

3rd Sunday of Lent - 3/3/24 SJ, SM

Exodus 20:1-17 - "And God spoke all these words: (2) "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. (3) "You shall have no other gods before me. (4) "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. (5) You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, (6) but showing love to a thousand *generations* of those who love me and keep my commandments. (7) "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. (8) "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. (9) Six days you shall labor and do all your work, (10) but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. (11) For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (12) "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you. (13) "You shall not murder. (14) "You shall not commit adultery. (15) "You shall not steal. (16) "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. (17) "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.""

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, DFR:

What can you say about the Ten Commandments? They're located in the Supreme Court. Even people who aren't Christians and don't believe in God have at least heard of the Ten Commandments.

There are Ten Commandments for bowlers. The Ten Commandments of Etiquette. You can find listings of Ten Commandments for baseball, for the internet, for managing stress, for choosing insurance, for game playing, of firearm safety and even the Ten Commandments of gambling. There are lists of 10 commandments for teachers, students, politicians, and police officers — and many more.

Yet there is only one true Ten Commandments, and all others are just imitations of the commands given to Moses on Mt. Sinai and engraved on the hearts of all mankind. Let's take a brief look at those commandments today, as we:

Hear the Will of Your God!

1. Fear his anger and do not disobey what he commands
2. Love and trust in God and gladly obey what he commands

1. Fear his anger and do not disobey what he commands

It's very sad that God found it necessary to give his Ten Commandments to Moses on Mt. Sinai. It's even sadder that he had to give them to Moses a second time.

Remember that God first wrote his holy will on our hearts, on our hearts and in our minds. But because of sin, that natural knowledge of God's will for us is damaged and is no longer perfect. Sin has put its taint on our conscience as it does with everything it touches, and so we need the law of God recorded in the Bible and given to Moses.

We cannot always trust our conscience. Our conscience may tell us that we can lie to someone to protect ourselves or to spare their feelings and that it isn't sinful. Or that it's okay to steal if you're hungry or can't pay your bills. Our conscience might wrongly decide that a law about seat belts, insurance, shots, parking or speeding is stupid, and therefore we don't have to obey it. Damaged consciences might make someone think that if your marriage is having rocky times, that adultery suddenly is acceptable. Everyone is doing it, so it might be alright, right?

Yet what does God say? He doesn't say, **Do not commit adultery except if you wife doesn't love you any more.** His stated will is simply: **Do not commit adultery.**

Don't have sexual relations outside the marriage bed. God's stated will is that we **do not bear false witness** – which means we are not to lie or to deceive. The Fourth Commandment orders us to honor our parents and others in authority. The Book of Romans teaches us that the government is God's representative, and to disobey the government is just as sinful as disobeying our parents.

But the Ten Commandments aren't really just a list rules. They're to teach us that God is God, and that he must be obeyed. If we fear him, trust in him and love him above all things, that doesn't allow room for to just disregard his will for our lives.

Listen carefully, very carefully to what God says to us: **You shall have no other gods before me.** I'm GOD! Listen to me! Pay attention to me! I am to be the single most important thing in your life. Why? **For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God.** God says to us, "I won't allow the attention, the obedience, the love, the trust, the fear, your life to be given to anyone or anything else besides me. And if you're ignore and break my commandments, then you you're ignoring and disrespecting ME."

God is not a jolly grandparent who will put up with our selfish and disobedience. This is the same God who threw Adam and Eve out of the garden. The God who exiled Lucifer from heaven for one sin and then created hell for the eternal punishment and of him and all who follow him. This is the same God who was so angry over the sins of the world that he sent a world-wide flood to cleanse the world of sin. The same God will send people to hell on Judgment Day for just one sin.

Remember Jesus' words? He told us not to fear what people can do to us, but to fear the one who can send both our souls and our bodies to hell. Fear God. Fear his anger and don't disobey what he commands! That's God's will for you and for me. That's one of the reasons he gave us the Ten Commandments.

2. Love and trust in God and gladly obey what he commands

But fear is not the only reason, because love is the very best reason for us to obey God's commandments. As God explained to Moses: **I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.**

Love is the fulfillment of the commandments. Even if we were to keep all of the commandments outwardly, but we kept them only out of fear of punishment, we wouldn't really have kept the commandments. Only by **loving** God with all our hearts and with all minds and all our might can we truly keep God's Commandments. And God promises to show love to those who love him.

The Bible frequently – time and time again – links keeping the Ten Commandments to love for God. The Apostle John taught us: **This is love for God: to obey his commands.** (1Jo 5:3) Jesus said: **If you love me, you will obey what I command (John 14:15)**

Jesus explains that love is the fulfillment of the Law., telling us that the Ten Commandments as command us to love God and then also to love mankind. Love really is the fulfillment of the first and second tables of the law.

Saddam Hussein gives us an excellent example between obeying someone out of fear and out of love. The people of Iraq have to obey Saddam. They have to or he will beat, imprison or probably just kill them. But most of them really don't love him. Given a choice, they wouldn't obey him; they'd ignore him and do whatever they wanted to do.

How much different is our relationship with God! Yes, we have fear and respect for God. But we also have a deep and abiding love for God that moves us to love and obey him. We look at ourselves and see how gracious and merciful God has been to us that he has given us our bodies, our clothes, the food that we eat, our mind, our talents, our sight and our hearing.

But most of all, we love God because of our Savior. God gave us his Son. He not only gave him to us, he sacrificed him for us. We hated God. We failed and still fail to keep his commandments in thought, word and action, and yet God STILL loved us and gave us his one and only Son. God gives heaven instead of hell, love instead of hate, he makes us his beloved children instead of his despised enemies. He blesses us instead of curses us. How can we not respond with love? How can we not love the one who has bestowed such grace and blessing on us?

Our faith leads us to show our love by obeying God's commands!

✠ God is our all, our everything, the center of our lives.

✠ We are satisfied and content with what God has given us, instead of being filled with thoughts of greed and covetousness, and drooling over what the Smith's have that we don't.

✠ we obey our parents and all laws, giving them respect and honor, even if we don't always like or agree with all the rules and laws they may inflict on us.

✠ we honor God's gift of marriage and keep it holy.

Let's close today with Luther's explanation of these words:

What does God say about all these commandments? He says, "I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments."

What does this mean?

God threatens to punish all who transgress these commandments. Therefore we should fear his anger and not disobey what he commands.

But he promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments. Therefore we should love and trust in him, and gladly obey what he commands.

Amen.