

A Good Opportunity

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Date: 06 May 2024

Preacher: Pastor Jared Bromka

[0 : 00] A Pastor's Reflections, A Good Opportunity. Genesis 34, 28. They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their donkeys, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field.

Proverbs 18, 17. He that is first in his own cause seems just, but his neighbor comes and searches him. Romans 14, 13. Let us not therefore judge one another any longer, but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

Simeon and Levi, the sons of Jacob, have just committed a great evil upon the people of Shechem. In retaliation to the rape of their sister Dinah, these two young men have embarked on a premeditated killing spree and murdered the entire male population of the city. When the dust settles, not one adult male is left alive. In the moments and days following this atrocity, an interesting opportunity now presents itself to not only Simeon and Levi, but all of the sons of Jacob. The city of Shechem is now defenseless and vulnerable. Not only women and children, but all of the goods and livestock of Shechem are now ripe for the plundering of any who would stretch out their hand to it. What should the sons of Jacob do? Do they leave these grief-stricken women and children to the mercy of the surrounding nations? These hot-headed young men have created quite a predicament for themselves and quite an opportunity. Maybe this is a way that they can help these people and also prosper themselves. However, just because an opportunity presents itself does not mean it is wisdom to partake of it. Simeon and Levi had an opportunity presented to them whereby they felt they could deal with the sin committed against their sister.

However, that opportunity was only a further occasion for sin. You see, the problem with good opportunities is that they always look good. As we pursue opportunities for the sake of the opportunity, we can often find ourselves spiraling into consequences that we had never intended. Simeon and Levi had taken the opportunity presented to them and avenged their sister. But now, not only was their sister a widow who would need their care, but so was the entire population of Shechem.

[2 : 51] Now what? Galatians 6.10 As we therefore have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

The opportunities that God presents are never to be used for selfish desires. They are never to be used to take advantage of someone. And they are never meant for me to take matters into my own hands.

Romans 14.13 tells us not to place an occasion to fall in our brother's way. Literally, we are not to trip people up. As we examine our lives, let's be careful that the good opportunities presented to us are not at the expense of another.

Let's make sure that we not only get some good outside input, but also some inside input as well. John 14.17 Father, forgive me for the times I have taken what appeared to be a good opportunity into my own hands and have inadvertently caused harm in another.

Let me find grace in your eyes for my past failures and my future decisions. Surround me with the good counsel of your people, your word, and the presence of your Holy Spirit.

[4 : 20] Amen.