

Dig-a-bit Month 4 Episode 4
The God of More: The God of More Forgiveness (Part1)
Cindy Colley

Forgiveness when I Don't Know

Hi! Dig-a-bit number four, chapter four, in our study of the God of More. I'm making rhymes today. We are talking about in our dig-a-bit— number 1: Is there a need for forgiveness? Even when the sin we commit is something of which we are unaware, or if we are informed about it later after the fact?" This is a good discussion question, and we may discuss it some more when we are in our video podcast.

And certainly if you have comments, send them to me or put them on the page because this is a difficult subject. Reread the account of Abimelech's illicit desire for Sarah in Genesis chapter 20, and read Deuteronomy 21. I want to talk about here how the God of more is able to forgive even sins of which we without knowledge, cannot specifically repent.

And I'm sure that in all of our lives there are things that we have done that we haven't taken note of, that we maybe didn't even know that were wrong at the time, and later found out that they were wrong, or maybe never even at all. So how does the God of more forgive those sins? Well, I want us to look at Abimelech for just a minute.

And notice some things about forgiveness that maybe you haven't noticed before. First of all, the sin the taking of Sarah in Genesis chapter 20 was based on Abraham's lie. So we have the guilt of sin first on Abraham telling a half truth about Sarah. I also thought that it was interesting that in Genesis chapter 20 down later in the chapter, let me turn there real quick.

I had never noticed this before. Maybe you have. But you know, we see Abraham committing this sin twice, once in Egypt and once here with Abimelech. And we see though, that in Genesis 20, this was a very much a premeditated sin on the part of Abraham, because it says, well, Abimelech in the chapter in verse 15 of chapter 20, Abimelech said, behold, my land is before you dwell where it pleases you.

And unto Sarah he said, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver. Behold, he is to thee, or it is for thee a covering of the eyes. And actually the ESV there says that it's a sign of your innocence in the eyes of all. So she hadn't committed. She hadn't had sex with Abimelech

They had not committed the sexual sin outside of marriage, but he had desired her and taken her. And Abraham admits something here that's— And so, you know, first off, we look at Abimelech and we say, well, he didn't he didn't intend to sin there. He didn't intend to take someone else's wife in that sense. He didn't intend to sin.

But Abraham did intend to lie, because look at verse 12. Yet indeed, she is my sister. She's the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother. And she became my wife. Well, he

wanted to lie. Why? Because he wanted to save his own skin. Verse 13. It came to pass when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her, this is the plan all along.

This is your kindness which you shall show to me. At every place where we shall come, say of me, he is my brother. How many places was this lie told? Well, we're not really given the account, the full account of that. Maybe just these two places, but maybe more, because he said, at every place where we go, you tell this lie.

So the greater premeditation sin lies on Abraham. And then we have Abimelech just desiring something that he thought he would be able to have. And that he didn't know he was violating the marriage of Abraham and Sarah. So the taking of Sarah was based on Abraham's lie. So Abraham's guilty here.

Number two. Know better, do better. Verse five. Didn't he say to me, she's my sister, and she even she herself said, he's my brother. In the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands, have I done this. And then God told him to restore the man, his wife and Abimelech did. He knew better and he did better.

And shouldn't that be all of our attitudes as we seek the forgiveness of the Almighty God. And then we notice, number three: God intervened in Abimelech's innocence. And God said to him in a dream verse six, 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 permit you to touch her.

God had something to do with the withholding of Sarah from Abimelech. It sets my mind to thinking, if we are seeking God, if we are attempting to please him, even in our ignorance, maybe of some of his commands, could he not, without miracles, providentially help us, keep us from sins that will destroy us later on if we are seeking him?

Well, I think certainly in his providence. Seek and ye shall find. Ask, and it shall be given unto you, I think, in the process, as Cornelius was in Acts 10, of seeking God, in crying out to him, I think that surely God is powerful enough to keep us from things that may destroy us if our hearts are seeking to do the right thing and studying the word toward doing the right thing.

Restoration then comes when we know better. Verse seven. Now therefore, restore the man, his wife. Repentance involves restoration whenever possible in every case. It means I'm going to give back what it is that I illicitly have. And it meant that in the case of Abimelech, even when he didn't know he had somebody else's wife, he had to restore her to Abraham.

And then I think we see the overriding importance of God's covenant in verse seven. Now therefore, restore the man as wife, for he's a prophet, and he will pray for you. Wait a minute. Abraham was the one who told the lie in the first place. And yet God said, he is my prophet and he will pray for you. The covenant is so important. Abraham, imperfect as he was, was in a covenant relationship with God. Are you? Are we in a covenant relationship with God?

And we know that that covenant in our day comes through the washing away of our sins in baptism. That's when we get into Christ. Romans 6:3-4 & Galatians 3:27. Are we in the covenant? Because that makes all the difference to God in his attitude towards us, even when we fall into sin.

Abraham misunderstood what the fear of God was and who was fearing God. In verse 11 Abraham said, that's why we tell the lie. And he says, Abraham said, because I thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place, and they will slay me for my wife's sake.

Did Abraham have the fear of God in his own heart at the time that he was telling the lie and getting them into this chaotic circumstance with Abimelech? He misunderstood who really feared God because when Abimelech learned better, he did better.

Now let's take just a minute and switch over to Deuteronomy chapter 21, which is, by the way, a very different circumstance. In Deuteronomy 21, they found somebody lying in the field. There's blood. He's been murdered, and they don't know who the murderer was. They don't know if the murderer was even an Israelite or someone from a foreign land, but they find a man in a field who has been murdered.

And in Deuteronomy 21, what were they supposed to do about that? In order to get rid of the blood guiltiness that they didn't know. They didn't even know who to account it to. And this is a different circumstance, albeit it has to do with forgiveness when we don't know what to do because we don't know who the guilty party is.

So if somebody be found slain verse one in the land which the Lord your God gives you to possess lying in the field, and it be not known who has slain him, then the elders and your judges shall come forth, and they shall measure to the cities which are round about him that is slain. Okay, we're going to put some guilt then the blood guiltiness on the cities that are around the person who was slain.

And it shall be that the city which is next to the slain man, even the elders of that city, have to take a heifer which is not been wrought with, worked with— and which has not drawn in the yoke. This is a young heifer, hasn't been really behind the plow, and the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer to a rough valley, which is neither cared nor sown, and strike off the heifer's neck there in the valley, and the priests, the sons of Levi, shall come near.

For them the Lord your God has chosen to minister to him, and to bless in the name of the Lord. And by their word shall every controversy and every stroke be tried. So we're going to get the priest involved, so that the blood guiltiness, and we don't know who to assign the blood guiltiness to, but it needs to be taken away. The priest is going to be involved in that.

Okay. We have a priest. We have a high priest, don't we? And all the elders of that city that are next to the slain man shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley, and they will answer and say, our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it.

We don't know who's guilty. Verse eight be merciful, oh Lord, and to your people Israel, whom you've redeemed and lay not innocent blood, and to your people of Israel's charge. But look at the next line, and the blood shall be forgiven them. So shall you put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you. When you shall do that which is right in the sight of the Lord.

The Israelites bore the guilt of blood in the field, and God gave them a way to atone for that blood in the field, even though they didn't know who put the dead man in the field, they didn't know who killed the dead man. They had to do something in order to receive forgiveness of that. So in Deuteronomy 21, the case is different and when we were reading in Genesis chapter 20, it's a man who was about to commit a sin and who had taken someone else's wife and really had committed a sin in that respect, and he didn't know that he was sinning.

And God made a way for him to be forgiven of that. In fact, God intervened ahead of time and made it where he didn't illicitly sexually take Abraham's wife. In this chapter, it's quite a different matter. Here it is—A sin has been committed, but we don't know who committed the sin, but it was committed in our territory, and God provides a way for us to be free of the blood guiltiness that comes with blood in the field.

I love both of these chapters. They're different scenarios, but both of them are saying something about God. He provides a way for forgiveness through his covenant, for his covenant people. And through today, the priest, just like it was in Deuteronomy chapter 21. I realized that these case scenarios are different in many key respects, but they say something about God's willingness to forgive even when his people are unaware of sin or unaware of the bearer of the guilt of sin.

Let's look at numbers really quick before we finish up here. Let's look at numbers, chapter 35. Numbers chapter 35. And let's read about this guiltiness in the field. Numbers 35.

Let's look at verse 33. So you shall not pollute the land where you are. For blood defiles the land, and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed thereon, but by the blood of him that shed it. God had made a law here, that the person who sheds the blood of another man, that blood is required in order for the land to not be polluted.

Well, we have that kind of blood mentioned in Deuteronomy chapter 21. We have somebody in the field who's dead and blood has been shed, and so the land is polluted. And God, there, when we are ignorant, when we don't know what to do to cleanse ourselves. The Israelites didn't know what to do to cleanse themselves. God spelled it out for them and it involved blood and it involved the priest.

I'm just going to say today, when we are guilty of sin and we don't know what to do about it because we are powerless, maybe in different ways, but we are powerless against the devil without Christ. He gave us a priest, he gave us blood, and he gave us forgiveness, just as he did in Deuteronomy chapter 21. All right, I hope you have a good day, and I hope this was helpful in some way. Thanks.