

Deuteronomy Chapter 14

V: 1 Remember who you are, what your identity is: you are the children of the Lord your God.

- If we forget who we are, we'll also forget how to behave in this world.

Matthew 5:9 "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."

Romans 5:1 "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:"

1 John 3:2-3 ²Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. ³And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

- We have a heritage and a responsibility from the Lord not to act like the rest of the world.
- Don't alter your appearance or disfigure yourselves by cutting yourselves or shaving your head or between your eyebrows for the dead.
- Pagan or heathen cultures so often "worship" the dead or the god of death in various ways and we're called not to do that but to live life differently because we worship the true and the "living" God.

When it comes to mourning:

1 Thessalonians 4:13 "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."

- When a brother or sister goes home to be with the Lord and we grieve, it is not for them – they are in a better place, they're in the best place.
 - When we grieve it is for ourselves because we will miss having their fellowship, but it is also with the hope and understanding that as believers we will one day be re-united with them in Heaven.
1. It is interesting how the heathen culture of the past has carried on even unto this day; we still see those who celebrate death in perverse ways through various pagan religions and cults.
 2. Mormonism seeks to present a wholesome image, but essentially Mormons worships "Mormo", the god of the dead, with a great emphasis on genealogies and praying for the dead.

3. The “goth” culture, and vampires which are so popular and are greatly promoted by our entertainment industry – all celebrate death.
 - Back in the old days, or in old painting of scholars and theologians often times you would see them depicted with their hand resting upon a skull, or even having a skull at their desk and so forth. This was to be a reminder to those who had increased in knowledge or had attained to some status that they were merely mortal, that they too would one day face death, acknowledging their own mortality.

Acknowledging:

Hebrews 9:27 “And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”

- Today the symbol of the skull is predominantly used to “celebrate” or “worship” death or the death culture and it is hard to get away from the display of skulls in this manner. It is interwoven into children’s clothing and toys, bumper stickers, and is often the focus of people’s body art or tattoo’s.
- The enemy, the Devil loves to be worshipped, longs to be worshipped; even if it is by deception or in ignorance – and in so doing we rob God of the worship that He so richly deserves.

V: 2 This answers the “why” question:

- Because you are a holy people unto the Lord, set apart for His purposes, for His glory!
- The nation of Israel was and still is a special nation before the Lord; God views them as His own.

1 Peter 1:15-16 ¹⁵“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; ¹⁶Because it is written, be ye holy; for I am holy.”

Ephesians 1:17-18 ¹⁷“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: ¹⁸The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.”

- God chose them, just as He’s chosen us – to be His!

2 Corinthians 6:17 “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord,…”

- Be different! And the next passage reminds them of how to demonstrate some of those differences.

V: 3 They are not to eat any abominable thing: nothing that is detestable to God, we are to adapt our appetite to His tastes, to His likes and dislikes.

- This is very much a review of the dietary laws described in Leviticus 11 and other places.

V: 4-20 This is what you can eat; what is on the menu and what isn't of various land animals, fishes, and different kinds of birds.

- Clean and unclean. There were definitely issues of health and safety – but the real deal in all these things was that all the other cultures around them had no limitations, they ate whatever – the children of Israel were set apart, they were different.
- If God said it was clean and good to eat, then they ate it. If God said it was unclean and not good to eat then they didn't, they were different because of this.
- The determining factors between clean and unclean came down to two basic issues;
 1. How they walked, divided hooves or not.
 2. How they ate, what they took in. (Blood)

V: 21a No road kill, nothing that dies of itself – but you can give it to the stranger or the alien...

V: 21b No boiling a kid (baby goat) in its mother's milk. The admonition to not do what the world does.

- This was part of a heathen fertility rite where they would literally boil a kid of the goats in its mother's milk.
- The Jews have taken this to mean that you cannot have any dairy products along with any meat products – just in case it is the mother's milk or cheese being served with one of her off spring.
- Because of this they prohibit dairy products being served with chicken and of fish, it appears that they've lost site of the actual purpose in this prohibition.

It wasn't always like that:

Genesis 18:7-8 “⁷And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it. ⁸And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.”

- It is not just that Abraham prepared this meal which included both meat, milk, and butter; but that the angels including this Theophony of Christ ate it.

- But because of this I learned to enjoy some awesome pizza with olives, onion, and cheese in Israel.

Later Jesus modified these laws saying:

Matthew 15:11 “Not that which goeth in to the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth this defileth a man.”

1 Corinthians 8:8 “But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.”

V: 22 The tithe, giving back to God a portion of what is His, He graciously allows us to keep and use a portion of what is His as well.

- Tithing is a form of worship, it is a step of faith and obedience, and it draws us to a closer relationship with God.

Jesus said:

Matthew 6:21 “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

- The next passage describes having fellowship with God over a meal, of the tithes and offerings brought by the people to that place the Lord designates.
- Apart from their tithes and offerings they would miss out on that privilege of fellowship and of course they would be in disobedience to God’s word.

Malachi 3:7-10 “⁷Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, wherein shall we return? ⁸Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. ⁹Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation. ¹⁰Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”

V: 23-26 Bringing the first fruits of their increase in either crops or livestock and enjoying a peace offering, fellowship offering with the Lord.

- If the Tabernacle is too far away to carry all of these things then they can sell it, take the money and buy acceptable offerings closer to the Tabernacle and do the same thing, rejoicing unto the Lord for His blessings.

V: 27-29 Don’t forsake the Levite, those who serve the Lord, you will be blessed for remembering him.

- Special tithe / offering every 3 years for the poor and the fatherless.

- Remember also the stranger and the fatherless, and the widow which are within your gates.

James 1:27 “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”

Ezekiel 16:49-50 “⁴⁹Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.
⁵⁰And they were haughty, and committed abomination before Me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.”

- God will bless them and us as we seek to minister to the poor.

Deuteronomy Chapter 15

V: 1-3 The year of release, all debts were forgiven between the children of Israel.

- Coinciding with the Sabbath for the land.
- Foreigners were not subject to this, they didn't count in the release because they kept working – no Sabbath for them, their income continued.

V: 4-6 If they are obedient to this there will eventually be no poor amongst you because of God's tremendous blessing upon them.

- Cancelling debts, giving to the poor may not make sense financially – but it is the way of blessing according to God's word.

Isaiah 55:8-9 “⁸For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. ⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

- As God's blessings are poured out they will lend to other nations, they will not have to borrow – in fact they are commanded not to borrow from other nations.
- They are to depend upon the Lord!

V: 6 Points out that those who borrow from others are ruled over by them, they become slaves to the debt.

2 Peter 2:19 “... for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.”

V: 7-11 We are to be compassionate towards the poor and needy. Throughout the Bible we see that God takes up the cause of the poor. They are not to be taken advantage of.

Proverbs 19:17 “He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.”

- God will not be a debtor to us.

V: 7-8 Speaking of ministering to thy brethren, within thy gates.

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.”

- At times this has been a dilemma when as a fellowship we've been approached by so many from outside the fellowship that present their needs.
- We have to discern who is truly needy: Often times people approach me as a pastor from without our fellowship, with out our gates so to speak.
- They will detail why they can't pay their rent, or their light bill – at the same time they'll be sporting brand new tattoo's which I know aren't cheap, or they smell of cigarettes or alcohol – meaning they had money for these things – but not for their real needs. Many describe living in sin / fornication to which we would be part of or facilitating if we help them.
- There is a need for discernment, but also for balance.

Proverbs 3:27 “Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.”

V: 9 The consideration shouldn't be whether they can pay back what was borrowed, but what does God want us to do.

- Don't think along the lines of, “well the 7th year release is almost here, and I won't get my money back...”

James 4:17 “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”

V: 10-11 Bless them from your heart, may it be a blessing to both the giver and the receiver!

2 Corinthians 9:7 “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”

- Give, bless generously; it is pleasing to God – and God will not be indebted to us!

2 Corinthians 9:6 “But this I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly: and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.”

V: 12-15 Repeating the command from **Exodus 21:2**, a Hebrew slave was to serve for 6 years, but in the seventh year he was to be set free, free also from debt or obligation to his master.

- Here Deuteronomy elaborates that this slave was to be sent out with blessings and provision, not empty handed. They were to be given some of what they had toiled over from the flock and the threshing floor, just as God had blessed them of the household.
- They were to remember how they themselves started out, as slaves – saved and redeemed by the mighty hand of God, and how God sent them out with the spoil of Egypt, and with their herds, and flocks, and with great substance.
- This is all very interesting particularly in light of human history:
- The description of human history begins with Adam & Even.
- As Adam & Eve fell to sin, we were all sold into slavery, subject to sin and death.
- There are about 4,000 years of history recorded from Adam & Eve to the advent of Jesus, the nativity.
- There are a little over 2,000 years from the advent of Christ to our present time – 6,000 years or so in all.

2 Peter 3:8 “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”

- Lord willing we’re getting close to that time when we too would be set free from these bodies, encased in bondage – set free to be in His presence.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 “¹⁶For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

V: 16-17 Speaking of the bond servant, NT – “doulos” – a willing slave.

- Peter, Paul, James, and Jude – all start their letters off in the same way:

Romans 1:1 “Paul, a servant / doulos of Jesus Christ,…”

- When we love our master, when we love being in His presence, then His commandments are not burdensome to us – we want very much to please Him in everything that we do, wanting to never be separated from Him! That’s what it is to be a bondservant.

1 John 5:3 “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”

- The servant would be brought before the judges to make known his desire, then he would be taken to the door post of the house. The door post would again remind them of the lamb that was slain, and whose blood covered the door post during the Passover, at that place they would have an awl driven through his ear, he would have an ear ring placed in his ear – symbolizing the commitment that he has made – and to be identified as a bond servant to the master’s household for the remainder of his life.
- That ring also symbolized that this person was not just owned, but under the protection of their master, that he belonged to somebody – it was security.

Psalm 40:6-8 “⁶Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. ⁷Then said I, lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, ⁸I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.”

- There is a Messianic prophecy relating to Jesus that makes sense in light of this practice.

Isaiah 50:5-6 “⁵The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away aback. ⁶I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.”

John 6:38 “For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.”

- Jesus willingly went to the door post, to the cross; and allowed Himself to be pierced, pinned to the cross, submitting to the will of the Father going to the cross for each of us. Jesus the ultimate bond servant!

V: 18 God want us to treat people well, to bless them.

V: 19-23 All the first born belong to the lord, of men and of the flocks and herds.

- They wouldn’t work with someone else’s animal or sheer someone else’s sheep, it is the same with God; those things belong to Him.
- They are to be given to the Lord, sacrificed as a thank offering.

1. **Meat / meal offering** (grain): (Minchah) An offering of thanksgiving expressing gratitude to God.
2. **Peace Offering**: (Zebach Shelamin) The offering of communion or fellowship. With the peace offering, the meat was roasted, and you got a portion of it and God got a portion of it.

- The idea was that as you would take your portion and sit down and eat it, it was like having a meal with God. As you ate your meal you were having fellowship with God because you were both eating from the same piece of meat, you were becoming one through the eating of a common meal together.
- If it had a blemish of any kind then it couldn't be given to the Lord, it had to be perfect, but it still couldn't be used in the normal ways because it was sanctified unto the Lord.
- Again the admonition against consuming blood.

Leviticus 17:11 “For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.”

- The sanctity of life is important to God, it was a death sentence to those who disobeyed this commandment.