

Ministry of Grace

Lesson 10 – This Schemer is a Prophet

Genesis 20:1-18

¹From there Abraham journeyed toward the territory of the Negeb and lived between Kadesh and Shur; and he sojourned in Gerar. ²And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. ³But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, "Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife."

⁴Now Abimelech had not approached her. So he said, "Lord, will you kill an innocent people?" ⁵Did he not himself say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this."

⁶Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that you have done this in the integrity of your heart, and it was I who kept you from sinning against me. Therefore I did not let you touch her."

⁷Now then, return the man's wife, for he is a prophet, so that he will pray for you, and you shall live. But if you do not return her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours."

⁸So Abimelech rose early in the morning and called all his servants and told them all these things. And the men were very much afraid. ⁹Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? And how have I sinned against you, that you have brought on me and my kingdom a great sin? You have done to me things that ought not to be done." ¹⁰And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you see, that you did this thing?"

¹¹Abraham said, "I did it because I thought, There is no fear of God at all in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife. ¹²Besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father though not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife. ¹³And when God caused me to wander from my father's house, I said to her, 'This is the kindness you must do me: at every place to which we come, say of me, He is my brother.'"

¹⁴Then Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and male servants and female servants, and gave them to Abraham, and returned Sarah his wife to him. ¹⁵And Abimelech said, "Behold, my land is before you; dwell where it pleases you." ¹⁶To Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver. It is a sign of your innocence in the eyes of all who are with you, and before everyone you are vindicated."

¹⁷Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, and also healed his wife and female slaves so that they bore children. ¹⁸For the LORD had closed all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

Synopsis

With the smell of smoke and burning Sulphur still in the air, Abraham decided to leave the Oak Grove of Mamre and travel further south in the land that God had promised him. Then he headed west to the land of Gerar. Here we see him fall back into his old habits. He and Sarah lied to the king of Gerar and told him that Sarah was Abraham's sister. As a result, Abimelech, the king of Gerar took Sarah into his harem. However, just like in Egypt some 22 years earlier, God protected Sarah and punished the king.

We are told here in Genesis chapter 20 that God appeared to Abimelech in a dream and told him that Sarah was a married woman. Apparently being a man of integrity, Abimelech defended himself stating that he was innocent of any wrongdoing. God agreed that Abimelech had not done anything to Sarah and said, "it was I who kept you from sinning against me." God told Abimelech to return Sarah to Abraham and informed him that Abram would pray for Abimelech's life because Abraham is a prophet.

The very next morning Abimelech returned Sarah to Abraham and chastened him saying, "[You have done to me things that ought not to be done.](#)" Then Abraham prayed for Abimelech and God healed him and others in his household.



Figure 1 - Abraham's Dwelling Places

Genesis 20:1, 2

From there Abraham journeyed toward the territory of the Negeb and lived between Kadesh and Shur; and he sojourned in Gerar. And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.

“Abraham journeyed toward the territory of the Negeb” – We are not told why Abraham left the oaks of Mamre. Perhaps he did so because of the constant reminder of the destruction of the cities of the plain, nearly visible from the oaks of Mamre. He had seen that destruction and may have assumed that Lot was killed as well. Or, perhaps he was reminded that God had instructed him to walk throughout the land:

Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you. (Genesis 13:17)

We learn in Genesis chapter twenty-three that he considered the oaks of Mamre his “home base” since it is here that he buried Sarah after her death (Genesis 23:19) and it is where Abraham was buried after his death (Genesis 25:9, 10).

“lived between Kadesh and Shur” – These are two of the wilderness areas at the southern end of Canaan. The Wilderness of Kadesh is directly at the southern end of Canaan, whereas the Wilderness of Shur is south-west of that, extending all the way to Egypt.

“sojourned” – Hebrew *gur*, which means “to dwell as a foreigner.” It implies a temporary residence in a foreign country as opposed to a permanent residence.

“Gerar” – This may be the same as (or at least close by) Gaza, one of the five cities of the Philistines (the present day Palestinians).

“Abraham said of Sarah his wife, ‘She is my sister.’” – This is exactly the same half-truth that they told to Pharaoh in Genesis 12:13 (approximately eighteen years earlier). It is possible that Abraham did not consider such a deception as being wrong. It is more likely that he knew it was sinful, and that he couldn’t resist doing so again. In either case, it appears to be an example of Abraham not trusting in Jehovah to protect him and Sarah. Perhaps, seeing God’s judgment on the cities of the plain has shaken his confidence in God. This event occurred very soon after the destruction of those cities (it seems that Sarah did not display any of the signs of being pregnant), and we have no evidence to suggest that Abraham knew Lot’s life had been spared.

“Abimelech” – The name can mean “father of the king” or “my father, the king.” In either case, it appears that it is not so much a name as a title taken on by Philistine kings. We encounter another king of Gerar named Abimelech in chapter twenty-six:

Now there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Gerar to Abimelech king of the Philistines. (Genesis 26:1)

Although it is possible that this was the same king of Garar, that is unlikely since the events in chapter twenty-six appear to have happened after chapter twenty-five and we learn in chapter twenty-five that Isaac is more than sixty years old, since that is the age at which Jacob and Essau were born:

Afterward his brother came out with his hand holding Esau's heel, so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them. (Genesis 25:26)

“Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah” – We are not told why Abimelech took Sarah, but the context makes it apparent that he intended to make her one of his wives. There are two possible reasons for his actions. Either he intended to marry Sarah to secure a relationship with Abraham (in which case it would most likely be a mutual agreement), or Sarah still remained a very beautiful and desirable woman even at the age of eighty-nine.

Genesis 20:3-5

But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, "Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife." Now Abimelech had not approached her. So he said, "Lord, will you kill an innocent people? Did he not himself say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this."

“God” – That is, *Elohim* (meaning, “the powerful one”)

“came to Abimelech in a dream by night” – Unlike His face-to-face encounters with Abraham, God communicated to Abimelech in a dream.

“Behold, you are a dead man ...” – God threatened Abimelech with death if he did anything to Sarah.

“Lord” – Abimelech addresses God as Lord (*Adonai*).

“Lord, will you kill an innocent people?” – This appears to be a reference to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, which cities were without a righteous person except for Lot. Abimelech appears to believe that he and his people are living right with God (at least in comparison to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah).

“In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this” – Abimelech sees himself as having done nothing wrong. Obviously, he does not consider taking a woman by force to be one of his wives as an improper action.

Genesis 20:6, 7

Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that you have done this in the integrity of your heart, and it was I who kept you from sinning against me. Therefore I did not let you touch her. Now then, return the man's wife, for he is a prophet, so that he will pray for you, and you shall live. But if you do not return her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours."

“Then God said to him in a dream” – It appears that the entire conversation between Abimelech and God occurred in his dream.

“I know that you have done this in the integrity of your heart” – This is an indication that Abimelech’s conscience did not condemn his actions. We cannot infer from this that taking Sarah to be his wife was right. This does show, however, that God knows our heart as well as our mind. That is, He knows the deepest inner-workings of our thoughts.

“it was I who kept you from sinning against me” – Our Almighty God has the ability to prevent sinners from sinning. Obviously, He does not do this in all cases, but in specific situations, He protects the innocent ones from their own sins. How He accomplished this is only hinted at. In

verse seventeen we read, “God healed Abimelech, and also healed his wife and female slaves” which seems to imply that there was some kind of sickness which afflicted Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants. It was not simply a matter that God had prevented the women from conceiving, because by the time they realized this to be true, Sarah would have shown clear signs of her pregnancy. And, we are told that the sickness affected Abimelech as well as his wife and female servants. So, apparently there was some kind of sickness which prevented them from having sexual intercourse.

“return the man's wife” – Even though God admitted that Abimelech had acted with a clear conscience, he had nonetheless acted inappropriately and God made it abundantly clear that Abimelech was to restore Sarah to her husband immediately.

“he is a prophet” – The Hebrew word translated prophet is *nabiy*, meaning “a man who is a divinely inspired spokesman for God.” It does not simply mean “one who foretells the future.” This is the first use of this word in the Bible, although we are told in the book of Jude that Enoch had prophesied before Abraham:

It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, (Jude 1:14)

A prophet in the Old Testament is often pictured as predicting the future. However, there are a number of examples where prophesying meant praying, particularly intercessory prayer, or simply delivering God’s message. For example:

Saul – When they came to Gibeah, behold, a group of prophets met him, and the Spirit of God rushed upon him, and he prophesied among them. And when all who knew him previously saw how he prophesied with the prophets, the people said to one another, "What has come over the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" (1 Samuel 10:10-11) – It is more reasonable to interpret this description of Saul as praying than that of foretelling the future.

The Prophets of Baal who prayed to their false god & were defeated by Elijah on Mt. Carmel (1Kings 18) – These were not foretelling the future, they were praying to their god.

Aaron, the brother of Moses – In Exodus 4:16 he is said to be a spokesman and then in Exodus 7:1 he is said to be a prophet.

The words of the Apostle Paul – On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. (1 Corinthians 14:3) – Again, this is not a reference to foretelling the future, but to delivering a message from God.

“if you do not return her” – Jehovah demonstrates Himself to be a merciful God, but He also announces Himself to be a God of righteous judgment who expects complete obedience.

Genesis 20:8-10

So Abimelech rose early in the morning and called all his servants and told them all these things. And the men were very much afraid. Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? And how have I sinned against you, that you have brought on me and my kingdom a great sin? You have done to me things that ought not to be done." And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you see, that you did this thing?"

“Abimelech rose early” – Apparently early in the morning immediately after having the dream.

“the men were very much afraid” – This fear is most likely the fear of being destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah had been recently.

“What have you done to us? ... on me and my kingdom” – It is obvious that Abimelech expected God’s judgment to include his kingdom as well as himself.

“You have done to me things that ought not to be done” – Even without an outright knowledge of Jehovah God, there is a real sense of right and wrong among these people.

“What did you see, that you did this thing?” – Abimelech now asks Abraham why he and Sarah conspired to conceal their marriage.

Genesis 20:11-13

Abraham said, "I did it because I thought, there is no fear of God at all in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife. Besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father though not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife. And when God caused me to wander from my father's house, I said to her, 'This is the kindness you must do me: at every place to which we come, say of me, He is my brother.'"

“there is no fear of God at all in this place” – Perhaps, because of the wickedness of the cities of the plain, Abraham believed that none of the inhabitants of Canaan were God fearing people.

“Besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father though not the daughter of my mother” – Abraham now tries to justify his sin by explaining it away as a sort-of truth. From this we see that anything which is not completely true, that is intended to deceive, is not the truth at all. By claiming Sarah as his sister, Abraham was intentionally deceiving Abimelech and his representatives. Abraham was afraid of being killed so that they could take Sarah as a wife for the king, just as he had been afraid of Pharaoh killing him for the same reason.

“when God caused me to wander from my father's house, I said to her” – This is probably a reference to a conversation that Abraham and Sarah had as they were travelling to Egypt because of the famine.

Genesis 20:14-16

Then Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and male servants and female servants, and gave them to Abraham, and returned Sarah his wife to him. And Abimelech said, "Behold, my land is before you; dwell where it pleases you." To Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver. It is a sign of your innocence in the eyes of all who are with you, and before everyone you are vindicated."

“Then Abimelech took sheep, oxen [cattle], and male and female servants, and gave them to Abraham” – This is very similar to the way that Pharaoh treated Abraham when he restored Sarah to him:

And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels. (**Genesis 12:16**)

“Behold, I have given your brother” – This appears to be a sarcastic expression given to Sarah who claimed that Abraham was “her brother.”

“a thousand pieces of silver” – This is not an additional gift of 1000 pieces of silver. It most likely is an expression of the value of the gift that was given to Abraham in the form of sheep, cattle, male servants, and female servants.

“you are vindicated” – Literally, “it is for you a covering of the eyes.” Some have interpreted this as an expression by Abimelech to mean that Sarah was to purchase a veil and cover her face, or that this was to cause her to not look upon any other man but her husband. There are no grounds for either interpretation: It is not likely that it is a reverence to a veil, since veils are not mentioned to this point in the Bible as a covering for women’s faces. It is, rather, an expression which indicates that the wrong done to Sarah (by taking her from her husband) was covered over so that it would not be seen as a wrong done to her. God had the High Priest do a similar thing on the Day of Atonement. In the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus, the process of atonement for the sins of Israel is described. The word translated “atonement” is *kaphar*, which means “to cover.” The blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled on the mercy seat as an atonement (covering) for the sins of the people.

Genesis 20:17, 18

Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, and also healed his wife and female slaves so that they bore children. For the LORD had closed all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

“Abraham prayed to God” – Fulfilling his obligation as a prophet of God.

“God healed Abimelech, and also healed his wife and female slaves” – The sickness which prevented conception was not just on the women, but on Abimelech as well.

“closed all the wombs” – This expression indicates a prevention of conception, not inability to give childbirth.

So What?

Faith Shaken by God’s Wrath

We all like to think of our God as a loving God, for so He is:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (John 3:16-17)

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:7-8)

We love because He first loved us. (1 John 4:19)

But our God is also a righteous God. Because of this, He must judge sin and sinners. Our loving God is also a God of wrath and of vengeance:

the whole land burned out with brimstone and salt, nothing sown and nothing growing, where no plant can sprout, an overthrow like that of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim,

which the LORD overthrew in his anger and wrath-- all the nations will say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land? What caused the heat of this great anger?' (**Deuteronomy 29:23-24**)

Still the LORD did not turn from the burning of his great wrath, by which his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked him. (**2 Kings 23:26**)

Therefore the wrath of the LORD came on Judah and Jerusalem, and he has made them an object of horror, of astonishment, and of hissing, as you see with your own eyes. (**2 Chronicles 29:8**)

He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, (**Psalms 2:4-5**)

for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand? (**Revelation 6:17**)

And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. (**Revelation 14:9-10**)

We could go on and on because there are more than twice as many verses in the Bible that talk about God's wrath than there are that talk about His love. As Christians, however, we know all about God's love. As a result, we also know about His mercy. We are comforted when we see His love poured out. And yet – when we see or experience God's wrath being poured out, we don't want to attribute it to God. When we see His love we are drawn to it, but when we see His wrath we want to run from it.

Abraham was no different. When he witnessed God's wrath against Sodom and Gomorrah and the other cities of the plain, a demonstration of wrath that was justified against the wickedness of those cities, he wanted to get away. In fact, he appears to be so shaken by the outpouring of God's wrath that his faith was weakened. No, he doesn't lose his salvation, his sanctification, or his righteousness, but he does seem to revert back to his old sinful ways. He finds it hard to trust in God for his safety, so he uses the same ploy that he had used before.

But, before we go on, let's stop for just a moment and ask ourselves a question. Why did God destroy the cities of the valley? We learned in the previous Lesson that it was: **"because the outcry against its people has become great before the LORD"** I submit to you, however, that it was not because of their wicked actions. It was because they refused to listen to God, or believe that He even existed. After all, Lot's actions, or at least the offering of his two virgin daughters, didn't exactly put him on the moral high ground, did they? And yet, God was not willing to destroy Lot, because he was righteous. At some time in the past Lot had believed in Jehovah and had been declared righteous as a result. Did the cities of the plain deserve to be destroyed? Of course! Did Lot also deserve to be destroyed? Of course! So, what's the difference? The difference is that God saw Lot in His own righteousness and he saw all the others in their own sinfulness. The difference was not their actions, the difference was their faith. Even though Lot was not living by faith (for which he suffered the loss of all his "stuff"), God still saw him as righteous.

That should be an encouragement (and a warning) to all of us who are saved. Because of our faith, God sees us as righteous. But, that doesn't mean that we can live like the devil and get away with it. Remember, Lot lost all his "stuff" and he produced two daughters who lacked proper moral conviction. Even Uncle Abe, had his share of backsliding. In the final analysis, however, Abraham kept his focus on God, while Lot still had his focus on himself.

Abraham, the Sinning, Righteous Prophet

The cities of the valley were about thirty miles southeast of the Oaks of Mamre and the rising smoke and smell of sulphur probably were a constant reminder to Abraham of the outpouring of God's wrath on them. It didn't take long before Abraham decided to leave the hill country of Mamre. Heading southwest to the coastal plain, he travelled for several days until he came to the land of Gerar. But his faith was so shaken by the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah that he was unable to trust his personal safety to Jehovah. As a result, Abraham reminded Sarah of the agreement they had when travelling in foreign lands, "Don't tell them you're my wife. Tell them you're my sister." We might be able to imagine why this ploy was necessary eighteen years earlier, when Sarah was in her early seventies and still quite beautiful. But now she was nearly ninety years old, and pregnant (although she probably hadn't yet begun to show it). And yet – although we are not told that it was due to her beauty (that can only be surmised), the king of the land took her into his harem.

This is now the second time that Abraham and Sarah have trusted in their deception to protect themselves (actually, in each case it was to protect Abraham). Don't you think they should have learned their lesson the first time? -- Of course, you and I never make the same mistake more than once, do we? Well, I can't speak for you, but I know how hard headed I am (but, don't you dare tell any of my children that I admitted it). We've all heard that one definition of insanity is performing the same action over and over again, expecting a different result each time. Well, if that's the case then we're all a bit insane, aren't we? It seems that the two times when we are most likely to have faith problems are when we experience God's wrath and when we experience great spiritual victory. Elijah is the perfect example of the latter. After his great spiritual victory over the prophets of Ba'al, he suddenly became afraid of the threats of Queen Jezebel.

But God never changes, does He? Even though Abraham and Sarah have fallen back into their old ways, Jehovah was still there watching over them, protecting them when they couldn't protect themselves. He rescued them from their self-inflicted predicament and even saw to it that Abraham receives more "stuff" as a result (as if Abraham really needed any more). But, the most startling thing we discover here is that Abraham was declared to be a prophet of God! This scheming, conniving foreigner is not only righteous in God's eyes, he is a prophet as well? Once again, we are reminded of God's grace; that's Grace with a capital "G." On many who deserve God's wrath, He pours it out on them. But, on a few who don't deserve His grace, He showers them with grace.

Which do you deserve, my friends, God's wrath or His grace? We all know the answer to that question; we all deserve the wrath of God, but through His great mercy we receive His love instead.

Wronged and Reconciled

Before we end this Lesson, let's look at one more thing. King Abimelech may have had some habits that don't seem quite right to us (like abducting innocent women and taking them into his harem). But, we also learn that he is a God fearing man. When God appeared to him in a dream, informing him that he has taken another man's wife, he responded immediately. I wouldn't be surprised if he didn't wake up right after having the dream. Perhaps it was still the middle of the night and I doubt that he slept any more. It is very likely that early in the morning he rose, informed his entire household about his dream, and ordered that Abraham be brought into his presence.

After giving Abraham a bit of a tongue lashing, Abimelech lavished gifts on God's prophet and asked him to pray for a miracle of healing. It was probably out of Godly fear that he did it, but he did it nonetheless. He even offered Abraham his choice of where he wanted to live anywhere in the land of Gerar.

How do we treat those who have wronged us? Do we offer them gifts? In his kingdom teaching, Jesus taught His followers;

But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, (Luke 6:27)

During the exodus from Egypt to the Promised Land we learn that Moses' brother, Aaron, and his sister, Miriam, challenged Moses' leadership:

Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman. And they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?" And the LORD heard it. (Numbers 12:1-2)

Do you know how Moses responded to this? He was the most humble man on the face of the earth, according to the following verse. When God judged Miriam and struck her with leprosy, instead of getting angry with her, Moses poured out his heart to God, begging God to heal her. And, He did!

And, what about Job? Remember his so called "friends" who condemned him and urged him to repent. Here's what happened to them:

After the LORD had spoken these words to Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite: "My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has. Now therefore take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves. And my servant Job shall pray for you (Job 42:7, 8a)

Job prayed for his "friends." Is that what we would have done? We often get so bound-up in getting retribution against those who have hurt us that we forget what God has done for us:

but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

We all want the love of God, but we are sometimes pretty stingy in showing the love of God. Abraham could have been angry at Abimelech for taking his wife (even if he did lie about their relationship). Moses could have been angry at Miriam for challenging his leadership. Job could have been angry at his "friends" who were supposedly trying to "help" him. Instead, these three

exercised mercy and gave to those who offended them what they didn't deserve, they prayed for them. Once again, when Jesus was teaching about kingdom living he declared:

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. (Matthew 5:7)

And, in speaking for God, the prophet Hosea said:

For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings. (Hosea 6:6)

Mercy is something that Christians experience over and over. We know and treasure how merciful our God is toward us. But, how often do we demonstrate mercy? When someone wrongs us, we are immediately filled with righteous indignation. We want to get even, or at least to call down God's judgment on them. Is that what Jesus would have done? Did He ever do that? The closest that he came to that was when he chased the money changers out of the temple. And yet, He didn't strike them with leprosy or blindness or anything else. He cleansed the temple, but He was merciful to those who had desecrated it.

So, how about you? When was the last time you showed mercy to someone who didn't deserve it? I challenge each and every one of us to look for opportunities to be merciful this week. Be on the lookout for times when someone else wrongs you, and be merciful to them. Pray for them instead of cursing them. Be kind to them instead of being mean to them. Show them mercy, just as God has shown mercy to you!