

**God's Ten Commitments**  
(the main scripture references are at the end of the sermon text)

We are finished WITH THE 10 COMMANDMENTS.

While we learned that they are NOT about what God wants from us, but What He wants FOR us, we also saw that we fail at every turn.

We don't keep the Ten Commandments as we should- in our hearts or in our actions.

If we are serious about loving God and obeying Him, then we can easily get discouraged, or we may try to double down and "try harder to get better". That may work for a while, but "white knuckle obedience" – just gut it out- won't lead to lasting internal change. (it may be needed at times, but it won't last.)

A pastor my brother knew in China, Mike Gaudet, suggests that to grow in grace we should focus on God's commitments to us. The Ten Commandments are useful in exposing our hearts and showing us what love for God and others looks like, but they can't change us.

2 Cor 3:17-18 gives us an important reality – **WE ARE TRANSFORMED as we Behold the glory and beauty of Christ.**

**We change because we have seen a superior beauty and worth and excellence. - PIPER**

**BEHOLDING IS BECOMING**

That is important to know because our obedience grows as we keep our eyes on God, not on ourselves. Our hearts are strengthened as we consider God's commitments to us. There are many, but I want to briefly introduce 10 Key Commitments we have from God.

As we head into the summer, keep these nearby – printed on the back of the bulletin.

**10- COMMITMENTS**

**God delights in His people – Deut 32:10-12; Zeph 3**

Christian, how does God feel about you right now?

How you answer that question will shape your life.

Is he ticked at you? Is He wagging his finger to scold you? Is he frowning? Is he perturbed at you?

"I know I'm forgiven, but .....i don't think God is real happy with me right now".

Even if we experience what Hebrews refers to as the "discipline of the Father", it is an aspect of His love for us.

Rom 8:1 – No condemnation

"This is my beloved Son"; We are "beloved children"

La Confession de La Rochelle – Article 18 **We hold only to the obedience of Jesus Christ, which is credited to us so that in Him we have not only forgiveness, but also the full grace and favor of God.**

Christian friend, in Christ you have the FAVOR OF God. He smiles over you. He rejoices over you with singing Zeph 3.

*"Our standing before God is not based on our performance"*

(true- it is based on the performance of Christ on our behalf. There is nothing we can do to change our status in Christ. God sees us as forgiven and accepted / perfect because of what Christ has done.)

THAT IS GOOD NEWS.

**God has come in the flesh and He will never leave us – Matt 28**

**John 14:15-18** Not leave us as orphans

He sent the Holy Spirit to us- June 4<sup>th</sup> is Pentecost Sunday. So that means that this Thursday, May 25<sup>th</sup> is .....ASCENSION DAY – 40 days after Easter, when Christ ascended to the right hand of the Father.

From there, he sent the Holy Spirit, so that we would never be alone.

**God loves us – Eph 3; Rom 5 ; John 3**

God LOVES US

In God's dictionary, love is a verb, not a noun. It is something He does rather than something He feels. It is active. God shows love by coming to the aid of those in need.

Why do we hesitate to approach God? Why do we remain distant when He lovingly beckons us to come close to receive mercy and grace?

Shame and fear keep us from approaching God.

We can feel ashamed to approach God. He is perfect – we make mistakes. He is strong – we are weak. However, when we remember that God sees us and yet sympathizes with us, we can more easily move toward Him.

Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need.” Hebrews 4:16

We no longer need to be ashamed.

We can feel afraid to approach God. He is holy and sinless – we are sinful. However, when we remember that God deals gently with us, we can more easily approach Him in times of need.

We no longer need to be afraid.

Shame keeps us from approaching God openly.

Fear keeps us from approaching God freely.

**God's love enables us to approach God confidently. Because of His love for us and the work of Christ on our behalf, our sin doesn't define us. We can draw near to God.**

**God chose us – – Eph 1 ; 1 Pet 1**

God chooses me

"They will be my people, and I will be their God." Jeremiah 32:38

How would you complete this sentence? God chooses me because.....

Most of us would complete the sentences using the word "I."

Whether furnishing reasons why we should or should not be chosen, we would describe what "I" do or what "I" don't do.

God does not choose us because of what we do for Him.

When we base God's choice on what we do . . . it leads to comparison and competition. We compare our lives with others. If we do more than they do, we feel confident about being chosen by God. If we do less than others do, we cease to feel confident. When we feel insecure, it is challenging to love and serve others.

God does choose us because of who He is and what He does for us.

God chooses us not because of what "I . . ." but because of what "He . . ."

When we focus on His character and commitments we gradually trust Him to keep them. We begin to base our confidence on His commitments rather than on our comparisons. We gradually trust Him to be "our" God.

**Increased security and confidence increase our capacity to love and serve others. - Gaudet**

Why does God choose you?

God chooses you because . . . He wants to display the riches of His grace in and through you.

God chooses you because . . . He wants to teach you to know and trust Him.

God chooses you because . . . He wants you to be part of His eternal family.

**God has qualified us Col 1:9-14**

God doesn't choose us because we are qualified – He qualifies us after he chooses us.

This is the end of striving to earn a right standing before God. Jesus did it for us. In Christ, by grace through faith, we are qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

EX: someone dies and leaves a will. You can't simply show up and expect to share in that inheritance, unless you are in some way qualified..... long lost relative or adopted child no one knew of.

EX: Qualifying races for the Olympics. You don't run in the final race unless you qualified

EX: It is hard for a quarterback to run a team if he's always afraid of being benched if he makes a mistake.

This means that THE PRESSURE IS OFF, so now we can go forth and follow Christ without worrying if we're going to be benched when we fail – and we will fail.

**God empowers us – Acts 1:8; Eph 1; 3 – prayers**

There is resurrection power available to us if we will connect to it by faith- and one way is through Prayer.

**Calvin - "Prayer Which is the Chief Exercise of Faith, and by Which We Daily Receive God's Benefits"**

**God is at work in us – Phil 1:6; 4:12ff**

God changes us

"I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts." Hebrews 8:10

This is the hardest commitment to take seriously! The evidence that it isn't true stares back at us each morning when we look into a mirror. We have areas of sin and struggle that have not changed. How are we to believe that God changes us when we are living proof that He doesn't?

If God changes us, why haven't we changed?

Our "gaze" and our "glance" are upside-down. This prevents change.

When Moses received the commandments from God on Mount Sinai, the experience changed him. His glowing face furnished visible proof. This change occurred because Moses gazed at God, not because he gazed at himself and willed the changes to occur. In fact, Moses didn't even realize that he had changed!

God wrote His law on stone tablets when He met with Moses. Now God writes His law on our hearts. He changes our lives by changing our hearts. He changes us from the inside-out. God begins with thoughts and attitudes and moves outside to influence behavior.

It is natural to gaze at behaviors that we are trying to change. We resort to determined effort and self-will to try to make needed changes occur. While it is possible to change behaviors this way, the resulting change is skin-deep and short-lived. It is not change that results from God writing on our hearts. Change that is heart-deep and long-lived cannot be willed. It is the by-product of increased awareness of and confidence in God's commitments.

**God changes us as we gaze at His commitments. BEHOLDING IS BECOMING**

**God sympathizes with us – Heb 4:15**

**"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses." Hebrews 4:15**

God sympathizes with me.

This changes everything!

God's watchful gaze is like that of a loving parent or a caring shepherd. The light of God's scrutiny is like that of a doctor's office, not that of an interrogation room.- Gaudet

God's sympathy assures us that He understands our weaknesses. He understands the pull of conflicting desires that each of us deals with. He is able to sympathize with us because Jesus Christ, God the Son, experienced this conflict personally.

God's sympathy is not the distant pity of one whose hands have never been dirty. His is the close compassion of one whose hands have touched our soil and whose lungs have breathed our air.

You can speak freely and honestly with God.

**God gives us power to persevere- - Is 40:28ff**

EX: when I first learned that verse – early sophomore year at UGA as part of a street theatre group. We were practicing for a long time and someone quoted it.

I was struck by the fact that the person knew the verse by heart, and I found the words meaningful and encouraging.

"He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak." Isaiah 40:30

As you examine your past you can see ways in which God has sustained you.

As you consider the present tap into the power of God by faith.

It's not automatic- we do need to lay hold of it, but it is available.

As you consider the future it helps to consider God's commitments to us.

Phil 1:6; Jude 24

God gives strength to the weary. Strength that produces perseverance, that allows us to put one foot in front of the other. That will come in handy today.

DO YOU FEEL WEARY AND WEAK? There is GOOD NEWS FOR YOU- God gives strength to those who need it and who come to HM.

**God Will Make all things right – – Rom 8:28; Rom 12:17-21**

All the wrongs will be met with the perfect justice of God. He rules in righteousness and equity. That should terrify us if we don't come before God under the covering of Christ alone. It should comfort our hearts if we know Christ and are fixing our hope fully on the grace to be revealed when He returns.

God will take all the mess, corruption, and sin of this world and make it right. 2 Thess 1:6-10

Rev 21:1-8

**ROOTS, BRANCHES, FRUIT**

These commitments are the truths that nourish the soil for our spiritual ROOTS. Healthy BRANCHES AND FRUIT grow from these truths.

Maybe you need to start believing. If so here are the **ABC's of belief**

**Admit**

**Believe**

**Confess**

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

. 2 Cor 3:17ff Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there* is liberty. 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit

**God delights in His people – Zeph 3**

Zeph 3 17" The LORD your God is in your midst,

A victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy,

He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.

**God HAS COME IN THE FLESH AND HE WILL NEVER LEAVE US**

15" If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

16I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 17that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

18"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you

### **God loves us – Eph 3; Rom 5 ; John 3**

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, 16that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, 17so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. Eph 3  
8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us Romans 5

### **God chose us – Eph 1**

Eph 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love 5He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

### **God has qualified us Col 1:9-14**

For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously 12giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. Col 1

### **God empowers us – Acts 1:8; Eph 1; 3 – prayers**

Eph 1 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who

believe. *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come

**God is at work in us – Phil 1:6; 4:12ff**

PHIL 1:6 *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. Phil 1

12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure. Phil 2

**God sympathizes with us – Heb 4:15**

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses." Hebrews 4:15

**God gives us power to persevere- - Is 40:28ff**

Isaiah 40: 28 Do you not know? Have you not heard?

The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth

Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable.

29 He gives strength to the weary, And to *him who* lacks might He increases power.

30 Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly,

31 Yet those who wait for the LORD

Will gain new strength; They will mount up *with* wings like eagles,

They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.

**God Will Make all things right – – Rom 8:28; Rom 12:17-21**

Rom 12:17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. 19

Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath *of God*, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord.

REV 21:

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them 4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

5 And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."

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