

Exod 03-12-28b

Let's pick up our study now in Exodus chapter 20. I figured away my time and didn't give our scripture reading in our first session, so having reviewed the five commandments found on the second table of the law, let's turn for our scripture reading to the book of Leviticus chapter 19 beginning at verse 9. Leviticus 19 9. In thinking about, and there are many passages we could go to, this is representative of the idea of love for one's neighbor and how that works itself out. This is a typical passage in the law that addresses the treatment of one's fellow citizen, fellow Israelite in this case.

So beginning at verse 9 in Leviticus 19. When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard.

You shall leave them for the poor and the stranger. I am the Lord your God. And you find the statement made here, I am the Lord your God, which is a reminder that in the horizontal plane the treatment of one's neighbor is part and parcel of one's duty to God and our horizontal relationships are an extension and a reflection of our standing and our relationship with God Himself.

So they don't exist independently. And over and over again God says do this because I am the Lord your God. Verse 11.

You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. And you have an iteration here of some of the commands in Exodus 20. And you shall not swear by my name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God.

I am the Lord. You shall not cheat your neighbor, nor rob him. The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until morning.

This goes along with the idea of owe no man anything. If you contract and agree to pay the parable that Jesus gave of the individuals who were who were taken on in the morning to begin work and others came at noon and others came near the end of the day and then he paid a denarius to each one at the close of the day. You notice in that parable he paid them the same day they did the work.

He was not late in paying them. He didn't say come back tomorrow and I'll give you your wages. And that's based on this passage.

The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until morning. Notice the contractor has the money and could pay but he doesn't. He just hangs on to it until the next day.

This is sort of a power thing like well you've done the work but you don't really have any

leverage on me. I can give it to you when I feel like it. There's a little bit of hubris, a little bit of arrogance in that rather than a desire to do well by the person who has done the work and to cause them to make a second trip to come back and get their wages.

This is sort of a power play. I'm the one with the money. You're the blue-collar worker.

You are sort of under my control and this is using money as leverage using someone's need for their wages to manipulate them and cause you can make them wait. You can make them come back and it's sinful and God forbids it. The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until morning.

You shall not curse the deaf nor put a stumbling block before the blind. And you have this happen. This has come down as a part of our humor.

They're very politically incorrect now but I can remember when I was a child there were a lot of Helen Keller jokes about her reading waffle irons and various things and the idea is do not abuse, do not disrespect someone because they can't hear it or they can't see it. Now this seems to be talking about the handicapped. Here's someone who literally can't hear and so you talk about them knowing that they can't hear but this extends in principle to talking about people behind their back.

If someone's not in the room they are deaf to your conversation. If someone is not in the area they can't see your machinations and if they express an intention to do something and then when they're gone you say well I'll put a stumbling block in front of the blind. They can't see what I'm doing.

I'll thwart them by another means. This goes on in business. It goes on in churches.

It goes on in Christian circles. It goes on within families where people when they think no one is looking or when people can't see they will do something to block or to thwart or to cause someone to stumble and that is forbidden in this command. You shall not cheat your neighbor.

You shall not rob him. Do not keep the wages of a hired man all night until morning. Do not curse the deaf.

Do not put a stumbling block before the blind but you shall fear your God. The motivation for treating other people with respect is fear of the Lord. You think about that fifth commandment.

Honor your father and mother. It's on God's table of the law. You shall fear your God and the outworking, the expression of that fear of God and recognizing that he is the Lord is to treat others with respect.

Look at verse 15. You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor nor honor the person of the mighty.

We have a society that has gone astray and awry and amuck in this area to favor the poor, be

partial to the poor, reverse discrimination in job hiring, in college admissions and scholarships, denying scholarships to qualified applicants and giving them to less qualified people on the basis of financial need or race or the country or location to which from which they come. They say well we want diversity. We want to have some international students so we're going to reserve these seats for international students.

Admission to educational institutions should be based solely on aptitude, on achievement, on merit, on ability and not on other factors and saying well we want diversity so we're going to deny you the option of coming to our school and give it to someone else who's not as qualified, who hasn't worked as hard, who doesn't have the grades but they're a particular color or they come from a particular place or they're poor and we want to give them a leg up and you think well but aren't we supposed to be charitable to the poor? Our country provides ample opportunity for the poor. You can start with nothing and you can get a job and you can work your way through college. If you don't think you can work your way through then go to a service academy.

I didn't have the money to go to college. I went to a service academy and you earn your way through there and you pay back the cost of your education with five or six years of obligated active duty. That's the price you pay for that education and it is a way to get a high-quality education.

You just have to be willing to work and the principle that we see here even in this passage is you do not give the poor something for nothing. Go back to the very beginning here. Verse 9, when you reap the harvest of your land you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest.

Don't glean the vineyard, don't gather every grape. Leave them for the poor and stranger. Now if we're really going to be charitable to the poor and stranger why don't we go ahead and pick the grapes and glean the grain and then just hand it to them.

Take big baskets of grapes down to the poor sections of town, go across the tracks and hand out grapes and hand out grain. What is the biblical principle of charity? Give them the opportunity to work for their food. Let them go into the vineyard, let them find and pick the grapes and carry them back.

Let them go into the field and glean. Let them swing the shining sickle and cut the ripened grain. Let them bundle it and carry it and thresh it and grind it and mix it and bake it and make their own bread.

We don't go down to the poor section of town and hand out loaves of bread. What do we do? We give them an entree, an opportunity at the beginning of that process. If they don't own a field that they can glean we'll let them glean from ours.

But they do the work. This even in secular terms allows someone some self-respect. Yes I am

poor, yes I am not a landowner, but I gleaned it, I threshed it, I ground it, I mixed it, I baked it and I'm going to eat it.

And if an opportunity ever does come by judicious use of that grain to obtain a plot of ground, you now have the work skills to become a landowner who can leave the corners of his field for someone else instead of a dependent handout oriented individual who has no work skills. If you did give them a piece of ground, well just give me the bread. If I have a piece of ground I would have to try to figure out how to work.

So the biblical principle of charity. This is why I will never hand any folding money out the window of my car to somebody standing on the curb with a cardboard sign. It is unbiblical to give handouts, just as it is unbiblical to maintain prisons.

In the same way that you pay the laborer the same day that he does his work, you pay the criminal the same day he does his work. The biblical model of justice as we're going to see going through the Levitical code here, going through the law given to Moses, is when crime is committed, justice is swift. Did you ever notice there's no provision for jails or prisons in Israel? There are no holding tanks, there's no incarceration, there is no doing of time.

In the same way that there is no time out, there's no sitting in the corner with your nose to the wall, retribution is measured, it is proportional to the crime, it is swift, it is immediate, and then it is over. The only exception to that we will find later on when we get to the cities of refuge are those who are blood guilty and worthy of death can escape to a city of refuge and that is a form of incarceration, that is a sort of special case and we'll cover that when we get to it. But you'll notice that it is not in bars, it is not taxpayers funding the life of a criminal and giving them a soft, cushy existence for the rest of their life or for some period of years.

It was unheard of in Israel. Somebody blinds a guy, pokes out his eye, you poke his eye out and let him go. If he breaks your tooth, you break his tooth and let him go.

If he maims you, you maim him and let him go. If he commits a capital offense, everybody gets together and stones him, drag his carcass outside the camp and you're done. You don't have this huge drain, you don't have institutions where young impressionable people are taken so that they can learn all of the advanced techniques of crime from the guys who have been there a long time and then turned loose.

They didn't have any system of rehabilitation because God knows it doesn't work. God says live under my laws, you either survive and prosper or you're disciplined, punished and possibly killed. It's a much simpler system.

Well, you shall not steal, verse 11, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. You shall not swear by my name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God. I am the Lord.

Verse 15, you shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor shall you honor the person of the mighty. No respecter of persons.

God doesn't respect people based on what they have or what they don't have, neither should we. In righteousness, you shall judge your neighbor. Well, wait a minute, I thought judging was a sin.

Judge not, lest ye be judged. Yet it says here, in righteousness, you shall judge your neighbor. Well, what does this mean? We have a responsibility to evaluate.

Why do we not hand folding money out the window to the guy with the cardboard sign? We evaluate. This is a form of judging, but it is not the sinful judging. In sinful judging, you set yourself up as judge, jury and executioner.

You find someone guilty of a crime and then you decide on a sentence and then you inflict the sentence. You punish someone for what they have done wrong. You decide, well, here's a person that has done a wrong thing.

I will punish them. I will ostracize them. I will defame them.

I will talk about them. I will put consequences on them. I'll make them pay.

God says, you will not make them pay. Vengeance is mine. I will repay.

There is not a sin in discerning that someone is committing evil, is committing sin. We are to judge our neighbor, but to judge them in righteousness. We are not to allow it to become a sin.

You can discern that someone is doing wrong and then turn it into a mental attitude sin by stewing about it and going on and on and fretting and that dirty rat and this, that and the other. How can they do that? You let the sun go down on your wrath. You bear a grudge.

This gets into the area of sin. But we are not to stick our head in the sand and say, well, you know, it looks to me like maybe something not quite right is going on over there, but judge not lest you be judged. I'm just going to go blindly on and pretend like nothing's happening.

The Bible never says to be stupid. Be thou stupid. There's no such command.

He says, be wise. Judge your neighbor in righteousness. You can discern that someone is poor and maybe there's a reason why they're poor.

Maybe they are poor because they are idle. Maybe they are poor because they are lazy. Maybe they are poor because they have no work ethic.

And it is legitimate to evaluate and come to a judgment and say, there is a person who is poor because they have no work ethic. The Bible says, work with your hands. The Bible says, earn your bread by the sweat of your brow.

The Bible says, he who does not work will not eat. The Bible says, go to the ant thou sluggard. But to bear a grudge, to say, well, because you're a lazy good for nothing, I'm going to inflict a

penalty on you, crosses the line into sin.

But you have to balance, I've said many times, and I believe it is a principle that you can observe throughout the Word of God. Anytime you find a biblical injunction, a command or a doctrine or a principle, there will be other passages that give us balance and give us objectivity about it. And one of those is, judge not lest you be judged.

Here is another passage that says, judge your neighbor in righteousness. So when it says, judge not lest ye be judged, if we inflict penalties on others based on our evaluation, then we will be recipients of penalties ourselves. So he says, you shall not go about as a tail bearer among your people.

This is gossip. This is defaming and inflicting a penalty by talk. Let me tell you about so and so.

This can happen within a marriage. I think one of the worst things that can happen is when spouses reduce the respect that others might have for their opposite number by telling tales out of school. It's amazing to me what some people will talk about, not in present company, but I'm talking about in my circulation through the world, my time in the Marine Corps, my time in business and even in Christian organizations.

People will tell you the most outlandish and private details. Why are you telling me this? If I ever meet your spouse, how am I supposed to look them in the eye and shake their hand when you're telling me these bizarre private details? You shall not go about as a tail bearer among your people, nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor. I am the Lord.

This is where someone judges a person to the point of saying, this guy needs to be killed. Let's get together and lynch him. This is basically a lynch mob prohibition.

Taking a stand against the life of your neighbor, going about as a tail bearer. This is rabble rousing. I will make people so upset at this person that they will be willing to take his life.

They'll trump up a charge and kill him. And you can see this as an extension of covetousness because then what's going to happen to his land? What's going to happen to his possessions? Well, maybe these are going to be available. Verse 17, you shall not hate your brother in your heart.

This is interesting because there's not a lot in the law about the internal life. The two aspects of thought and inner life that are addressed in the law are love and hate. Love for the Lord your God.

Love your neighbor as yourself. These are addressed. But there's not a lot said about mental attitude sins or sins involving the mind and the thought processes.

But here is one. You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor and not bear sin because of him.

Now this is a hard thing to do in our modern day. If you have a neighbor, if you have someone in your near periphery, this could be family, this could be close personal acquaintances, and there is a problem that by remaining silent you are implicated. You become complicit.

Sort of a silence is consent type of thing. Where later someone could say, well if you thought it was wrong why didn't you say something? We are not to be in that position. If someone is involved in sin, if someone is operating in evil, you shall surely rebuke your neighbor and not bear sin because of him.

We don't take a stand against a neighbor's life, but we do take a stand against a neighbor's sin. And this is many times unpleasant. It may have a backlash, but that's just the way it's going to have to be because God says if you do not rebuke, if you do not make a point of something, you are complicit.

Do not bear sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.

You shall keep my statutes. You shall not let your livestock breed with another kind. You shall not sow your field with mixed seed, nor shall a garment of mixed linen and wool come upon you.

Well, so much for 40% cotton and 60% polyester. What is the idea here? People interbreed livestock all the time now to selective breeding and cross breeding to enhance various attributes. And what is the result? Now we have, because that is a form of genetic manipulation using natural means, now we have scientific means of manipulating genes.

And you have genetically enhanced animals, genetically enhanced corn, genetically copied animals. They just cloned some other kind of animals. They are cloning animals right and left now.

But it is just the natural outworking of what is prohibited here in the nation of Israel. But what is the real point? Interbreeding livestock, mixing different kinds of seed in your field, or mixing fibers, threads, when you make fabric. Why would God prohibit that? These are pictures of compromise.

These are pictures of trying to intermingle unlike things, or things that are similar but not the same. There is a morality that is accepted in the world and in our society. It is not the same as Christian principle.

It is not the same as biblical truth. And so God pictures this for Israel in the literal world and He says, do not intermingle, do not interbreed, do not mix kinds of thread. You might think, well, but I can get the strength of one and the softness of another.

That is why they make underwear out of polyester and cotton, and shirts and other things. Well, it can be soft like cotton, but it won't wrinkle. It is permanent press.

But in Israel, He said, don't mix things that are similar but not the same. He doesn't say, don't mix a cow with your fabric, or don't mix your seed with your animals. Two kinds of seed, two kinds of cloth, two kinds of cattle, don't interbreed them.

What is He saying? Discern the better things. If you want a better cow, then pick the best kind of cow and concentrate on that. If you want a better crop, then pick that crop and concentrate on that.

If you want a better fabric, if wool is better than linen, then concentrate on the wool and make it a wool garment. If linen is better suited for your purpose, then concentrate on the linen. Don't mix the two.

And the idea is one of compromise. The idea is one of intermingling things that are similar but not the same. Why would that be prohibited? Because in the spiritual world, there are things that are similar but not the same.

Allah is similar to, but not the same as, the God that we worship. Morality is similar to, but not the same as, biblical truth and obedience to the Word of God. There is a facade of good will and righteousness, and isn't he wonderful he would give you the shirt off his back, that does not have behind it the power of the Holy Spirit and the transforming work that God does in our soul.

It's not the same. Don't mix them. Don't mingle them.

Don't base a church on good fellowship that is similar to, but not the same as, genuine Christian love that comes from rehabilitated hearts and souls. You're mixing wool and linen. You're mixing two different kinds of cattle.

You shall keep my statutes, God says. I am the Lord. Well, let's go back now.

This is a broadening out. This is an explication, a more detailed look at the idea of things that have to do with dealing with one's neighbor. And that's what we have in Exodus chapter 20, in the second table of the law.

Now, we've seen these commands. They're fairly straightforward. It doesn't take a lot of interpretation to understand, thou shalt not murder.

We know, by the way, in verse 13, you have people that go wrapped around the axle about, thou shalt not kill. And they don't want to kill anything. They want to be vegetarians.

You can't kill under any circumstances. War is wrong. Policemen should never shoot a criminal, and so on.

When it says, lo tirtzah, you shall not murder, ratzah, ratzah, actually, r-a-t-s-a-c-h, is the word for murder. It is not the word for kill. We have a completely different word that is used for kill.

This is the word that is always used for an act of premeditation, an act of the shedding of blood on purpose for evil reasons. Anybody who has taken first year Hebrew can tell that this has nothing to do with a prohibition against all killing. Unfortunately, the Quakers and the Friends and a lot of people who are pacifists in their leanings and trying to base it on the Bible don't understand that.

Adultery, straightforward, we know what that is, violation of the marriage vows. You shall not steal. By the way, adultery is always defined as the breaking of a marriage vow.

It is distinguished in that sense from fornication. Two unmarried people doing something prior to marriage, that is fornication. Someone having intimate relations with someone who is married, it is a different category of sin.

Why? Because there has been a promise made. There is a vow of commitment made at the point of marriage, and it is the breaking of that vow, it is the violation of that covenant of trust that is in view. It is not just the sexual act.

It is the act of breaking the vow that is in view in adultery. You will notice that in the Ten Commandments it does not say thou shalt not fornicate. It says thou shalt not commit adultery.

That doesn't mean that fornication is okay. Some people wish it was, but no. But all of these commands, all of them, all ten, have a view toward a commitment of love that is made toward one's God and toward one's neighbor.

And it is a breach of covenant, a breach of trust, a breach of loyalty, if you will, to violate any of these ten commands. Loyalty is not in view. There are a lot of other things that are in view in the sin of fornication, and you can see it as a prospective sin, a sin against a prospective spouse, but it is distinguished from adultery.

There are two different words that are used. Naaf is the word for adultery used in Hebrew. Naaf is the word for adultery used here in verse 14.

And when we get to thou shalt not steal, that's fairly straightforward. Do not bear false witness against your neighbor, whether this is in a court of law or whether it is in a conversation. To make a misrepresentation about someone, to misconstrue their motives, to say something about them that is not true, is all encompassed in that.

And then coveting. And we've talked in a little bit of detail about that. What I want to do now, there's a lot we could say about these.

We could spend literally weeks upon them. But turn with me to Mark chapter 7, verse 21. Mark chapter 7, verse 21.

Jesus is responding to a criticism and a lack of understanding. The Pharisees accused his disciples of eating with unwashed hands and so on. And Jesus rebukes them in verse 9 of Mark

7. All too well you reject the commandment of God that you may keep your tradition.

Moses said, honor your father and your mother. And he who curses father or mother, let him be put to death. But you say, if a man says to his father or mother, whatever profit you might have received from me is korban, that is a gift to God.

It's dedicated. What is the situation? Here's a man who has some wealth. His parents are aged.

They can no longer support themselves. And he should be taking care of his parents. But he says, well, I would like to take care of you, but I've already made a vow to God and I've dedicated all of my belongings to God.

I can't take what I've dedicated to God and spend it on you. So you're kind of on your own. You need to go to the poor house.

You no longer let him do anything for his father or mother, making the word of God of no effect. And what they would do is they would encourage people. You know, nonprofit organizations know all about endowments and bequests and last will and testament, you know, leave your estate to our organization, create an endowment out of your estate or out of your money that will benefit us.

You keep the corpus and we'll live off the interest. You know, we'll keep it without spending it in this sort of thing. Well, the Pharisees would go to rich Jewish people and say, you know, we can wink, wink, nudge, nudge.

We can get you a little closer to God if you'll dedicate your estate to us. They say, well, I'll give you a part of it because I've got to take care of my elderly parents. And they would say, well, you know, if you could really give us the whole thing, you don't have to give it to the support of your parents.

If you give us the whole thing, it'll double what you're giving to us and we can double the influence with God. You know, the Catholic Church did the same thing in our dispensation. And so they would cajole and coerce people into giving what should have been used for the support of their parents to quote-unquote the church, to the temple, to the treasury, to the party of the Pharisees.

And in so doing, violate or cause these people to violate, honor your father and mother. You no longer let him do anything for his father or mother, making the word of God of no effect through your tradition. They said that this was legitimate.

They said that this was okay. And it wasn't many such things you do. So Jesus calls the multitude to himself and he says to them in verse 14, hear me everyone and understand there is nothing that enters a man from outside, which can defile him.

But the things which come out from him, those are the things that defile a man. If anyone has

ears to hear, let him hear. Well, the disciples, this is said to the multitude.

Then the disciples come and ask him questions. And in verse 18, he says to them, are you thus without understanding? Also, do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him because it does not enter his heart, but his innards and is eliminated. Verse 20, what comes out of a man that defiles him for from within out of the heart of man proceeds what evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.

All of the things in the second table of the law are covered in this list and some others are added. Do you see that? It begins with evil thoughts and all of the acts of commission, all of the overt sins are preceded by mental attitude sins and evil thought, evil motivation, such as adultery, that's on our list, fornications we've talked about, murders, that's on our list, theft is on our list, covetousness is on our list, wickedness, deceit is on the list, lewdness, an evil eye, this is being prejudiced against the neighbor, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness. All these things are evil things come from within and they defile a man.

So there is an uncleanness and it proceeds out of the heart. So the tables of the law become a measuring stick, become a standard by which a man is evaluated with reference to righteousness or unrighteousness, cleanness or uncleanness, being defiled or being undefiled. Now turn with me to Matthew chapter 19.

There's a question at the beginning of that chapter that talks about divorce. We don't have time to review that, but look at verse 16 of Matthew 19. Behold, one came to him, good teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life? Now remember, these commandments that we're looking at in Exodus, God gives them and he says, I'm giving you these that you may live long in the land.

Do these commandments that you may live long in the land which the Lord your God is giving you. Remember that? The law over and over again, keep these commands so that you will live long in the land, the land of Canaan, the land of promise. But look at this, what must I do that I may have eternal life? Jesus says, why do you call me good? No one is good but one.

If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments. And we have an equivalence made here which we have recognized for a long time between entering the land and entering eternal blessing. If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.

He says which ones? Jesus says, look at your second table. Thou shalt not murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Honor your father and mother.

This is where I said maybe you might want to go with the six commandments on the second table because Jesus includes honor father and mother and you shall love your neighbor as yourself, which of course comes from Leviticus, not from Exodus. It is the summary. We just

saw that in our Leviticus reading.

Don't murder. Don't commit adultery. Don't steal.

Don't bear false witness. Honor your father and mother and love your neighbor as yourself. Which one is left out from the second table? Which one is left out? Covetousness.

The desire for material things is left out. And in its place, honor your father and mother and love your neighbor as yourself, which sort of sums them all up. The young man says all these things I kept for my youth, what do I still lack? Jesus says, well if you want to be complete, go sell what you have and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven and come follow me.

When the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful for he had great possessions. If we ever get to the place where we have possessions with which we cannot part, if our happiness depends on our possessions, we have crossed the line of covetousness. But you have this summary.

Jesus says nothing about the table related to God because those are sort of invisible. These are the visible manifestations. These are the ones we can see.

If you want to enter into life, it's important for us to understand the principles behind these Ten Commandments because if you want to enter into eternal life, eternal in the sense of quality, partake of the blessings and rewards that are a part of the bright future, our hope, we have to understand and be able to implement in our lives fulfilling these commands. Well, as you can tell, there's a lot more we have to say about this, but we're out of time for this morning. So let's close in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for giving us the truth of your word and illustrating it so beautifully and so clearly. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will impress these truths on our hearts. May we live in a way that is pleasing in your sight and glorifying to our Savior.

We ask it in his name. Amen.