy a veil if her beauty is going to be a stumbling block.
- Ladies, I know y'all love to look pretty. Believe me, we guys appreciate it. But with that beauty also comes some responsibility. You cannot use your beauty as a stumbling block. If you cause guys to gawk, and thereby sin, you need to tone it down some.
- *Luk 12:48*
For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.

There is a way to be pretty and be classy at the same time. (As opposed to being “hoochie.”)

Verses 17, 18

Abraham now intercedes for Abimelech. As well he should because he is responsible, in a way for the curse or disease that befallen Abimelech's household. Now God allows him, that is Abraham to be a part of the cure, or the solution. That is our part here in this world. We are to be a part of the solution, by ministering to others and by intercessory prayer. It must have been humbling to pray for the guy you almost caused to die.

We don't like being put in that place of humility, but that is when and where God uses us the most.

And isn't that what we claim to we want as Christians?

Wrap-up:

- 1.** Don't lie!!
- 2.** Don't pre-judge!!

- 3.** Know that no matter what you have gotten yourself into God can bring you through it smelling like a rose. He's done it for Abraham several times already.