

## Sin will be Revealed

Genesis 20: 1-18

Although Abraham was the friend of God, he was just a man. He struggled with the same insecurities and doubts that we all do. There were times when he was strong and courageous in faith, and at other times he was doubtful and uncertain. Often when faced with uncertainty, Abraham responded in accordance to the flesh instead of by faith. Through it all God remained faithful. He had made a promise to provide a son, and Abraham's failures would not derail or limit the promises of God.

We can identify with Abraham's tendencies. At times we are strong in faith, and yet at others we bow to our fears and the uncertainty of life. The Bible is filled with precious promises for our lives and our future, but we often focus on the difficulties rather than the promises. Like His dealings with Abraham, the promises of God remain steadfast and sure, even when we fail to respond as we should, doubting God's care and ability.

Abraham learned through his failures. While God never abandoned him, Abraham was never able to hide his sin and doubt. The same is true for us as well. We tend to miss the mark at times, even hoping to keep our failures hidden. Left unconfessed, God will bring them to the light. As He does, we too must seek to learn from past mistakes to avoid repeating them in the future. As we discuss the [certainties](#) revealed in our text, I want to preach on the thought: [Sin will be Revealed](#).

**I. The Character of Abraham's Sin** (1-2) – [And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar.](#) <sup>[2]</sup> [And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, \*\*She is my sister\*\*: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.](#) These verses reveal the nature of this particular sin within Abraham's life. Consider:

**A. The Repetition** – This is not the first time Abraham has made such a decision. We studied of his journey into Egypt several years prior. There he made the decision to leave the land to which God had led him, desiring to go into Egypt. Fearing for his life if anyone knew Sarah was his wife, they decided to tell everyone she was his sister. That trip had brought disgrace and unknown difficulty to the family, and yet Abraham had not learned from his prior mistake. Once again he decided to tell the same lie instead of trusting God and following Him.

- We may tend to be critical of Abraham's decision and deceit, but we are just as guilty at times. No doubt we all have some sin within our lives that we struggle with, one that we find

ourselves repeating again and again. Like Abraham, we have dealt with its consequences in the past, and yet we continue to engage in that sin.

**B. The Rationalization** (2) – Abraham had told this lie so often that he no longer viewed it as being deceptive. He and Sarah had accepted it as a normal way of life. He will admit to king Abimelech that they had made a pact to tell this lie whenever they were in a strange land, [Vvs.11-12](#). Unfortunately Abraham had become so accustomed to telling this lie that it had become second-nature to him and he thought nothing of it.

- The enemy continues to work in our hearts and minds in much the same way. He wants us to view our sin as something that is acceptable due to particular circumstances. We get to the place where we seek to justify and rationalize our actions. “It isn’t a lie if I prevent someone from being hurt in the process.” “No one will ever know, so what will it hurt if I indulge just a little.” Preachers and pastors will even “bend the truth” in order to make their ministries more effective, or tell of experiences that happened to others while claiming them as their own if they think it would advance their cause. Sin is sin, regardless of the package it is delivered in. We must never seek to justify or rationalize our sin!

**C. The Ramifications** (2) – Abraham and Sarah had agreed to tell the lie that she was his sister, but they failed to consider the implications it would have for others. In both cases, innocent people became involved through their deception, having to face unwanted consequences.

- I have said many times – we do not sin in a bubble. Our sin rarely affects us alone. Most of the time our sin will end up involving and hurting other people. Many times those affected by our sin are totally innocent and yet they too are forced to deal with the consequences.

**II. The Consequences of Abraham’s Sin** (3-8) – Here we discover the consequences of the lie Abraham and Sarah agreed to tell. Their sin affected not only them, but others. Notice:

**A. The Obscurity** – While it could be argued that Abraham had not told a complete lie, but failed to reveal all the truth, his deception affected an innocent man. Sarah could have legally been considered his sister, but he failed to reveal that she was also his wife. Had Abraham told the whole truth, not having been deceptive, king Abimelech would never have taken Sarah unto himself. An innocent man would have to deal with the consequences of Abraham’s deception. The failure to reveal the truth would cause Abimelech to be in trouble with God.

- Failure to be honest with ourselves and others can have devastating effects. We have a tendency to share parts of the truth without revealing the whole truth. How often have we heard it said, “Well I didn’t exactly tell a lie; I just didn’t tell the whole truth.” When we seek to be deceptive through withholding part or all of the truth, we have sinned. More often than not, there will be consequences for such a decision.

**B. The Reality (3-8)** – The lie Abraham told put Sarah in a dangerous and difficult situation. God had a plan for her to bring forth the promised Son. This was certainly no place for her to be at any time, especially as God was about to fulfill His promise.

- It also placed Abimelech in danger of divine judgment. God came to him in a dream and declared he was but a dead man. He stood dangerously close to the wrath of God. While the Lord prevented Abimelech from compromising the promise of Isaac, this whole situation was displeasing to God. Abimelech was commanded to restore her, untouched to Abraham, or face the wrath of God upon himself and his entire family.
- No doubt we would be less eager to engage in sin if we could see the results of it as clearly as Abimelech did. We know that when sin is finished, it always results in death. Apart from salvation in Christ, one will face eternal death. Even for the believer, this passage reveals that God takes sin seriously. He is righteous and will not condone sin in our lives. If we refuse the chastening of the Spirit, we can expect the Lord to deal with us according to our sin.

**C. The Anxiety (8)** – *Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears: and the men were sore afraid.* Abimelech immediately revealed the deception they had encountered and it caused fear among his servants. Like the trip into Egypt, Abraham again lost credibility with his neighbors as his integrity was called into question. He had an opportunity to be a witness for the true and living God, but these would remember him as a man who lied to them and could have brought the judgment of God upon them.

- Our testimony before others is one of the most precious possessions we have. It takes a lifetime to build a solid testimony, but it can be destroyed in a moment of transgression. Once we have lost the confidence of others, our ability to reach them for the Lord is compromised, and we may never have the opportunity to regain it. We cannot allow the temptation to sin tarnish our reputation and testimony. Guard it and keep it pure!

**III. The Confrontation about Abraham’s Sin (9-18)** – Finally we see that Abimelech confronted Abraham about his lie regarding Sarah. Consider:

**A. The Displeasure** (9-10) – Abimelech was not pleased with Abraham. He felt as if this transgression was unfair and unwarranted. There was no reason Abraham should have lied. His deception could not be justified.

- We cannot expect the Lord or anyone else to be pleased with our sin and deception. In fact, we might as well expect to be confronted with it eventually. We may never be confronted by someone else, but I assure you the Lord will confront sin in our lives. He is never pleased with sin and rebellion, especially in the lives of believers.

**B. The Disgrace** (11-13) – Abraham had no choice but to admit his sin. He felt as if he had entered a land inhabited by godless people and became afraid. Again it appears that Abraham tried to justify his actions, but it clearly brought disgrace to him. His image was tarnished with Abimelech and his servants.

- We need to be mindful of the disgrace associated with sin. These men may have forgiven Abraham, but I doubt they ever forgot his deception. Our actions reflect upon the Lord and His church. When we allow sin to enter our lives, and that sin becomes public, it always results in disgrace and reproach upon us, the Lord, and the church. We need to guard against sin at all costs. I never want to be a reproach on my Lord or His church!

**C. The Discretion** (14-18) – The closing verses reveal the sovereignty of God and integrity of Abimelech. God would preserve His promise of a son to Abraham, providing the way for Christ to come. Sin affects the world in which we live, but God's sovereign plan will be fulfilled. Abimelech offered gifts unto Abraham and Abraham prayed for healing for the people. Although Abraham had sinned, God provided for him. This does not imply that God rewarded Abraham's disobedience, but that He intended to keep His promise to Abraham.

- Actually our text closes with hope. Abraham had failed again, but his failure was not final. God had chosen Abraham, and His faithfulness to Abraham was not based on the actions of Abraham. God will never encourage or condone sin, but those in Christ as secure in Him. He will forgive our sin and restore our fellowship if we come to Him with a repentant heart. I am thankful His faithfulness is not dependent upon my faithfulness to Him!

**Conclusion:** I am certain we can all identify with this passage. We all have failed and missed the mark. Are there needs in your life that you need to confess before the Lord? Maybe you have not been completely honest with someone and need to make that right. You may have yet to respond to the Lord's gracious offer of salvation. Whatever the need, respond to the leading of the Spirit.