

Introduction

A few years ago a worship leader in Albuquerque shared the disturbing news with me that one of his daughters had been sexually assaulted. The horrifying experience brought lots of pain and heartache to the whole family. The daughter started receiving counseling to help work through the terrifying experience. Unfortunately, this is not that uncommon. Here are some statistics about rape and sexual assault. (<https://www.rainn.org/>)

- 1 out of every 6 American women has been the victim of an attempted or completed rape in her lifetime (14.8% completed, 2.8% attempted).
- From 2009-2013, Child Protective Services agencies substantiated, or found strong evidence to indicate that, 63,000 children a year were victims of sexual abuse.
- A majority of child victims are 12-17. Of victims under the age of 18: 34% of victims of sexual assault and rape are under age 12, and 66% of victims of sexual assault and rape are age 12-17.

Sexual assault is not the only sexual crime that we are having to deal with. Sex trafficking is a major problem around the world. I was reminded this week about sex trafficking by a news article about the National Prayer Breakfast, which was held on Thursday, February 07, 2019. Gary Haugen, from International Justice Mission, spoke to the audience. He said, "Modern slavery is as vast and as brutal as it has ever been." Look at these statistics.

- It is estimated that there are more than 40 million human slaves around the world.
- 81% of trafficking victims are trafficked for sexual purposes.
- 75% of the slaves are women.
- It estimated that sex trafficking revenue is about \$39.9 million in Denver, Colorado, and \$290 million in Atlanta, Georgia.

President Trump was one of the attendees and he encouraged them, saying they were doing God's work. He told them that ICE was doing everything they could to help. Just a few days earlier, the FBI arrested 169 people and rescued 18 victims at the Super Bowl, which is one of the largest hubs for human trafficking.

What does this have to do with our text today? We are in Genesis 34 and one of Jacob's children is sexually assaulted. Dinah, the daughter of Leah, was sexually violated by Shechem, the son of Hamor. By the way, the town is named Shechem. We do not know if it was named after this young man, or whether he was named after a grandfather or relative that built the town. He was a prominent figure and there are not any easy solutions or fixes. These crimes affect the victims for many years, if not an entire life. Other family members are also impacted. This morning, I am going to try to give some practical applications from a very difficult passage of Scripture.

(Gen 34:1-4) "Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to visit the daughters of the land. {2} When Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the land, saw her, he took her and lay with her by force. {3} He was deeply attracted to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the girl and spoke tenderly to her. {4} So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Get me this young girl for a wife."

What a tragic and devastating event! I cannot even fathom the distress, shock, hurt, anger, and flood of other emotions that Dinah, Jacob, and their whole family went through when this sexual assault takes place. Look at some of the after effects from a sexual assault. These statistics come from an organization called RAINN, which stands for Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network. It is the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization. (www.rainn.com)

- 94% of women who are raped experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) during the two weeks following the rape.
- 30% of women report symptoms of PTSD 9 months after the rape.
- 33% of women who are raped contemplate suicide.
- 13% of women who are raped attempt suicide.
- Approximately 70% of rape or sexual assault victims experience moderate to severe distress, a larger percentage than for any other violent crime.
- People who have been sexually assaulted are more likely to use drugs than the general public.
- 3.4 times more likely to use marijuana
- 6 times more likely to use cocaine
- 10 times more likely to use other major drugs
- 38% of victims of sexual violence experience work or school problems, which can include significant problems with a boss, coworker, or peer.
- 37% experience family/friend problems, including getting into arguments more frequently than before, not feeling able to trust their family/friends, or not feeling as close to them as before the crime.
- Sexual violence also affects victims' relationships with their family, friends, and co-workers.

It is hard to even know the pain and anguish that Dinah and her family experienced at this horrific crime. Jacob had eleven sons and one daughter at this time. This was the only girl and she was pretty special to everyone. Dinah was Leah's seventh child. She had six boys and then Dinah, all within the first seven years of her marriage to Jacob. Jacob served Laban for six more years before they headed towards his home land. That means that Dinah was about seven when they moved. Joseph and Dinah were born the same year, so he was also seven when they moved. He was seventeen when his brothers sold him as a slave. We don't have an exact time period for how old Dinah was but we do have a ten year window between 7 and 17.

We also have a clue by the Hebrew word that is used for girl, na'ara (Strong's H5291). It is the feminine of na'ar (Strong's 5287). Strong's says that na'ar refers to a boy from the age of infancy to adolescence. It also says a girl of similar latitude in age. Adolescence is considered between the ages of thirteen and nineteen, but can start as early as nine. So, Dinah is not yet considered an adolescent, so this narrows the possible range to between seven and thirteen. They had lived at Succoth for a season and then moved to Shechem. They had been there for a while so that narrows the window down even more. Scholars think she was around twelve or thirteen years old and that is probably correct.

I will talk a little bit more about the perpetrator of this crime next week. Shechem is the son of Hamor the Hivite. He was the prince of the land, so he is well known, well respected, and probably well to do. He is a son of privilege, and probably has got away with things all his life. He committed a horrible crime in any culture. In fact, everything in this chapter is horrible.

But this morning, I want to focus on prevention. The focus of most organizations that deal with rape and sex trafficking victims is prevention. They want people to recognize the most common ways that it occurs, and what steps to take to prevent something like this from happening. The old adage that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure is certainly true in this subject matter.

1. Choose Friends Carefully

Dinah went out to visit the daughters of the land. She went to hang out with the world. These were not people in a relationship with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. These were Canaanites who worshiped foreign gods and idols. These were the people that God told Abraham not to allow his son Isaac to marry. In Genesis 24:3-4, Abraham charged his servant with finding a wife for Isaac. Listen to what he said. *“And I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live, but you will go to my country and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son Isaac.”*

In Genesis 28:1-2, Isaac charged Jacob with the same things. He said, *“You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and from there take to yourself a wife from the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.”* The Jews were not to marry these Canaanites. They were to be separate from them. God did not want them to be led astray to worship foreign gods, and He did not want them living the way the world lives. We have different standards and morals.

Christians are not to dress like the world. The world has no dress code. They want to seduce and reveal flesh. God tells us to dress modestly. The world teaches that sex is okay and they even teach how to have safe sex in elementary school. God tells us in His Word that fornication is wrong, and we are to flee sexual immorality. God's ways and the ways of the world are vastly different.

A few years ago a young Christian lady was dating a non-believer. I told her that I did not believe in date evangelism. The problem is that you can get emotionally attached and then your emotions get involved. The young man she was dating liked to smoke dope. In fact, his whole family would smoke dope together. The young man and his family had different moral values. He wanted premarital sex and he could not understand why this young woman was resisting. The young lady was in a moral battle that she should never have been in. Fortunately, this young woman broke up with the young man. Eventually she met a godly man and she is now happily married. We need to be careful about the friends that we keep. Dinah may have been surrounded by eleven brothers and no sisters, but it was not wise to go see and get involved with the daughters of the land.

God wants us to be the light of the world. The world is living in darkness, and we are the light of the world. God does not take us out of the world, because He wants us to preach the gospel to the world. God loves the world, but He does not love the ways of the world. God hates sin, but loves the sinners. God wants us to reach out to the world, but not to participate in their deeds of darkness.

Dinah has gone into the Canaanite town to meet the Canaanite girls. We have to be very careful about going into the world. Our hearts have to be pure and we need to have the right motives.

Dinah went out to visit or see. The Hebrew word is *raah*, which means to see. She wants to check them out. She wants to meet some new friends. We have to be very careful about our friends. Solomon told us that the companion of fools suffers harm (Pr 13:20). Why would anyone want to look for a relationship that is going to bring us harm? The Apostle Paul told us not to be mocked, that bad company corrupts good morals (1 Cor 15:33). Why would any of us go looking for a relationship that is going to corrupt our morals. We need to be extremely careful about going and hanging out with the world. Our good morals can be corrupted, and we could suffer harm. God tells us in Proverbs 2 that we need to seek His wisdom so that we can avoid the paths of the wicked and in verse 20 He gives the benefit of seeking His wisdom: so that we *“will walk in the way of good men, and keep to the paths of the righteous.”* We need to be very careful about the friends that we keep.

Let me make a quick plug of the types of relationships that we need to be looking for. In Hebrews 10:24-25, God tells us to *“consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, nor forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as is the habit of some.”* We need to look for and pursue relationships that are going to encourage us to follow God, and that will stimulate us to love and good deeds. Where is the best place to look for these relationships? In church. The church is to be a place of encouragement. The church is to be the place where people gather to stimulate one another to love and good deeds. You won't find this when you go see the daughters of the land.

If you go into a store and you are with someone who steals something, you can be arrested and jailed as an accomplice. You are guilty by association. The companions of fools suffer harm. When I was about three years old, I was playing with some boys in the neighborhood. One of them took some matches from home and set the woods on fire behind our house. I didn't set the woods on fire, but I was with the boys that did. I got a whipping for something that I didn't do. But, the whipping was appropriate. I was guilty by association. We have to be very careful about the friends that we keep.

Did you know that “Seven out of 10 sexual assaults are committed by someone who knows the victim.” Dinah had just met the girls in Shechem. It was not a big place. Everybody knew who Shechem was. He was not some stranger. He was a well-known person who was the prince of the town. Just because we know someone does not mean that we really know that person. One of the cautions that RAINN gives is to get to know people better before trusting them. RAINN stands for Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, and it is the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization. They tell parents to get more involved with your children's friends. Get to know them. Get to know your babysitter before entrusting them with your children. We have to be very careful about the people we are with.

2. Don't Go Alone

We also need to be wise about going into the Canaanite territory. It appears that Dinah went out alone. The Apostle Peter wrote that we need to be of sober spirit and be on the alert. He said that our adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Lions and wolves go after the animals that get separated from the flock. They go after the ones that are by themselves. There is safety in numbers. Experts tell us that one of the things to do is go out in pairs or in groups. If Dinah had been escorted by one of her brothers, she would never have been assaulted by Shechem.

(1 Pet 5:8) “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

The experts say to use the buddy system. Watch out for one another. They also say to have some code words so that if they hear you say a certain word or phrase, they will immediately get help or come help you. The perpetrator won't recognize the alarm call, but your friends will.

3. Avoid Drugs and Alcohol

The Bible does not prohibit the use of alcohol. However, there are lots of warnings about alcohol. The secular sites that help prevent sexual assault tell people to watch how much alcohol you drink, and to never drink anything that you have not carefully guarded. Alcohol is one of the most abused drugs. In many sexual assaults drugs are involved. In cases like Bill Cosby, he put drugs into the drinks that the ladies had, and then he assaulted them. But, alcohol and sexual assaults have been linked together for thousands of years. In Habakkuk 2:15, God rebukes His people for this very practice. *“Woe to you who make your neighbors drink, who mix in your venom even to make them drunk so as to look on their nakedness!”* Alcohol is a very dangerous drug, and I encourage young people to abstain from it.

As a prison chaplain, I had to deal with people whose lives had been devastated by consequences of alcohol and other drugs. Ninety-five percent of people incarcerated are there for drug or alcohol related charges. I encourage young people to abstain. If you do drink, follow the advice of the experts and limit the amount that you drink.

4. Be Prudent (Avoid Risky Places and Compromising Situations)

In Proverbs 5 and 7, Solomon warns young men not avoid the paths of an adulteress. In Proverbs 2, he tells us that wisdom will help us stay clear of the path of the wicked and keep to the paths of the righteous. We need to watch where we go. We need to be prudent and avoid risky places and compromising situations.

In addition to going in groups, the experts say to go in well-lit places. Avoid places that are high risk. We have a training center in Odessa, Texas. I go there about once a month to teach a class. I have been told that Odessa has the highest crime rate in Texas. I have never had a problem or seen much going on there. I asked some locals about the crime. They said that most of the crime happens at night, particularly around the night clubs. Well, I go to bed at our apartment and sleep at night. I usually get up between three and four in the morning, so I am not out at night when the crime happens, and I am not at the places where crimes occur. I go to the office, grocery store, restaurant, and to the apartment. I am never in a place that is risky, dangerous, or where I feel endangered.

Even though we should avoid risky places, the experts can tell you the statistics of where these crimes take place. Surprisingly, 55% of them take place near home. So, be careful, even around familiar places in your neighborhood. Parking garages are dangerous places, so don't go into a parking garage by yourself. Get friends to walk you to your car. We must be prudent. Peter said to be on the alert, your adversary, the devil is prowling, seeking someone to devour. We must be alert and prudent at all times.

The experts tell us to be aware of warning signs. Churches today have found that multiple check points are important. They have security people in the parking lot watching for any unusual or suspicious looking people. They make lots of contacts. If anyone looks suspicious, they will radio another security person to make contact with the person again. These security people are trained to know what to look for.

Since about 70% of sexual assaults take place with people that you know, learning to recognize warning signs is important. When someone begins to cut off friends and become more isolated, that is a danger sign. When someone stops participating in normal activities, that is a warning sign. When someone is controlling, that is a danger sign.

5. Stay Under God's Protection

James gives us a key to being safe. He said in James 4:7, "*Submit to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*" Submitting to God is very important, and I believe that many Christians do not understand what this means. Let me give you a quick run-down on what it means to be submitted to God.

Children need to be properly submitted to their parents. They are to obey their parents, which is a sign of submission (Eph 6:1-3). In a large percent of cases of sexual assault, the children had distanced themselves or even run away from home. Parents are part of the protection plan God has for children and teenagers. As children go into the teen years, they get really smart and think they know more than their old parents. The truth is that they really don't know as much as they think they do, and their parents can provide wise guidance in their lives. When teenagers get to be about twenty-five to thirty, they start realizing that their parents were a lot wiser than they gave them credit for.

Paul wrote in Ephesians 6:1-3 that children were to obey their parents for this is the first commandment with a promise. What were the promises? The first was that it would go well for you. I think safety is part of going well. When you get out from their protection, you are statistically far more vulnerable to sexual assault.

I don't know how Dinah's relationship was with her parents, and in particular Jacob. But, I do know that she went to visit the daughters of the land, and I don't think that Jacob would have been in agreement with that. If she had asked her parents for their input and counsel, I don't think she would have been visiting the Canaanite girls. I believe her visit was indicative of her seeking her own ways and own friends, and being independent from her parents. I believe she got out from under their authority. If you are not submitted to your parents, then you are not submitted to God. The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services reports, "*One in three teens will be recruited by a pimp within 48 to 72 hours of running away from home.*" Staying at home under the protection of your parents is extremely important. Parents and teens need to work through the issues that would cause the youths to run away. Unfortunately, in many cases it is drug, alcohol and abuse at home that makes children leave home.

Right before James tells us to submit to God, he tells us in James 4:4, "*You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*" I believe that Dinah was making friends with the world, and therefore was making herself an enemy of God. I believe she was out from under God's protection. That is a dangerous place to be.

Being submitted to God also means being submitted to spiritual authorities. In 1 Peter 5:5, a parallel passage, Peter says, *“You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.”* Being submitted to God means that we are submitted to the elders or pastors of the church. This same concept is shared in Hebrews 13:17, where we are told, *“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.”* Notice that the leaders of the church keep watch over your souls. They are the umbrella over your lives. They are part of the protection plan God has for all of us.

There are millions of Christians that are not in church today. They don't understand the importance of being in a body. They don't understand the importance of being submitted to a pastor in a local church. They think it is okay to not be part of a body. They need to be connected to a body, and they need to be submitted to God through one of His representatives, a pastor.

Many people today believe that if you are a Christian, you are automatically part of the body of Christ and there is no need for local membership. That is partially true. When you receive Christ, you become a member of the body of Christ. However, that does not make you part of the local body of Christ. In Hebrews 13:17, we are commanded to obey and submit to our leaders as those who give account for you. If you are not part of a local body, which leader are you submitted to and who are you obeying? If you are not part of a local body, who is watching over you and giving account to God? In God's government, He delegates authority, and He has delegated authority to the leaders or pastors of local churches. Christians need to be joined to a local body and submitted to the leadership of that church. It is part of God's protection for the flock.

(Heb 13:17) *“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.”*

Notice what Paul said to the Ephesian elders while meeting with them at Miletus. In Acts 20:28, he said, *“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock...{31} therefore be on the alert...”* Peter talks about lions seeking to devour the flock. Paul talks about savage wolves that won't spare the flock. It is the job of the shepherds to oversee, watch over, and to protect the flock. Those that are not under the protection of God's appointed shepherds are open to attack.

This message is about things that we can do to protect ourselves and prevent assaults. I don't want to focus on tithes, but I will mention it. Tithing and submission go hand in hand. Jacob said that since God was going to watch over him and protect him, he was going to make God his God. Then Jacob said he was going to give 10% of everything. I usually focus on the honoring aspect of our giving. We give to honor God. I don't focus on giving so that we can get something. But, the truth is when we are submitted to God, we gain a whole lot, including protection. In Malachi 3, God rebukes Israel for not honoring Him with their whole tithes. Then, He encourages them to start tithing, and He promises to pour out a blessing and to **REBUKE THE DEVOURER**. When we submit to God, we come under His protection.

(Mal 3:8-12) 'Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed Thee?' In tithes and offerings. {9} "You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you! {10} "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows. {11} "Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it may not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes," says the LORD of hosts.

I want to close with one more thought: prayer. Notice that Paul told the overseers of the flock to watch over the flock. Watching over the flock implies actually watching over them, but it also implies prayer. In Matthew 26, Jesus is praying. He asks the disciples to pray with Him, but every time He comes to them they are sleeping. In Matthew 26:40 He *"found the sleeping and said to Peter, 'So you me could not keep watch with Me for one hour? Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.'"* In Matthew 6:13, Jesus is teaching the disciples how to pray. In verse 13 He said, *"Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil."* God encourages us to pray for protection. I believe that mothers and fathers should be praying for themselves and for their children. It is not just the pastors' responsibility. I believe that our youth need to learn to pray for protection. We are coming to a time in church history where things are going to get tougher. The church is going to have to pray like never before.

Conclusion and Applications

This morning, we have looked at the tragic thing that has happened to Jacob and his family. Our desire is to glean what we can from this horrific event. God says that He works all things together for our good. We want to learn to do the same thing. We want to take something horrific and make something profitable out of it. The lives of our young ones are valuable. They are precious gifts from God, and we want to do everything that we can to protect them. So, we spent some time looking at preventions this morning.

Perhaps there were some things shared this morning that were applicable to you in your life. Perhaps, you have not in a local church, and God has convicted you of your need to be in a local body. We would love to talk to you about that.

Perhaps there were some other things that God has spoken to you about and you would like for us to pray with you. After the service, we would be happy to pray with you.

We are going to share the Lord's Supper right now. Karen is going to be leading us this morning in Communion.

Introduction (Gen 34:1-4)

<https://www.rainn.org/>

- 1. Choose Friends Carefully** (Gen 24:3-4, 28:1-2, Pr 13:20, 1 Cor 15:33, Pr 2:20, Heb 10:24-25)

- 2. Don't Go Alone** (1 Pet 5:8)

- 3. Avoid Drugs And Alcohol** (Hab 2:15)

- 4. Be Prudent (Avoid Risky Places and Compromising Situations)** (Pr 2, 5, 7)

- 5. Stay Under God's Protection** (James 4:4-7, Eph 6:1-3, 1 Pet 5:5, Heb 13:17, Acts 20:28, Mal 3:8-12, Matt 26:40, 6:13)

Conclusion and Applications