

Almighty God our Heavenly Father we come into your presence rejoicing in all your mercies past and present. We pray now that you would open our eyes that we may behold the wonderous things out of your law. Strengthen us in your service. In Christ's name. Amen.

The ox and responsibility.

Open your bibles to our text this morning is Deuteronomy 22:1-4

1 Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother. 2 And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again. 3 In like manner shalt thou do with his ass; and so shalt thou do with his raiment; and with all lost thing of thy brother's, which he hath lost, and thou hast found, shalt thou do likewise: thou mayest not hide thyself. 4 thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again.

I can very close to naming this “The ass and responsibility.”

This section gives the law concerning our responsibility to animals, 22:6, 7.

Proverbs 12:10 *A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.*

But our focuses is on our **responsibility to our fellow man**, to our neighbor or brother. It refers to any kind of property that might belong to our neighbor. **Luke 10 records Christ's application** of this law to the Gospel Church, as does Paul in Galatians 6:10.

Luke 10:25 *And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? 26 He said unto him, What is written **in the law**? how readest thou? 27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. 28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.*

It would be absurd to think that Christ told this lawyer that by keeping the law, one would be assured of eternal life. From Genesis through The Revelation, we are told eternal life is by grace alone through faint alone in the finished work of Christ alone.

The purpose of the law was and is twofold:

First, the purpose of the law is to make sin exceeding sinful, and show man his hopelessness without trust in Christ.

Second purpose of the law is sanctification; that is, to teach us how to be *Holy even as he is holy*. The Spirit of Grace works in us to give us both the desire and the power to fulfill the requirements of the law.

Christ had been presenting Himself as the only way to the Father and eternal life. Here is a lawyer who was considered by all to be an expert in the law of Moses; he is **swelled up pride** because of his knowledge of the law, and seeks to challenge Christ.

If this is the same lawyer who stepped forward in Matthew 22, there was a group of scribes and Pharisees who were challenging Christ as He preaches that He is the only way to the Father and eternal life. Evidently, this lawyer, who was considered an expert in the law of Moses, had been chosen to challenge Christ. Regardless of whether or not it was the same lawyer, his goal was to show zeal, to show his superior knowledge, to impress his listeners and to tempt, or test Christ according to the law. Remember that Satan sought to test Christ. However, we see that the Word of God exposed his false zeal and pride, and he went away shamed.

behold, a certain lawyer stood up

Observe

1) more than a few ministers and teachers feel they are qualified to teach and to question the Word of God because of their various education degrees. Their self-importance and pride are obvious. In **2 Peter 3:16**, Peter tells us to listen closely, and we may hear them as they wrest the **Word of God from His context**, and that **context must include all the law and the prophets**. They torture the Word of God to make Him say things He does not say. Moreover, their proud spirit will be in their speech. From such turn away.

We joined a Presbyterian Church about 30 minutes from us. Over the objection of many of us, they called a young man straight out of seminary. The church is made up of homescoolers, and their children knew more Bible than this man. (He admitted to me that he did not know if he had even read his Bible through one time.)

Many times, he would violate the context of his passages. I would confront him privately about the violation of the meaning of the passage. He was proud of his education, and he would flee to the Greek or Hebrew. **Or he** would only say he had not studied it out, and he would get back with me. He never did get back with me. We and **two** other families had to depart from him.

2) we have all met men with a zeal for the law of God, but their zeal evaporated when it came time to put it in action.

We had a 30-year-old single man show up at the Batavia church few months ago. He professed to love the Word of God, and professed a great amount of zeal for the Lord. However, when it

was time to show some responsibility, he fled in the dark of night from a room one of our men was providing for him.

3) Beware of those who are overly zealous.

Maybe like some of you, **I grew up in the Dispensational**, Arminian Fundamentalist movement, and did not get out of it until few years after the Lord moved us to pastor a church in 1982. The only pastors I knew in Indiana were dispensational, antinomian, Arminian Fundamentalist Baptist who were fully committed to the rapture theory.

During my time there, my daughter was on the volleyball team of the Christian school she attended. They were playing a Christian school in the next town to the east of Crawfordsville Indiana. The church was a typical antinomian Baptist church. Before the girls were allowed into the gym, they had to obey a list of rules, such as no pants on the girls. **I find it sad that though that church rejected *the law of the Lord***, they strictly enforced a list of rules they made up. In other words, they replaced *the law of the Lord* with the **law of man**.

Their actions revealed that **their means of sanctification was not *the law of the Lord***, but the laws that were good in their eyes. They were a law unto themselves, and prided themselves in their laws.

V. 29 *But he, the lawyer, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor?*

In other words, **he heard the gospel of Christ, and knew** what was required in order to inherit eternal life, but in his pride, in his self-will and because of his unwillingness to believe Gospel, he wanted ***to justify himself*** to escape the responsibility of believing the Gospel. He certainly knew he was not being truthful with the Lord, so in order to evade the issue, he said, ***Who is my neighbour?***

Over the years, all of us have heard many justifications for rejecting the gospel of **faith alone in Christ alone**, including the one used by this lawyer in calling attention to his good works.

Christ answered this question from the law given in Deuteronomy 22:1-4, which we will consider shortly. **Christ identified our neighbour** as anyone, friend or enemy, whether we know him or not. It applies to anyone who has a problem, and applies to any kind of property.

Luke 10:30 *And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, 34 And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and*

brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. 36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves? 37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

Quoting Albert Barnes:

Ver. 33. A certain Samaritan. “The Samaritans were the most inveterate (long standing, habitual) foes of the Jews. They had no dealings with each other. It was this fact which rendered the conduct of this good man so striking, and which was thus set in strong contrast with the conduct of the **priest** and the **Levite**. **They would not help their own afflicted and wounded countryman.** He, who could not be expected to aid a Jew, overcame all the usual hostility between the people; saw in the wounded man a neighbor, a brother, one who needed aid; and kindly denied himself to show kindness to the stranger.”

Matthew 23 tells us that these Jews prided themselves in knowing and following every jot and tittle of the law, even in their tithing. (James 2:2 gives a good insight here.)

Christ’s words to this lawyer could not have been more to the point and cutting. Christ struck right **at the heart of this proud lawyer** who was trying to get Christ’s approval. Yet Christ knowing his heart, told him that he would have ignored the law, and would have passed the wounded man by and let his fellow Jew die on the roadside.

Hebrews 4:12 *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

Our text,

Deuteronomy 22:1 Thou shalt not see thy brother’s ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother.

As normal, God argues from the lessor to the greater. In 22:6, 7 God argues for the importance of the family from a mother bird sitting on her nest in the wild.

In our text, God argues from an ox and an Ass. The Old Testament law concern the ox is used by Paul to show that the law teaches that the laborer is worthy of his hire.

This law is one easy to identify with, for it covers an animal of value. We live in a farming community. Our neighbor buys feeder calves, raise them across the road from us. When ready, he butchers them and sells the meat. In a small way, his **life and freedom are tied** up in that beef. I read that in the west, cattle rustling has become an organized crime. **Thief of those**

cattle is a threat to the owner's life and freedom. If he loses enough cattle, he will lose his business, and his freedom. He will need to go to work for someone else.

According to the law here in our text, it is theft if we see our neighbour's property unprotected because it has been mislaid or in some other way lost or stolen. It is theft if we do nothing when we know we can do something to help him protect his property. **Ignoring the problem is theft.**

Psalms 50:16 *But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? 17 Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee. 18 When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers.* (See Romans 1:32)

Property and freedom are closely tied together. The neighbor's life is tied up in his property. **In this life, property is closely tied to one's existence,** tied to his calling and to his freedom. Any farmer will tell you that his existence and freedom is tied to his property. This goes for any man who owns his business.

I was an associate pastor in LA for over 7 years. The church had a Christian school. One morning the school principal was following a pickup truck, and a tool box full of very expensive *Snap-On* tools fell out of the truck, probably several thousands of dollars' worth.

That man's life was tied up in those tools of his trade, and he certainly should have treated them according to their importance to his life.

Obviously, the school man stopped and picked them up. When he bragged to me about what he picked up, I told him he should tell the authorities or even run an ad in the paper for the owner of the tools. He refused, and said the man could turn the loss in on his instance. How long would it take for insurance to replace his tools?

The man should have taken better care of his tools of his livelihood, but his carelessness did not justify the church staff member keeping them. According to law, the school man stole the tools upon which the man depended on for his livelihood.

Leviticus 6:2 *If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the LORD, and lie unto his neighbor in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbor; 3 Or have found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely; in any of all these that a man doeth, sinning therein: 4 Then it shall be, because he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or **the lost thing which he found,** 5 Or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass offering.*

If we see our neighbour's property unprotected because it has been mislaid or in some other way lost or stolen and if we do nothing when we know something can be done to help, it is theft.

There are many Biblical laws respecting property because in this life property is closely tied to our existence, to our calling and to our freedom. Where would we be if we were suddenly stripped of all our property, particularly the tools of our trade. Life and property are very closely linked.

The law of Deuteronomy 22:1-4 is repeated by Paul in Galatians 6:10 *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*

Only God's law can define the *good* that is to be done *unto all men*.

With the Good Samaritan, Christ applied the law to real life. Remember the priest and Levite refused to take any responsibility for their injured brother. Christ's message was especially pointed to this lawyer because Jews hated the Samaritans, and may have even wished they were removed from the land.

There was no love between the Jews and the Samaritans, yet the Samaritan was the one who realized his moral responsibility of loving his neighbor as himself, so he helped the injured Jew when those who prided themselves in their obedience to the law ignored the responsibility required by the law.

We all know the Golden Rule found in Mat 22:38-40. Christ said that all of the law and the prophets are contained in that rule.

I remember in grade school that they passed out rulers with the Golden Rule printed on the back of them.

The law requires us to give assistance if possible, to a neighbor in need, distress or injury, particularly if he calls for help. A farmer down the road from us has cancer, and was unable to get his crops in. The neighbors got his crops in for him, which is common practice in farming communities.

Here are **six** obvious points from the law in Deuteronomy 22:1-4

First, we must love our neighbor which means we must do him no evil, and we must see that even our personal enemies are included in just treatment. Justice is defined by **God's law, not by our feelings**.

Second, not only must we do him no harm, but we must not hide ourselves or withhold our help when the need arises, and we have the opportunity.

Our son lives in Amish country in PA. Down the road from where he lives, a barn burned. Everyone in the community came to help rebuild. As we passed by, I stopped and gave what money I had in my pocket to help in the rebuilding.

Third, ownership does not cease when one's property is lost or stolen.

The man who lost his tool box did not lose ownership of it, so the man who picked it up stole it from its owner.

Bettie left a \$20 bill in the change return at Walmart. On our way to Columbus for a family reunion, she realized it was missing, so she called Walmart. Someone had found it and turned it in, and Bettie was able to pick it up when we got back. This shows us that there is still some Christian character left in society, epically in rural areas.

Forth, according to Paul's instruction in Galatians 1:10, **we cannot hide ourselves responsibility** to help those in need, particularly those of the *household of faith*.

Fifth, our neighbor's property should be as important to us as our own. It is theft if we see our neighbour's property unprotected because it has been mislaid or in some other way lost and do nothing when we know we can do something to help him.

Thus, ignoring the problem when we are capable of doing something is theft; it is sin.

Finally, there is no penalty attached to the laws found in vv. 1-4. **The penalty comes from God in the form of anarchy and disorder such as we see today.** "It is not my business or it does not affect me, so I will ignore the situation though I have the opportunity to help those in need."

Deut 22:1-4 and **Leviticus 6 identifies that attitude as sin.** Christ applied those laws for the Gospel Church age in Luke 10.

We are in the midst of the total collapse of Western Civilization unless there is repentance and the return to the Common Law upon which this nation was founded.