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Exodus 21 verses 28 through 36. These are God's words. If an ox scores, a man or a woman to death, Then the ox shall surely be stoned and its flesh shall not be eaten. But The owner of the ox shall be acquitted. But if the ox had tended to thrust with its horn in times past, and it has been made known to its owner and he has not kept it confined so that it has killed a mineral woman.

The ox shall be stoned and its owner. Also shall be put to death If there is imposed on him as some of money Then he shall pay to redeem his life whatever is imposed on him. Whether it has goured a son or gourd a daughter According to this judgment, it shall be done to him.

If the aux scores, a male or female servant he shall give to their Master, 30 shekels of silver. And the ox shall be stoned And if a man opens a pit or if a man digs a pit and does not cover it and an ox or a donkey falls in it.

The owner of the pet shall make it good. He shall give money to their owner, but the dead animal shall be his If one man's ox hurts another's, so that it dies, Then they shall sell the liveox and divide the money from it and the dead ox. They shall also divide or If it was known that the aux tended to thrust in time passed and its owner has not kept it confined.

He saw surely pay ox for ox and the dead animal shall be his own.

So far the reading of God's inspired and inherent worked. It is clearly wrong to be careless with others lives or others property. That is established by the sixth commandment and by the eighth commandment. And The one who is careless with others lives or property is already guilty before. God for his carelessness.

For he did not value God's image in the life of his neighbor. And so his violated the six commandment and he has not valued the providence and wisdom of God that has assigned to each what they have. And given us, the right ways of obtaining and using the good things that he has given us in this world.

But societies are to punish not sins, which got alone can punish, and the society cannot cast into hell. But crimes, when that carelessness actually leads to loss of life or damage of property. And so, as we've seen, especially the the fifth and sixth commandments flushed out, thus far, we come now to see a treatment of some of the cases in which the eighth commandment and the sixth commandment regard for others property eight commandment in regard for others'.

Lives would be enforced when harm has been done. And we see here at least These three principles, in the case law that we have just had read in our hearing. The first principle is that criminal negligence is culpable that is guilty punishable in the case of loss of life.

But as we'll hear in a moment or see, hopefully in a moment, this criminal negligence that is culpable in loss of life, Criminal negligence does not rise to the same level as premeditated murder like that, which we saw in the passage last week. The second thing that really sets these case laws apart from other ancient Near eastern case law.

And it is, because man is made in the image of God is that women's lives are to be valued as much as men's lives. That does not sound revolutionary to you. But that is because you and I stand on the back of hundreds of years of culture that has been formed by the Bible, but as the idea of what a woman is has begun to bewilder many in our culture, You shall not be surprised when people's lives are not any longer valued equally for there being made in the image of God.

Not only or you determine to value the image of God and others, but you should be prepared that, especially if you do not agree with the mind of the culture, the mind of the world around you you will be one of the first who is assigned, a lower value, a zero value perhaps or even a negative value.

If you are perceived as a threat to the culture that they are trying to establish. But the second thing we will see, is that in what was very revolutionary in. Among the cultures around them women's lives are valued as much as men's lives in this passage. And then we'll also see that criminal negligence isn't just culpable and loss of life, but that it is also culpable in the destruction of property.

And by comparing What happens to the ox who destroys property to what happens to the ox who destroys life? We will see the sanctity of human life. The sacredness of human life. So let's begin with that ox who destroys life in verse 28 If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, then the ox shall surely be stoned and It's flesh.

It'll not be eaten, But the owner of the ox, shall be acquitted in Genesis 9:6. God had said that he would require the blood of an animal. That shed human blood that killed a person that he himself would do it. He didn't appoint man to do it. At that point, He did appoint men to execute.

The one who had murdered that, he who shed man's blood by. Man, his blood shall be shed, He requires what we call capital punishment, in the case of murder, in all societies. And at all times. But now in this particular society that has been formed by God as a people's special unto him, He is demanding that or instructing that they require the life of the animal that has killed a man.

And not only that they require it but that they refuse to benefit from taking the life of that animal. This is that distinction that we were just hearing about between the ox. You takes a man's life in the ox destroys an animal's life and animal is just property. It's life is not sacred.

It does not bear the image of God and therefore, that animal though. It is killed because it has or the dead animal. Sorry. If it was known as you shall surely pay Oxford Ox and the dead animal shall be his own. In this case, he the dead ox can be eaten.

Just realize that the parallel that I had seen. There is not exactly there. But there is the principle that an ox that dies for taking the man, taking a man's life is not like any of these animals that die. Any of these other animals that die in this passage Adena animal was valuable.

It was valuable for me to it, was valuable for its skin. It's hide and so forth. But the ox that had taken a man's life. It must not. It must not be eaten. Man's life is sacred verse 29. Then tells us that although if the ox had not been known to do it, the owner would be acquitted.

If the man had, if the ox has been known to do it, then the owner is guilty and he is fully guilty. The ox shall be stoned. Says the end of verse 29 and its owner also shall be put to death. Now this freed Israel from the need for amassing to themselves.

Regulation of how much fencing there would have to be, and what the fencing would have to be made of, and how the fencing would have to be put together and you wouldn't have to hire an army of ox Goring. Ox fence Inspectors and regulators because you would regulate for yourself.

If your extended to gore and you would be responsible, whether it Gore's another animal and you you lose that value, or whether it goes a man and you lose your life. Now, the one thing you could do in this case is you cannot do. In the case of murder is found in verse 30, if there is imposed on him a sum of money, then he shall pay to redeem his life whatever is imposed on him.

It's another one of those blank check things just as you would be. Very careful. Not to have two rambunctious, a fight around a pregnant woman. So also you would be very careful to make sure you did a good job. You would be your own fence regulator. And if you didn't do a good job at that, you might lose your life or you might end up in one of these blank check situations.

One of the things that that provision in verse 30 does however, is it differentiates criminal negligence that leads to loss of life from premeditated murder, the murderer numbers? 3531 tells us could not be permitted to pay any redemption price for his life. He had to be executed, there would not be that other option.

And so we see the Lord helping us understand that there's a difference between criminal negligence in which life is lost and premeditated murder. Well, that's the that's the first a principle that we hear a second one is that women's lives are to be valued just as much as men's.

And If you've read Genesis 1, then you said well that makes all the sense in the world. God said, let us make man in our own image and in his own image, He created him male and female. He created them man and woman are both created in the image of God.

Adam is brought out as formed from the ground and made in the image of God. Now, the woman is made out of slightly more, sophisticated dirt, at that point. She's made out of Adam's side, but she's brought to him as a living creature. What is implied is that God has put his image in her and given life to her made from the man's rib, every bit as much as he did when he made the man from the ground.

And so Genesis 2 is a little more expanded for us but you have the same implication. The same principle that she is made in the image of God. And so in verse 29, the man and the woman are avenged equally upon the ox, The man is not kept at confined, so that it has killed a man or a woman.

The ox shall be stoned etc. And then in verse 31 is specifies, whether it has gored a son or gored a daughter, according to this judgment, it shall be done to him. The Hebrew case law was unique, in its time. And in its place for making these very specific statements, valuing the woman's life as much as the man's.

And then in verse 32, If the ox gores a male or female servant he shall give to their master and in the case of a servant, there wasn't a blank check, there was a very heavy fine, 30 shekels of silver and the ox shall be stoned. Why is that a very heavy fine?

Because the other two case laws in the ancient Near East that, we know of that treat this very specific situation, One sets of fine of 15 shekels, The other one sets, a fine of 20 shekels and that's only for men. But here the fine is either 50% more or 100% more depending on which and the male servant and the female servant are recompensed or the amount is made up for them equally.

So this this valuing them, the same is a unique feature of, of the case law here. Incidentally, this shows that It's paying for the value of the life, not for the value of the service, and Leviticus 27, which deals with those who are devoted unto the Lord and to be given up for his service and redemption prices for them.

There are different redemption prices depending upon the age and depending on male or female corresponding to the amount of work that they would have done in in the Lord's service. So this equality here over against even that shows that this is not a valuing of the labor, that is lost.

That's what happens with the animals. You value what labor is lost. This is the valuing of life and that woman's life is as sacred, her being made in the image of God. As the man's life, We ought to value life and this indeed has been one of the distinguishing characteristics of God's people throughout history.

Not just this here. One of the ways that the church grew in the first century, was that in the Roman culture? It actually, it actually was quite common for them. If the baby that was born was a daughter, they would leave her out in the street to perish because they did not value her life.

The way they valued the life of a son and the Christians began regularly going through the streets and collecting these baby girls and bringing them up as daughters in their own homes. So that the rumor was spread in connection with that. And also unbelievers were expelled from the, from the worship service, right before the Lord's Supper, and a rumor grew up in Roman culture, that Christians were cannibals.

That's why they they kick us out of their worship services before they eat flesh and blood. And that's why they run around gathering up Very similar, isn't it to what we've seen recently in our own culture Christians valuing life and willing to bring up as their own and provide for and those who would have murdered them attack as immoral, and make targets of the very ways in which the Christians are seeking to value and take care of the babies.

I'm sure If I've seen it and I don't pay attention to a whole lot of news. You've seen, we're not only are they vandalizing crisis, pregnancy, centers and so forth. There are actually legislators who are trying to target whether through funding or other ways. These these centers that the only point of the the place is to value the lives of these babies who have been created in the image of God.

But that must be a distinguishing, mark of believers of God's civil society of God's ecclesiastical society. Civil society is like the nation the culture. The Ecclesiastical Society is the church Now, probably or not going to have to deal with a whole lot of murder and manslaughter among you. But if the valuing of the image of God in one, another is one of the distinguishing marks of our congregational culture.

Then that ought to mean that the things that make people less valuable to others in the broader culture, are not allowed by you, to get you to look down upon or leave out exclude. Shame others among our congregation. Now by all means. Love the gospel love. Good doctrine holds to it.

Let those who refuse to find that there is a way in the, in which they don't fit in, But don't you dare create any subcultures and I'm especially talking to you kids, Although we adults do it too, and it would be good if those cultures weren't separate but altogether, don't you dare allowed to be set up any networks of of friends or I don't know what they call them.

They call them clicks around here, a little groups where, you know, who's in and you know who's out and you make sure they know to stay out. You make this congregation to follow God's valuing of life and His image and others. As a place that is distinct from the culture in that just like Israel was from other ancient Near Eastern cultures just as the Christians of the first century were from the Roman culture.

Very easy for us to say, we're against abortion and we're for taking care of babies. But the principle behind it has an everyday every week application for you. Well, the third principle we see here is that criminal negligence is culpable in the destruction of property. Pitts were needful. They didn't have refrigeration.

A pit was a way to get a temperature controlled and perhaps even humidity controlled place for for storing various things a cover however is required to protect others property If a man opens a pit or if a man digs a pit and does not cover it and an ox or a donkey files falls in it.

So Now know that no one was going to go around making sure everyone had their pick covered. Although I'm sure there there weren't supposed to, according to the Word, They're probably Jews who appointed themselves for that. And We're very good at multiplying laws onto ourselves. Remember, one of the things that we know about this laws that was never very well kept in Israel, but it doesn't specify what kind of cover what it should be made of.

And you wouldn't have an army of pit cover and, you know, inspectors and regulators. But you wouldn't want to make sure that whatever you covered it. With would hold an ox up because the ox was the most expensive thing and it turned out to be also the heaviest thing.

And so if you are good at making auxproof covers, you'd probably be helpful to your neighbors or perhaps they all knew how you don't have enough information for that. But you see the difference between the way this society handles things as instructed by God for their case law and the way a society that becomes more and more God less with people, not taking responsibility for themselves or caring about their neighbors and then those who can profit over being in the Inspector regulator army, gladly multiplying inspection and regulation.

Etc. The owner is accountable for the result. Since in verse 35, this one man's ox hurts another. So that it dies, it could have happened to the one as well as the other. This is a case in which neither of them knew that either of their oxen, We're aggressive.

And so they receive it as God's providence and they sell the aggressive one. Probably at a discount. Since he has to be confined better than other oxen and they take that and they split it and they split the dead ox. And and they they divide it because it was the providence of God.

But you are responsible for what, you know you're expected to make observations and respond with what we would call common sense. God given wisdom. And if it was known, then you lose the live ox. If it was yours and you get to keep the dead one and you may go ahead and use it how equally we should value.

Others property unto them. Even as we value our own property unto ourselves and we must never excuse our own irresponsibility by throwing up our hands. And well, that's God's

providence. God's providence to my neighbor was that he had an irresponsible loud of a neighbor like myself and too bad for him.

He lost an ox? No, We are not to. We are to receive the providence of God, but we are not to let ourselves off the hook of our responsibility. Personal responsibility puts each man in charge of taking care of his own property in a way that guards, especially the lives of others Since their lives are sacred.

But also the property of others. Perhaps not as moving doctrine and portion of Scripture as we had this morning. But in our ordinary every day lives before God, recognizing who he is, and whom he has made us to be to himself is necessary that we receive all of his teaching.

And many of us are probably sitting here thinking, If we could just re-implement some of this, in our society is at large, how much we would benefit from a little exercise of the truth of God and the wisdom of God. He granted to us. Let's ask him for it.

Lord first and foremost we ask for ourselves that you'd help us to value one another and take precautions and be intentional about valuing one. Another has made in your image. And then We ask also that you would help us to have not just a doctrine of your providence in understanding that you assigned to each of us what we have and the ways of getting it.

But that you would also make us to understand that you've given us responsibility. For those that we are around and that we should have regard for what is theirs, just as much as we have regard for our having. What is ours? Help us Lord for a people who do not love you with all our heart soul.

Mind and strength would not have any basis for loving our neighbor as ourselves. But Christ has done both of these perfectly count, his righteousness for us. Make us to be more and more like Him and then we do pray, Lord for our society at large that not only would you bring a new and powerful work of your spirit in saving men and women in Jesus and conforming them to his image.

But that you would also restore to us a nation. A society, whose ideas about responsibility and crime, and punishment are once again, shaped by the principles of your word. O, Lord. This nation is destroying itself by folly. Have mercy on us and retrieve us from being those fools who say in their hearts, there is no God, but who rather fear you as the beginning of knowledge and the beginning of wisdom, We ask it all in Christ's name.

Amen.