



Sermon, Sunday June 19, 2022 “Don’t Ignore Your Responsibility”

SCRIPTURE: Deuteronomy 22:1-12 ¹You shall not watch your neighbor’s ox or sheep straying away and ignore them; you shall take them back to their owner. ²If the owner does not reside near you or you do not know who the owner is, you shall bring it to your own house, and it shall remain with you until the owner claims it; then you shall return it. ³You shall do the same with a neighbor’s donkey; you shall do the same with a neighbor’s garment; and you shall do the same with anything else that your neighbor loses and you find. You may not withhold your help. ⁴You shall not see your neighbor’s donkey or ox fallen on the road and ignore it; you shall help to lift it up. ⁵A woman shall not wear a man’s apparel, nor shall a man put on a woman’s garment, for whoever does such things is abhorrent to the LORD your God. ⁶If you come on a bird’s nest, in any tree or on the ground, with fledglings or eggs, with the mother sitting on the fledglings or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young. ⁷Let the mother go, taking only the young for yourself, in order that it may go well with you and you may live long. ⁸When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof; otherwise you might have bloodguilt on your house, if anyone should fall from it. ⁹You shall not sow your vineyard with two kinds of seed, or the whole yield will be forbidden, both the crop that you have sown and the yield of the vineyard itself. ¹⁰You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey yoked together. ¹¹You shall not wear clothes made of wool and linen woven together. ¹²You shall make tassels on the four corners of the cloak with which you cover yourself.

Introduction: Holiness in Personal Conduct

According to the BBC report on June 11, at a restaurant in Tangshan City, Hebei Province, China, some men assaulted a group of women sitting at another table. This has turned the whole of China upside down. No one in the restaurant intervened to stop the men from beating the women.

Unfortunately, this is not a unique occurrence in China. Even in the United States, where we live, such assaults happen. Most people ignore such difficult incidents because they fear harm will come to them as well.

Deuteronomy was written by Moses to educate the second-generation people of Israel after the Exodus. Also, the words of Deuteronomy are based on Leviticus. Today’s text explains the various social norms found in Leviticus chapter 19. In other words, it shows the direction people who believe in God should follow, and various things that can happen in their lives.

Also, today’s text commands three major things that Israelites must observe when they enter and live in the land of Canaan. The first is a specific guideline to love our neighbor. The second guideline is for the creative order. The third guideline refers to respect for life.

Dear brothers and sisters! How are you living your life in fulfillment of God’s command to love God and love your neighbor? Today’s text shows us what it is to love our neighbor through concrete actions. Through today’s message, let’s examine our thoughts, attitudes, and actions toward our neighbors and the creative world.

Body: What does it mean to love God and to love your neighbor?

Today’s text, Deuteronomy 22:1-4, commands us to actively protect the possessions of our neighbors. In ancient agricultural societies, livestock was an asset and a means of livelihood. Therefore, neighbors had to protect each other’s livestock. If you didn’t, you were seen to not love your neighbor. So, according to today’s



text, if a neighbor's cattle or sheep are found wandering, anyone who sees it must return the livestock to the neighbor.

Therefore, the words of Deuteronomy 22:1-4 contain not only the passive command of 'don't do it', but also the active neighbor love command of 'do it'.

In fact, our society is filled with the idea that we can have more by winning competition with our neighbors, and that we must succeed even by stealing from others.

But the Bible is asking us to do something different. The Bible commands us to love our neighbor. How can we love our neighbor?

Even if it seems like we are having a hard time, we don't want to do it, and we think it will be a loss, we should actively help neighbors who are in trouble. **Jesus said in Matthew 5:47. "And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?"**

The Lord requires of us a higher moral character than the people of the world. But are people the only things we should love as the holy people of the Lord?

Let's look at **Deuteronomy 22:6-7. "If you come on a bird's nest, in any tree or on the ground, with fledglings or eggs, with the mother sitting on the fledglings or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young. (22:6), Let the mother go, taking only the young for yourself, in order that it may go well with you and you may live long. (22:7)"**

This verse commands us to guard against our covetousness. We can see from this verse that what the Lord's people should love includes not only their neighbors, but also the creation of the Lord.

Today's modern people consume too much compared to the people of the past. We are living in an age of abundance and can't stand the slightest discomfort. But over time, the ecosystem is getting sick because of human greed. The resulting environmental degradation is again affecting humans. The heatwave, desertification, and global warming that we have experienced recently are still ongoing.

I sometimes have conversations with my children about the environment. Even in this area where I live, environmental problems are so serious. I talk about what the earth will look like for my children in the future. It's a shame that huge amounts of food waste and recycling waste are thrown out of my house every week.

Today is Father's Day. My father passed away in December 2016. I will share my good memories of my father. When my father returned from work, he liked to plant a small vegetable garden by our house. Various crops such as red pepper, radish, Chinese cabbage, sweet potato, potato, corn, and green onion were planted in the garden. But my father didn't use artificial fertilizers to increase the harvest. He always used natural fertilizers and sometimes didn't plant crops while waiting for the soil to build up again. Also, pesticides were not sprayed against pests.

Although he did not spend his early period with an abundance of material things like me, rather he was a man of wisdom who knew how to obey the laws of nature and how to control greed. My father gave me amazing wisdom and went to heaven. I expect you and I, too, will be able to leave the true wisdom of life to our children and posterity.

In this way, the Lord commanded us to extend our love for our neighbor into His creation. And when we live this way, we can complete our lives as children of the holy Lord. Let's look at the words of **Deuteronomy 22:9-12 in today's text. "You shall not sow your vineyard with a second kind of seed. (V.9), You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey yoked together. (V.10), You shall make tassels on the four corners of the cloak with which you cover yourself. (V.12)"**

All these verses are commands that steer the holy people of the Lord away from pagan religions. It is to keep the purity of the faith, that is, to keep it holy. We shall not sow our vineyard with a second kind of seed.



We shall not plow with an ox and a donkey yoked together. A community set apart before the Lord must not lose its holiness before the Lord and must complete the holiness of faith by always remembering the Lord.

Conclusion: Love your neighbor through heart and deeds, not just words

Now let's summarize today's sermon. Love for one's neighbor is not just words. If we have a heart to love our neighbor, it will come into action. The basis of love for one's neighbor is consideration for others. This is thinking from the other person's point of view and acting from the other person's point of view. This kind of consideration for our neighbors extends our love from our neighbors to the world that the Lord has created. And this life guides us to always remember the Lord's commands and enables us to perfect the holiness of our faith. I hope that everyone will experience these amazing results.

