Deut 24

Protecting Human Rights

I. Announce:
   A. Slide#2 Harvest Crusade - This Fri, Sat, Sun. Aug 15-17 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 Rights
   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