

Because He First Loved Us

“Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.”

When we live in a city that is the poorest large city in the country, we obviously have special obligations to care for our neighbors. The Scriptures have a lot to say about this, specifically the text before us today.

Deuteronomy 10:12-22

12 “And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, **13** and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today for your good? **14** Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. **15** Yet the Lord set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day. **16** Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn. **17** For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. **18** He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. **19** Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. **20** You shall fear the Lord your God. You shall serve him and hold fast to him, and by his name you shall swear. **21** He is your praise. He is your God, who has done for you these great and terrifying things that your eyes have seen. **22** Your fathers went down to Egypt seventy persons, and now the Lord your God has made you as numerous as the stars of heaven.

I. God commands us to love the sojourner.

A. Who is the sojourner?

In Hebrew the word *ger* signifies one who is not a native citizen, and, specifically he is landless, like the orphan and widow (v. 18). One who does not have land is vulnerable because in an agrarian economy, land is the means of production. The parallel for us would be those who do not have capital, because, in a capitalistic economy, the means of production is capital. When we look at the situation of physical sojourners, like the Hispanics, or African-Americans whose net worth is about 2% of the net worth of the average Caucasian, we realize we have an obligation to give special love.

B. How do we love the sojourner? There are at least three ways we can love the sojourner:

1. Defend the sojourner.

There are many misperceptions about undocumented workers in our society and many misperceptions about Americans and the poor. We need to communicate clearly the facts.

2. Develop the sojourner.

We need to love him in practical ways. Notice in verse 18 that God fed and clothed the sojourner.

3. Disciple the sojourner.

The only way in which we can ultimately solve the problem of “no land” is by being sure the sojourner has a stake in the new heavens and the new earth. This investment will only occur when he comes to know Jesus Christ savingly.

II. God tells us why we must love the sojourner.

A. We must love the sojourner because of God's character.

Notice in verse 18 that it is God Himself who loves the sojourner. Ancient Near Eastern deities showed special concern for the royal family. Yahweh is different. He shows special favor for the weak and the vulnerable. If we glorify God, we will imitate Him, and, therefore, we will become compassionate and generous toward the marginalized.

B. We love the sojourner because we were once sojourners.

This is the grand scheme of God's redemptive plan: He is gathering sojourners (in the New Testament – Gentiles) to comprise His Kingdom; and all of these sojourners will gather in the new heaven and new earth to claim their rightful citizenship in His Kingdom.

Discussion Questions

1. What is your analysis of our city, materially and spiritually?
2. What are the most important things Christ's disciples need to do in this city? What are some of the practical ways we can do this?
3. Why is it, do you think, that God chose to show special favor to the sojourners? What does this say about Him?
4. How can you best keep in mind, for the long run, that you are a sojourner and the child of a sojourner? What difference does this make in the way you look at other people?
5. What are the practical ways you would like to take new steps to reach the lost and the lonely and the marginalized?