

Countercultural Compassion

General Topic: God: The Source of Justice

Sunday, January 30, 2022

Author: Lola J Thrower, MS

Lesson Text: Deuteronomy 24:10-21

Background Scripture: Deuteronomy 24

(Deu 24:10) When thou dost lend thy brother any thing, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge. (Deu 24:11) Thou shalt stand abroad, and the man to whom thou dost lend shall bring out the pledge abroad unto thee. (Deu 24:12) And if the man be poor, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge: (Deu 24:13) In any case thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment, and bless thee: and it shall be righteousness unto thee before the LORD thy God. (Deu 24:14) Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates: (Deu 24:15) At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the LORD, and it be sin unto thee. (Deu 24:16) The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin. (Deu 24:17) Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the stranger, nor of the fatherless; nor take a widow's raiment to pledge: (Deu 24:18) But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee thence: therefore I command thee to do this thing. (Deu 24:19) When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands. (Deu 24:20) When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. (Deu 24:21) When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. (Deu 24:22) And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

Lesson Objectives:

Moses, again, provides additional marching orders for the Israelite nation, that is fresh, young, and needed spiritual direction to behave righteously with each other, as well as other nations. She was to always remember where she came from.

Questions to Ponder:

Discuss the first principle in outline one and role play how that might be resolved (or not) in the present century.

Discuss ways believers can walk out the last principle in everyday, run of the mill, life.

How can your local church affect real change in the lives of the local community? (This might be a great project to undertake in '22! Lay it out, get permission, and assign tasks. It would serve to meet a need caused by this pandemic!)

Teaching Tools:

Word puzzles may be developed from the following site: www.puzzlemaker.com. Also, www.dtlk.com has several visual aids that may be beneficial, as well as www.kidssundayschool.com which provide other helps for teaching.

Bible Journaling may be an interesting way to involve older teens in self-expression of the lessons they are taught. Visit www.lifeway.com/Articles/how-to-start-bible-journaling-in-six-easy-steps to find ways to use this valuable tool to learn and reinforce Scripture.

Movie Clips are a wonderful teaching tool to further explain or create topics of discussion for a variety of age groups; www.wingclips.com provides clips divided by movie title, category, scripture, or theme. Clips may be accessed on any electronic device.

The Lesson:

We are still focused on using the justice of God as our measurement for our own attitudes toward people different from us. This was God's attitude toward the families that would live around them. It's hard to live around others who are different than you; however, both sides must employ some give and take if justice is to take place.

This nation was young and inexperienced; consequently, Moses knew they would need repeated instruction to ensure the bond of peace. Pretty much what we need to be sure that we behave as Kingdom Kids, in harmony

with one another. The one thing I do understand is that personalities clash, without regard to godliness. We have to be constantly reminded that our differences do not have to separate us. When we learn how to live righteously, we will have chaos licked! But I digress!

The first outline, Deuteronomy 24:10-13, probably lunged out into my psyche, as I envisioned how things would fall out without adherence to this principle. I was reminded of the western's I've seen where a man was gunned down without warning.

In the event of an unpaid debt, the lender cannot bust into the borrower's home to get his payment. This was to keep the lender from pilfering off items belonging to the borrower; especially those not agreed upon in the initial transaction. Anger from not being paid could very well result in the lender feeling he could overthrow the borrower, taking what he wanted to settle the debt. I love the way God forces men to behave as gentlemen with one another. The scripture says that the lender must stand abroad, meaning outside the lender's home (I'm assuming at a reasonable distance) and wait for the borrower to come out to him. No need in disturbing the man's entire family to collect a debt.

Middle eastern living arrangements were not as plush as our times, where some houses/apartments have at least seven rooms. They lived in one room huts; everything took place in that spot. There was no privacy. So, any little disturbance involved everyone in the house. God would not allow them to run over one another. Some conflict can be stopped before it happens. Believers should be willing to avoid creating unnecessary conflict when possible.

Get this: if the man were poor and all he had to offer at the time, for payment of his debt, was his cloak, which was often used as a blanket to keep one warm at night, the lender was allowed to take the cloak but had to return it before nightfall to keep the borrower from being uncomfortable on those cold middle eastern nights. Now, you might find this humorous and/or ridiculous, but keep in mind that God's thoughts and ways are not ours. I'm so glad!

Now, it gets even better. When the cloak is returned, the borrower is supposed to bless the lender because he was able to rest well AND this is the best part: the lender's righteousness would be held before the Lord! Who would not serve a God like this?!

Moses essentially writes that one's righteousness is measured by the degree of justice he extends to another. Kill me now! So often, in the household of faith, where everyone is in the same situation before God, a sinner;

we often treat each other worse than folk on the street. Even the homeless know how to huddle together to keep one another warm. Folks, we simply must do better!

The second outline, Deuteronomy 24:14-18 provides the following principles:

Take care of the poor and needy. If someone performs a service for you, please pay them! It did not matter what their nationality, they should be paid the agreed upon wage for their service. God said to avoid the sun going down before he receives payment; otherwise, he will cry unto the Lord about you and it will be counted to you, as sin! Ouch! I like it!

God will not allow us to take advantage of one another. He is concerned about ALL of His children.

Furthermore, each one will die for his own sin! Israel's judicial system called for equity among criminal behavior; consequently, every tub sat on its own bottom. Families were not to be persecuted for the missteps or criminal behavior of one. What has the world come to when someone will kill an entire family in an attempt to exact revenge on one person? The Bible says 'every man shall be put to death for his own sin.'

The last principle in this outline is that God wanted the Israelites to give special attention to the oppressed. They were especially forbidden to take advantage of the widow, the poor, and the stranger. He always led them to remember how it felt to be looked over and mulled down when they were in captivity to the Egyptians. Perhaps, a look back gives us caution before moving forward. Nobody wants to be treated like a nobody!

In God's economy every man is sufficiently cared for!

In the last outline, Deuteronomy 24:19-21, God purposefully makes provision for those without by commanded the people to leave something in the field and on the olive and grape vine for the oppressed so they can be fed, also. I do not know, but perhaps they might be able to sell some of what they gather to support other needs they may have.

As God cares for those without, so must we. We are His children and should love as we have been loved. Making sacrifices for someone else is always an excellent way to show that you are concerned about what concerns them.

I cannot imagine being loved by God and not being able to love someone else. It is hard for me to watch someone hurting without trying to help in some small way. I guess that's one reason why I am not wealthy; I'd always find a way to give it away.

The lessons over the past few weeks demonstrate that God wants us to love justice, as He loves justice. There is always a right time to live life God's way!

Be Salt! Be Light! Be Blessed!