

Genesis

Lesson 25

And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned. Gen 21:8

In our last study we looked at the birth of Isaac. We noted how that his birth was the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham of 25 years before. So we note that this is something that they have been waiting 25 years to realize.

Imagine the joy in the camp at this feast. Abraham was the head of this group of hundreds, possibly thousands of people by now and he had called for a celebration because his son, born of Sarah, Isaac, had come to childhood from his infancy. The joy and the merriment of that festival was enormous.

Isn't that the way it is when God grants us great blessing? There is great joy in our hearts when we find ourselves so blessed of God. There may have been a time that God has done some great thing in your life and you were enjoying it greatly and then, notice verse 9.

And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. Gen 21:9

Here we have a bible example that we can be sure our sins will find us out. Isn't it strange that even in this joyful celebration of the blessing of God, something can happen to us in the to bring us crashing down again in the reality of our lives.

In our previous studies we looked at how Abraham had been weak in faith and sought children through Hagar, and this at the request of Sarah, his wife. We looked at how they had sought to gain, or obtain, in the flesh, something that only God could do. This was sin, just as it is for us to seek to work up blessings instead of waiting on God to do His work in His own time.

Now before us is Sarah, in a time of blessing and joy when suddenly she is reminded of sins of the past. She looks up from the celebration feast before her and sees the result of past sin in the child Ishmael. We have seen before that old sins are like old sores; if not dealt with properly they are apt to break out on you again.

Repentance is very important in the life of a child of God and it is often the first part of Christianity that is forgotten. No where have we read that Sarah was repentant of this sin. We have seen that she admitted, or confessed her wrongdoing...

And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee. Gen 16:5

...but not the slightest hint of repentance. Instead she was spiteful, resentful, even vengeful over her own wrong-doing. She even tried to put it off on Abraham in 16:5. That is not the proper way to deal with sin.

But she is reminded of her sin in the mockery of the child Ishmael in verse 9 before us. Her unrepented sin mocking her while enjoying the blessing of God. And what did it do? It robbed her of the present joy in her situation. Nor did she go to God with a broken heart in repentance but she proved the truth of the old saying that "Misery loves company." She shared her misery with her husband, and upset him.

Have you ever noticed that you can find yourself paying the price for some wrong and you are the last person you think to blame for it? The first thing that we do is claim that we are being attacked by the devil. He gets the blame for a lot of things that he has nothing at all to do with.

I know a man who sustained damage to the roof of his house in a severe storm. He suffered very minor damage while many others were left in dire straits. In an attempt to take unfair advantage of the insurance company he climbed up on his roof and nailed plastic over his house. Literally "nailed" the plastic down; thereby doing more damage himself than the storm did. "Be sure your sin will find you out." The insurance company did not give what he had applied for. This was clearly the result of his own sinful conduct but was he repentant? Of course not. He felt that he had been unfairly mistreated, though he knew that he had been dishonest all along. He suffered for his own folly, as most of us often do.

Abraham and Sarah has unjustly tried to work out what God had promised to do for them. Now their sin was staring them in the face.

The insurance company was willing to replace the storm damaged roof, but would not satisfy the man's own greed for a much more expensive roof than he had before, and it cost him. The insurance policy was just what he needed and was going to take care of it but he wanted more. We all get that way sometimes in our business transactions with the world. We are all guilty.

Look also at who suffered the most for the sins of Abraham and Sarah. We have studied before how that the innocent suffer for sin. We see this truth played out so often, and in many places, by many means.

Young children suffer abuse and neglect all around us. We see drunkards and drug addicts feeding their habits and desires while spouses and children starve or freeze. We see good people trying to make their way in this world by working hard and dealing justly who are victimized by thieves, vandals or gossip. Though they may have done nothing to deserve what they suffer, yet they are the victims of sin in the lives of others. There are refugees the world over who have lost all their worldly possessions for no wrong that they had done. They were simply between two who were at war. People starve in nation's that are under the judgment of God for the rejection of Christ. The innocent suffer for sin.

36 men died for Achan's sin, more than 50,000 died because a few peeked into "The Ark of God," the child of David's adulterous affair died. Hagar was a slave. Abraham and Sarah received her from Pharaoh when they went down into Egypt. She had no choice in the matter of Abraham's going in unto her in order to have children. And, of course, Ishmael had nothing to do with it at all. But they suffered for the sin of Abraham and Sarah.

Genesis 22:1

In our previous study we looked at the birth of Isaac and we looked at verses 1-20 briefly. In looking then at verses 22 to the end of the chapter we see a picture of a child of God's relationship with the world.

Notice verse 22... "God is with thee in all that thou doest." This is the thought of Abimelech. We often forget that the world is watching us even when we are not watching ourselves. The world sees us when we forget they are there. And amazingly enough, the world can tell the difference between a hypocrite and the real thing.

We are surrounded on all sides by this crowd who is saying, "I ain't 'sposed to judge nobody." But even the world has sense enough to use good judgment. The only ones that won't today are the superspirituals.

We see from the words of Abimelech that he could see God's blessings on the life of Abraham. This tells us some things...

- a) even the world knows there is a God though they may deny it and refuse to accept Him or His word.**
- b) the world knows that there is difference between us and them. These days it is the church that has forgotten that fact.**
- c) the world does not find the presence of those who are real to be undesirable. Notice, he did not ask Abraham to leave the land. He asked Abraham for justice. (remember that Abraham has already lied to him once about Sarah.)**
- d) Abimelech knew that God was with Abraham. God Himself had told him so. That same God will move on your behalf. And when God does move on your behalf, the world knows this. Abimelech knew that God was blessing Abraham and that as long as Abraham was in his land that he too would be blessed.**

Something else very much worth taking note of is the working relationship between God's people and the world. Notice verse 24, "And Abraham said, I will swear." He took an oath of honesty and kindness.

This was not an expectation from Abimelech, nor an acceptance by Abraham of a requirement for conformity. Abraham was a stranger in a strange land. A pilgrim. He was different. He would continue to be different but he would dwell in the land peaceably.

These days the church has lost its grip on this truth of basic bible doctrine. We are different, we think differently. Though in the world, we are not "of" the world. The world understands this, it is the church this day and time that does not. The church has dropped the ball these days and is hard to recognize in the world. It is no wonder that the world has lost its respect for the church.

Matthew Henry wrote that "Religion does not make men morose and unconversable; I am sure it ought not; We must not, under colour of shunning bad company, be sour to all company, and jealous of everybody. An honest mind does not startle at giving assurances: If Abraham say that he will be true to Abimelech, he is not afraid to swear it. An oath is for confirmation." We should be this way but not to the point of compromise. We are different and are to appear different.

Abraham shows us a picture of this honesty and kindness that he has sworn to Abimelech in his first transaction hereafter. Note verse 35. First order of business was reproof.

In living a life of honesty and kindness here in this world we must remind ourselves constantly that the kindest thing we can do is tell the truth. Reprove when we must.

This easy-believism society that we live in is neither kind, nor just. If you have just come out of a dark alley wounded and robbed, it would be cruel to smile and allow passersby to enter that same alley with those same dangers and robbers to suffer the same fate as you have. It would be wrong to allow anyone else to suffer this way without warning.

Religion today is teaching our youth to dress like the world, act like the world, talk like the world, in order to win the world. That is just the same as smiling and happily waving to the world and allowing them to go on in a life of darkness which you profess that God has delivered you from.

You can not bait a hook with the world in order to drag the world out of hell. If they are already in the world, just throwing more worldly things to them is going to keep them happy in the world.

We are to be honest and kind. And the kindest thing to do is don't give the world something that will keep them satisfied where they are. Let your life be a reproof. Don't give back ground to the devil, stand up and be what God would have you to be.

- 1. Abraham swore kindness and honesty**
- 2. was willing to work in his own life, "dugged a well"**
- 3. was willing to stand up for what he had, "water"**
- 4. was willing to pay the price to keep it**

Are you?