

Protecting Human Rights

I. Announce:

- A. **Slide#2 Harvest Crusade** - This Fri, Sat, Sun. Aug15-17 at 7pm at Angel Stadium in Anaheim.
- B. **Aug.27** - Last Family Night of summer. We'll pick up tab for dinner.
 1. **Starting the 1st Wed in Sept thru Oct.** We are going to start **dinners** out of our kitchen for only \$3.50 per meal. **Promote fellowship.** Sometimes hard to go from work/home/church/home.

II. Intro:

- A. **Title:** *Protecting Human Rites*
- B. Moses continues with individuals rights to **own property & the right to life.**
 1. He established several statutes aimed at protecting the dignity & reputation of people *easily taken advantage of* [a leper, someone in debt, someone in deep debt, & an indigent(a poor/needy person)]

III. DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE (1-4)

- A. This law was quite specific & did not cover all instances of divorce.
 1. It neither **condemned** nor **condoned** divorce, **but** simply recognized that divorce existed.
 2. **Jesus** accepted *Moses' allowance* of divorce only for reasons of **unfaithfulness**, **but** taught that *from the beginning* God had never intended divorce to take place at all.
 - a) Divorce was widespread in the ancient Near East. However, the Old Testament always regarded divorce as a **tragedy** (cf. Mal. 2:16).
 3. These commands then, were given to **regulate an already existing practice.**
 4. The **some uncleanness/something indecent**, which a husband might find in his wife, **cannot** refer to **adultery** for which the penalty was **death** (22:22).
 - a) Nor can the *indecency* refer to the wife's *premarital intercourse with another man* for which the penalty was also **death** (22:20,21). *The precise meaning of the phrase is unknown.*
 5. If a man found **some uncleanness/something indecent**, the certificate of divorce he wrote was apparently given to the woman for **her protection** under the law.
 6. If after being divorced she **remarried** and then her second husband divorced her or died, her first husband was not permitted to remarry her since she had been defiled.
 7. The word translated **defiled** was also used to describe a man who had committed adultery (Lev. 18:20).

- a) So the use of this word to describe a woman who had been divorced and remarried to the same man suggests that divorce was viewed in *a negative light* even though Moses **permitted** it.
 - b) A remarriage to her former husband would be tantamount to a legal adultery and therefore detestable to the Lord.
8. The purpose of this law seems to be **to prevent frivolous divorce, and to present divorce itself in a disparaging light.**
- a) Jesus' interpretation of this passage indicated that divorce (like polygamy) went against *the divine ideal* for marriage.

IV. MISC LAWS (5-22)

A. Now on a happier note...

B. Newlyweds (5)

- 1. Exemption from military service or being drafted for a year.
 - a) If he were killed in combat...he probably wouldn't have **future generations** to preserve his name in Israel.
- 2. Exemption from business.
- 3. 1 year honeymoon to make sure she's *happy, happy, happy.*
 - a) I'm sure this *diminished or removed occasions* for the divorces mentioned earlier.

C. Pledges (6)

- 1. **Rules governing what may be received as security for a loan.**
- 2. **Slide#x Millstones** were used daily in homes to grind grain in preparing meals. **To take even one of these as collateral for a debt would in effect deprive a man of his daily bread** (livelihood) **and** therefore **contradict the spirit of generosity** which should have motivated the lender to lend in the first place.

D. Kidnapping (7)

- 1. Apparently the crime of kidnapping was common in the ancient Near East for it was also mentioned in **the law codes of Mesopotamia** and **the Hittite Empire.**
 - a) Since the kidnapper was depriving his victim of **his freedom** (by taking him as a slave or selling him), the kidnapper was to be punished by death - as though he had taken the victim's life.
- 2. This is why **Human Trafficking or Trafficking in Persons** is so deplorable.
 - a) Whether for *Forced Labor; Bonded Labor/Debt labor; Slavery; or Forced Prostitution.*
 - b) **Slavery defined:** *being forced to work without pay, under the threat of violence, and being unable to walk away.*

3. Slide#x Show HT Video

E. Outbreak of disease (8,9)

1. Miriam had slandered her brother Moses & been struck by leprosy as a result.
2. Moses said to submit to the instructions of the Levitical priests, who had the **authority** to treat & **declare** someone as cured/clean.

F. Loans (10-13)

1. **Don't** enter the debtors house & do your own *search & seizure* and take whatever was put up as security.
2. And, if the item was his cloak, the outer garment used for sleeping/doubles as a blanket, it must be returned each night. *Show Masai pic Slide#x*

G. Oppressing poor laborers (14-16)

1. Never take advantage of poor laborers. Pay them their wages each day b4 sunset.
 - a) The dignity of a poor hired servant could be maintained by paying him each day for the work performed. (They live day to day. No refrig. \$ to buy the evening meal)
 - b) In the ancient Near East, this pay usually included *his daily meal*.
 - c) No person should have to beg for what is their due.

H. Personal Accountability (16)

1. Moses established the *individual worth of each person* by holding everyone responsible for **their** own sins.
2. Maybe to help magistrates, because often times I bet the injured party thought something like, *"its dad's fault for not disciplining his son earlier."*

I. Justice for the Marginalized (17,18)

1. The concern for justice due those who were **on the margin** of society is a common theme in Deut.

J. Welfare (19-22)

1. Framers were commanded to *leave a portion of your crops behind* for foreigners, widows, and orphans to glean.
2. **Why?** to again let them have **dignity** in providing for themselves (for those who physically could) without having to beg.
 - a) What some have termed **betterment** (doing something for others) offers immediate help, improves conditions, yet is distinctly different from **developing** people.
 - (1) **Betterment** does for others. **Development** maintains the long view & looks to enable others to do for themselves.
 - (2) **Betterment** improves conditions. **Development** strengthens capacity.
 - (3) **Betterment** gives a man a fish. **Development** teaches a man how to fish.

V. Helping w/o Hurting [When Helping Hurts, Danny Campbell - Toxic Charity, Robert Lupton]

- A. There are at least **3 things** that enhance **human dignity**: *Attentive listening communicates worth; Legitimate employment gives meaning to life; Community gives a sense of belonging.*

1. **Attentive listening** communicates worth;
 - a) **Instead of** a white church van pulling into a poor neighborhood, then jumping out & “*cleaning up what they deem dirty*”; **maybe** a better approach would be to encourage the neighbors to meet together to discuss community needs, decide what are the highest priority, identify available resources w/in the community, & then decide what (if any) outside help is needed?¹
 - (1) That way the volunteers can aid in a community-driven effort, under the direction of a neighborhood leadership, & celebrate together their mutual accomplishments.
 - (2) **Community driven** *rather than* volunteer driven;
Community led *rather than* volunteer led.
2. **Legitimate employment** gives meaning to life;
 - a) One of the surest ways to destroy self-worth is subsidizing the idleness of able-bodied people. **Work is a gift, a calling, a human responsibility.** And the creation of productive, meaningful employment fulfills one of the Creator’s highest designs.²
 - b) Matthew Cox in *The Reinvention of Work* said, “*There is only one work in the cosmos...that one work is God’s work. Humans are invited to participate.*”
 - (1) Whether cleaning debris from a lot **or** running a corporation, mopping the kitchen floor **or** selling real estate. **Work, all work, is an invitation from God for us to take an active role as co-participants in an ever-unfolding creation.**
3. **Community** gives a sense of belonging.

¹ Toxic Charity, Robert Lupton, pg. 150

² *ibid.* pg.152