

# Frightening the Faithful

Genesis 20

# How Do We Handle It When Our Heroes Become Hounds?

- Pretend it's okay?
- Accept it as inevitable for public figures?
- Become disillusioned?
- Turn cynical?
- Reject all the good they did and turn our backs on them?

# How Do We Handle It When Our Heroes Become Hounds?

- Honesty requires that we acknowledge that we fall in the same manner
- Righteousness requires that we do something about it when we fall
- Humility requires that we avoid being judgmental toward others who have fallen

# Sometimes The Faithful Are Fearful

- The Bible says “Do not fear” 51 times
  - Isa. 35:3-4 - “Strengthen the weak hands, And make firm the feeble knees. 4 Say to those who are fearful-hearted, Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; He will come and save you.”
  - Matt. 10:28 - “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”
  - Rev. 2:10 - “Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

# Sometimes The Faithful Are Fearful

- Faith is a process; it does not come all at once.
- Even heroes of faith in the Bible had to grow and occasionally suffered setbacks

# Faithfulness Does Not Imply Perfection

- The Bible records the failures of its noble characters
- Abraham, “the friend of God” and “the father of the faithful”
  - James 2:23 - “And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. And he was called the friend of God.”
  - Rom. 4:16 - “Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all”
- Was shamed and eclipsed by a pagan king - Gen. 20

# Faithfulness Does Not Imply Perfection

- Even the righteous who had witnessed great miracles by God fell into fear
- Noah
  - Gen. 9:20-23 - “And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. 21 Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent. 22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. 23 But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness.”

# Faithfulness Does Not Imply Perfection

- Moses - Num. 20:7-13
- David - 2Sam. 11
- Peter - Matt. 26:69-75
- Abraham did it more than once - Gen. 12:11-20



# Faithfulness Demands Repentance

- Abimelech would have died had Abraham remained silent
  - Gen. 20:3, 11 - “3But 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... 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.”

# Faithfulness Demands Repentance

- A casual or resentful admission of sin is not the same as a broken-hearted confession
  - Psalm 51:17 - “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart-These, O God, You will not despise.”
  - Psalm 34:18 - “The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit.”
- The faithful have an obligation to the world to overcome their fears and repair the damage they have done

# Faithfulness Demands Repentance

- What harm had Abraham done?
  - His character: Abraham stopped asking what was right and asked what was safe.
  - His honor: How can others trust him if he is a known liar?
  - His life's purpose: He was sent to bless people, but instead put lives at risk
  - His heritage: Isaac followed in his father's footsteps - Gen. 26:7-11

# Faithfulness Demands Repentance

- The influence of our sins persists in the lives of others long after we are gone.
- If the heroes of faith had known that their sins would be displayed and remembered forever, would they have chosen differently?
- Would you?