

Slandering Jesus Matthew 2:19-23

- I. One of the burdens Joseph and Mary carried was public shame.
- A. The angels had only appeared to Joseph and Mary.
 - 1. To others, Mary's baby appeared to be "illegitimate."
 - 2. Babies born outside of marriage were considered illegitimate.
 - B. Mary and Joseph lived in a culture that valued Law keeping.
 - 1. People's reputations were related to their character.
 - (a) Character was evaluated based upon following the Law.
 - 2. It appeared to everyone that Mary had broken the Law.
 - (a) Also, that Joseph had not upheld the Law.
 - (b) If it was his baby, he was a Law breaker, too.
 - (c) If it was someone else's, he had not prosecuted Mary.
 - 3. So, Joseph and Mary suffered from judgment.
 - (a) They were innocent of wrongdoing.
 - (b) Ironically, God probably chose them for their character.
 - (c) But they were badly misunderstood.
 - C. This misunderstanding and judgment fell on Jesus, too.
 - 1. The Pharisees had a contentious discussion with Jesus in John 8.
 - (a) Jesus calls them children of the devil.
 - (b) Women compete with each other for relationship.
 - (c) Look at their response (John 8:4).
 - (d) Jesus hasn't called them illegitimate.
 - (e) Why do they say that?
 - 2. Because of Jesus' miracles, people were calling him the Messiah.
 - (a) The Pharisees want to check this guy out.
 - (b) They send representatives to Nazareth to inquire.
 - (c) What do they hear?
 - (d) One thing they hear is the story of Mary's pregnancy.
 - (e) Someone in Nazareth is slandering Jesus and family.
 - 3. The Pharisees called Jesus a Samaritan (John 8:48).
 - (a) That can't be true if Mary and Joseph are his parents.
 - (b) The Samaritans were a mixed-race people.
 - (c) The Pharisees' assumption is that Jesus' father is a Gentile.
 - (d) They are judging him based on stories they have heard.
 - (e) But, those stories weren't true. They were slander.

II. Slander is a very serious sin.

- A. What is slander?
 - 1. "The utterance in the presence of another person of a false statement that is damaging to a third party's character or reputation." (Webster)
 - 2. So, there are three aspects to slander.

- (a) It is spoken to someone about someone else (gossip).
- (b) It is a false statement.
- (c) It tears that person's character and reputation down.

- B. Why is slander such a serious sin?
 - 1. We are commanded to love one another as Christ loved us.
 - (a) Has Jesus ever slandered us?
 - (b) No, but Satan slanders us all the time.
 - (c) He is our accuser. He tells us (and God) we are guilty.
 - (d) But, if you know Jesus, Satan's accusations are false.
 - (e) "There is no condemnation ..." His accusations are slander.
 - C. Some Hebrew words paint a picture of their meaning.
 - 1. For example, the Hebrew for nose is the root of the word "anger."
 - (a) Why is that?
 - (b) What happens to a bull's nostrils when enraged?
 - 2. Several Hebrew words are translated slander.
 - (a) Dibba: "defaming, evil report, slander."
 - (b) Dibba comes from a root word meaning, "to glide, to move slowly."
 - (c) What animal appears to glide, move stealthfully?
 - (d) A serpent (the tongue of a slanderer is like a serpent).
 - 3. Another Hebrew word translated "slander" means, "to wag the tongue, accuse, slander."
 - (a) It comes from a root that means "evil speaker."
 - D. In the New Testament, the word translated "slanderers" is "diabolos."
 - 1. It is also the word for devil. So, what is the Bible saying?
 - (a) It is saying that when we slander, we are like the devil.
 - (b) We are being more like Satan than like Jesus.

II. We slander more than we realize.

- A. In dispute resolution there are 3 stories.
 - 1. Party A, Party B, and the truth.
 - (a) Why is that?
 - (b) Because we tell stories from our perspective.
 - (c) We tell them in a biased way (Nazareth).
 - (d) That means they aren't 100% truth.
 - 2. That means we inevitably slander when we speak negatively about other people, because we are biased.
 - (a) Proverbs 10:19
 - (b) To change that, stop talking about people.
 - (c) Don't say to third party, what you wouldn't say directly.
- B. The temptation to slander arises when we are competing.
 - 1. Men often compete about capabilities, positions, power.
 - 2. Women often compete for relationship (1 Timothy 3:11).
 - 3. We all need to find our significance and security in Christ.

