

Q4 L05 - **The Stranger in Your Gates** - 2021-10-30

Luccas Rodor: Hi, friends. Well, thank you so much for being here with us this morning. We have a great study. I'd like to welcome you to our Sabbath School Study Hour, where we will be investing one hour in learning more about God's Word, diving deep into the present truth of Deuteronomy. That is the title of our quarter, if you've been accompanying us so far. I'd like to welcome all those that are watching virtually, also those who are here in our local church. Thank you for being here and spending this time with us.

Today, we have an incredible study coming from the fifth lesson of this quarterly which is about the book of Deuteronomy and today's title is "The Stranger Within Your Gates." And so Pastor Doug will be diving deep into this lesson, bringing us truth for today about how to deal with many situations that are relevant for us today but that we learned from the Bible so long ago.

But before we actually invite him to come out and invite our choristers to come out, I'd like to tell you that you can take advantage of our free offer. It's called, "Life in the Spirit." So it teaches us how to live through the power of the Holy Spirit and how to have that Holy Spirit power in our day-to-day life. And if you would like that, you could call 866-788-3966 or 866-Study-More and you could ask for the offer number 155. If you live on continental North America you can text "SH047" to the number 40544 and you could ask for that digital link.

But if you live outside of North America, you can also go to study.aftv.org/SH047 and you could ask for "Life in the Spirit," and I'm sure that'll be a blessing for you. I would like to invite our choristers to come out and to lead us in worship and I'd like to invite you to also sing along with them, praising our God this morning.

Doug Batchelor: I want to welcome our friends that are studying with us and we know we've got a lot of people joining us on Facebook or YouTube or Amazing Facts Television or Hope Channel or 3ABN and so we have kind of a global class. Welcome to you as well as those of you who are here live in our Granite Bay Hilltop Church.

We're continuing with our study guide on the book of Deuteronomy, one of my favorite books in the Bible. And today's lesson is going to deal mostly with chapter 10. Some of chapter 10 has been touched on in other studies. But we have a memory verse. This is Lesson 5 and the memory verse comes to us from Deuteronomy chapter 10, verse 19. If you have your Bibles open, you can say it along with me. Deuteronomy 10, verse 19, ready? "Therefore, love the stranger for you were strangers in the land of Egypt."

Have you ever been a stranger in a strange land? I'll tell you, it is a lonely feeling when you get off the plane in a foreign land where nobody speaks your language. You don't know how the systems work and the transportation and the person who's supposed to meet you at the airport is not there. And that is-- it's a real empty feeling and when finally someone comes along to help you and guide you that speaks your language, oh, there's such a relief you just want to cling to them because they are your bridge to being able to survive in this strange land. You know, after you've been a stranger in a strange land, then you know how it feels and you can show a lot more love for people who are in that situation.

Well, turn with me in your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 10 and there's a number of passages we're going to consider here. We're not going to take time to read every word in the chapter, but when you go to the first section, it talks about circumcising your heart. Circumcising your heart. Now, that phrase is found several times in the Bible. Let me give you a couple of places where you find that. We'll talk about

what does that mean. For instance, of course, first of all, it's there in Deuteronomy 10:16: "Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart and be stiff-necked no longer."

It's almost self-explanatory there. You look in Deuteronomy chapter 30, verse 6, Moses repeats this again: "And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants to love the Lord your God with all of your heart and with all of your soul that you may live." Well, whatever it is, it's pretty important because he marries it with the Great Commandment, "that you might love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul, that you might live." Conversely, if you don't understand what that means, you might die. Romans 2, verse 27 through 29: "And will not the physically--" I'm sorry. "And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who with your written code and circumcision are transgressors of the law."

So here, Paul is saying in Romans chapter 2 to the Jews, "There are people who are not Jews, they're not circumcised, but they'll be judging you, even though you've got the law, if you don't have circumcision of the heart, basically. If you don't love the Lord, what profit is it to you?" "For he is a Jew--" I'm in verse 28 now of Romans chapter 2. "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly," meaning in the body, "nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not of the letter, whose praise is not from man but from God."

So circumcision, of course, was the covenant that God made with Abraham and the descendants of Abraham, and it was very important to the children of Israel. In fact, one of the terms that David used for the Philistines, he went to King Saul, speaking of Goliath, and he says, "Why should we let this uncircumcised Philistine?" It was a phrase they used for people that were pagans and lost. Unlike the descendants of Moab, Edom, and Ammon, they were all related to Abraham through either Ishmael or Keturah. They still practiced circumcision. But the Philistines, they were considered, you know, heathen heathen, and they were into idolatry. And so, you know, this is talking about just making a complete covenant with the Lord.

Now let's go to the New Testament and some other verses that talk about this. You look in Colossians chapter 2, verse 11: "In Him you were also circumcised," meaning in Christ, you were circumcised, "with a circumcision made without hands," not done by a rabbi when you're eight days old, "by putting off the body of sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ." In the born again experience-- now a baby might be born but he wasn't circumcised until the eighth day and I understand the reason for this is that on the eighth day the clotting vitamin, vitamin K, isn't really released in a newborn. Matter of fact, in many hospitals when newborn babies are born, they give them an injection of vitamin K to help accelerate that clotting factor. And it's amazing that God knew this and baby boys were not supposed to be circumcised until the eighth day. So they were born but it's still a few days later before they were circumcised.

People who are born again, it may take a little while for them to experience the sanctification but Christ changes the heart and look, for instance, in Philippians 3:3, another New Testament example of this principle: "For we are the circumcision who worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

See, as Paul went from place to place, preaching and teaching, he would start first in the synagogue and he'd talk to the Jews. Bible says: "Go preach the gospel to the Jew first, then to the Gentile." Why did he go to the Jews first? Because when Paul first went preaching to the Jews, he did not need to say, "Now, there's only, you know, one God and you're not supposed to be eating unclean food and," you know, a lot of principles, "you're not supposed to be praying to idols," the Jews, they knew all that.

What was the thing the Jews did not know? They didn't know about Jesus. So to bring them into the full truth, it was a much shorter job when he started at the synagogue: "So you know the Messiah we've been looking for? Jesus was Him." When he went and he talked to the Greeks, he had to explain what is a Messiah? He had to talk about idolatry, he had to talk about just all the other things the Jews already knew. When we do public evangelism-- any of you see our big statue out front? I'm wondering if some of the neighbors are going to think we're Buddhist now when they drive-- I hope they've read Daniel 2. As they drive by, they know and will make the connection, but-- how did I get off on that? Anyway, what was I talking about? I don't remember.

All right, so you've got the--oh, yeah, now I know it. So they were involved in idolatry, the Gentiles. And they had so many things they had to learn. We're doing an evangelistic meeting this week and when you do public evangelism, you know, it is much easier to share the three angels' message with people that have some background in the Bible, that already believe in Jesus. When I go to countries, I did some meetings in Japan, it's one of the most atheistic countries in the world. Lovely people but just a lot of atheism, a lot of suicide too, you might know. But it's a lot harder doing evangelism where they have no background.

Karen and I were in China and I remember talking to our cab driver and he asked about what we do and we mentioned, "An evangelist," and "What's that?" I said, "Well, we believe the Bible," "What's that?" I said, "Well, we talk about Jesus." "Who's Jesus?" Well, doing a series of Bible studies in a country like that takes a lot more time because you've got to lay the foundation. So Paul, as he went from place to place and he would go from preaching to the Jews and start talking to the Gentiles, the Jews were annoyed. And sometimes, Paul would take Timothy with him. You remember Timothy, he had a Jewish mother but a Greek father. And Timothy was not circumcised and they would say, "How dare you bring this uncircumcised person into our synagogue?" And it just became such a point of conflict.

When you read the book of Galatians, where he talks about we're no longer under that yoke of bondage and the law, some people try and make that sound like it's the Ten Commandments. Has nothing to do with the Ten Commandments. The big battle was over circumcision. And Paul had to keep emphasizing what God wants is the circumcision of the heart, meaning that we're born again. Circumcision was a rite that was to point to the time of Christ and, like the sacrificing of lambs, it ended at the cross. Now, you know, nothing wrong medically with the person practicing that but it's not a requirement for salvation, and it doesn't change the heart. What God wants is a change of the heart.

Look, for instance, in Ezekiel 11, verse 19: "Then I will give them one heart and I'll put a new spirit within them, and I'll take away the stony heart out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them and they shall be My people and I will be their God." There you have it, friends. That's talking about the new covenant and that's what it means, that the circumcision of the heart is taking the hard stony heart out and having a heart of flesh that is moved by love and touched by the Spirit.

All right, going on now to the next section under "Love the Stranger." Now we could spend the rest of the time here because that's the title of our study today: "Love the Stranger." Look in Deuteronomy chapter 10, verse 17, and I'll read verse--through verse 19. "For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords." And we might add, "King of kings." "The great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality or takes a bribe."

The Bible says God is no respecter of persons. God--you know, you might be the CEO of your company. That does not impress God. You might have a proliferation of degrees following your name. Do you think God's impressed? When God looks down, what does God look for? He wants to see the fruits of the Spirit in our life and that's the things that matter to Him is the integrity, people who are willing to do His

will. He's no respecter of persons, the way, you know, that we categorize importance. "He shows no partiality, nor takes a bribe."

You know, some judges--I guess I can tell you this now without incriminating anybody but when I was a kid, my mother and father went to court once or twice, fighting over custody of my brother and I. It's very awkward when you're brought in to talk to a judge and a bunch of attorneys and say which parent you want to live with. And I remember one time, my father flew--my brother and I were at a camp up in Maine. My father got a private plane. He flew, he said to the camp counselors, "I'm the dad. I've come to visit with the boys. Want to take them to lunch." He went to take us to lunch and he took us from Maine back to Miami. We didn't know what was going on. And it got into a big court battle with my mom and we had to go and talk to the judge and everything like that and it ended up that we went back to Mom. And I remember Mom leaning over the front seat in the car and we--I was trying to figure out what had happened and she said, "We paid the judge more than your father because he's cheap."

What kind of impression do you think that makes on the justice system for a kid? That I guess it was a pretty corrupt set-up back then. And my father had all this money, but he didn't give the judge a big enough bribe. So, yeah, they're--not all judges are honest. I believe there are a lot of honest ones out there, but they're not all honest.

And even in Bible times, if a judge thought he might get some benefit--do you remember what it says about the sons of Samuel? Samuel was a good man, godly man, and at the end of Samuel's life when they asked for a king, Samuel said, "You know, you've sinned a great sin and asked me for a king." He said, "Why have you been unhappy with my administration?" He said, "Testify." He gathered all of Israel here. Says, "Testify to me now. Who here have I taken your donkey, have I taken your sheep? Did anyone here ever give me a gift or a bribe?" When Naaman tried to pay Elisha for his healing, Elisha said, "I will accept nothing," but Gehazi, he wanted the money, he got leprosy, didn't he?

And so a principle with God in justice--did Jesus ever give a medical bill for anyone He healed? Now, it's okay if doctors--you're in the profession, you bill people, I understand that. I'm just saying. He wasn't bribed to do it. He didn't heal the rich more than the poor. And so, you know, God chose no partiality. "Therefore love the stranger for you were strangers in the land of Egypt."

We're going to come back to that phrase again a little later. One example you might look at, if you have your Bibles, you might turn to the book of Ruth. I'd like to highlight a little vignette from the story of Ruth that talks about loving and caring for the foreigner, the stranger. In Ruth chapter 2 and in verse 8, now, you know the first part of the story, Naomi's husband dies and Ruth's husband dies and Orpah's husband dies while they're in the land of Moab during the famine that's in Bethlehem. Finally, the famine's over and Naomi says, "I'm coming home," and Ruth says, "I'll go with you." And they get into town and she moves into maybe part of her old house or something, and they have nothing. She said, "I went out full, I'm coming back empty." And so, the only thing they can do for food is gleaning. That's what the poor people did. Gleaning is where you kind of go through the field and you're just living from hand to mouth.

When I first landed in Covelo, I hitchhiked into town, had no food, and I remember my girlfriend and I were walking through cornfields picking corn and eating it raw. Ever eat raw corn, off the stalk, when you're hungry? And it tasted great, actually. But this is how they lived back then and they would go behind the people that were harvesting and whatever they missed, they were allowed to pick it up. Or after they'd harvested the olives or the trees, anything left on the trees, the poor would try and go get the ones they missed. And they lived on the gleaning.

So, Ruth, who was a little younger and more able, a little stronger than Naomi, she goes out to glean. Boaz sees her in the field. There were other women and poor people gleaning. And he says, "Who is that?" to his servants. They said, "That is Ruth the Moabitess who came back with Naomi. She's looking after Naomi." And then Boaz says to Ruth, this is Ruth chapter 2, verse 8: "You listen, my daughter, will you not? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close to my young women. Let your eyes be on the field which they reap and go after them. Have not I commanded the young men not to touch you," in other words, you'll be protected.

Other fields--sometimes the young poor ladies, the harvesting men might take advantage of them. But Boaz is looking after her because she's a stranger. He said, "I've told them not to touch you, not to harass you, and to let you glean. And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels. You can come to our well when we take a break for lunch and you can share with us and drink what the young men have drawn." You don't have to draw your own. "So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground to him and said, "Why have I found favor in your eyes that you should take notice of me since I am a foreigner? I am a stranger?"

Well, Boaz was following the principle, "Show mercy on the strangers, the foreigners," because the children of Israel were strangers in Egypt, amen? So here's one example of that playing out. Here's another one about loving the stranger. You know this story. Luke chapter 10, verse 30. Fold my notes here, makes it easier to hold. "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, departed, leaving him half dead.

Now by chance, a certain priest came down that road and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise, a Levite, when he arrived at the place, he came and he looked and he passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan--" Samaritans were in foreign land when they were down around Jerusalem. This was the road between Jerusalem and Jericho. Samaritans live up North. "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, he came to where he was and when he saw him, he had compassion on him. So he went to him and he bandaged his wounds, pouring in the oil and the wine, set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, took care of him. On the next day, he departed and took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said to him, "Take care of him and whatever more you spend, when I come again I will repay you."

And now Jesus says, "Which of the two do you think was a neighbor to him who fell among thieves?" Who is it? It's the foreigner who showed mercy on the man who fell among thieves.

And of course, this is the attitude Jesus wants us to have, to have mercy. Now, right now, oh, do I dare even say this? Kind of sets you up, I sort of need to. I got to say it carefully. There's an immigration crisis in our country. And there's two ways I think a Christian needs to look at this. Personally and civilly. Every country needs to have laws, and you need to be able to recognize what your borders are if you're a country. That's one aspect to the immigration issues in North America. The other aspect is when you meet an individual, regardless of what your immigration theories and philosophy might be, you want to treat them the way Jesus would treat them.

You see what I'm saying? Because it's the one-on-one relationship. And you know, I frequently encounter--I pick up hitchhikers and meet people in coming and going and doing odd jobs and I frequently meet people that--and I speak a little Spanish, you know, and they are not legally in the country. But I treat them like brothers because whatever those issues are, that's, you know, to be dealt with in a different jurisdiction. As a Christian, you want to treat everybody like a brother or a sister. How would you want to be treated, is the idea. That's the golden rule. So, did I--I hope I didn't say anything wrong by saying that. Okay, so I've got my views on what the law should be, but that's separate from how you treat every individual. See what I'm saying?

All right, so you love the stranger and I told you about the good Samaritan. Now let's go to Deuteronomy 10:19. It's repeating the second half of that verse where it talks about "you were strangers in Egypt." And he says in Deuteronomy 10:19: "Therefore love the stranger for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." What is the Lord saying here that should jump out at us? There's a principle that we need to remember how God has been merciful to us and show other people mercy.

You know the parable of the unmerciful debtor that you find in Matthew chapter 18. This man owes the king 10,000 talents and he can't pay. The king's going to sell his wife and children, all his stuff for--to recompense, and he begs for mercy. He's about to lose everything, he's about to go to jail and be tormented for his sins, and the king says, "Okay, you're forgiven." That same servant goes out and finds a fellow servant that owes him 100 denarii, a very small sum. Takes him by the throat, says, "Pay me what you owe me," and throws him in prison, even though he begs for mercy. He forgot the mercy that he received and he did not pass it on.

You know, whenever you go through any trial, you're going through that trial for one of two reasons, usually both. One is God wants to teach you through that trial. The other is God wants to help you reach others through your trial. So it's that we show compassion with others, with the compassion that we've received.

And so, I'll tell you what, since I got sick with COVID a few months ago and other people call up and say, "Yeah, I've got the plague," boy, I can empathize with them a whole lot different, a whole different level of empathy now, than before. You know what I'm saying? When you've been through it. And so if you have been a slave in a foreign land and you know what it's like to be mistreated, you show a lot more compassion on people that are in your country, hopefully, you've learned from it. He says, "Don't forget."

In other words, don't forget what God forgave you. Don't forget the mercy God showed you. You show mercy to others in the same way. And the--it's summed up in Matthew 7, verse 12. He said, "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them for this is the law and the prophet in a nutshell." You know, whenever you're in doubt about what to do, they call this, what kind of rule? The Golden Rule: do unto others as you would have them do unto you. And Billy complained to Mom. She said, "What's the problem?" He said, "Sally and I were having a fight. I pulled her left braid and I told her she had to let me pull the right one," because you turn the other cheek. It doesn't say, "Whatever you would--whatever you do to men, do back to them." Says, "Treat people the way you want to be treated."

Now, it says: "Don't forget you were strangers in the land of Egypt." Have you considered that Jesus was a stranger in the land of Egypt? Do you remember that? Look in Matthew chapter 2, verse 14, and this is after the wise men went back to the country. "When he arose he took the young child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet saying, 'Out of Egypt I have called My Son.'"

Now, we don't know exactly how long Joseph and Mary were in Egypt, probably around two years because the Child, you know, He was about, probably about four when they came back again. Herod reigned probably two more years after the slaughter of the innocents in Bethlehem. Jesus was about two years old because he killed all the children two years old and under. So we're just speculating. We can't be very dogmatic about this but they lived in Egypt. Joseph and Mary were strangers in a strange land. I mean, by the time a child is three or four, are they talking? Yeah, they're jabbering at two, usually.

And yeah, I remember our daughter Rachel, I took her to an auto parts store. She was, like, 19 months old. The guy at the counter saw this cute little blond girl, he said, "And how old is she?" And she spoke up and said, "I'll be two, March 23." The guy almost fainted. She talked really young. My mother says I didn't talk until I was four and then I didn't stop after that. I felt better when I heard Einstein didn't talk until he was four either. I think I talked, I just didn't say much.

Anyway, so the reason I said all of that is Jesus probably spoke a few Egyptian words, if He was living in Egypt during that time in His life because you notice how quick kids learn a language? I've seen it before where--I know one particular family that came from Mexico and they had three children and-- who were attending our church. And the mother and father were struggling learning English, and in one year the kids were speaking fluently, without an accent. Have you seen that before? It's amazing. Twenty years later, parents still struggling with English.

There's a time in your life when your language skills develop rather quickly. Jesus might have spoke a few words of Egyptian. There's probably not a lot spiritually edifying in that thought but I thought it anyway. 2 Kings chapter 8, verse 3. Another stranger in a strange land. "And it came to pass at the end of seven years."

Now, this is talking about the Shunammite woman. I kind of wish we knew what her name was. Always just refers to her, of a great woman from Shunaam. And Shunaam was a territory in northern Israel. They were not Jews but they accepted the God of the Bible, many of them did. You remember in the Song of Solomon, Solomon falls in love with a Shunammite. We're assuming it's Solomon that is in the story. You remember when David was old and he needed someone to keep him warm as he was dying, probably from congestive heart failure that they found Abishag, the Shunammite.

And while there is a great woman of Shunaam, Elisha resurrects her son. You remember the story? She makes an upper room for Elisha in the roof of her house and he then prays for her and she has a miracle baby boy. Boy later dies, working in the field with his father. Elisha resurrects the boy, tells one more story about her. "Came to pass that Elisha tells her, 'You better go wherever you can dwell because there's going to be a famine in the land for seven years.'" It's interesting, that's also what Ruth did. Famine for seven years. And so the Shunammite woman, she goes and she dwells in the land of the Philistines and then at the end of the famine she comes back but while she was gone during that seven years, she being a stranger in the land of Israel, other people had moved into her house.

They'd taken over, you know? Often happens. Had a place up in Covelo, we still have that place. I had to go to Texas for over a year to help a family, had a heart attack and they were building a house. And while I was gone, someone moved into my house. And I actually had to drive back and get the police and chase them out of my house. And I knew, as soon as they knew I was going back to Texas, they'd move back in again. It's the Wild West up here in Mendocino County. And so I stayed one more day and I went back to the house after they'd been evicted. They had moved back in, just like I thought.

So you know what I did? With the help of a friend, I snuck down to the house at night while they're in the house, I took some pebbles and I screwed some pebbles into the valve stem on their truck so it would slowly let the air out on several tires and while I was doing that, they came out of the house. I had to roll underneath the truck and hide. My own place. Then they went back in the house. I went back and I got the sheriff and I said, "They moved back again." He said, "No, they wouldn't do that." I said, "I can guarantee they're still there," because the truck was flat. They were loading up my stuff in their truck to take with them.

So, she's been gone seven years. I mean, she has this nice house. She actually built a--she built a special room for Elisha. People had moved in. They'd taken over. And so she's appealing that she can get her

place back to the king. She's a stranger, she's a foreigner, and the king could have said, "Well, tough, you're a Shunammite. Israel's going to get first choice."

She went to make an appeal to the king. At that very time--isn't God's providence wonderful? "At that very time that she goes to appeal to the king between court cases, the king is talking to Gehazi, Elisha's servant. Says, "Tell me the story about the boy that was raised from the dead," and so Gehazi tells the story about how Elisha resurrected this boy that was stone dead, and while he's telling the story, they said, "Okay, next case," and there is this woman and she's with the son who's now a teenager. And Gehazi says, "My Lord, the king. That's the woman. There's her boy."

How providential that something like that would happen. And it happened as the king was telling--that Elisha was telling the king how she had been restored--or the boy had been restored to life, there was the woman whose son he had restored, appealing to the king for her house and her land. And Gehazi said, "Oh my Lord, this is the woman and that's her son that was--Elisha restored the life." And the King asked the woman--she told him. So the king appointed a certain officer. He said, "I'm sending a policeman with you," saying, "Restore everything that was hers and all the proceeds of the field from the day she left until now. Not only that, you're to give interest for all the--her crops that you took while she was gone, you're to restore."

And so, and the Bible talks about can God restore the locust--what the locust has eaten? God restored everything to that woman. She's a type of the church. This world is going to be restored after these 7000 years, amen? He's going to make a new heaven and a new earth. So she was a stranger. The king--that king of Israel was not always good, but he did the right thing here, showing mercy to the foreigner, okay? Judge righteously. Deuteronomy 10, verse 17: "For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, great, mighty, and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe."

You know, it's--people are always tempted to show partiality and you really need to examine your heart to make sure that you're being fair with everybody and not giving anybody preferential treatment. James says in his book: "If there comes into your assembly a poor man and you say to him, 'Yeah, there's a seat over there on that log or the rag there on the floor, you can go sit over there,' and then a rich man comes in, in fine apparel, you go, 'Oh, we've got the throne for you.' And James says, "Are you not showing yourself partial, judges of evil thoughts?" That effect, that's in James chapter 2, verse 1. Let me read it to you. "Brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality."

He's talking about don't be partial, give people preferential treatment. Treat everybody as a child of God. "For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings and fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and you say to him, 'You sit here in a good place,' and say to the poor man, 'You stand there,'" don't even give him a chair, "or 'Sit here at my footstool,' have not you shown partiality among yourselves and become judges of evil thoughts?"

Then go to James chapter 2, verse 8: "If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, you will love your neighbor as yourself. You do well. But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors."

I'll tell you a little story from history. How many of you remember when you were in school, probably about fourth or fifth grade, hearing about the Boston Massacre? Before the Revolutionary War, one of the things that fomented it into being a revolution is the colonists, the people that were colonizing North America in Boston, had become very upset about the taxes that the British Empire was imposing, unfair taxes with no representation, just arbitrary, to pay for other wars that they fought, and the

colonists were getting fed up with it and when they started to complain, Britain sent more and more soldiers into Boston to help settle everybody down.

And finally, there was a confrontation between the citizens and some soldiers and someone threw something or someone fired a shot when they fell down, and all the other soldiers fired into the crowd. Several people were killed. And it turned out that-- and the whole thing was just a mob gone bad.

Well, they were going to hang all the soldiers and the British loyalists. "Following the Boston Massacre, March 5, 1770, Captain Thomas Preston, eight British soldiers and five British civilians were indicted for murder, thus facing possible execution. Obviously, it was very difficult to find a defense team that would agree to defend them." I mean, if you're a defense lawyer and you've got somebody who's been a traitor in the US and the media has painted them as the devil, as soon as you as an attorney say, "I will defend the devil," you're going to be hated and you're going to be threatened, right?

Do you know who defended them? John Adams, attorney, future to be president of the United States. "Obviously, it was very difficult to find a defense team that would agree to defend them in a very anti-British city of Boston. John Adams realized that much was on the line for colonial America, not the least of which was the international reputation. He realized it was critical for the accused to have a fair trial, lest other nations view colonial America as a place where justice and due process were not respected or applied to all."

You know, I've seen a couple of cases in our country in the last year and a half or two years where the media tried people before they declared them guilty, before they were ever tried. And they were denied due process. And someone says, "We don't need a court case, we've got video on our phone." Several cases like that. Have you noticed? People were treated as though they were guilty before they ever went to court and that's when you start drifting away from due process and fairness.

So, he realized what's the world's going to say that America's a wild country with no due process. A fair trial might also prevent retaliation from the British. Furthermore, Adams had gained the reputation as being incorruptible. You could not bribe John Adams. He had his faults. I read a whole massive book on him. It took me a year. He had his faults but I'll tell you, the guy had integrity. He was a very honest man. He was incorruptible and everybody knew that, and they firmly believed the accused had a right to a fair trial and all of the neighbors were upset when he defended the British soldiers. They finally got over it because they realized that he was being honest and I think that they were acquitted of deliberate murder. The whole thing was a terrible misunderstanding.

And so the idea was do not show partiality. Give justice to everybody, amen? So, I think I got another verse on that. Exodus 23, verse 3: "You shall not show partiality to the poor man in his dispute." Now, I put that in there because everybody automatically thinks like what James said that we tend to show partiality to the rich and we've got to bury-- because the rich can bribe more, and they can give you favors. But, you know, sometimes in society, they can hate the rich and show partiality to the poor when the rich are really not guilty. Rich person might be--have done everything perfectly fine, but people wanting to get poor votes will show partiality to the poor and they'll villainize the rich.

So what Moses is saying, it doesn't matter if they're poor or rich, you treat everybody equally, right, amen? You with me on that? Okay, so Moses does it both ways. He says, "Don't show partiality to the rich. Do not show partiality to the poor." And everyone should get fairness before God. God is no respecter of persons. Doesn't matter what your race is, the Bible says: "God has made of one blood, all people." It doesn't matter whether you're a foreigner, a native."

The Bible often, Moses said, the same law will apply to the native and the foreigner, and everyone was to be treated equally. All right, and then in the last section, pure religion before God. This also comes

from James but, well, let me see. I'm going to start with Deuteronomy chapter 24, verse 10: "When you lend your brother anything, you shall not go into his house to get his pledge. You shall stand outside, and the man to whom you lend shall bring the pledge out to you."

A person's home was their sanctuary. You were not to barge into a person's home and collect. And God knew that if that was allowed, it could easily be abused. If you said, "Look, you owe me something, there's a pledge, you've got to pay me," you could stand at the door, you can't go in their house. They've got to bring it out to you. "And the man to whom you lend shall bring the pledge to you." Don't they--we have a law in our country, the police cannot enter your house without a warrant. Your house is supposed to be sanctuary. And you see this in the Bible.

I can think of at least three examples. They're not always the best. The mob in Sodom, they banged on the door of Lot and they said, "Bring the men out to us." They didn't say, "We're coming in." That also happens in a similar story in the book Judges, where they didn't go in. They said, you know, "Bring the woman out to us." And then when Sisera went into the tent of Jael, they came to the door and she had to invite them in. You always stopped at someone's door. You did not go into their house. Their house was sanctuary. "And he'll bring it out to you. If the man is poor, you shall not keep his pledge overnight."

Now, what does that mean? Sometimes, as the pledge of an agreement, a person might give their garment. They might say, "All right, here's my robe. This is my guarantee that I will pay you back." I don't know if you've ever gone to a pawn shop to pawn something. Once, I was so short on money I had to pawn my clarinet. You're shocked to know that I owned a clarinet. I could sort of play it. But I really needed money. And it was, like, you know, a \$100 clarinet. The guy gave me \$10, but I needed that \$10. Well, there was a period of time if I didn't come back, he could sell it. And I did come back and got my clarinet back. But I had to pay it with interest to get it back again. You didn't know all this, have you? That's how a lot of people get by.

So, they used to have a process where maybe you needed to borrow some money and you'd offer something as pledge, and they'd lend it to you. But they said, "If the pledge is their garment, give it back to them. They've shown you it in sincerity." "They might need it to stay warm at night," is what he's really saying. "You shall not keep his pledge overnight. You shall in any case return his pledge to him again when the sun goes down that he might sleep in his own garment and bless you, and it will be righteousness to you before the Lord your God. You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether one of your brethren or one of the aliens who is in your land with you, whether he's a native or whether he's a stranger. Each day you shall give him his wages and do not let the sun go down on it for he is poor and he has set his heart on it, lest he cry against you to the Lord and it be sin to you."

Back then, you would hire harvesters. You remember the parable that Jesus told about the workers in the vineyard? At the end of the day, he paid them. And basically, those people often live from hand to mouth. They'd take the pay from that day, they'd go and they'd buy food to feed their family. They didn't say, "Okay, you'll get your paycheck in two weeks." They said, "When someone does contract labor, unless you've got a prearranged agreement, you pay them at the end of every day because some of these people were living--they're poor, they're living from day to day. Now, most of us, you know, we've got bank accounts and we can float a couple of weeks and it's actually more convenient that way. But back then, that was so important.

So what is pure religion before God? In concluding, I want you to turn with me to the book of Matthew, Matthew chapter 25, and this is an interesting passage because it comes on the heels--if you've got a Red Letter Edition Bible, if you look in your Bible, if you've got a Red Letter Edition, you will notice that Matthew 24, Jesus begins his discourse on the Second Coming. It stays red letter all the way through Matthew 24, through Matthew 25, and then you get to Matthew 25, verse 31.

This is the conclusion of Jesus's sermon on the Second Coming. And this is a picture of what we would call the Great Judgment, talking about how important it is to love the stranger. "When the Son of Man comes," Matthew 25, verse 31. "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him," that's going to be a lot of angels, "He will sit on the throne of His glory. And all nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats."

There's going to be a day, we'll be talking about this in our study of the Millennium during our Panorama Prophecy series. But there's a day, there's a judgment, when God separates all the saved from all the lost, the sheep from the goats. And everybody's going to meet again in eternity. "And He will set the sheep on His right hand," a position of favor, "but the goats on His left hand. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was--'" by the way, it talks about the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world and from the sacrifice of Christ.

This is how these people were able to find their salvation. "'For I was hungry, and you gave Me food; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in; I was naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.'" Notice that part: "I was a stranger, and you took Me in," showing love for the stranger, love for the poor, equality, mercy. "And then the righteous," the sheep, they say to the King, "'When did we see You? We forgot that. When did we see You as stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'"

Whether they were great or whether they were small, He says, "Anything you do in showing love to your fellow man, you are in turn doing for Jesus." And then, He continues. "Then He'll say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, ye cursed, into the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty, and You gave Me no drink; I was a stranger, and You did not take Me in; and naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick and in prison, and you did not visit Me.' And then they'll answer, and say to him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to You?'"

They were aghast, they said, "If course we would have done that for You." "And He'll answer and say to them, 'Assuredly I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do this to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these," the goats, "they go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into eternal life."

Now, first thing I want to draw to your attention in this passage: so often when we think about what's going to separate the saved from the lost, we think about, "Well, the lost, they committed sins so they're lost. They stole, they lied, they committed adultery. They murdered, they worshiped idols, they did all these bad things, they were bad people and so they were lost."

This parable is rather stunning in that the ones who were lost do nothing bad. What they do bad is they omit to do good. You've got two kind of categories of sins. One are called the sins of commission. That's where you commit a sin. If you kill someone, you commit murder. If you lie, you commit perjury. And so they're sins of commission, you're doing something wrong. But there's a whole 'nother category people don't think about and they're called sins of omission. That means you are omitting or neglecting to do something good.

In this Great Judgment that is depicted here, it's only talking about sins of omission because, in reality, those who are guilty of sins of omission are almost also guilty of the sins of commission. But they're

being judged here solely upon, "Did you love your brother? Do you love your sister? Do you love your neighbor?" Isn't that right? He's saying--He's not saying you did anything bad to the poor. You didn't steal the clothes and make that person naked. You didn't falsely accuse them and put them in prison. You're not responsible for their suffering. What you're responsible for is not caring to relieve their suffering. And so they are guilty of the sins of omission.

Now look at what the categories are that are being mentioned here. I know that when I first studied this, it kind of shocked me. I thought, "Wow, in the Great Judgment, I've always thought, you know, I've got to stop doing bad things." And I thought, it's not just-- I mean, theoretically, you could lock yourself in a room with 72 degrees and never do anything wrong. But you never do anything right either. And God is not calling Christians to just go through the day and trying not to do something wrong. He wants us to be doing what is right. And so, these people who are going into everlasting punishment, they could have said, "We didn't--we never would have done that to You, Jesus, we would have never--" He said, "It's what you didn't do that's what's condemning you. You didn't care, you didn't love your neighbor."

There are six things that are mentioned here as specific things. He said, notice, go to, you know, Matthew chapter 25, He says, "I was hungry and you gave Me food." Should Christians feed the hungry? Yeah, oh, we can't feed the whole world but we ought to do what we can to feed those that are hungry. Fortunately, right now, we're in a country that has relative abundance and we are able to help to a great extent do that.

But Christians are not just supposed to give out, you know, baked beans. What is the bread that we're supposed to be giving? Jesus said, "Man doesn't live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." Not only should we feed the hungry, we should be giving them the bread of life, see what I'm saying? "I was thirsty, you gave Me drink." If you see someone thirsty, Jesus asked the woman at the well for a drink of water. I think she may have forgotten to give it to Him, she was so amazed. But should we care and be providing living water for people that need Jesus?

He says, "I was a stranger and you took Me in." One of the jobs for Christians: people are separated from God. We are to make atonement. That means "at one-ment." We are to become a bridge between them and the God that they're alienated from. So we're to care about those who are strangers to God and introduce them to their Savior.

You see, there's a spiritual analogy. "I was naked." What does clothing represent? Character, and naked would be no character. We need to give them Christ's righteousness. What happened to Adam and Eve after the devil got done with them? They were naked. Did God clothe them? Are you with me? When the man fell among thieves, it says they beat him and left him naked and half dead. Did he help clothe him? He did. But they should be provided with Christ's righteousness. "I was sick."

Now we Christians should care for the sick and I'm so glad we have health ministry and we've got hospital systems and things that minister to people's practical physical needs, but way beyond that, people are sick with sin. The Bible describes those who are lost. It says: "From the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, there's nothing but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. They're sick in sin, and we ought to help them find that balm in Gilead." You with me?

"I was in prison." Some people are in literal prison and I'm thankful for Christians that have prison ministry. And we've got folks in our own congregation that care about those in prison. But there's another kind of prison. Those who are imprisoned by sin. See what I'm saying? So we're to be giving the bread of life and the living water and one last thought before I run out of time.

These six things that are described: hungry, thirsty, naked, stranger, sick, in prison. Did Jesus experience all of those things in the cross? They represent all the suffering of humanity. Do you know you cannot

hardly describe any suffering in the human race that doesn't fit in one of those categories. So when Jesus died on the cross, He literally took all of that pain and suffering of humanity when He was hanging there. God is not only omnipotent and all-powerful and all-knowing, He's omnipathic, meaning that God feels everything. Does God feel when a person's hungry? Does He feel when they're thirsty or naked or sick?

Anything you do to relieve the suffering of any creature, not just man. "Righteous man regards the life of his beast." Anything you do to relieve the suffering of any creature, does Jesus feel the relief? So you are literally making God feel better when you show love for the stranger, amen?

male announcer: Don't forget to request today's life-changing free resource. Not only can you receive this free gift in the mail, you can download a digital copy straight to your computer or mobile device. To get your digital copy of today's free gift, simply text the keyword on your screen to 40544 or visit the web address shown on your screen and be sure to select the digital download option on the request page. It's now easier than ever for you to study God's Word with Amazing Facts wherever and whenever you want. And most important, to share it with others.

Brian: I normally do 15 to 20 yards a day by myself. I have a lawn service. And it was a long day. I'm coming home, so I'm just-- hit scan on the radio, and it stopped on a staticky station and I heard Doug say, "Hello, friends, would you like to hear an amazing fact?" And I actually looked at the radio and answered. I'm like, "Yeah, I sure do."

After it was over with, I wanted to make sure to find the program again because it was starting to static in and out. I went and started to find the podcast of "Bible Answers Live," and that's really what got me with "Amazing Facts," is their vast library of the podcast. Once I seen all that, I got to hear his testimony. So I got on YouTube. I have to see this man's testimony, and his testimony, like, I was looking at me. It's like, you know, I can understand this guy. He's been through what I've been through. There's no coincidence in this. There's a reason that station stopped that day. Thank you for changing my life.