



The Culture Behind the Bible
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Session 4

Relationships in AMC

- . Family, clan, between unrelated peers, patron-client.
- . Obligation, balance govern the relationship. Patron-client relationships are lifelong.
- . God/human relationship is a patron-client relationship.
 - . Spelled out in Sinai Covenant, and Mosaic Law
- . Jesus is both a broker (between God and humanity) and a patron (to his followers).
- . Jesus redefines the basis of all relationship from honor to love.

The Patron-Client Relationship:
An example of relationship broken and restored

The opening scene of the Godfather:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CV5QskX_oW4

Jesus:
Using the Patron/Client Relationship as Teachable Moment

"Our Father in heaven
hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we have forgiven our debtors.
And do not bring us to the time of trial.
But rescue us from the evil one.
For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. - Matt 6:9-15

"Father, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.
Give us each day our daily bread.
And forgive us our sins,
for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.
And do not bring us to the time of trial. - Luke 11:2-4

Why does Jesus address God as Father? Any insights?

Jesus: Cultural Disrupt

- . Jesus redefines all four aspects of social systems: Kinship, Economics, Politics, and Religion.
- . Paul and James make it even clearer in their letters:

"There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." - Gal 3:28

"My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our Lord Jesus Christ? For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes, and say, 'Have a seat here, please,' while to the one who is poor you say, 'Stand there,' or 'Sit at my feet,' have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?" - James 2:1-5
- . What does Jesus' radical redefinition of his culture mean when one looks to the community to tell you who you are? (Outward-focused identity.)

Jesus: Cultural Disrupt

- . This cultural disrupt applies to our own time.
 - . It speaks of the total obliteration of all social distinction.
 - . It speaks of a radical equality.
 - . Do we really take Jesus' teaching to heart?

Morality in AMC

- . "Limited good" society: too much of anything not a good thing. Resentment and jealousy.
- . What about our own society?
- . Mosaic Law is something to aspire to; not assumed that one would live it out perfectly.
- . No organized system of crime and punishment; it is in the hands of local authorities.
- . In-groups and out-groups. Lots of distinctions.

Israelites' Moral Development

- . Eye for an eye a step forward. (All challenges must be answered.)
- . Morality moves beyond maintenance of social order to encompass relationship with God.
- . Care for the outsider:
 - . "You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. If you do abuse them, when they cry out to me, I will surely heed their cry; my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with my sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children orphans." - Ex 22:21-24
 - . "For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, might and awesome, who is not partial and taken no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them with good and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." - Deut 10:17-19

Israelites' Moral Development, con't

- . Care for the poor:
 - . "Ah, you who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is room for no one but you, and you are left to live alone, in the midst of the land! The Lord of hosts has sworn in my hearing: Surely many houses shall be desolate, large and beautiful houses, without inhabitant. For the acres of vineyard shall yield but one bath, and a homer of seed shall yield a mere ephah." Is 5:8-11
 - . "Hear this, you that trample on the needy, and bring to ruin the poor of the land, saying, "When will the new moon be over so that we may sell grain; and the sabbath, so that we may offer wheat for sale? We will make the ephah small and the shekel great, and practice deceit with false balances, buying the poor for silver and the needy with a pair of sandals, and selling the sweepings of the wheat." The Lord has sworn by the pride of Jacob: Surely I will never forget any of their deeds...I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentations...I will make it like the mourning for an only son..." - Amos 8:4-10

Exercise: Moral or Immoral?
Israelite Culture, US Culture

- . To be rich?
- . To be poor?
- . To show special care for the poor and marginalized?
- . To put limits on immigration? To give amnesty to illegal immigrants?
- . To bring religious beliefs to bear on political questions?

Jesus' Farewell Discourse

"After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe and had returned to the table, he said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord - and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.'"
John 13:12-15

"I have you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you should also love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."
John 13:34-35.

Next Week:

The Reign of God
