

Deuteronomy 19:14-21

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[0 : 00] Let's go with me to the book of Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy chapter 19, Deuteronomy chapter 19, starting in verse 14. So Deuteronomy 19, verses 14 through 21 is where we will be at.

Deuteronomy 19, verses 14 through 21 will be our text this evening. At first reading, it's going to seem as really, maybe this text has no application to it, maybe it seems to be a little distance. It's one of those passages of scripture which we read it in our daily reading or in our devotional times. I would say we probably skim over a little bit more and move on to some weightier arguments.

But again, we know these passages are here. The Bible tells us that all of scripture is profitable. So it's kind of our job to dig into it. I want to do it justice and I don't want to dig and try to find stones that aren't there.

So we want to bring its clear application out. So that's where we will be at this evening, Deuteronomy 19, verses 14 through 21. If you remember, I know we always, I repeat this probably twice a week, but it bears repeating.

[1 : 07] Moses is here delivering a discourse, his final message. The book of Deuteronomy, except for like the last two chapters, three chapters possibly, you get into the blessings and cursings there at the end and you get the song of Moses.

Moses, the book of Deuteronomy is one long message. And you guys think I'm long-winded. But this is just one message that Moses stands up and declares to the people.

As he says in the very first chapter, he is expounding the law. He is standing before them and making the law clear, wanting them to understand what God requires of them, wanting them to understand what it is the Lord is asking them to do when they go into the promised land.

And they're going to live differently. They're going to look differently. They're going to behave differently. Because the law was there, as Paul would later say, to be a tutor, to teach them how to behave, teach them how to live, to teach them how to stand apart, how to stand out.

Now, we know ultimately the law is there to prove to us that no man can live legalistically according to the law. None are righteous according to the law. No, not one. But there's all these requirements that God has for his people.

[2 : 23] And he wants them to stand out. I'm going to stop right here. Son, you come in that door one more time. I'm going to be greatly distracted. Thank you. I'm so sorry. I know we're live streaming this evening.

My apologies there, people. But you can only see a side note one about three times. So there we go. It's okay, dear. When you've got four, you're bound to see one every now and then, right?

So anyway, we keep going. This just reveals our humanity. So Moses is declaring to the people here, when you go on the land, this is how you live.

This is how you don't live. And he deals with every part of society, right? Because being the people of God impacts every single area of our life.

It's not just coming together and worship, even though he does talk about when they get together and worship, right? He does talk about their sacrifices, their rejoicing, their celebration, their festivals, their annual events.

[3 : 22] Three times a year, they're supposed to come together. Bring your families with you. I mean, I think children were probably a distraction there as well. I had so many kids running around there. Jesus got lost. Remember, his parents traveled for over a day, didn't know that Jesus wasn't with them.

We understand these celebrations, right? Everybody's gathered together and you're worshipping.

But God also dealt with the justice system, you know, the judges, the priests, those who were sitting at the gates, those who were ruling at the temple, the decision, the legal matters, the purging of evil, as it's called it.

And he deals with every area of society. And then, as our passage will show us today, he deals with how we live as individuals within that society.

So, Deuteronomy 19, verses 14 through 21, we'll read the passage. As we're reading it, I want you to think about this. Living honestly before the Lord.

Living honestly before the Lord. The Word of God says, You shall not move your neighbor's boundary mark, which the ancestors have set in your inheritance, which you will inherit in the land that the Lord your God gives you to possess.

[4 : 33] A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed. On the evidence of two or three witnesses, the matter shall be confirmed. If a malicious witness rises up against a man to accuse him of wrongdoing, then both the men who have the dispute shall stand before the Lord, before the priests and the judges, who will be in the office in those days.

The judges shall investigate thoroughly. And if the witness is a false witness, and he has accused his brother falsely, then you shall do to him just as he intended to do to his brother.

Thus you shall purge the evil from among you. The rest will hear and be afraid, and will never again do such an evil thing among you. Thus you shall not show pity. Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Deuteronomy 19, 14 through 21. Let's pray. We thank you for allowing us together this evening. We thank you for the great blessing and the benefit it is of opening up your Word together.

We pray that through the power of your Word, that you would speak to our hearts and help us to see these simple truths recorded for us in the Word of God. Lord, may they come to us in its simplicity.

[5 : 43] Lord, may they have a great impact upon our lives for all of eternity. And we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. We see here God's call to his people to live honestly before the Lord in the land in which they're giving.

He is calling them to live as honest people in their dealings with one another, and ultimately as honest people in their dealings with him. Not just to go through the rituals, and not just to do the right thing, not to say the right thing, not just to bring the right sacrifice, not just to attend the right festivals, or to be in Jerusalem or Shiloh, whatever city happened to be that city that year.

Not just to be there at the right time, not just to go through the motions, but in their daily life to live honestly before him. And these are very, very practical matters because Christianity is a real life thing, right?

Faith in Christ deals with big things, right? Sure, it deals with eternity. It deals with how we face death. It deals with our hope that we have beyond the grave. It deals with our major issues. But our faith in Christ deals with life everyday issues as well, right? How we make decisions tomorrow in our everyday affairs. How we go about our job, or how we live out our retirement, or how we do these things on our normal basis.

[7 : 03] Because faith in Christ, just like in the Old Testament, dedication to Yahweh, affects every aspect of our life. Because to be Lord over is to have absolute control and sway over every aspect.

And this is exactly what we see in Scripture, in the call to live honestly with practical implications. And understanding the first one, which seems to make no sense to us, but hopefully the application is found to us when we look at it.

The first one is we are to be honest in our personal possessions. We are to be honest in our personal possessions. And in Deuteronomy it says it like this.

Don't move the boundary mark. The boundary mark would be a stone set between two individuals' land. And it would be a stone that is there that says, this is where my land starts, and that's where your land stops.

It would be what we call today like a fence, right? But in the area of free range, or pasture a free pastured animal, and livestock, and moving sheep about from place to place. And shepherds following them around.

[8 : 15] There were no fences up. Things were there. And there were those boundary marks that were set. We see them all throughout Scripture. We see boundary marks being put up all over the place. And, you know, don't pass past this point, or don't pass beyond this point.

And we see it. But he tells them here, So the very first thing he deals with is our honesty and our personal possessions.

Because riches were acquired through possessions, right? One was wealthy when he possessed a large livestock. Or a number of his wealth was not counted in money. Not in how many dollars and coins he had.

But his wealth was counted in how many livestock he possessed, or how much land he owned, and how much land he tended, and all these things. So he says, you're going to be honest in your dealings with individuals, and the things which you possess, the things which are yours.

And the first thing you need to understand is, it is not very becoming for any individual to take from someone else just in order to enrich themselves. It is not acceptable to say, well, I want more, therefore I'm going to move the boundary.

[9 : 19] If it's a stone, think about that just for a moment. I can just move this stone over 10 feet. And if I move it over 10 feet, then I gain 10 feet of land. And if I move it in a couple months, 10 more feet, then I'll gain 10 more feet of land.

One of the funniest comics I ever saw is one of those far-from-home comics. And I think I've told you this before, but it's the family sitting at the dinner table. And I think there's a wife, a daughter, and a couple of boys at the table.

It kind of resonated with me, right? And at the head of the table, the dad is sitting in his chair, and the table is hitting him about his nose. So he's very short. And one of the sons is laughing. He says, I've been cutting a half an inch off dad's chair for the last three weeks.

So every time dad said, he was just sitting a little bit lower, a little bit lower. The reason that resonates is because you know boys would do that, right? So it just gets a little lower, a little lower, a little lower, a little lower, a little lower. And that's the same thing in moving a boundary mark. If I was to move my boundary mark over, I gain a little bit more.

And I move it a little bit more, and I gain a little bit more. And gradually, and gradually, and gradually, I'm taking what belongs to someone else. So here it is. Don't move your neighbor's boundary mark.

[10 : 18] Because it belongs to someone else. And we're to be honest in our personal possessions. And he goes on about it because he says, In your inheritance which you possess.

So dishonesty, at its core, is saying that which we possess is not enough. Right? Dishonesty, in this passage, is saying that which I have is not sufficient for that what I want.

That's bad English, but that's what it means. What I possess does not equal what I want. It is not enough. So I'm willing to take measures to take more.

Because that which I already possess. He says, in your inheritance which you possess. So he's not talking about an individual who possesses nothing here. He's talking about an individual who possesses something yet wants more.

And then he breaks it down a little bit further. He says, which the Lord your God has given you to possess. Now let's take this a little further. Because dishonesty.

[11 : 23] This is stealing, by the way. Thou shalt not steal. As many people say, the Deuteronomy reflects the Ten Commandments over and over and over again. So it's stealing.

We can call it what it is. This form of thievery. Or stealing. Or dishonesty. Is not only saying what I possess is not enough.

It is saying, what the Lord my God has given me is not sufficient. And when we take it to that extreme. We're saying, God you didn't give me enough.

So I'm going to take it from someone else. And that is a lack of contentment. With what he has provided. I love the psalmist that calls out.

Lord give me neither riches nor poverty. Lest in my riches I despise you. Or in my poverty I steal from others.

[12 : 23] Now I'm paraphrasing. But give me what I need. Give me what I need. Paul said, I have learned to be content in all things. Whether in riches.

In abundance. Or in want. In need. Whether in hunger. Or being full. Whether being clothed. Or being naked. I've learned to be content in all things.

A dishonest life. With one's personal possessions. Is simply proclaiming. That which God has given me. Is not enough. For what I want. I want more.

Now this isn't just an Old Testament principle. Because. When we really. Ultimately say. Jehovah Jireh. The Lord our provider. The Lord God provider.

He is our provider. And when we live in the reality. That our Lord. Has provided everything. Which we possess. Doesn't say we own it. He has allowed us to possess it.

[13:21] Right? He has allowed us to inhabit it. For a season. Which takes it even further. The land which the Lord your God. Is giving you to possess. The land is not your neighbor's land. The land is not your land. The land is his land. Right?

The land belongs to the Lord your God. And he has given it to you. To possess for a time. And what he has given to you. He has entrusted to you. To possess. To the best of your ability.

For a time. And to be dishonest. And to say. I think I can have more than what he gives me. Bring that application down to us. To live. An honest life.

With our personal possessions. Is to surrender. To surrender to the Lord. All that we own. And say Lord God. Whatever you want me to have. I'll allow you to provide. Sure. Through hard work. It's not saying I'm not going to work. Because the Bible also says.

If a man doesn't work. He shouldn't eat. So we want to work. It's not to say. That we ought to be in laziness. But it also says. We ought to be good stewards. Of what he's given. But it is to live.

Honestly.

[14:16] And say Lord God. If you provide it. Then it is sufficient. And I'm not going to look out. With a dishonest spirit. And saying Lord. Whatever you've given me. Is not enough. Because I want more.

I'm not going to move. My neighbor's boundaries. Because I'm not satisfied. With what he has. Freely provided me. Because even though. He'd given them the promise. And they still had to go.

Fight the battles. Right. So he was giving it to them. It is to live. An honest life. With the possessions. Which we own. Or possess. For a season. And allowing him also.

To be the. Lord. Of those possessions. That is to tell us. When we're ready for more. And tell us. When we're ready for less. Because he gives and takes away. And that's okay. That's a surrendered.

Place to be. And we understand that. That we are to live honestly. With our personal possessions. Don't move. Your neighbor's boundaries. Second thing we see here.

[15:13] Is we are to live honestly. In our public confessions. In our public confessions. Again. Something that doesn't seem to stand out to us much. And it's something we've already kind of alluded to.

Going through the book of Deuteronomy. That on the testimony of one witness. No man can be found guilty. Right. Upon the testimony of one witness. No charge could be brought to another. But on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

An issue should be settled. Now the reason he put this here. Is because it says. If a malicious witness was to arise. Again. We need to. Kind of celebrate the fact.

That the Bible deals in real life. And God acknowledges the reality. That at some point. Somebody's going to make somebody else mad. And somebody's going to get so mad about it. They're going to try to do them harm. By making an accusation against them.

And they are in their maliciousness. Want to bring an accusation. That will cause them personal harm. If not death. Right. God acknowledges that. That when someone stands up. And goes. Oh well so and so did this.

[16:07] And wants to make an accusation. And there's no one else. Who makes that accusation. First of all. Don't listen to it. Because on the testimony of one witness. No man can be found guilty. It must be two or three.

So. The first thing we see about honesty. Is there must be this cohesion. This agreement. Between witnesses. And people must. Have this settled. Viewpoint. Of seeing these things. Transpire.

Again. Another one of the. Validations we have. For scripture. Jesus says. He testifies. The spirit testifies. And the father testifies. And also. The works. Which he did.

Testify to who he was. Right. So we have more than one witness. Who testifies to Christ. Not even counting the apostles. Or the 500. Who saw him after his resurrection. But we. We move on.

And it says here. That when that malicious man. Comes forward. And is so mad. At his brother. And is so angry. That he wants to do him harm. That he brings a false charge. Against him. And there's this bickering.

[17:00] And fighting. And he says. Then both men. Shall stand before the judge. Right. They should go before the judge. And the priest. In those days. And the Lord. Should give discernment.

And then he gets to this kind of. This rubber meets the road thing.

And says. But if it's found out. That this didn't happen. The man. Who brought the false charge. Whatever it is. He wanted to happen to that man. Is going to happen to him. So if he said. Oh he did this. He deserves to be stoned. That's the extent. Let's take it to the extreme. He deserves to be stoned. Well if that. Accusation is false. Then he's going to be stoned. Or if he said. He deserves to have his hand cut off. Well then he's going to lose his hand. Because there is this reality. That our public confession. Must be honest. Right. This is extreme. And this is extreme on purpose. And we say. Well that doesn't matter to us. Because we don't. Take our matters to individuals. And make those. We don't have judges. And we don't have to stand before priests. Like that.

[17:55] And I know we have judges. But I'm talking about. Judges sitting at the gate. Right. You're not going to go up here to. I guess the closest thing to a gate. We'd have a more trace. Would be the train crossing. So you're not going to go up here. And find an individual. Sitting on a chair. And bring your charge against somebody.

I mean you might find an individual. Sitting on a chair. I wouldn't bring a charge. Against anybody to that man. Who knows. It may be the right person. It may not be. I know some of you have told me. About where the judge used to sit. Under the well house. And you went and sat in a chair. Beside him. And that was at the gate. Of this area. I'm not going to bring any names. To any of you up. But I do know that's a thing. In the path. That happened here. But we don't have that. In today's time.

So we don't have to worry about this. Well he said this. And you know. He said no. He said. And it's bickering. And fighting. But we do have this thing. Called gossip. And slander. And this public confession. Of trying to cause harm. Or belittlement. To another individual. Publicly. And the whole purpose. Behind it.

[18:51] Is to. Lessen. Someone else's standing. In the society. That we live in. He says. Be honest.

Right. Be honest. And if we're just going to be honest. This is something. Every one of us. Wrestle. Every one of us. And the reason. Every one of us. Wrestle. And I'm including me in that. Is we always see ourselves. Better than we actually are. And the best way. To see ourselves better. Is to see everybody else. Around us. Lesser. But to be honest. Right. To. Honestly. Evaluate. To make sure. You're not bringing. An accusation. Or an assumption. Or. Or. A vindication.

Against anyone publicly. To make them look. Smaller. Or lower. Or to belittle them. Or to cause them harm. Simply for the purpose. Of your anger.

[19:48] And appeasing your anger. Or making you feel better. That's a very. Dangerous. Public. Confession. Church. Says.

We need to be honest. In our. Speech. What we say. About one another. How we talk. About one another. How we. How we.

Portray. One another. Publicly. Because in case. You've missed it. We're the church. And this is. God's plan. For reaching the world.

That needs to know. What we know. And if we're too busy. Making one another. Look bad. In the world. In which we live. I don't need you. Making me look any worse. Than already look. Right. I'm bad enough. On my own. And we can all say that. I do a pretty good job. At that part. On my own. Pretty good job. But we're the.

[20:48] Hands. Feet. The billboard. And the attraction. When. It starts fighting. All of a sudden. We're not living honestly. Before the Lord. Third thing.

We see here. Not only are we honest. In our personal possessions. We're honest. In our public confessions. And this third one. Is this repeated theme. Just to be honest. With you. Kind of. Wrestled with it.

But it's. To be honest. In our private devotions. To be honest. In our private devotions. Because he makes this comment here. He made it just a few verses. Back. In verse 13.

He makes it also. In chapter 13. Speaking of. The false prophets. Idolaters. He says. You shall purge. The evil. From among you. You shall purge.

The evil. From among you. Now. Just so we have clarity here. This eye for an eye. Foot for a foot. Tooth for a tooth. Hand for a hand. This is saying.

[21 : 44] Whatever that witness wanted to do. To this man. Should be done to him. If he is found to be a false witness. Right. Equal retribution. We have no record of this actually ever happening. Even though this was the supreme standard.

Right. This was the utmost. Some say. Well this is a very. Mean thing. Or a very. Judgmental attitude. And really. It is very. Loving.

Because. God limits. The retribution. Right. If this individual. Brought an accusation. And wanted you to lose your hand. You could not require him. To pay with his life. You could only. Require as much as. He was bringing against you. Right. So God. Limited the judgment. Right. He limited. What you could do. To an individual. Through this. This equal retribution. There is. As some people refer to it. But in this. What we see is. This standard. That God expects. He said. You should do these things. Right. You should. You should be to the utmost. And these things should come about.

[22 : 40] And it should purge the evil from among you. Remember when you were to stone. Those who practice idolatry. And those who. Were false prophets. It would purge the evil from among you. And this is whole thought of. God's people must be more concerned.

About purging evil. Than they are public opinion. They ought to be more concerned. About purging evil. Than they are about being popular.

And then. It takes it a step further. Not only. Are God's people. Willing to go to the extreme. To make sure evil doesn't exist.

Because other people will hear. I mean. If. I hear somebody else. Making a false accusation. And they lose their hand over the matter. It's going to make me think twice about it. Right. I'm not going to say those things again. Or. Or.

I'm not going to. Take. Take the steps. That this individual took. Because of what he paid. But it says. And you should have no pity. You should have no pity. When you're stoning.

[23 : 36] The false prophet. Or those practicing idolatry. And you're purging evil. You should have no pity. People are dying. In their sins. You should have no pity. To me. When I bring that down. It comes down.

To private devotions. Because. We have pity. When people are paying. For the things we love to do too. We have pity.

When we say. Oh. They got caught. I didn't. That's when we begin. To excuse their sin. And we excuse.

The sins. Of others. Because we excuse. Our own sin. And we begin. To show pity. Because our private life. Is just like theirs. We just haven't been caught. Now I'm not saying.

I'm not talking about. This is autism right. So we're bringing. This application out. I'm not saying. We need to go around. Pointing fingers. Having no pity. No grace. I'm not saying that. But what God. Is getting to the heart.

[24 : 32] Of here. Is the reason. This type of judgment. Breaks the heart of man. Is because. We know. We deserve. The same thing. We know.

At our core. The very depth. Of our being. We deserve that. Whatever is happening. To this individual. Is what should be happening. To us.

That's. The purpose. Of the law. It shows us. Our private. Devotion. It is very.

Honest. To who we are. It is very. Telling. To who we are. Internally. No matter what we look like. Externally.

We may have. A good facade. In public. But in private. The law. Reveals. To us. The reason. We have pity. On the sinners.

[25 : 27] Is because. We are a sinner. And we deserve. The same thing. We just haven't. Been caught yet. We are. We are. We are. And it reveals that what God calls his people to do is to live a life of honest, private devotion.

The only way that ever happens is through grace. It's through mercy. And in steps Jesus. Who had no sin, yet pitied the sinner and paid his price.

Who had no cause for shame, but willingly took our shame and bore it upon himself and went to the cross. Who now gives us his righteousness because our righteousness is like filthy rags.

Right? And now we understand the brokenness with Tibor that caused him to sweat great drops of blood. Because it's our grief, not his.

It's our sorrow over who we are. Our misery, our sin. Understanding we deserve that. That's our price. That's our penalty.

[26 : 42] And the only way to live with a sincere, honest, private devotion is to live completely and totally devoted to Jesus Christ. And to live a life surrendered to him.

Because the reality is, when we read these things, friend, I've told you I don't get through the first two chapters of the book of Leviticus before I'm stoned. The holy standard's too high.

I dare say not many of us get through the book of Deuteronomy. I mean, I just don't think we do. None of us get to the book of Malachi and we're okay.

Because we need that disparity of soul. We need that reminder that internally we are not devoted as we should be. So that we can meet Jesus.

Where he's at. When he comes to us. And we see Emmanuel. And we stand amazed at his devotion to us.

[27 : 47] And while we were yet sinners, he died for us. And we worship and adore him for that. Living honestly before the Lord. Deuteronomy 19, 14 through 21.

Thank you, brother. Thank you.

Thank you.