

Before the Good Samaritan

Deuteronomy 22:1-4

I. A Brother's Problems Belong to the Entire Family

A. "FINDERS KEEPERS – LOSERS WEEPERS" works better on the playground than in the real world of Christian living. 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.* (DEUTERONOMY 22:1)

B. Finding and restoring the lost becomes an increasingly powerful part of the prophetic message. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up *that which was* broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment. (EZEKIEL 34:16)

C. Jesus expanded this instruction to illustrate His Messianic work. But he answered and said, *I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* (MATTHEW 15:24)

D. Subsequently Jesus expanded this doctrine to illustrate evangelization. *What man of you*, having an hundred sheep, *if he lose one* of them, *doth not leave the ninety and nine* in the wilderness, *and go after that which is lost, until he find it?* And when he hath found *it*, he layeth *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing. And *when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends* and neighbours, saying unto them, *Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.* (LUKE 15:4-6)

E. Sheep are valuable but people are far more valuable. Brethren, *if any* of you do *err* from the truth, *and one convert him*; Let him know, that *he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul* from death, *and shall hide a multitude of sins.* (JAMES 5:19-20)

F. Ignorance of the situation is an excuse which is actually a self-accusation. *If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death*, and *those that are* ready to be slain; *If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not*; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider *it?* and *he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it?* and *shall not he render to every man according to his works?* (PROVERBS 24:11-12)

G. True worship of God expresses itself in these evangelical virtues. *Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free*, and that ye break every yoke? *Is it* not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? *when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself* from thine own flesh? (ISAIAH 58:6-7)

II. With God, Brother Is a Large Term

A. A believer must assume what is lost belongs to another and should be protected till it can be restored. 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. (DEUTERONOMY 22:2)

B. Christianity requires preemptive brotherhood. *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them:* for this is the law and the prophets. (MATTHEW 7:12)

C. Nothing is ever lost, misplaced, neglected, or strayed from the eyes of Heaven. That no *man* go beyond and defraud his brother in *any* matter: because that ***the Lord is the avenger of all*** such, as ***we also have forewarned you*** and testified. (1 THESSALONIANS 4:6)

D. For God, BROTHER extends to include ENEMY. *If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again.* (EXODUS 23:4)

E. Ultimately God declares a unity of all humanity. Have we not all one father? ***hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother,*** by profaning the covenant of our fathers? (MALACHI 2:10)

F. Restoration is the inescapable message of Scripture; ignoring the obligation is not an option. 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.*** (DEUTERONOMY 22:3)

III. Enemies Still Have the Claim of Brothers

A. Focus on the need. 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.*** (DEUTERONOMY 22:4)

B. The suffering animal should not be abandoned to his pain because of his owner's character. *If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden,* and wouldest forbear to help him, ***thou shalt surely help with him.*** (EXODUS 23:5)

C. Jesus takes the RESTORATION principle to the point of making the opportunity a Providential assignment. But I say unto you, ***Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*** (MATTHEW 5:44)

D. Christians are not in the world to please themselves. *We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.* (ROMANS 15:1)

E. God has made believers agents of His own care for those in need. Wherefore ***lift up the hands which hang down,*** and the feeble knees; ***And make straight paths for your feet,*** lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but ***let it rather be healed.*** (HEBREWS 12:12- 13)