

Leviticus 19-20

Good Evening church.

VBS Announcement

Well, tonight we are going to continue our study of the riveting book of Leviticus.

And I have just had a wonderful time going through this book with you so far.

If you remember, we are in the midst of a section called by many as the “Holiness Code.”

We saw in chapter 17 the Sanctity of Life and Blood; in chapter 18, we discussed God’s Laws of Sexual Morality.

And tonight, in Chapter 19 we will get what seems to be a random wrap-up of moral and ceremonial laws.

Chapter 19 is a deeper look or explanation really of the 10 Commandments, but not in order.

When we get to Chapter 20, we will see God’s penalties for breaking His Holy Code of Conduct.

Now this Holiness was the central separating factor for this Nation of Slaves.

They were separated from the many surrounding nations that would be idolaters and full of immorality.

These Holy Laws would serve as a protective barrier to this New Nation.

They would be in the midst of rebellious and wicked people, who God was ridding the previous tenants from land of because of their wickedness.

This Holiness would be a part of every aspect of the Jews lives.

In every action, and all the day-to-day routines, they would have constant reminders that they were different, and called out to be a special people for God.

Chapter 18 ended with **Lev. 18:30 'Therefore you shall keep My ordinance, so that you do not commit any of these abominable customs which were committed before you, and that you do not defile yourselves by them: I am the Lord your God.'**"

This shows us, although the nations that previously were in the Land of promise were not God's Covenant people, God has an expectation on all of humanity, and what the Canaanites were doing in the land, was detestable to Him.

God was warning the Nation of Israel, to keep themselves separate from the worldly influences and customs, which were in the Land.

It is a similar admonition we Christians get in the New Testament.

2 Cor. 6:17-18 Therefore

"Come out from among them

And be separate, says the Lord.

Do not touch what is unclean,

And I will receive you."

18 'I will be a Father to you,

And you shall be My sons and daughters,

Says the Lord Almighty."

Our lives should be set apart from this world.

If we are, acting and looking like the world that we are called to be separate from we confuse the unbeliever.

What fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness?

Now this law will not produce in the nation of Israel the Holiness it demands.

God here will reveal the righteousness of the Law.

And as we read through it, we will see the enormity of all that it requires.

The Law was incomplete.

Rom 3:19-20 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Today we have the Holy Spirit indwelling in us, through the Grace we received from God, He comes in and Christian living then becomes possible.

A Holy Life, A Holy Separation is impossible without the empowering of the Holy Spirit through the New Covenant.

And as we journey through the Old Testament, we will see this Law, as good as it is, could not bring sustaining holiness to the Nation of Israel.

So, let us get into, and read the conditions that would separate God's people from the evil influences surrounding them...

Now, because the content is not in any particular order, we just go through and discuss each item as it is listed here.

Moral and Ceremonial Laws

19:1 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: 'You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.

We once again see the source of these Laws.

This is not any man's agenda to legislate a nation.

These are God's demands, and the purpose is to separate them out and guide them to Holiness.

These laws are to be observed by all the citizens in this new nation.

No matter if they are poor or rich, have position or are an outcast.

All the people will be required to be Holy.

The whole congregation of Israel will be responsible to maintain this witness to their God.

Today as a church, we have a responsibility as well to maintain a witness to this same God, our relationship is through Grace, but we are still expected to maintain a separate life.

You should be different than the worldly influences that are in your lives.

The Apostle Peter says...

1 Peter 1:13-16 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of

Jesus Christ; 14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; 15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."

Our lives as Christians should stand out as ethical, moral, good, and most importantly loving.

The heart of this Holy Law, will be love for God and for our fellow human.

As we live our lives as a Holy witness to God, it should leave an undeniable witness for God.

When people look at your lives they should see Him.

There is no doubt in the workplace or your schools, or even among your family they will hold you to a higher standard once you mention the fact that you are a Christian.

In fact, my recommendation to you, is to reveal this to them as soon as possible.

Because what begins to happen, is even the unsaved will hold you to a higher standard of living.

And at first it will be overwhelming, but it will also help you on your path to holiness.

I remember the first jobsite I walked onto for a framing company in Lake Havasu, at lunch I mentioned I was a Christian.

However, I was still very rough, and had a filthy mouth among other unchristian habits like drinking and smoking.

I remember my supervisor laughed, and said, “Sure you are a Christian.”

I remember cussing in front of him, and Marty my boss just sighed and said “some Christian.”

The man himself was filthy, but he was not claiming to belong to Jesus, I was.

Well, it took about 2 years of working with this company, as God actually used their taunting, and mocking to lead me to desire Holiness and a life that truly was a light for Him.

And I remember, the day it happened, when things started to turn for me and my witness at that job.

One of my co-workers finally said it, he said, “I am not a Jesus Freak like you!”

He meant it to be derogatory, but a joy came up inside in me, because I knew that over the course of those 2 years, God was changing me by His Grace.

No longer was I being mocked for my poor witness of Christ, but now I graduated into persecution for my Christlikeness.

The guy could not understand my celebration after he told me that.

But if you truly desire a holy and good example, expose your faith to those around you, and they will hold you to the standard of what that name means.

They will hold you accountable to the holy calling of being a Christian.

So next, God, who is the source of this Holy Code, will lay out some of its content...

3 'Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and keep My Sabbaths: I am the Lord your God.

First in priority in this section is fear of parents, giving them honor that they are due.

This was something that would set the Hebrews apart.

This patriarchal system, where the young honored the wisdom of those who lived before them.

You see the parent stands in the place of God for the child.

As that child learns to obey God in their lives, they will do so by obeying their parents.

You see Holiness starts at home.

You understand the way you rule your home parents, will be the way your children know God early in their lives.

Some of you perhaps had a horrible father, and for you, you have found it difficult to understand God's love for you, because we associate very naturally our relationship with God through that relationship.

You see this parent child relationship is so important for early development.

To teach your children respect, to have discipline in the home, and their foundation will be strong in their adult years.

You understand Satan knows, that this is a priority to godly living, and he is working relentlessly to tear this foundation apart.

We know that a sign of the last days in 2 Tim 3:2 is children will leave this foundation, and be disobedient to parents.

You parents, watch the movies your kids are watching, even the cartoons for the little children, most of it teaches rebellion toward adults and parents.

Our kids from a young age are being groomed to come against us their loving parents.

Be careful what you let their diet of entertainment consist of.

We are seeing Satan's agenda at work, and the rebellion today is at a place our society has not seen before.

Just talk to the teachers in our church, and ask them what they have to deal with every day.

Of course, in order to get respect from our children, we have to be a parent worthy of that respect.

If you are telling them not to drink and you drink, then you will produce a drinker.

If they see you watching filthy movies, they too will watch the perversions Hollywood puts out for entertainment.

Make sure your parenting aligns with your life.

They will respect you, if your actions line up with your words, you will be a joke to your children if you are a hypocrite.

So, we also saw in this verse, God desired them to keep His Sabbaths.

God demanded 1/7 of their time.

They had to set a day aside for reflection and rest.

This day would reset their magnets for the new week ahead, and remind them, their lives were set apart for God.

Today the Church observes the 1st day of the week for this.

We come together on Sunday to reset our magnets, and to remind ourselves our lives are lived for Jesus first.

We come corporately together to do so.

I don't know about you, but when I miss a Sunday or even Weds. Night of church, I feel so detached, like something is missing in my life.

Even when Jess and I are on vacation, we cannot miss going to church on Sunday, we try to find a place, where we can go and put our focus where it belongs, on Jesus.

God makes known the importance of these two things by reminding the Israelites that He is the Lord their God.

No other explanation is needed, as far as I am concerned.

So many critics today are asking why God would do this or that, or command this or that.

When I meet a critic who can make his or her own air to breath then I will listen them.

But for now, the One who Created the heavens and the earth declares these things, and that is good enough for me.

We all breathe His air, and walk on His earth, His precepts here should be taken into consideration and obeyed.

His says next...

4 'Do not turn to idols, nor make for yourselves molded gods: I am the Lord your God.

They are commanded here to abstain from any form of worship of idols.

These lifeless forms of man's creation have always had a way of taking man's heart and mind away from God.

You see pagan or false worship always appeals to the eye of man.

It is spectacle that usually captivates one's mind away from God.

The forms of false worship appeal to man's flesh, and so easily entangles the person.

Israel, fell eventually to the beauty and attraction of these forms of false worship.

The appeal to their flesh drowned out the warning of God here.

This "eye service" is still used today to captivate the heart of the worshipper.

Today we have a "man centric" worship.

The church loves to create atmosphere and an appealing environment for the worshipper.

Could this not be idolatry as well? When man's desire becomes the main focus of a worship center, then the object of worship is man.

Today millions are spent on keeping the worshipper entertained and enamored.

The attention is placed on the lights, the smoke, the feel of the sanctuary, instead of the God who dwells in the sanctuary.

I hate even dimming the lights in a worship service.

The justification is always, I love how it makes me feel.

We are people of the Light, I want to keep it that way.

I don't want to feel like I am worshipping in a dark dungeon.

I don't want to create anything for man to feel better during worship, we want worship to be God centered.

Anyway, idolatry appeals to the flesh and man's desires are lifted above God's.

God says have no part of that.

Next...

5 'And if you offer a sacrifice of a peace offering to the Lord, you shall offer it of your own free will. 6 It shall be eaten the same day you offer it, and on the next

day. And if any remains until the third day, it shall be burned in the fire. 7 And if it is eaten at all on the third day, it is an abomination. It shall not be accepted. 8 Therefore everyone who eats it shall bear his iniquity, because he has profaned the hallowed offering of the Lord; and that person shall be cut off from his people.

So, God here once again deals with the peace offering. Now, notice this is a freewill offering.

It was an offering that the worshipper brought out of gratitude towards God, and His provision.

Yet, even though it was voluntary, the worshipper still had to follow precise rules and guidelines.

Any deviation from this guideline would have the severest of penalties.

The person would be cut off from the people.

And that would be all but a death sentence.

God anticipated the excuses, “It was a freewill offering. I wanted to bring this to you, why does it matter the amount?”

The worshipper would be tempted to perhaps hold back more than his share of the offering for provision for his family.

Even though it was voluntary it still had to be done right, in all reverence to God, the left overs would not be true thanksgiving, but some innovation of false worship.

We see this in the church today.

Many people make a pledge to God and the church, and then they feel they do not need to go through with it.

It is sad to say Christian's are some of the worst people to keep their word.

So many times I have heard of promises of getting things done, or some kind of gift being brought in, or a promise of some generous giving, to only be left wondering where the person went.

If you are going to do something voluntarily then try to do it right.

If you give, give truly, not left overs.

I have seen people donate trash from their garage, or old ripped furniture, and other stuff they just did not want in their own house, and they did it as though they were doing some pious thing.

To give God the leftovers of your life is not true worship.

The first fruits are to go to God.

You know King David in our Daily reading today had the right understanding of giving.

As King David was preparing his son Solomon for the building of the Temple, the provisions came in from the people.

And they came abundantly, but David did not give credit to man.

1 Chron. 29:14

14 But who am I, and who are my people,

That we should be able to offer so willingly as this?

For all things come from You,

And of Your own we have given You.

All things are God's, our paychecks and livelihood come from Him.

The way we acknowledge that in our giving, is by giving of the first fruits, cheerfully.

God should not get our leftovers...

And this law of the freewill offering made sure they gave with the right heart behind it.

Next God starts to deal with the Hebrews relationships with each other... He begins with the poor in the land.

9 '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. 10 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.

Now this was God's wonderful way of caring for the poor in Israel.

This was a community that was to love God by showing their love for one another.

God had instituted a way for even the down and out to be cared for.

But notice this, they were not to receive a welfare check for doing nothing.

The poor had to actually work to gather their own as well.

The landowners were not to glean the whole crop and give the poor fruit from their own labor.

Everyone was expected to work for their own.

I imagine that concept would transform the welfare system in our backwards society.

Why would anyone who does not work, be motivated to do so when we live in a society that rewards the taker rather than the giver.

Only by the conviction of the Holy Spirit, have I seen people rise out of the welfare abuses that our culture permits.

To take from someone else's earnings and give it to someone who has no desire to earn seems to be criminal to me.

God had a better way in His system.

Even today so much Christian Charity rewards the abusers of the system.

We think if we give the person food, and a jacket we are helping them out.

When many are selling their government granted food stamps for drugs or other vices.

The system is crazy, and much of the church today tries to appease their Christian conscious by aiding in these ventures.

I remember when we had programs running out of this church, the free cell phone people would be standing outside in the parking lot, and they would try multiple times to get me to sign up for a free phone.

I would say I have a phone, and I am happy with it, their sales pitch was, "Yes But I can give you that same phone for free, you are paying for that one."

One day I just had enough, I explained the phone wasn't free, that there were hard working people all over this state that paid for those phones.

But the appeal for something for nothing plays right into the human selfishness.

Some people have multiple supposedly Free Phones. But we see here in God's society even the poor were required to work for their provision.

It is not a bad concept.

To teach someone work ethic, rather than keep them in a place of poverty.

You know too, this way of allowing the poor to glean off the landowner's field, enabled both rich and poor to acknowledge the good hand of the Lord.

They were thanking God for their provision and not government.

Now this is not at all to say there is not a time when person needs welfare to get back on their feet.

I believe that was the intension of the system, to help people get going again on their own.

But to use the system for a means of living, you know having more kids to get more money kind of thinking, then it is wrong.

There was a time in Jessica and I's life where we had to get aid, and for a month or so, we were grateful for the help until I could find work, but we never wanted to stay in that place.

And we see very clearly that God wanted the community to look out for each other.

If the rich were to care for the poor, the poor would be grateful enough not to take advantage of the system.

It was all supposed to be reciprocal.

They were to respect and love each other.

You can see Satan at work again today, as he tries to demonize the rich and the poor.

He turns the one on the other, knowing if there could be harmony and respect between the different classes of people, then much good could be done.

But many of the poor today are demanding the rich give to them, and the rich despise those who are taking what is not theirs.

And a sharp satanic separation has happened in our society.

God wanted mutual respect and appreciation between the classes.

So next God says...

11 'You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. 12 And you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the Lord.

To steal, to accuse falsely, and to lie were forbidden in this covenant society.

These things create suspicion, mistrust and hatred.

These things begin to weaken the foundation of a society.

When our word means something, there is strength in our relationships.

In the New Covenant, we are instructed to abstain from these things as well to maintain our witness for God.

In fact, one of the healing remedies for someone who struggles with stealing was to work with his hands.

Eph. 4:28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.

It is a hard concept for someone who has lived his life stealing from others to go to work.

But the thief finds purpose when he puts his old habits away, and begins to earn his money.

That person walks with a different countenance.

They perhaps were making thousands a week robbing people, and now they are only making hundreds

working at a normal job, but the hundreds have so much more value to them than the thousands ever did. The same for the liar, once their real stories are heard and accepted their whole demeanor is healed.

Col 3:9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds.

And since lying was to be done away with, they were not swear by God.

What was the need for this if they were telling the truth?

Jesus in this New Covenant He instructs us to let our yes be yes and our no be no.

Anything beyond that is wicked.

May we be a people whose word can be trusted?

Next God demands...

13 '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.

They were to be fair businessmen.

If they hired someone for an agreed upon amount, they were not to cheat the person.

The same goes for us today as Christians.

So many Christian business owners have ruined the witness they are to have before men, because when it comes to their money, they are greedy and selfish.

They cheat their employees, their yes is far from their yes, and their no never means no.

If you are a Christian employer, make sure you maintain your witness in your business dealings.

I remember working for a man for many years who preached at me while I was in my sin.

He was relentless with my life, and how I was not living up to Christian code.

But I watched over the years as he lied to clients, cheated us out of our paychecks, cussed, stole, and the thing that disturbed me the most was the way he treated his wife.

When I would get mad enough to say something in regards to his hypocrisy, he was quick to quote the grace verses in the bible as they applied to himself.

It put such a bad taste in my mouth toward Christianity, if Christ had not intervened in my life, I might had never come to the Lord.

You have a right to be shrewd and wise with your money, just do it with honesty and integrity if you are in that kind of position.

Next we read...

14 You shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but shall fear your God: I am the Lord.

We see God's concern here for the weak, helpless and those who were struggling with infirmities.

He strictly rebuked anyone who took advantage of a weaker person.

They were to maintain a healthy fear that God was always watching, and He especially had His Eyes on those who were infirmed.

We see this very clearly as God manifested Himself through His Son Jesus Christ, who came to this earth, and went to those who needed healing, because of the effects of this cursed world being upon them.

This is amazing here that God lists the deaf and blind as classes of society.

In the surrounding cultures, these people would not be protected.

Yet God's Law, here He lifts them up... Truly this law was nothing like this world had ever seen up to this point.

And next God speaks to those who are entrusted with judicial powers.

15 'You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor.

16 You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor: I am the Lord.

The judge in Israel needed to remember he judged as God judged.

He was to be impartial to the poor and rich.

His decisions were to be solely based on truth.

In addition, those who are testifying, are to be truth bearers not exaggerators or liars.

In the justice system, when founded on true testimonies, true justice would take place.

This would be a great concept today that judges would be without motive or bias, but only wanting truth to win.

It would be wise for us to pray for our judges, that as they make their judgments, that they would have a holy fear of God as they do.

I have Jury duty next week, it is always an interesting experience to see our justice system in action.

I would encourage you Christians who are summoned to fulfill your duty; also, you can witness the great burdens our judges are entrusted with making.

Next we see...

17 'You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. 18 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.

We see here their responsibility toward their neighbor involved having a positive attitude toward them.

Hatred within the human heart should ever only have one target in this life, and that is evil.

If they ever had to correct or rebuke their neighbor, they were to do it with wisdom and grace.

They were never to take the law into their own hands and enact vengeance for themselves.

And God instructs them to love each other in order to accomplish this.

This all has a New Testament completion in Jesus, and these things are also to be lived out in Christ's Church.

Jesus said we fulfill the law by loving our neighbor.

He even gives us instructions in Matthew 18 that help live this all out.

To go to our brother first, then with two or three witnesses then to the church with any problems.

Now living this out goes against everything in our nature.

We much rather live with a grudge and a vindictive attitude.

Yet in Jesus's steps, we usually find healing.

We find there that the bad look we got was not in any way toward us, but the other person just had a bad morning.

All the confusion of disagreements and confrontations usually go away in that first step.

Next, we read...

19 '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.

Holiness and purity within the nation of Israel were acknowledged by observing this principle of separateness. Harrison

They were not to create hybrid species or they were not to sow different kinds of seed.

Nor were they to use two different types of fabrics.

This nation was called out to be separate, and even their clothing would be a unique reminder to them that they were different and could not mingle with the nations around them.

They were to maintain in every area of their lives a picture of their Holy calling, and mixing and mingling would taint this picture.

When their kids would ask, “why can’t we grow wheat in the same place our vineyards are growing?”

It would give the parents opportunity to explain their nation’s special calling.

Another form of improper mixture God will address next was the marriage bed.

20 'Whoever lies carnally with a woman who is betrothed to a man as a concubine, and who has not at all been redeemed nor given her freedom, for this there shall be scourging; but they shall not be put to death, because she was not free. 21 And he shall bring his trespass offering to the Lord, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, a ram as a trespass offering. 22 The priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering before the Lord for his sin which he has committed. And the sin which he has committed shall be forgiven him.

A man was to be punished for having sex with the concubine or slave of another man.

The man was only punished here, and was scourged and had to bring a trespass offering.

Many woman's rights activists go to this law to show how sexist God is, that this man was really only slapped on the hand for ruining this woman's life.

Yet, these slaves would have no protection in the surrounding people group's culture.

God once again is exalting the slave woman here, and protecting here from injustice.

Next God has instruction for the fruit trees in the promise land.

23 'When you come into the land, and have planted all kinds of trees for food, then you shall count their fruit as uncircumcised. Three years it shall be as uncircumcised to you. It shall not be eaten. 24 But in the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy, a praise to the Lord. 25 And in the fifth year you may eat its fruit, that it may yield to you its increase: I am the Lord your God.

The first three years of the trees fruit is considered forbidden.

The term uncircumcised is used to describe the forbidden fruit.

By the fourth year, the fruit that would be produced would be mature enough to bring as an offering to the Lord.

And on the fifth year the people could enjoy the fruit.

This restraint would remind the people that every good and pleasant gift came from God.

They had to honor Him first; again, He does not get the leftovers.

But what a wonderful thing, that we see His abundant blessing of all of the fruit after the fifth year.

26 'You shall not eat anything with the blood, nor shall you practice divination or soothsaying. 27 You shall not shave around the sides of your head, nor shall you disfigure the edges of your beard. 28 You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you: I am the Lord.

So, these customs would be part of the pagan cultures that they were entering.

God wanted no resemblance of His people, and the world around them.

They were not to have similar hair dos or beard styles.

They were not to make cuttings on their skin or tattoo themselves for the worship of the dead.

My brother in law, before he gave his life to Jesus, thought he was condemned from heaven because he was a tattoo artist and had many tattoos, because someone told him the Bible condemns tattoos.

I read him this verse, and asked him if his tattoos were to honor and worship the dead?

He replied “no.”

Then I would not worry, and today God redeemed him, and all of his tattoos on his body.

Should a Christian get tattoos, well I personally have all the tattoos I want, which is none.

However, I do not think they will keep you out of heaven.

So next God says...

29 'Do not prostitute your daughter, to cause her to be a harlot, lest the land fall into harlotry, and the land become full of wickedness.

Again, this would be a practice in the heathen cultures all around them, and would be normal.

Not for Israel though, sexual relations were to be sacred and only done under the covenant of marriage.

A greedy or desperate father could never think to offer his daughter up for prostitution to earn money.

He was forbidden from offering to the cultic worship of pagan gods as well, as would be so common in the false worship of the day.

Next, we have the reminder to keep the Sabbath and God's sanctuary Holy.

30 'You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary: I am the Lord.

31 'Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God.

So, God forbids necromancy or trying to get access to the spirits of the dead.

The spirit world is very real, but God's people were not to seek the counsel of any spirit other than the Holy Spirit.

Even as Christians, we are to not trust any spirit or even angel above the Word of God.

Gal 1:8-9 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

This practice is normalized by TV shows and movies, where it is becoming socially acceptable.

A Christians should not entertain themselves of the spiritual mediums so popular today.

Next...

32 'You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the Lord.

Respect for the aged was to be given on the grounds that the aged person had gained wisdom throughout their lives.

God desires His people to honor the old man, and it goes in conjunction with fearing God Himself.

Our culture needs to gain this perspective again.

To honor the aged. For when they were 18 many of them were storming beaches in foreign lands, today the 18 year old has so much pride and contempt in their heart toward their elders.

If they could only sit and listen and learn from where they have been.

Even in the church there is such a gap from generation to generation.

The elderly are instructed to disciple the young, but they many times despise them instead.

The young disrespect oftentimes their elder counterpart, and a great much of church discipleship is missed because either side is not willing to budge.

So next, as the world sees this nation set apart, many will be drawn to the God they represent.

So God lays out the conduct for the Jew toward the foreigner...

33 'And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. 34 The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.

The stranger among them was to be a constant reminder of where God saved them from.

Again God's law lifting up and protecting those who in other societies would be rejected.

There would be no room for racism in this covenant nation.

Christians are also called to this kind of attitude.

Heb. 13:1-2 Let brotherly love continue. 2 Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels

This is very difficult at times, to entertain those who are different than us.

To care for those who are not the same as us.

Even in ministry, this gets really difficult at times, yet it does not change the mandate.

Now there are a lot of Christians who have a lot of theories on how we are to treat the poor and the homeless.

But very, very few of them will lift a finger to do anything themselves.

You know you have met the armchair Christian who sits in church, and gives their opinion on everything that happens in a ministry but they have no idea of what it is like to do ministry.

But for those of you who do practice Christianity, you know how difficult and messy it is at times.

It is hard to love people, especially if they are ungrateful and mean.

You know our neighborhood is dark, and sometimes ministry is hard during the week.

It seems we constantly have drug addicts shooting up, homeless doing just detestable things all over the church grounds.

I put a camera system up to detour them, but that does not stop the madness around here at times.

And we are constantly feeding them, giving them water, trying to care for the stranger that comes around.

But, I will be real with you, it gets really hard sometimes.

One young man, I am constantly catching smoking speed and doing other things, it does not matter what I tell him he will not stop.

You know our wonderful legislators in Sacramento have made it to where the cops can do nothing for drug use.

If we call the cops, they really can not do anything.

So I got really frustrated one day with this young guy, as he is flicking his cigarettes on the ground.

And I gave him a what for, and explained I did not want to see him around here anymore.

Of course, he was out of his mind, he couldn't do anything but smile, and try to make eye contact, he had just gotten high.

I left here kind of angry, again I am being honest with you, but I got in the truck, to complain to God, what am I supposed to do these people don't care, they are ungrateful, and they are just taking advantage of the ministry.

You know what God did? He popped this verse in my head!

you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.

I asked when was I ever that bad, and immediately a picture came to mind, of a time I was so desperate to get high, I was frantically searching the floor of my

truck for hours to find any remnants of a rock of Chrystal Meth that I could crush and snort...

I snorted pebbles that day, hoping it was meth.

I was pitiful, and out of my mind.

At that reminder, I just hung my head in shame, and repented.

“I was a stranger like that guy when You found me, I am sorry Lord.”

How could I ever forget, I never even asked the kid his name, I was just sick of cleaning up after him.

In my frustration and disgust, I never once even mentioned the Name of Jesus to him.

Well, the next day I saw him, even though I asked him never to come around, he was thrashing the same spot, I actually caught him smoking his speed.

Now this time, God had changed my heart.

I confronted him again, yet in the confrontation, I presented the gospel.

It changed his demeanor as I told him I once was where he was, and God has a better plan for his life.

I explained that Satan was punking him, destroying his life, and Christ came to give him life more abundant.

I'd like to say he repented right there, he didn't, he talked in some demonic gibberish, and left.

But the lesson for me was clear, God allowed the stranger in Israel's land to be a picture for them, that they would never forget where they came from.

That young man and the many that will come after him, will be a constant reminder for me where God delivered me from.

Sometimes when ministry feels the most hopeless God teaches some of the most impactful lessons.

Maybe God has placed someone in your life you have a prejudice against, you might want to see what kind of lessons God is trying to teach you through that stranger.

35 'You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume. 36 You

shall have honest scales, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

37 'Therefore you shall observe all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them: I am the Lord.'

Again they were to conduct honest business.

And verse 37 states the reason that they are to observe these things was simple.

“I am God, and I said so,” and that is good enough for me!

I just want to remind you the Elders will be up here for prayer tonight, come up and let them minister to you tonight.

VBS Announcement