DEUTERONOMY

Chapter 25

**When men have a dispute, they are to take it to court and the judges will decide the case, acquitting the innocent and condemning the guilty. 2 If the guilty man deserves to be beaten, the judge shall make him lie down and have him flogged in his presence with the number of lashes his crime deserves, 3 but he must not give him more than forty lashes. If he is flogged more than that, your brother will be degraded in your eyes. 4 Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain. 5 If brothers are living together and one of them dies without a son, his widow must not marry outside the family. Her husband’s brother shall take her and marry her and fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to her. 6 The first son she bears shall carry on the name of the dead brother so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel. 7 However, if a man does not want to marry his brother’s wife, she shall go to the elders at the town gate and say, “My husband’s brother refuses to carry on his brother’s name in Israel. He will not fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to me.” 8 Then the elders of his town shall summon him and talk to him. If he persists in saying, “I do not want to marry her,” 9 his brother’s widow shall go up to him in the presence of the elders, take off one of his sandals, spit in his face and say, “This is what is done to the man who will not build up his brother’s family line.” 10 That man’s line shall be known in Israel as The Family of the Unsandaled. 11 If two men are fighting and the wife of one of them comes to rescue her husband from his assailant, and she reaches out and seizes him by his private parts, 12 you shall cut off her hand. Show her no pity. 13 Do not have two differing weights in your bag—one heavy, one light. 14 Do not have two differing measures in your house—one large, one small. 15 You must have accurate and honest weights and measures, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. 16 For the Lord your God detests anyone who does these things, anyone who deals dishonestly. 17 Remember what the Amalekites did to you along the way when you came out of Egypt. 18 When you were weary and worn out, they met you on your journey and cut off all who were lagging behind; they had no fear of God. 19 When the Lord your God gives you rest from all the enemies around you in the land he is giving you to possess as an inheritance, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget!**

**25:3** *not … more than forty lashes.* Beating could subject the culprit to abuse, so the law kept the punishment from becoming inhumane. Cf. Paul’s experience (2Co 11:24). (CSB)

Restraint on the one meting out punishment, which protected the humanity of both. (TLSB)

**25:4** Applied to ministers of Christ in 1Co 9:9–10; 1Ti 5:17–18. (CSB)

t*reading out the grain.* See notes on Ge 50:10; Ru 1:22. (CSB)

God’s Law shows concern not only for the poor, the widow, the stranger, and the criminal, but also for animals. cf Hos 10:11. Paul cites this compassionate law as proof by comparison that Christians ought to financially support ministers of the Gospel (1Co 9:9–14). (TLSB)

**24:5–25:4** These miscellaneous laws protect the weak from the strong. Jesus may have had some of these laws in mind when He taught the Golden Rule: “Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them” (Mt 7:12). Luther picks up on this loving concern for one’s neighbor in several of his explanations to the Commandments. When we examine our words and actions, we must confess our failure to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Thanks be to God for His compassion toward us! His Son loved us more than Himself, and He died for our sins. • Precious Savior, move me to love others more and more because of Your great love for me. Amen (TLSB)

**25:5–6** The continuity of each family and the decentralized control of land through family ownership were basic to the Mosaic economy (see note on Ge 38:8). (CSB)

**25:5** Some of Israel’s neighbors also followed this practice. Except in the situation described here, such a marriage to a close family member was forbidden (Lv 18:16; 20:21). (TLSB)

**25:7** *if a man does not want to marry his brother’s wife.* See vv. 8–10; note the experiences, with some variations, described in Ge 38:8–10; Ru 4:1–12. (CSB)

*elders at the town gate.* See 22:15; see also notes on Ge 19:1; Ru 4:1. (CSB)

**25:9** These symbolic actions express utmost disdain, a public ritual of disgrace. (TLSB)

**25:10** This family nickname would perpetuate the memory of a brother’s loveless action. (TLSB)

**25:5–10** The man who refused to marry his brother’s widow lacked God’s gift of love. He cared for his own interests, not his brother’s. God calls us to live and act differently: in love. How very different is our Savior, who cared not for His own interests but for the interests of us all and has chosen the Church as His beloved Bride. • Dear Jesus, Your sacrifice leads me to sing, “Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all!” Amen. (*LSB* 425:4) (TLSB)

**25:11–12** Cf. Ex 21:22–25. (CSB)

The harsh punishment compensates for the crime of a scandalous attack on a husband’s opponent. (TLSB)

**25:13–16** See note on Lev 19:35. (CSB)

**25:13–16** The last of the civil and criminal laws recorded in Dt. Such dishonest business practices were persistent and widespread in biblical times. Mel: “The lazy and wasteful are all thieves, for unless they take from someone else they cannot sustain their laziness and costly habits” (Chem, *LTh* 2:417). (TLSB)

**25:14** *measures.* Of quantity. (CSB)

**25:17–19** Amalekites were descendants of Esau (Gn 36:9–12) who lived south and east of the Salt Sea. The Lord’s judgment (Ex 17:14) is against Amalek because of their attack of Israel at Rephidim during the exodus. As Israel is about to enter the Promised Land, the Lord reminds them of this obligation (cf 1Sm 15; 30:16–20). (TLSB)

**25:17** *Remember.* See note on 4:10. (CSB)

*Amalekites.* See Ex 17:8–16; Nu 14:45. (CSB)

**25:18** *fear of God.* See note on Ge 20:11. (CSB)

**25:19** *rest.* See note on 3:20. (CSB)

**25:11–19** People in every society sin by taking unfair advantage of one another. Such behavior stirs the Lord to anger. He therefore authorizes Israel to blot out the memory of Amalek. God must address all sin by punishment, atonement, or forgiveness. Only because Jesus bore our punishment can we escape God’s wrath and receive full pardon for our sins. • Lord Jesus, may Your goodness lead me to be an instrument of justice and fairness in the world. Amen. (TLSB)