

Sermon: Deuteronomy 21:10-17 A Law Not a Savior

The Background:

1. Israel was going to have other military campaigns (This Law does not apply to the conquest of Canan)
 - a. In those campaigns their enemies would be defeated and the natural spoils of war were going to be available to the israelites
 - i. As long as there has been war, the women of conquered peoples have been exploited.
 1. Waring peoples like the Vikings were said to “rape and pillage”
 2. In Ecuador it was routine in tribal warfare for villages to set out against a neighboring village in order to steal their women often sharing the captives repeatedly among themselves on the journey home before the capturing man took one or more as his wives only to have them stolen back or stolen by another village in the future
 3. In world war 2 the germans raped the russians as they advanced East, and then as the war turned the russians raped the germans. Japanese soldiers made sport of captive women. Facing occupation the Japanese filled brothels to appease american soldiers and keep them away from the population at large.
 - ii. What is unique about Gods Law is that it is constantly tellings God’s people to be different than the world.
 1. Here, God does not forbid taking a woman who is captured in war but what he does forbid is raping her or selling her as a slave.
 - a. She is to be made a wife.
 - b. She is to be purified
 - i. Symbolically by shaving her head and pearing her nails and putting on new cloths
 - ii. And she is to be given whole month to mourn over the loss of her home and family.
2. A polygamist is faced with the temptation to show favoritism toward the son of his favorite or “loved” wife when that child is not entitled to the firstborn’s birthright.
 - a. Polygamy is never forbidden in the OT but it is always warned agains.
 - b. As for the birthright, the firstborn son was entitled to a double portion of the inheritance so we could see how a man who has linked himself to two women and their interested would be tempted to show favoritism toward the wife and the child of the wife which he preferred

The Problem:

1. We come to this section land and we find it offensive to our 21st century american ears and minds for two reasons:
 - a. Cultural:

- i. The idea of a woman being captured or possessed by a man and forced to be his wife is repulsive
 - 1. We have been conditioned to believe that marriage is best based on romantic love and infatuation and therefore the idea of a marriage that come about just because a victor in battle thought a woman was beautiful and decides she will be his wife is barbaric
 - ii. We read of a man having two wives we we can't get passed it
 - iii. We read of the firstborn being entitled to a double portion of the estate and we are enraged with a sense of injustice and in equity
- 2. Biblically:
 - a. We know that marriage is to be a picture of christ and his church so bach at the idea of a man having two wives, after all Christ did not die for the churches but for the church
 - b. We know that in Christ all people are equal and so how could a man ever capture a woman and force her to be his wife or give more inheritance to one child over another.

Some Answers:

- 1. In order to make sense of these commands both culturally and biblically we need to understand what the bible says the law is and does and what it is not and does not do. So we turn to scripture to see if we are told anything about the Law and its purpose and function
 - a. The Law was necessary because of hardness of heart
 - i. Matt 19 Jesus teaches us that the Law is necessary because of our hardness of heart.
 - 1. the immediate context has to do with divorce but the principle teaches us a greater truth about the law - the law was never meant to make us perfect it was given to restrain or retard our sinful tendencies
 - 2. Twice in the passage Jesus says divorce should not happen vs 4-6 and 9
 - 3. The question then is why did Moses give laws about divorce? And he answered that those laws about diverce were necessary because you and I are hard hearted and so God knew that things were going to badly and so he put laws in place to keep them things from spiraling out of control
 - a. Similarly God gave instructions about the behavior of kings even though he did not establish Israel as a kingdom. Why Give the Law about kings if you don't want them to have a king. Because he knew they were going to have a king so he gave laws for how that king should behave.
 - b. So God was not saying you should force women to be your wife he was saying, since your going to do it your going to do it in a manner that is different than all the other nations

- c. God was not saying you should have two wives rather since you will make that poor decision and produce jealousy in your home you may not show favoritism
 - b. The Law was necessary to show us our sins Romans 7:7ff
 - i. When a person is made aware of the law he is shown something about himself. - that i want to do what it tells me I can't or i don't want to do what it tells me I must
 - 1. When that warrior of israel saw that beautiful woman what the law shows him is that his natural desire is not to dignify her and take her to be his wife. He does not really want to wait a month before he knows her intimately. He doesn't want to pay for her new clothes and commit to her well being for the rest of his life- what he really wants is to have her in the moment of his desire and then to turn around and sell her as and make a profit.
 - 2. When the man with two wives finds when faced with the law is that his heart is so wicked that he would be willing to defraud his own child in order to express his love for his favored wife and the child he had with her.j
 - 3. When you come to the law and it tells you that you are to have no other God before Jahovah you are forced to recognise that what you want is to have any other God but Jahovah
 - 4. When the law tells you not to steal you are forced to recognise that you have been scheming how you might acquire that things that doesn't belong to you without having to pay for it
 - ii. So the Law exposes our sin
 - c. The Law necessary to condemn us (Galatians 3:24)
 - i. We read ingalationstah the Law is a guardian (school master, toutur, trainer) - (we might think of a governess)
 - 1. The purpose if this guardian was to instruct the child in his charge on all the ways of behavior in society usually by harsh disciplinary means
 - a. Strict behavior enforcement.
 - b. To say it another way this person's Job was tell you how to do something and then to tell you over and over how you had failed.
 - ii. The law was never intended to make us righteous, it was always telling us how unrighteous we are.
2. All three of these purposes for the law were meant to show us our need for a savior.