

Matthew 19-06-23b

Let's resume our study now. We're looking at Jesus talking about fulfilling the law and one of the themes that we especially came to understand and develop in our Corinthians study is that we are Christ on this earth. The notion of being the body of Christ is not just a metaphor for unity or fellowship.

We represent, we stand in for, we are the physical presence of Christ on this earth or we should be. That is our calling and when Jesus says, I have come to fulfill the law, well, heaven and earth are still here so that fulfillment is ongoing. Well, he says, I have come, he is in the earth.

He didn't fulfill it in heaven. There wasn't a heavenly sacrifice, there wasn't a heavenly ministry of communication and representation of the fullness of deity and bodily form. It was on earth.

The Lord Jesus has left but that ministry of fulfillment still goes on. That's why heaven and earth are still here. Well, who is fulfilling it? You are.

I am. That is our calling. We should be fulfilling the law so it's important to understand how do we fulfill the law.

It is not enough to say, well, I've got to get out of jail free card because Jesus said, love the Lord and love your neighbor and I've got the law fulfilled. It's not quite that simple. What are the principles involved in loving one another? What is the extent of that love? What are its limits? What is its context? What are the conditions under which that love can be expressed or withdrawn? There is a time to snatch someone out of the fire, hating the garment defiled by the flesh.

There is another time to withdraw and treat someone as a heathen and a tax collector and what does that mean? What is the proper treatment of a heathen or a tax collector? It is not despising or being dismissive or being spiteful and vindictive and implacable and intolerant. There are specific instructions in the law for the treatment of those who need to be kept at a distance. What is that? Those principles pertain to you and to me right now.

You can't just quote a platitudinous abstraction and say, well, I love my neighbor and excuse yourself from responsibility for fulfilling the law. The yokes and the titles were not mentioned to no purpose. The details of the law matter and Jesus said you had better know and observe the details.

Old Testament scripture pertains directly to New Testament people without adumbration, without dilution, without distraction. We need to know the law so that we can keep it. Well, does this mean throw out the bacon and start meeting on Saturday?

What exactly does that mean? We're looking at this passage in Deuteronomy 22 to figure that out and it explains itself.

So we saw in the first 12 verses here that it is vital to distinguish the principles of purity, integrity, and responsibility in our personal behavior. That's timeless. Is there ever a time when you don't need to be pure? When you shouldn't strive for a life that isn't involved in sin or human good or evil? Should we be striving for integrity? Should we be endeavoring to be responsible to others and to God in every area of our life? It's not enough that something is not observed.

It's not enough that it is thoughts and intents in the heart and they can't be seen so it's okay. I can fantasize or I can explore forbidden possibilities in my mind or in my imagination because nobody's getting hurt. That's not purity.

That's not morality. Purity, integrity, dedication, commitment without admixture is required by the law and it's a very convicting realization that we are held just as much to that standard of purity, integrity, and responsibility as any Old Testament Israelite was under this law. We are essentially under this law just in a different way.

The principles are the same. The physical expression is different. Think about your Bible.

Go to any Pauline epistle and in your Bible you're not going to see a single word that Paul wrote. Well, you might see Maranatha. In the Gospels you might see Talitha, Kumi.

You'll see a few but basically the symbols that express the concepts of scripture are different now than they were in New Testament days and far different than they were in Old Testament days. We don't speak Hebrew. We don't speak Greek.

We don't speak Aramaic, right? And if you walk up to somebody unversed so to speak and say Maranatha, a lot of us don't even know what does that actually mean. Talitha, Kumi, what does that actually mean? Lama Sabachthani, what does that actually mean? Well, you've got to parse those symbols into something that's understandable in the modern day. That's what the law of Moses is.

It is a language of expression in a particular place, in a particular time, for a particular generation and dispensation of God's people. We need to be able to read that language and render it into modern day language. It is not a matter of bird nests and mothers and young for us.

It is a matter of leaving things as we found them in terms of resources and opportunities for those around us. And that's going to be a different expression. If you go to a public park and have a picnic, you shouldn't litter it and make it hard for the next person to use.

If you go to a motel room, have some consideration for the people who have to clean it

and get it ready for the next set of guests. You can sometimes carry that to an extreme. My wife will clean an apartment.

When the maid comes in, she's basically got almost nothing to do. The trash is already bagged. The sinks are already cleaned.

The floor has been picked up. The maid just walks in and says, well, I'm here for three minutes and I'm done. It's and I admire her for that because she's thinking about not being a burden to whoever comes next, whoever enters the room next.

Why should I make it more difficult for them? And that is the moral principle that is expressed with bird nests and eggs. It's expressed with a rail around the top of your house. We have different expressions in the modern day, but the moral principle is unchanged.

So in interpreting the law of Moses, the simple hermeneutical principle, the interpretive principle is be sure you distinguish between the time bound expression in the days of Israel and the timeless content of principle that it communicates. Right. You don't we don't say, well, if I really want to memorize scripture, I should memorize it all in Greek and Hebrew, even though I don't actually understand the syllables.

I'm just going to mumble it like a like a mantra and say all of these words and they have no meaning. It has to be meaningful in our day. So there's a different language today, but we must fulfill every single principle of the law expressed in these particular graphic examples given to Israel.

Clear. All right. Let's think about that now as we go to the second half.

This is considered to be one of the more difficult sections of the law of Moses because it seems unscientific. It seems arbitrary. It seems unfair.

It seems ignorant and it seems very harsh. A girl can suffer the death penalty just because and you'll forgive there's a little bit of graphic necessity in this section, but because she didn't bleed a little bit on her wedding night. And I'll step around this as gracefully as I can, but it's in scripture and we've got to cover it.

This was the language that is understood in Arab cultures today as an idea of purity. But let's take a look at what scripture actually says. I think you will be pleasantly surprised.

We begin here having that context in mind that in the modern day, for example, it's okay to mix cotton and polyester or have fleece on the inside and a nylon shell on the outside. There's nothing wrong with that. But if I were to label, and this happened to me, I bought a sweater when I was traveling in Rome, going to and from Lebanon, one thing, we were stuck in Rome for a while.

Nice place to be stuck, all things considered. But anyway, I went to a store and I bought a sweater and it said 100% virgin wool. And it was a very attractive price.

It was like in American by the time you translate it out of Italian lira or whatever it was, it was like 18 bucks. I thought, wow, this is a really nice pullover three button, really nice looking sweater. It's a hundred percent virgin wool, 18 bucks.

So I bought it. Well, long story short, I discovered after I got home, it wasn't wool at all. It was synthetic, but it was labeled as wool.

Now, granted they didn't charge me 80 bucks, but I still, I bought something that was represented to me as being one thing. And it was something else. And I felt cheated.

You don't want to buy something and find out it isn't what you had it represented as being. And that is a timeless principle. So Israel was to be boldly distinguished from the Amorites who preceded them in the land by exaggerated dedication to purity.

And the exaggeration is just like we do in conversation. I mowed the lawn and it nearly killed me. Well, it didn't nearly kill me.

I'm exaggerating to make an emphasis out of the point that it was tiring work, right? This language in scripture is an exaggeration of distinction in many cases, distinction with the people of the land who were corrupt and immoral and promiscuous and used sexual interactions in their worship, dedicated all kinds of priestesses and such to all kinds of profane and corrupt and just heinously practices that make you wince. They're so heinously immoral. And God said, you are to be distinguished by your dedication to purity and to consideration for others.

So you will not even sow two kinds of seed in the same field. Is there anything immoral in crop rotation or in using the same plot for two different things? Some people plant in their garden, they'll alternate rows of things for various reasons. I saw somebody who was growing watermelons.

And it's very interesting because now everybody wants seedless watermelons. I guess they don't like the seed spitting contests that are so much fun in the summertime. But seedless watermelons, well, you cannot grow seedless watermelons unless you also grow seedful watermelons.

Because the seedless watermelons have all female flowers and the seeded watermelons have male flowers. And it requires both in a field and bees to cross-pollinate or you don't get the seedless watermelons. And so any watermelon farm is going to have both.

And there's purists or old-fashioned types who really like seeded watermelons anyway. And there's an argument that they taste a little bit better than the ones that have been bred to have no seeds. But, well, is that immoral to grow two different kinds of

watermelons in the same field? You see why our context is important.

The immorality is not in the mixture. It is found in the principle that that mixture is designed as a language, as a symbolic language to express. It's like hieroglyphics.

Israel was to just be pure almost to a fault because it distinguished them as God's people. And that's why this section ends in verse 12. You shall make tassels on the four corners of literally the cover with which you cover yourself.

The cover with which this is the outermost garment. You don't hide your tassels on the inside. You know, people will have dog tags or a cross or something, but it's tucked inside their clothing.

You don't see it. This is designed to be visible. Whatever your outermost cover is, that's where the tassel or fringe goes.

And why do they have tassels and fringe? Well, you need a little bit wider context here to understand it. You might stick a marker or a finger or something here in Deuteronomy and flip back to Numbers chapter 15, which explains this in great detail. Numbers chapter 15, beginning in verse 37.

Numbers 15, 37 through 40. Numbers 15, 37 through 40. Again, the Lord spoke to Moses saying, speak to the children of Israel.

Who is this for? The children of Israel. Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners. And you shall have the tassel.

Here's why. That you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them. And that you may not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined.

And that you may remember and do all my commandments and be holy, separated, distinctively committed for your God. I am the Lord, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God. I am the Lord, your God.

You see the importance of those tassels. Now is the importance in the tassel? Can anybody sew a tassel on the garment and wow, are they good to go? It is the function of the tassel. Why does it have a blue thread, by the way? What is blue the color of? Loyalty, chesed, commitment, blue.

It's a blue thread, not a red thread for redemption, not white thread for purity. This is a blue thread. It's dedication.

It's commitment. It is loyalty, fealty, remaining faithful. It's a faithfulness tassel.

It's a faithfulness fringe and it's on your outermost garment. So you see it because you put that outer garment on anytime you leave your home and it is visible to others. You are to be holy to your God and you are to wear a badge of that commitment that is visible to yourself and to others.

It is a reminder, specifically to remember and do all my commandments. We don't have time to look at it, but the context of this in Numbers chapter 15, you notice we're starting at verse 37. The preceding context is intentional or presumptuous sin.

Did you sin willfully or did you sin accidentally? And immediately preceding this is the incident of the guy who picked up sticks on the Sabbath. They have just received the 10 commandments. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

Six days labor into all your work. The seventh is a day of rest. You shall do no work on God's Sabbath.

But while the children of Israel, verse 32, were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. Those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron to all the congregation, put him under guard because it had not been explained what should be done to him. They had the commandment, but what's the penalty? The Lord said to Moses, the man must surely be put to death.

All the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp. So as the Lord commanded Moses, all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him with stones and he died. Now, again, so important to distinguish expression versus principle.

Is there anything intrinsically wrong with picking up sticks? Is there anything intrinsically wrong with doing something that seems necessary on a Saturday? Why was this man given the death penalty for picking up a few sticks? Because it is an intentional, willful disregard for a clear command of God. And it is not the picking up sticks or some slight amount of work on the Sabbath that is being punished. It is the real infidelity.

It is the real corruption. It is the real sin of rebellion. It is a rebellious disregard for a clear command of God.

The rebellion suffers the death penalty. There's not a moral component to reaching down and picking up a bit of firewood or carrying it back to your tent. Clearly not.

And you say, well, of course they could do that in six days. It's because he did it on the Sabbath. Well, aren't the disciples later going to pick heads of grain to nourish themselves? Couldn't this guy be picking up sticks to build himself a fire? One situation there is a willful, rebellious, in-your-face disregard for a clear command of God.

In the case of the disciples, they are itinerant. The man had six other days to gather

firewood. There's no reason for him to be gathering it on the Sabbath.

He's doing it to show that he can color outside the lines. He's an Israelite. Are we not all God's chosen people? It's like the guys who decided they could be priests and they brought strange fire before the Lord.

Well, aren't we as good as any Levite? Why can't we bring fire before the Lord? Well, because when you do so, you are violating God's assignment in having you born in the tribe you were born in and the family and the clan that you were born in. And you deciding that you're going to be something God did not design you to be is willful disregard. Women who willfully go into the ministry and willfully take authority over men in the church are considered to be in this category.

There's debate back and forth, especially in the modern context of women's rights and such. But the argument against it from scripture is this is little different than the men who brought strange fire before the Lord and said, are we not all priests? Aren't we all equal? Why can't we do the function of a priest if we want to? Because you've not been given that assignment. And you're in this case, a woman and not a man.

And there is a symbolic element, even in the church with the authority that has been assigned and the opportunity for support and submission that has been assigned in the same way that the military assigns support and submission to enlisted people and authority and responsibility and accountability to officers and senior enlisted. There are assignments and it is God's framework for the beneficial function of human interactions that those assignments be respected as from God. If God wanted you to be a pastor and a teacher, he would have made you a man and given you the gift.

If he didn't, don't assign it to yourself. It's a sin of the high hand as this gathering of sticks one, and it is the high hand that is punished by death. That's the context for the tassels.

God says, you know, so that you remember that you have a dedication and a responsibility for commitment to remember and do these commands, make yourself a reminder. This is why we have refrigerator magnets. And most of the homes, nearly every home I go into to tune a piano, when I walk in, it's so refreshing because people have verses on the wall.

It's a reminder. I'm a believer. This is the word of God.

I am not my own. I was bought with a price. So I should glorify God in my physical existence, in my body and what my body does and how my body looks.

I represent Christ on this earth. And in this particular context, in Matthew chapter five, we are the means by which Christ continues to fulfill every jot and every tittle of the law. Is it fulfilling the specific expression? No, it is fulfilling every word that proceeded from

the mouth of God in terms of purity, responsibility, dedication, consideration for others.

Those are timeless. They apply for God's people from beginning to end, from Adam to the last human being that's born on this earth, all the way through to the end of the millennial kingdom, past the Gog Magog rebellion and into the kingdom of the Father. We have that responsibility.

And one yod and one corner of a letter is not going to pass away from that requirement until it is fulfilled. Well, we are in the process. We are called to be a part of that fulfillment of the law.

So when we study the law, we're not trying to figure out what foods we can eat and, well, is it seafood or what about bugs and the rest of it? Does it chew the good and divide the hoof? And what are we looking at? Are we committed to purity? Are we committed to remembering who we are and why we're here? To let our light so shine before men that they see a difference and they glorify God. Israel was supposed to stand out and be visibly distinct from all of the other peoples in the land. God said, I didn't pick you because you were mighty.

I didn't pick you because you were talented. I didn't pick you because you were, you were the least, you were a small, inconsiderable group, but I've dedicated you to me and you are going to be my representatives on earth. He said to Israel, you are the chosen people.

They're not chosen by heredity. They're not chosen by genetics per se. They are chosen because they entered into an agreement with God to represent him on this earth at Sinai and in subsequent acts of entering into covenant with God, they said, all the Lord has said, we will do.

And people could come from the outside, Ruth and Rahab and others, Uriah the Hittite and the Naaman, the Syrian could dedicate themselves to God. It wasn't genetic. People who are of faith are of Abraham.

Paul, the apostle, we don't have time to look at it, but you remember, he makes a big point out of in Isaac, shall thy seed be called? And we are the seed by faith. We are old Testament believers under the law in the sense of having responsibility to fulfill these yokes and tittles of the law in what they represent and what they communicate and what they mean. Now, quickly, let's get back to Deuteronomy 22, because those tassels on the four corners of the garment, they're expected to already know from numbers what those tassels are and what they mean.

You are dedicated to God. You represent him in the land. You represent him on this earth and you should be visibly different.

You should be distinct. I don't have a problem with people who put a fish on their car or

wear a cross around their neck if they're doing it because they understand this principle. I should be visible.

I should be present. I should look like a Christian. My life should reflect Christian values, biblical morality.

I should look like it. I should reflect it. People should know that about me in very short order.

I've got that fringe on my life. Right now, let's take a look at this somewhat cryptic requirement here. If any man takes a wife, goes into her, detests her, charges her with shameful conduct, brings a bad name on her and says, I took this woman.

When I came to her, I found she was not a virgin. I will tell you right now, this has nothing to do with a bloody piece of cloth. It's not in the scripture.

There is no cloth and there is no blood to be found in this passage at all. That has been imported by people trying to understand what it means. But it is eisegesis.

It is saying, well, there are some Arabs who believe and that goes back to what we think are ancient times. So therefore it was an ancient practice in Israel that that there had to be this piece of bloodstained cloth that would be an evidence of virginity. I want to read you something.

And again, pardon me for a slightly graphic nature, but it's necessary to make the point. And if nothing else, it will be memorable. Notice, first of all, the condition here.

It's like the bird's nest. It's not any old bird or any old young or any old eggs. It's when you're out in the way and you encounter a mother and her young.

It's a specific situation. Look at the specifics of this situation. This is not any old time to try to figure out if a girl is a virgin or not.

It's a specific situation and it's not any old marriage. It's not every marriage. The Arabs, this happens for every marriage.

And I say this, there's a few little strands in the Arabic world where they perpetuate this kind of weird thing of the bloody cloth. And it's weird and it's very unscientific. But the condition is the husband, after the honeymoon, immediately hates his bride.

He detests her. This is a strong word for revulsion. You will remember the situation where Amnon seduces his sister Tamar in David's household.

And he just can't think about anything but her. And his friend concocts this plot to finagle her into his presence. And then he basically attacks and rapes her, rapes his half-sister.

And immediately afterward, he hates her. The reality didn't live up to the fantasy. They say that rape as a crime is about power, not about, I can't wait to have fantastic fun in terms of stimulation and enjoyment.

It's a power thing. And whatever it was in Amnon's case, he immediately can't stand the sight of Tamar, detests her and hates her. Well, that's the idea here.

This husband has paid the bride price, entered into contract with the father, has taken the girl, they've had the wedding, they've had the wedding night. And now this guy hates her, wishes he hadn't married her, just finds her detestable. That's the first condition.

He immediately detests her. And as a function of this hatred, he begins to bring a bad name on her. Now, what does it mean to bring a bad name? He's talking.

He's gossiping. He's slandering. He is maligning.

He's saying, oh, everybody thought she was so pretty, but she's terrible as a wife in the physical department. It's just awful. And he brings a bad name on her.

And then he begins to disparage her character and say, I don't think she was pure. I don't think she was chaste. I think she was probably sleeping with other guys before I married her.

And he's just bad mouthing her all over the place. What is your recourse in a situation like this? What is the protection for a wife who has to be submissive to her husband in Israel, as in the church, and the guy is just trashing her all over town? What can she do? Well, under the law, she does nothing. She doesn't do anything.

Never answers this charge. She's not even in view. She doesn't show up at any part of this regulation at all.

Evidently, she is not even present when this case is brought to court because this guy, and essentially his charge is that he was deceived and cheated into marrying a girl who was represented to him to be a virgin. This is his more or less actual charge. She wasn't a virgin.

I was cheated. Her father sold her to me, so to speak, with the bride price. I paid the dowry and I didn't get what I was promised.

She was unchaste. She's damaged goods. She's corrupt.

She's defiled. If we have a child, I don't know if it's going to be mine. I don't know how long ago it was that she, and there's actually a little bit of irony.

Up above, we had the idea of mixed seeds. Don't have mixed seeds in the same

vineyard, so to speak. Well, if there's a child born, I'm not even sure it's going to be mine.

This is a horrible charge of corruption that he brings against the wife. How is she going to answer this? Well, she doesn't answer it at all because this is not just a slam on her character. It is a direct attack on her father because in Israel and in many parts of culture, even down to today, a father is the shield of protection and provision for his daughters.

She is to live in her father's house until that responsibility for her care and her provision and her protection and that umbrella of safety and security is transferred from the father to the husband. That's the transaction. She goes from being under her father's roof to under her husband's roof, and she is always provided for.

She is treasured. She is guarded. She is cared for meticulously.

A husband is to love his wife as he loves his own flesh. Paul talks about in Ephesians, right? And he is to take as much care of her as if it was his own self. Talk about love your neighbor as yourself.

You should love your wife even better than yourself. Put yourself out sacrificially on her behalf. Well, he's doing the exact opposite.

He's disparaging and defaming her and her conduct before the marriage, which reflects directly on the father. He's basically saying this father didn't do his job, didn't secure this girl, provide for her, keep her safe, keep her chaste. And so the charge is officially against the father.

It's the father's responsibility to ensure all of the features of his daughter's well-being, including her chastity. So notice that when the husband says his wife isn't a virgin, he has no grounds in the law to take this charge to the elders. There's no provision in the law that says if a husband finds that his new wife isn't a virgin, he is to go before the elders and make his case and they are to adjudicate and see if there's a bloody gun.

He doesn't bring a charge. All of this is unofficial. He's slandering and bad-mouthing and disparaging the reputation of the entire family through her.

And who brings the formal charge? The recourse is for her father to make a formal case. He formally takes the son-in-law to court and the charge is defamation of character. So the father goes to the elders in the gate with what you have in the King James or New King James.

It says tokens of her virginity or evidence of her virginity. But you notice that's in italics. He is to bring her virginity.

It's the Hebrew word *betulai*. And it's a word that represents a concept, not a piece of physical evidence. We've been talking about the distinction between a principle or an idea and the expression thereof in symbolic terms.

Well, he is to bring the concept, the notion of her virginity. He is to bring her virginity. How do you bring somebody's virginity before the court? Well, we'll find out shortly.

But right now it just says that he is to go to the elders in the gate with her virginity. There's no word for token, evidence, anything here. It's the word virginity.

And he is to tell the elders about the hatred and the slander that the husband has been spreading. And then he is to lay before them, to present to them her virginity. Well, heavens, what could this be? How do you physically express someone's moral purity? Then you'll notice that once this presentation is made, it says in verse 15, the father and mother of the young woman take and bring out the young woman's virginity, scratch out evidence of.

It's not there. The father and mother shall take and bring out. They take out and spread out is the two Hebrew words here.

They take out, meaning they've brought it out of the house and they spread out, they display. This word for spread out is used of bird wings. In fact, in Judges 8.25, we have this same verb and noun used for spreading it out.

We'll see that here in a minute. But they take it out and they spread it out before the elders. And once that presentation is made, the father says in verse 16, I gave my daughter to this man as wife and he detests her.

He has charged her with shameful conduct, saying, I found your daughter not a virgin. And yet these, my daughter's virginity, it's plural. Here, the demonstrative is in the plural.

These, my daughter's virginity. And they, that's the mother and father, shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. It says spread the cloth.

Well, here's what is physically manifest because, uh, with all of the context that we've seen as background, and we see this, we see this court case that is brought by the father against the new son-in-law, father brings the charge. Now the father is to display this virginity by whatever physical means it's, let's just leave that aside for the moment. In some fashion, you could potentially say, maybe it's a bloody cloth, maybe it's something else, but it's something that represents the daughter's virginity.

The daughter is not present. So it's nothing related to her. There's no physical examination involved here.

They bring and display to the elders this evidence. What happens then? Verse 18, then the elders of that city shall take that man and punish him, find him a hundred shekels of silver, give them to the father because he brought a bad name on a virgin of Israel. And that bad name reflects on the father.

That's why the shekels go to the father and not the girl, because it is besmirched and slandered the father's role in taking care of his daughter, securing her, protecting her, harboring her in safety and security and purity in his own house, purity in his own house. And she shall be his wife. He cannot divorce her all his days.

He's expressed this hatred. Well, he's stuck with her. He's got no opportunity to make any other case for divorce that you can find elsewhere in the law.

Those options are closed to him. But if the thing is true, and then you have this stoning at the father's doorstep. Now, let me ask you in practical terms, what is the sequence of events here? This husband is badmouthing the purity of his new wife.

Notice the inevitable, unavoidable, unstoppable sequence of events. If he does this and the father takes the case to the elders, it is the father that takes the case. Bride has no choice.

Husband has no choice. This is the father who makes the case. He presents the virginity to the elders, and it's a slam dunk.

This guy is fined. He is chastised, and he is without the option of divorce until the end of his days. Now, ask yourself this question.

If the guy is slandering my daughter, who I just gave in marriage, and for some reason, I don't have the virginity, whatever it is, to present to the elders, am I going to bring this case to the elders in the first place? Why would I do that? Because if I can't, if I don't already have that evidence in hand, I would be a complete insane nutcase to make the charge, oh, wait, I don't have any evidence, and now my daughter is being stoned to death on my doorstep, and I'm a pariah and an outcast socially, morally, and every other way. It's been demonstrated that I'm an idiot, and I've got my dead daughter on my doorstep to prove it. No father is ever going to bring this case unless he is confident and certain that he and his wife can present whatever this virginity is to the elders.

It's never going to happen. I promise you, and we'll find out in glory, but I can tell you right now, the second half, if she is found guilty, never happened in Israel. Why would you do that? Why would you bring the case to defend your daughter's honor, fail to prove it, and have her executed on your doorstep? It makes no sense.

It would never happen. The only father that is ever going to bring this case, and you think the mother is going to let her daughter be stoned on her own doorstep? She's going to say, now, you know, Benaiah, what the heck are you think you're doing trying to

bring this charge? We don't have the evidence. You're just going to get her killed and us disgraced and make us pariahs in Israel for the rest of our lives.

They're never going to bring this case unless they have this item, whatever it is. And once that's spread before the elders, it doesn't say the elders shall examine it and decide if it's worthy or they will make any further inquiry or investigation or take testimony or listen to any further talk from the husband. Once this thing is shown, the husband's guilty.

He is chastised, fined, and stuck with the gal for the rest of his life. It's a slam dunk. All the father and mother have to do is bring whatever this is, right? So why even have the provision for stoning on the doorstep? What does that do? Well, what does it say? Bring the young woman to the door of her father's house.

Why the door of her father's house? It's his fault on two counts. First of all, he didn't secure her and do his job of making sure that she was a virgin in Israel. And secondly, he's an idiot for bringing the case and not being able to prove it, which I promise you nobody would ever do.

They bring the young woman out of her father's house. The men of the city stone her to death with stones. Why? Because she has done a disgraceful thing in Israel, playing the harlot in her father's house, playing the harlot in her father's house.

Two quick observations here. A, there is no penalty in the law of Moses for playing the harlot. There is no enjoining against houses of prostitution or prostitutes practicing and applying their trade in Israel.

Look in the law of Moses, harlotry in terms of unmarried women prostituting themselves. There is no charge and there's no penalty in the law of Moses. Very interesting.

This girl hypothetically suffers the death penalty, not for being a harlot, but where she does it. Remember the sticks on the Sabbath? It isn't, it's anything wrong with. I'm not saying that there's nothing wrong with being a harlot.

What I'm saying is under the law, it wasn't the picking up of sticks. That was the crime. It was the attitude behind it here.

This girl is in keeping with the context. She is still walking around in her father's house, assumed to be looking like a virginal, marriageable young woman, when in fact she is playing the harlot. It's not playing the harlot that is in view for the death penalty here.

It is in her father's house because young women living in their father's house are by default chaste, pure, protected. And when they are given to a young man to become his wife in exchange as a token of that contract, a bride price, that's a contract made in good faith. And she has betrayed that good faith.

She's betrayed her father. She's betrayed anybody that takes her to wife. And she is stoned for that, representing herself to be something she is not.

She allowed herself to be sold hypothetically again to this young man as a virgin bride when she wasn't. And that is the moral transgression for which the death penalty comes. It is impudent sin.

It is willful disregard for what she's supposed to be in her father's house. And it is wearing bridal clothes as a virginal bride when she's not one. And God's intolerance of that kind of hubris and moral corruption is reflected in the severity of this what we would see as hypothetical penalty.

It's kind of like the hypothetical penalty of a rebellious teenager in Israel being taken out and stoned by the community. Parents are convicting themselves if they have an uncontrollable child. And are they really going to make this charge to the elders and have their rebellious teenager taken out and stoned? It would have to be, you know, did this ever happen in Israel? There's no record that it ever did in the Bible or outside of it.

But it is another expression. It is a symbol. It's a hieroglyph for God's attitude toward impudent, arrogant, defiant sin, self-interested disregard and deception to cover it and to try to make out and get yourself married when you've been playing the harlot and you will continue to play the harlot in your husband's house, just as you did in your father's house.

God says, I won't tolerate that. And you should not tolerate it in your community. So he says, you shall put away the evil from among you.

Now, in our final few minutes, I just want to talk about this. What is it? You still have the question. What is it that is presented to the elders? Well, it's not a bloody cloth.

It's referred to as her betule, her virginity up above. But then, and by the way, to know that this is the concept of virginity, uh, this, this, uh, word is used in, uh, the previous, uh, in a previous context in Leviticus 21, 13, just make a note. You can circle, cross out evidences of, or token of circle virginity and put Leviticus 21, 13.

The high priest is required to take a wife in her betule, same word. Now, is he taking a wife in her bed sheet? Is he taking a wife in her bloodstained cloth? No, he is taking a wife in her virginity. This, this is in the sense of somebody who has not been married before someone who is a virgin daughter in Israel.

This is her first and only marriage and so on. In her betule, she cannot be experienced. This, this needs to be a formal assured purity transaction for the high priest.

It doesn't say other people can't do this or that a prostitute couldn't eventually change her ways and get married. You have one of the prophets doing this later on. Remember

Gomer? Uh, but this is a different case.

The high priest can't do that. The girl might mend her ways and say, you know, I, I askew and, and, uh, reject and I'm walking away from that former life and I want to enter into a new life. My faith has come alive and a man might graciously marry her.

High priest can't be that man. He's got to take a woman in her virginity. There's two subsequent uses outside Deuteronomy.

Judges 11, 37, and 38. Remember Jephthah's daughter? He promises the first thing that comes out of the house will be dedicated to the Lord. And I don't have time to talk about the fact that she was not made a burnt offering.

Um, there'll be some notes on the web that you'll be able to download. Watch in the, uh, Matthew folder for a link. I've got a six page summary of our two lessons this morning that include a footnote on Jephthah's daughter.

Don't have time to cover it. Trust me when I tell you she was not made a burnt offering. She was fully dedicated to the Lord.

Jephthah said, and this is the only thing that makes sense even out of his vow. When you look at his vow, just real quickly, he says, Lord, if you'll give me victory over the Ammonites, I will dedicate to you the first thing that comes out of my door or it there's a wow there. And wow is regularly often, usually properly translated or, or I will make a burnt offering dedicating the first thing that comes out of the house could be he he's not silly making a dedication.

He might dedicate. Usually the servants would come out. They would see the master coming home and a servant would come out.

He'd say, I'll take that servant and I will dedicate him to the Lord. I'll take him out of the household and I will send him to serve the Lord, help the high priest, do whatever. I will dedicate him to hewing wood and calling, hauling water, whatever.

And that's what he expected. He did not expect his daughter to come out and he had to dedicate her. And this is why she says, it's fine dad, but let me go with my companions and bewail my betulai, identical, same word, not bewail my bedsheets or bewail my bloody cloth, bewail my virginity because she is now going to be perpetually a virgin.

She's dedicated to the Lord. And this is, this would be on the order of what Catholic nuns think they should do. Well, I'm dedicated to the Lord.

I can't marry. And that, that was the nature of this vow dedicated to the Lord means she can't be dedicated to a husband. And she says, let me go to the hills.

And she doesn't say, let me bewail my impending death. Let me bewail my being burned

alive on the altar. She says, let me bewail my betulai, same word here, that which is presented before the elders, bewail my, my virginity.

Because if you look at the context, Jephthah was the son of a prostitute. He was, he was a bastard son of his father and his brethren rejected him and kicked him out. So his mother was not married and now his daughter won't be married.

And that's the end of the line. She's his only daughter. He has no other children.

It's the end of the Jephthah line in Israel. And so she bewails this situation on the hills with her companions. It's her virginity.

She's never going to have children through marriage. It's, it's the end of the Jephthah line. So that's what's going on.

That's betulai. Well, it's also used in Ezekiel 23, verse three and verse eight, just write it down. Ezekiel 23, three and eight.

And God pictures the spiritual immorality and corruption of the Northern and Southern kingdoms. He says, your sisters in impurity and you allow, and let me just say it as abstractly as I can. You can read the context, but they allow the intimate fondling of their bodies.

And this is the upper body graphically in Hebrew. He says, you've allowed yourself to be handled and fondled outside of marriage and you have corrupted your betulai in so doing. You're not a virgin.

The Bible understands that moral impurity is what corrupts virginity. And it doesn't have to be the simple act of, of formal, what we would call, you know, missionary position relations. Anything of an intimate, impure nature corrupts betulai.

And there is an interview I was reading about these Arab people who have that custom of the bloody cloth. And this woman they were interviewing said, you know, I've got friends that engage in every different kind of imaginable sexual exploration with their boyfriends, except the one thing that might prevent them from potentially being able to produce this little piece of bloody evidence. And she says, you call that purity? I mean, they, you can't believe the stuff that they do.

They'll do everything but that one thing. And she said, if that's your idea of purity, that's just silly. That's not purity just because you avoid one particular manifestation of, of all of these kinds of intimacy.

She said, that's just ridiculous. And of course it is, and that's not what the Bible is talking about. So what is this betulai that is to be brought out? Be sure you read by the way, that Ezekiel 23, three and eight in terms of what, what happens to your quote unquote

virginity, just in improper intimacy, because there's a lot of Christian girls today who have the same attitude as those Arabs.

Well, as long as I don't do the formal deed, everything else is on the table and there's all kinds of other ways of stimulating and provoking and, and pleasuring one another all, but the actual act that might result in a pregnancy. Nonsense. God says himself in Ezekiel 23, three and eight, using that example of his people as a metaphor, representing their spiritual impurity, their spiritual corruption, their spiritual departure and disloyalty, and they're condemned for it.

And the same is true in the modern day. So what is this real quickly now, when it says, these are the betulai of my daughter and both parents then spread. And it says the cloth and your new King James, the word is not cloth.

It is Shimla, S H I M apostrophe L A H. It is Hashimla. Shimla everywhere in scripture means garment. It was a Shimla that Shem and Japheth put on their shoulders and walk backward to cover Noah with.

They didn't wrap him in his bedsheets. They had, and they didn't have bedsheets outside his tent. They had a cloak.

They had an outer garment and they grabbed two pieces of this Shimla, this mantle, and they walked backwards and they covered in my view, their mother, who had been intimate with their brother, Ham. And the nakedness of the father in the law, look at it. If you have relations, you've uncovered your father's naked.

You have a relationship with the mother. You've uncovered the father's nakedness. What is the father's nakedness? It is intimate relations with his wife.

And that explains the whole curse on Canaan. Why was Canaan cursed instead of Ham? He's the product of that union. And it is the same as when Reuben defiled his father's bed and went into the concubine.

Anyway, long story. But this is Hashimla. You can look this up in any lexicon, go to 8071, Strong's number, 8071, Shimla.

Look it up on Bible Hub. There'll be a link for that in these notes I'm posting, but read everywhere that it is used. It is very straightforwardly everywhere used for a garment.

It is clothing, not a cloth. Show the clothing. Now, how is clothing going to represent her virginity? When you go to Ruth chapter three, verse three, when Ruth is going to put on her Shimla and go to Boaz, this is the sign of her proper chaste eligibility.

She's been married before, but she's a widow and she is back to a virgin status because virginity in Israel is purity, not necessarily your physical status. And she is once again, a

young marriageable girl. And she puts on the Shimla of a marriageable girl.

This was provided by the father for his daughters. And Shimla is used both with this verb and the noun in Judges 8.25. As I mentioned earlier, look up Judges 8.25. It says, spread out the garment. That's what it is here.

Spread out the garment. It's translated, spread out the garment in Judges 8.25. And it should be translated that way here. It is a garment.

It is the particular attire that virgins in the sense of marriageable young women wore in Israel. You can see it in the Amnon and Tamar context in 2 Samuel chapter 13, 2 Samuel 13, 11 through 19. Read that.

Once Tamar has been raped, the first thing she does is get up and tear her Shimla. She tears her garments because she can't wear them anymore. She has been defiled and she is going to remain much as the daughter of Jephthah unmarried for the rest of her life.

And she tears the Shimla as a sign of this change in status that will prevent her from ever getting married. And she remains unmarried in her father's house for the rest of her days. Read that 2 Samuel chapter 13, same word.

It is Shimla. Look up the Strong's number. Everywhere in the Old Testament, you find Shimla.

It is translated garment. It is a mantle. It is an outer covering.

And in the same way that looking at the third finger, the left hand of a girl in our, used to be not so much now, but in earlier days in Western culture, if there's no ring, you're advertising that, hey, you can date me. If I'm spoken for, I'll either have an engagement ring or a marriage, a wedding ring. But empty third finger, left hand, that's a sign.

In Hawaii, I learned this in the fourth grade. We studied Hawaii and my dad had a potential set of orders to Hawaii and I was anxious to learn all about it. We actually had a luau in my fourth grade class.

But there is a tradition and it's something of a secret in Hawaii where if you wear a flower behind your left ear in Hawaii, and it's usually like a hibiscus or something, but the flower behind the left ear, that's a married woman. If the flower is behind the right ear, she's unmarried. And you can look at a girl who's got a flower in her hair and whichever ear it's behind, she's available or she's spoken for.

Well, that's what this Shimla was in Israel. And all the father has to do to win this case is bring the Shimla that he provided for his daughter and he says, I did my job. I dressed my daughter in this robe.

She exchanged this virgin robe for her bridal attire in my home. You have to ask the

question, if the honeymoon happened in the husband's tent and he doesn't want the father to bring a charge, all he's got to do is wad up the bedsheets, not letting anybody have them. How do the parents end up with this virginity that they can spread before the elders? Because the bride changed clothes in her father's house.

She wore her virginal Shimla for the last time in her father's house. She hung that in the closet, put on her bridal gown, so to speak, and got married. And if the husband brings any disparaging remarks against that girl in terms of her purity and did the father do his job, the father and mother get that robe out of the closet and say this is what she was dressed in and that's a slam dunk.

Now is that actual physical proof of anything? Could she have been wearing that and actually be a rascal girl perhaps? But it is a symbol of purity and it is a vouchsafing of purity. Now what is the application of that? Because you say, well, it seems like just like the bloody cloth that could be so easily used to perpetrate an injustice. The visible symbols communicate the principle.

Now if people have subverted that, it's just like the Pharisees who make a great show of righteousness, but inside they're full of dead men's bones and it's a whitewash. Could somebody whitewash this situation and maybe the girl really wasn't a virgin? God says we're not getting into the actualities. You are a symbolic people and you are to represent before the world purity and the father is to say this girl was pure and you married her as such and it's on him if it wasn't actually the case because it was his responsibility to ensure that.

And so he comes before the elders and all he does, he and the mother spread out this garment just like Judges 8.25. They lay the virginal garment before the elders, case closed. There's no discussion, there's no examination, there's no extra witnesses, there's no calling the husband up to say what's your side. As soon as when they say look, this is what she was dressed in when this guy paid the bride price.

As far as anybody's concerned, she's a virgin, that's what he took her as, that's what she is, case closed. That is symbolic language for the requirement of purity in Israel. Now what is the application? You think well my goodness, how could we ever have an application out of that? I just want you to think about the fact that we don't have resort to elders in the gate today.

We can't bring a piece of clothing and win the case. But do you notice who brings the evidence that settles the case? And he says this is my daughter's purity. This is the badge and the token and this settles the judgment.

Nobody can ever say again that she's impure or unchaste because the elders in the gate have decided the case. Judgment has been made regardless that she is pure and righteous and anybody bringing a charge has to shut up now. Vindication at the

judgment through appeal to righteousness provided by the father.

Think about that. What's going to happen when we go before the elders in the gate? When we stand before the judgment? I have no other righteousness. I have no other plea except that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's son, was shed for me.

And the father is going to accept the evidence of our guiltlessness. The father provided it. The father is going to bring it to the judgment and that settles the judgment.

Our righteousness is guaranteed by our father in heaven who sent his only son to secure it and assign it to us even though we don't rightly deserve it. Right? We don't deserve and we didn't earn the righteousness that is our plea and that will settle our case at the judgment and we are forever considered pure and chaste. And this is where they come up with the concept of the bride of Christ in Ephesians chapter 4 that might present to himself a glorious church not having spot or blemish or any such thing, spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish.

Well, we are spotted and wrinkled and we're full of blemishes, but Christ presents the church to himself pure. And that's what this ritual does. And it is to be the case for the people in Israel, purity, commitment, an unmixed dedication and consideration for others.

If this girl really does have trouble, the father has a responsibility to not engage her and marry her off to a guy. If he knows that she can't be trusted with herself, what father would palm her off onto a guy? What does that say about the father? Well, this ritual is designed to communicate in its specifics, the timeless responsibility that God's people have to be pure and chaste, fully dedicated to be what they are represented to be. That virginal garment is just like the earlier things we saw in the chapter in terms of labeling as you're not a man wearing woman's clothes.

You're not a woman wearing man's clothes. You're not a promiscuous girl wearing virginal clothes. You are to be what you are represented to be and nothing else.

So the notion that, well, this was written by fallible people and they were unscientific and they thought if you didn't bleed on your wedding nights, you weren't a virgin and all that, that is a misunderstanding and a misinterpretation based on exporting things from the outside. This is all about that garment David provided for his daughters, Reid, 2 Samuel. Jephthah's daughter would have to wear that garment for the rest of her life because of her dedication to the Lord.

That's what the word means. That's what it says. And you can see the assignment of responsibility to the father.

He provides that garment and if anything goes wrong, it is literally on his doorstep as a result. Somebody came in that door that shouldn't have if she's playing the harlot in her

father's house. But this case is never going to come to court unless he's got that virgin garment hanging in the closet.

And it's trivially easy for he and the mother to bring it. Case closed. All on the father.

The father brings the case. The father settles the case. The elders administer the rightful punishment to the hateful husband.

Well, plenty of food for thought there. We'll close in prayer and pick up in Matthew 5 next time. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for the opportunity we have to dedicate our lives to you and to the principles that reflect your righteousness and your grace, your forgiveness and the salvation that has been offered to everyone through your son, the Lord Jesus. We pray that we can be worthy representatives of him on this earth, that we can let our light so shine that others will see our good works and glorify you. We pray all these things in Jesus name.

Amen.