

Ten Laws of Love
The TENDER Commandments
Intro pt 2 MISUNDERSTANDINGS

Intro to the Ten Commandments:

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

Last week we started a series on the Ten Commandments, and I said that we'd do 2-3 weeks of introduction.

This is the Yankee Gen. George McClellan approach rather than that of Confederate Gen Robert E. Lee.

McClellan was more cautious and like to make sure that everything was set up just right before he engaged. Gen Lee was more of a "let's get at it" kind of guy.

I chose the cautious approach simply because there are issues that we need to clarify so that the Ten Commandments will make more sense.

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

Remember that THE Ten Commandments ARE SOMEONE WE MEET BEFORE THEY ARE SOMETHING WE OBEY.

We live in a world that has lost its moral center.

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.

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.

They also calls forth the gospel in the life of the believer because it slays us and humbles us, thus driving us to Christ.

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.

This morning I want to speak to some MISUNDERSTANDINGS about the "LAW" in general.

One issue that is often thrown out in the discussion of the "Law", or the Ten Commandments in particular, is that Christians will "pick and choose" which laws to obey.

For example: When a moral law is discussed in the broader culture that might relate to marriage or adultery, or alternative sexual choices, someone may say, "The Bible also says that eating shrimp (a shellfish) is an abomination, so will you outlaw that? You Christians just want to pick and choose which laws to obey."

That approach was popularized in a 2008 video in support of same sex marriage featuring Jack Black (comedian, actor)

http://townhall.com/columnists/frankpastore/2008/12/04/jack_black_jesus_and_prop_8

The gist of that is approach is to say, "There are so many OT laws, and some are kind of weird, so can we really listen to anything the Bible says"?

This plays upon some basic misunderstandings of scripture and the "Law" that is given by God.

As I mentioned last week, if we don't understand why God gave the LAW, we will be crushed by it – if we take it seriously.

There are **4 basic misunderstandings** that we have to remedy in order for the law to no longer crush you, but rather become “high steel” in your life.

EX: Skyscrapers framework = high steel, on which you hang the rest of the skyscraper on. Law of God is the high steel around which you hang your life of love for God and others. The Law helps give some framework and definition to what LOVE FOR God AND OTHERS, looks like.

“ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE” 🎵 is a great song and slogan, but it doesn't really help clarify what love looks like.

“If you love me, you'll let me _____” is a phrase used by various adults and children in many ways. Does what “goes in the blank” really define or express love?

Since God is God, and He created us and knows what is best for us, we would do well to listen to how he describes what love looks like. That is one of the functions of his “law” – gracious instruction.

Misunderstanding #1 – People don't understand that the motive to obedience to the law is intimacy with God. Ex 19: 4- THE EAGLE'S WING SPEECH

'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Ex 19:4

– The law of God was not given to the children of Israel until they were brought out of bondage, and God says “I want you to relate to me, to revere me, to know me as your King...and then he gives the law.” That sequence is important!

Many people see the law of God like they see the law of the land. Law of the land is a necessary trade-off of restrictions you agree to in order to have order in the land. The government. must restrict your personal freedom if a society will survive. BUT God doesn't need a thing from us...so **what's the motive?**

The word “torah” means instruction between a father and a son. The motive of instruction is to bring that son to maturity through a relationship with the parents. Did God come to the children of Israel and say, “here's the law, obey it and I'll save you?” No. God set his love on the children of Israel, he pulled them out and delivered them, and then he said, “now, because I want to be YOUR god and I want you to be my people, because I want you to blossom, to be everything you were designed to be, I want to establish a life of intimacy with you...here's the Law of God.”

Don't you see, there are two different motives to obedience.

1 – I see the law of God and I want to obey it, so that he will hear my prayers, so that he will accept me, so that He will help me, so that I will know that I am going to heaven. I will use the law of God as a ladder to heaven.

2 – The other way to see it is to say, “Because He has saved me out of his sheer grace and mercy not because of anything I have ever done or performed, because He has forgiven my sins through Jesus Christ's death on the cross, NOW I want to become like Him, to please this Great one, who has done this for me...and **I want to live a life of intimacy with him.**”

Those are not just two different motives to OBEY the law...those are two different religions.

The first approach says, “I am going to obey the law to get God to love me, to favor me”. There are two possible results to that approach:

- a) You're crushed by the law, you've tried and you've tried and you can't do it, and you get bitter, you hate the law, you hate the church, and the next thing you know you are in fundamentalist anonymous.
- b) b) You become smug and self-righteous because you think you are keeping these standards! You either become crushed or self-righteous and there is no other alternative. But if you take the proper way, the way that says, "I have saved you, so now, obey the law, so we can become friends, intimate with each other, a personal relationship...that transforms, it doesn't crush, nor does it make us smug, it transforms.

The genius of Christianity is this - God is a personal being that you can know personally. The way in which you relate to an impersonal object is that they make no claims on you, no demands on you at all, it's not their nature to...you just express yourself to them at your convenience. We often treat people like that...we call it oppression when we do. BUT PEOPLE make claims, people make demands. There is no such thing as a personal relationship without the give and take of requests or commands.

You know that...there are certain people who you will drop everything for, you will mess up your day and schedule if they will give you an audience. The greater person, the greater the demands that you will heed. If you love that person and you want a relationship, that's o.k.! You are very happy to mess up your schedule if that person will just let you have a talk with them. So how much greater with God, who says "this is how you relate to me."

Don't you see, John 14:21-22... "He who has my words and obeys my words, my Father and I will come into Him and we will manifest ourselves to Him." If you want God to be real to you, to come into you, there it is ... obey. That's your motive...intimacy.

The proof of one who obeys out of intimacy is that he or she is becoming an approachable person. I've known people who are obedient with smugness and self-righteousness, proud of their morality, but nobody wants to go and share a problem with them; noone wants to enter a personal relationship with them. The mark of someone who is obedient out of a motive of intimacy with God is that he or she is approachable. Intimacy with God breeds brokenness and intimacy with others.

2nd Misunderstanding – The actual result of obedience is always freedom, not bondage.

Deut 4:1 – that you might live!

There is something counter intuitive about biblical obedience. It grows out of the grace of freedom. **God delivers his people from bondage, and then He calls them to obey. Grace brings freedom that leads to obedience.** Grace brings freedom, but it also has a super glue quality – it binds us to the one who has freed us.

EX: Titus 2 – grace brings us salvation and freedom, and it changes us – it instructs/disciplines us.

In Jesus we know the truth, and the truth sets us free and the truth sanctifies us.

I know the common definition is that freedom is the absence of discipline. But when I listen to people play the piano, or an instrument, "I say, if only I had the ability to do that, how freeing it would be!" To be able to express myself that way!"

ex: THE saxophone player who DID THE NATIONAL ANTHEM at the Falcon – Packer game
Jan 22

Ask those people who have those abilities to play or dance or do gymnastics, etc, and you will hear about what?: Years and years of thankless toil, blisters on hands and feet, deep knee bends, etc. Freedom always comes through discipline. And Freedom also comes from honoring your design.

You could take a fish, watching the family sitting on the sofa watching TV... and he says, "I'm not free I want to be sitting on the sofa watching TV like everybody else." If he flips himself out of his tank, he is not more free. He loses his freedom to breathe and be what he was created to be.

EX: a car manual, "obey the manual", the car will need maintenance. Nobody will come to you and fine you for not putting the oil in the car. You have the freedom to ignore the proper upkeep of your car. BUT you will punish yourself. To ignore the owner's manual is to ignore your own best interest.

The word of God is the owner's manual. The fish and the car are pretty simple. But a human being is very complex. How do you check the owner's manual? How do you know?

A lot of people say, the only way to know how to run your life is to look in your own heart...you can't let some book tell you, you can't let some preacher tell you. You must know yourself for yourself.

EX: Home Alone 2 - "Follow the star in your heart"

How shortsighted can you be! Don't you remember you thought you knew what you wanted 10 years ago? 10 years from now, you will look back and say, "hmm I only thought I knew what I wanted back then!?"

Friends, we don't know. The only way to know is to ask the designer. And anyone who obeys the design of the creator, experiences an explosion of freedom and power. Like the bird who finally obeys his design and flies and the fish who obeys his design and swims.

3rd misunderstanding - God's commands don't rob us of enjoyment and fulfillment in life, they open doors to enjoyment and fulfillment in life.

Ex: 19 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.

There is nothing more fulfilling and satisfying than knowing that you are a treasured by someone; to know that someone you love and respect thinks much of you.

What could be better than being treasured by the God of the universe?

And knowing that is the key to being free from living for the approval of others - friends, parents, teachers, etc. "When People are BIG and God is small" We need to reverse it so that God IS BIG, and people are small.

SIDE ROAD: How do you know if people are big or if God is big in our hearts? Witnessing and prayer in public, even if just in a small group.

4th misunderstanding - Obedience is only about external behavior, when the Bible says obedience is about the heart.

(We'll come back to this a bit next week, so just a few words about it now)

V Deut 4: 9 - the purpose of the law is to get it into your heart

Jer. 31:33 -

Christian obedience is not about taking this external series of regulations and twisting and contorting yourself to it. The Bible says, that what it means to receive Christ as your Savior is that the Holy Spirit comes into your life, and bit by bit, stage by stage, writes the laws of God onto your heart... so that over time you develop, what? FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT and...

The integrity that the 8th command talks about. The purity that the 7th command talks about. The generosity, the love, the peace, they begin to come inside. It's a process of growth. It's not like anything most people say that it is.

Obedience's goal is to get it into your heart. God cares about who you are when nobody is looking. Who you are in your heart. When no one is telling what you have to do, when no one taking your thoughts and telling you what to think....where do your thoughts go?

Only the Spirit of God can take you and mold you into a person of both private and public integrity. And that can only happen when you receive Jesus Christ as Savior, and in comes the holy spirit in your life.

CONCLUSION

ROOTS, BRANCHES, AND FRUIT IMAGE from Psalm 1

Psalm 1 – Godly man – not that he prays day and night, not that he goes to church day and night, not that he's outside on the streets day and night.... The mark of the godly man is that his delight is the law of God and upon he meditates day and night. He loves it! HE loves to have God tell him what to do!

Do you like that? The answer to that question will tell you the state of your soul. It will tell you if your religion sees the law as a drudgery or as something sweeter than Honey.

Some of you need to realize that the reason HE is not a reality in your life, the reality that Jesus talks about in John 14, is that you are not being obedient, and you need to look your life over and say "Lord, in the next few weeks, I want you to point out to me those areas where I am committing sins I shouldn't or where I'm omitting things that I should."

Because lack of reality, lack of personal relationship is not always mysterious! Often, it comes from a lack of Holy Spirit empowered obedience.

And I hope that there are some folks here that recognize that when we talked about those two different religions, (recap) perhaps you recognize that you are in the former religion. It's not Christianity. You need to come to a place, and you need to do it this morning, where you say, "Jesus, I have been using the law to get to heaven, I now see I have to be saved in a completely different way."

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.

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