

The Importance of Following Rules

Scripture

“Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, ‘Come aside, friend, sit down here.’ So he came aside and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, ‘Sit down here.’ So they sat down. Then he said to the close relative, ‘Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, sold the piece of land which [belonged] to our brother Elimelech. And I thought to inform you, saying, Buy [it] back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem [it], redeem [it]; but if you will not redeem [it, then] tell me, that I may know; for [there is] no one but you to redeem [it], and I [am] next after you.’ And he said, ‘I will redeem [it].’ Then Boaz said, ‘On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy [it] from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance.’ And the close relative said, ‘I cannot redeem [it] for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance. You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem [it].’ Now this [was the custom] in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging, to confirm anything: one man took off his sandal and gave [it] to the other, and this [was] a confirmation in Israel. Therefore the close relative said to Boaz, ‘Buy [it] for yourself.’ So he took off his sandal.’ (Ruth 4:1-8 NKJV)

Commentary

It may sound silly to take off your shoe to confirm a contract. Clearly, this would not hold up in our courts today. However, in the days of Boaz, he followed the rules to ensure that no challenge could be brought against him and his marriage to Ruth.

We live in a society of rules and regulations. Sometimes those rules seem silly to us, but God has placed authority over us for our own good.ⁱ We never do right by breaking the rules unless the rules tell us or force us to break God’s rules.

Most of the time, the rules that govern our society do not violate or cause us to violate God’s rules. This is further evidence that God has written the law on the heart of man (Rom 2:14-15)ⁱⁱ. Therefore, be thankful that God has given you a place where you might live in peace.

With all the problems we have in our society, it is still relatively harmless to our faith. Sure things are changing, and the anti-Christian movement is rallying forces, but we will not advance our cause by operating outside of the laws of our nation.

However, this should be our call to prayer. We labor in vain if the Lord is not working for us.ⁱⁱⁱ This is one of God’s rules for life. Will we, who are so willing to fight for our rights to live as Christians, forsake the Lord’s law? Surely this would be hypocritical.

Prayer

Father, thank you for the freedoms we have in this country. Lord forgive our transgressions, and continue to provide safe passage for your children. Stir in us a holy fervor that the world will see your glory, and turn from their wicked ways, amen.

ⁱ “Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same.” (Romans 13:1-3 NKJV)

ⁱⁱ “for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves [their] thoughts accusing or else excusing [them]” (Romans 2:14-15 NKJV)

ⁱⁱⁱ “. . . Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.” (Psalms 127:1 NKJV)