

The TENDER Commandments
Intro pt 1

Intro to the Ten Commandments:

Text: Exodus 19:1-6; Deuteronomy 4:1; 4:5-8

Illus: paging through an old high school yearbook...11 yr old son says, “hmmm.... I guess most of these people are dead now?”

Our culture discards and disdains the old!

NEW AND IMPROVED ARE THE CATCH PHRASES OF MARKETING.

In our age of knowledge and technology things become obsolete and worn out within a short time.

Ex: scene from a movie with a rotary phone – how weird!! “If you’re dialing from a rotary phone you might as well give it up because you ain’t ever getting through”

Who dares to make such a statement that 10 laws for human behavior, 10 commandments, that were written over 3000 yrs ago should be the linchpin and the basis for our civilization? Who dares to make such a statement like that?

The church of Jesus Christ does. IT was Jesus who said, “heaven and earth may pass away, but not a jot or tittle of the law of God will pass away until all is fulfilled.”

What he was saying is that the law of god is greater than heaven and earth. Now that is something. The mountains themselves are as scaffolding, they are fluff compared to the law. **Our lives are like fluff, unless the Grace of God with all it’s greatness, comes in and writes His Law on our hearts.**

Tom Brady-



After great success and multiple Super Bowl wins, he says, “There’s got to be more than this.” (60 Minutes)

When Tom Brady was asked what else there could be his only response was, “I wish I knew. I wish I knew...”

EX: MADONNA, Today Show 4-24-03

“I can tell you that fame and the riches that go with it don’t satisfy.”

. Here are two people who got far closer to their dreams than probably any of us ever will, they reached the pinnacle of success to bring strength and acclaim and they were empty and there is only one possible explanation for that: **the human soul is so great that even this kind of achievement cannot satisfy!**

Pascal...”There is a God shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus.”

When it comes to finding meaning and purpose the answer is a “who”, not a “what”. And the person is God himself, as He is know through Christ.

How does that relate to the Ten Commandments??

We get to know people, and God, through what they, and He values.

You can meet someone and say, "I know her/ him," but until you know what he or she values, how well do you really know them?

You can feel like you know a person you've never met because you've learned about what he/she values

EX: John Piper, Tim Keller, J.I.Packer, Elyse Fitzpatrick – I've never met them, but I feel like I know them because I've read or listened to their sermons, articles and books so much, that I have a good sense of what they value.

So too with God. As we read His book, we learn what He values, and one place where those values are expressed is in what are known as the TEN COMMANDMENTS.

Before God gives the Ten Commandments IN EXODUS 20, He gives these words of reminder and promise in Exodus 19:3-8 -what one author calls THE EAGLES' WING SPEECH

There Israel encamped before the mountain, ³ while Moses went up to God. The LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: ⁴ 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. ⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; ⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'

These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel."

⁷ So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him. ⁸ All the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do." And Moses reported the words of the people to the LORD. ⁹ And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you forever."

Before we go any further, you need to know this – The values embedded in the 10 Commandments are Someone you meet before they are commands to Obey. The Ten Commandments are embodied in Jesus.

Before God comes down in shock and awe, He has already come as the Deliverer of His people.

That's the thesis of the scripture passages in this series. God is promising something great for the human soul. He promises the blessings of character and righteousness when we know Him and depend on him for how we are to live.

Before "this Law" is repeated in Deut 5; we read this in Deut 4.

Deut 4:1, 5-8

"And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules¹ that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you.

⁵ See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. ⁶ Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' ⁷ For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? ⁸ And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?

v Deut 4:1 – follow them so that you will what? You might live.

v. 8 – What a privilege it is to have such a righteous “law” given to us.

IS THAT HOW we typically view the Law of God? Do we see it as a blessing; as a gracious gift?

God's love gave us His law, just as His love gave us the gospel – J.I. Packer

If you want to really live, the only thing that will come into your life that will give your real life, is the righteousness of God. Not all the achievement, not all the critical acclaim, not all the plaques, not all the benefits, etc., in the world. If that is all you fill the human heart with, the soul shrivels up and dies. – (Tom Brady and Madonna)

Gods Law = his instruction and it is for our good. It also shows us that we will never achieve the righteous that it demands. That is why we need a Savior. Jesus is the SOMEONE who lives out the law of loving God and loving others.

The law is like an X-ray in that it will help diagnose where the problem is, but it does not, and cannot heal you.

EX: going to the doctor – “We need to get an X-ray”. Once it is over, you don't leave thinking, “Now I'm cured because I had an X-ray”. NO, now you have a better sense of the problem.

Now, somebody says, yes! This is very exciting. But are you saying, “I must fill the soul with the 10 commandments???” Look, I've been there! When I get around those things I feel swamped, depressed, guilty!”

The answer is this: the 10 commandments are fairly well known, but people, a lot of people, just know them, and they don't understand what the bible says about them, their context, and as a result people are crashing on the 10 commandments.

WHERE WE ARE GOING IN THIS SERIES:

Before we actually get to the 10 commandments we will set the table for at least 2-3 weeks as we get an overall picture of the context and deal with misunderstandings about “the Law” and its role in the life of the believers. My goal is to make is practical and not too wonky or deep in the weeds.

As a way of LONG INTRODUCTION to the series, let's consider a couple of reasons **why we should study the Ten Commandments.**

We live in a world that has lost its moral center. While no society has ever been founded or perpetuated on perfect principles, there had been a general acceptance that we live in a world of absolutes. People may have disagreed on what they were, but the idea was there.

That changed over a period of time. Crucial in that change was Einstein's theory of Relativity. (lectures in 1915). What happened is that the “-tivity” became an “-ism”.

The scientifically useful part of relativity morphed into a general culture view of relativism – i.e. there is no such thing as a fixed truth, in any domain- science, morality, religion.

Ancient wisdom and truth of our Judeo Christian heritage gave way to economic, sociological, psychological, and political “truths” that were constantly changing – they were “relative”.

<http://www.albertmohler.com/2015/12/07/relativity-moral-relativism-and-the-modern-age/>

Einstein was not a moral relativist, nor did he believe that his theories had any essential moral or cultural meaning. He recoiled when his theory of relativity was blamed or credited for the birth of modern art (Cubism, in particular) or any other cultural development.

The philosopher Isaiah Berlin defended Einstein against any such charge: “The word relativity has been widely misinterpreted as relativism, the denial, or doubt about, the objectivity of truth or moral values.” He continued, “This was the opposite of what Einstein believed. He was a man of simple and absolute moral convictions, which were expressed in all he was and did.”

This is a stark reminder that ideas have consequences – even unintended consequences.

The Ten Commandments reconnect us to timeless, changeless wisdom and truth that God has given us for our own good.

We need to study them because **they call us to grace**. We know that salvation is by grace alone, not by the works of the Law. Keeping the Law is not the means of salvation, but when we understand grace we can say with the Psalmist, “O how I love Thy Law; the Law is perfect restoring the soul; the judgements of God are more desirable than gold and are sweeter than honey.” (Ps 119; Ps 19)

The Eagles Wings Speech of Exodus 19 is a message of grace, and the Law is a gracious gift to God’s people, not a means for earning salvation. He’d already saved them.

For the Christian believer, living under the moral authority of the Ten Commandments becomes a path of joyful fellowship with God and guide us as we seek to love others. Thus, it invites grace upon grace in our lives.

They also calls forth the gospel in the life of the believer because it slays us and humbles us, thus driving us to Christ. If we take the Ten Commandments seriously, then they destroy our ability for us to think of ourselves as good. They disabuse us of any pretense of our own righteousness. They drive us to call on Jesus and rest in the Gospel of his love and obedience for us.

The law and gospel go together. The Law exposes our sin, and even stirs it up, right. When you see a “don’t walk on the grass” sign, what do you want to do?

THE PROBLEM ISN’T THE SIGN; it’s our hearts. It is understanding this about our hearts that makes us appreciate the GOOD NEWS OF THE GOSPEL.

The good news is GOOD, in light of the reality of our own sin and the condemnation we deserve for violating the Law of God.

APPLICATION: Take time during this series to read and memorize the Ten Words (Decalogue) or Commandments and / or other passages that show the goodness of God’s gracious Law/ instruction – Psalm 19; Psalm 119; Psalm 1

Review and learn them with your kids; take one per week – use the catechism – children’s catechism; WCF or Heidelberg

As believers, indwelt by the Holy Spirit we have new desires and a new heart. **The same Holy Spirit who empowered Jesus to obey, lives in us, and His desire is to lead us to walk in God's ways.**

If you don't know Christ, then the Law is a weight on your soul; it will feel like a swamp or quicksand. But you can escape the quicksand through Jesus, who lived the life we should have lived and who died the death we should have died.

The ABC's of coming to faith –

A - Admit that you're weak and need grace and strength – That means there is GOOD NEWS FOR YOU

B- Believe that Jesus is the only savior who can heal your heart.

C- confess to God that you want to trust Jesus as your savior and Lord.

