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MINISTRIES

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Parashah Points: Tzav – First Be Reconciled

Welcome to another episode of Parashah Points—short thoughts from the weekly Torah Portion.

This week’s Parashah Point comes from Tzav (*sahv*), which is Hebrew for “Command,” and it goes from Leviticus 6:1 to Leviticus 8:36.

This Torah portion gives instructions for how the priests carried out the sacrifices and describes the ordination of Aaron and his sons.

There’s a lot we can talk about in this Torah Portion. Today we’re going to present just a thought on restitution.

According to the Torah, if you’ve wronged someone, repentance requires more than just feeling guilty. We are obligated to make things right—to make restitution. The Torah says that if someone has defrauded their neighbor, they must pay it back plus 20 percent:

Leviticus 6:4-7

Then it shall be, when he sins and becomes guilty, that he shall restore what he took by robbery or what he got by extortion, or the deposit which was entrusted to him or the lost thing which he found, or anything about which he swore falsely; he shall make restitution for it in full and add to it one-fifth more. He shall give it to the one to whom it belongs on the day he presents his guilt offering. Then he shall bring to the priest his guilt offering to the Lord (YHWH), a ram without defect from the flock, according to your valuation, for a guilt offering, and the priest shall make atonement for him before the Lord (YHWH), and he will be forgiven for any one of the things which he may have done to incur guilt.

According to this passage, God’s prescription for removing the guilt of defrauding one’s neighbor is by making full restitution to the one who was defrauded followed by giving an offering to YHWH. Why must restitution be made before drawing near to God with an offering in worship?

The reason is that the act of making things right with your neighbor *proves* that your repentance is true.

It's easy to say that you feel sorry and to go on pretending to be religious without making amends with the victims of your sins, but that is the very definition of hypocrisy.

Yeshua directly affirmed this principle from the Torah in His Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 5:23-24

So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Indeed, if we were truly sorry for cheating someone, we would be moved to do whatever we could to make things right. The Holy Spirit within us wouldn't allow us to ignore our responsibility to our neighbor. Zacchaeus understood this well:

Luke 19:8

And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold."

We cannot put off making things right with the people we've wronged. Scripture is clear, and we are accountable to the clear words of the Torah and the Messiah. Restitution is a priority. If someone literally defrauded someone, it is to be paid back—plus 20 percent. This principle can also be applied more broadly: For instance, if a person publicly slandered someone, the same ought to make a public apology and do one's to right the wrong.

In either case, the person that continues to go on pretending to be religious without doing everything that can be done to make things right with the people that have been wronged first—to at least reach out and initiate that process of making restitution—that person is a hypocrite. That is profaning the name of God through hypocrisy. "First be reconciled to your brother, and *then* come and offer your gift."

Thank you for joining us for another Parashah Point!

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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