

The Known and The Unknown

Sunday Morning, April 2, 2017

Today, I want to speak on a topic that most of us would rather not think about. In fact, many churches don't even approach the subject, because it makes people uncomfortable. Even the cross, directly related to this topic has been removed from sanctuaries in many churches today. Do you know what topic I'm talking about? You may have guessed it, it's the subject of sin. Naturally, when we think of sins we've done in our lives, we think of them because we're aware of them. When we sin, we act contrary to the will and character of God. We oppose Him!

Opposition to God is sin, our actions can produce sin intentionally or unintentionally.
We can know we've sinned and we can sin unknowingly!

First, we're going to look at this in Genesis Chapter 20 and later we'll learn how to deal with this topic in the New Testament. So let's turn to

(Genesis 20: 1 – 2)

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

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

Abraham and Sarah journeyed South to the Sinai Peninsula and settled in Gerar. Abraham told the inhabitants of Canaan around Gerar that Sarah was his sister not his wife. This was an "action" of sin, it's what he did. It was a half-truth, Sarah was his half-sister, his father's daughter, but not his mother's daughter. This was a half-truth, because the whole truth was not revealed. There is a being who constantly tells half-truths, (i.e., twists the truth, gives a part of the truth to make his logic sound right) and that being is Satan. **(John 8:44)**

44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

When we tell half-truths, we take on a character trait of Satan who is the father of lies. Abraham told a half truth that resulted in evil, which allowed his wife Sarah to be taken to King Abimelech. The “intended” sin was not trusting God to save his life. If it was known that Sarah was his wife, then it wouldn’t have been unc customary to have Abraham killed, so Abimelech could just take Sarah to his harem.

The actions taken by Abraham for intentional reasons had revealed his lack of trust in God’s protective hand on him and Sarah. We can evaluate our actions and find that we’ve sinned, but when we intentionally sin, we take control for ourselves so we can best benefit us, rather than trusting God with each situation or need we have.

We must learn to trust God in everything and live His way.

This is an ongoing endeavor, because of our sinful nature. Let’s continue on in

(Genesis 20: 3 - 7)

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.”

4 But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, “Lord, will You slay a righteous nation also? 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.” 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. 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.”

Now Abimelech was a dead man, because of his sin, literally. God told Abimelech this in Verse 3. God revealed the truth to him. He showed him the sin. In verses 4 and 5 Abimelech expresses to God his innocence in the matter because of the half-truth he had been told. In response, God, acknowledges his reasons and then in verse 7, tells him what he must do to free himself from the consequence of his sin – that being death! If you read further, you will see in verses 8 – 14 that Abimelech makes things right with God and Abraham by returning Sarah and making an offering of gifts for the offense.

We can understand being accountable for our intentional and knowingly committed sins, but why does God hold us accountable for our unintentional or unknown sins? It seems unfair.

We must remember that God is Holy! No sin is acceptable and must face his righteous judgment.

(I Peter 1:16)

because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”

(II Corinthians 5:10)

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

The account of Abimelech and Abraham in Genesis Chapter 20 is not unlike how God deals with each of us.

As believers or Christians, whether our actions of sin are intentional and known, or they are unintentional and unknown, God’s Holy Spirit will convict us of our sin.

(John 16: 7 – 9)

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. 8 And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 of sin, because they do not believe in Me;

If we are not a believer or Christian, we are as dead men when we sin. Thankfully, as Christians we do not have to live in fear as Abimelech, because we are made alive.

(Ephesians 2:1)

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,

If we have been convicted of sin, we can claim God's marvelous promise in

(I John 1:9)

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And take notice of this...

Jesus is faithful to forgive us and Jesus cleanses us from all sins, intentional or known and unintentional or unknown!

Every time we apply the truth and practice of I John 1:9 in our lives, He wipes away the guilty stain of sin and completely makes us clean. He gives us a clear conscience and spiritually makes us fresh and anew in Him!

Invitation and Lord's Supper Service

(Matthew 26: 26 – 29)

The Bread:

26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."

The Cup:

27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you.

28 For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

29 But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."