

“God’s Gift Of The Ten Commandments”

James 2: 1 – 13; Galatians 3: 1 – 6 & 19 – 25; Matthew 5: 17 – 20; **Exodus 20: 1 – 20 (Sermon)**

How would you answer someone who asked you; “*why did God give us the Ten Commandments?*”

I think this is extremely important because today many people think the Ten Commandments are outdated and are no longer applicable in today’s society.

Many people feel The Ten Commandments are too restrictive and other people do not believe in moral absolutes.

We hear this philosophy everyday. *“Nothing is right or wrong, there are just different opinions”; “What’s right for you may not be right for me”; “If it feels right it must be right”.*

The scary thing with that kind of thinking is *“Anything goes”*.

But even more shocking is that a recent poll reported that 62% of professing Christians said there was no absolute standard of right and wrong.

God places a lot of emphasis on The Ten commandments.

God gave The Ten Commandments in The Book of Exodus, God explained The Ten Commandments in Leviticus, God repeated the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy, Jesus taught and lived the full meaning of The Ten Commandments, and Jesus fulfilled The Ten Commandments.

Just in case you are not convinced that the Ten Commandments are important to God’s people listen to what God says in Deuteronomy 6:6-7, ***“And you must think constantly about these commandments I am giving you today. You must teach them to your children and talk about them when you are at home or out for a walk; at bedtime and the first thing in the morning.”***

Another shocking poll that I read recently stated that only 47% of weekly churchgoers could list more than five of the Ten Commandments.

I will not embarrass anyone this morning but I pray that everyone here could not only list all The Ten Commandments but that everyone here is sincerely trying to live their life in accordance with God’s Ten Commandments.

First let’s look at the background of the Ten Commandments.

In Exodus 19:4-6 God said, ***“You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”***

God chose the Israelites to be His special people and for Israel to have a personal relationship with Him.

God is holy and God called His people to lead a holy life, to be different so that the rest of the world would take notice and be drawn to God.

God promises to bless His people so they could bless all the people around them.

God wants to bless His people so that all the peoples of the earth would see the difference The God of Israel made in Israel's life so they would want to get in on the good life God offered. (Genesis 12:2)

Some Christians mistakenly say that the Ten Commandments do not apply to us today since they were part of the Old Covenant and as Christians we are under The New Covenant of Grace.

But listen to what Jesus said in Matthew 5:17-19 Jesus said, ***“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”***

While we were not slaves in Egypt we were all slaves to sin before we accepted Jesus as our savior.

God has saved us from the slavery to sin by faith in Jesus Christ.

1st Peter was written to Christians and 1st Peter 2:9-12 says; ***“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.”***

As Christians we are to be a holy people and God said we are a royal priesthood.

A priest represents God.

We cannot represent God and all of the benefits God offers to an unsaved world unless we are living like God wants us to.

So the **first** purpose of The Ten Commandments is to state God's expectations for us in response to all that God has done for us.

In verses 1 and 2 of our text from Exodus God identifies who He is, what He has done for you, and that God wants to have a personal relationship with His people.

God wants to have a personal relationship with His people however the relationship must be on God's terms.

God is holy and we must be holy if we want to come into His presence.

God gave us The Ten Commandments to tell us how to experience the abundant life that God has planned for us.

The Ten Commandments are God's blueprint for human behavior and relationships.

The first four commandments show us how to relate to God.

The last 6 commandments teach us how to relate to one another.

The last six commandments deal with life and death, sex, family, work, neighbors, and honesty.

God's wants all people to be free to enjoy life.

Without rules there is fear and chaos.

These limitations God has placed on us are not to hurt us or prevent us from enjoying life.

The Ten Commandments are a gift from God so that all people can enjoy Him and enjoy the life He has given us while we are on earth.

1st Timothy 1:8 tells us the law is good if it is used properly.

The Ten Commandments are a gift from God and He wants to protect us from things that He knows will destroy us, destroy relationships, and keep us from receiving all of His blessings.

The Ten Commandments tell us how to experience freedom.

Freedom comes from honoring boundaries set for the common good of people.

God gave us The Ten Commandments to show us our sinful nature.

The Ten Commandments are God's standard of righteousness.

God's law exposes our guilt so that we will seek His forgiveness.

The 6th Commandment says, "***You shall not murder***".

We might think that I am OK because I haven't murdered anyone."

But 1st John 3:15 states; "***Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer.***"

Jesus said, "***Anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to the judgment***" (Matthew 5:22).

The Ten Commandments were necessary because of our sinful nature.

It wasn't long after the children of Israel crossed over the Red Sea that they complained and they were ungrateful.

They could not get back at God so they took out their anger on the people around them.

The Ten Commandments are stated negatively, "***Thou shall not***" because God was addressing man's negative behavior

You see, without a standard to compare ourselves to we would not realize how sinful we are.

But when we compare ourselves to God's standard of righteousness, not only do we see our sinfulness, but also we realize our inability to keep God's law.

James 2:10 tells us that, ***“Whosoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking the whole law.”***

We kicked God out of our public schools and now we have violence, security guards and metal detectors in our schools.

Sadly today people’s morals are shaped by TV and Hollywood rather than by God’s law.

Today our society is lost in a moral fog and The Ten Commandments are God’s directions to get us safely home.

God gave us The Ten Commandments to lead us to Jesus Christ.

We read about that in our lesson from Galatians.

We have all violated God’s Holy Law and we are condemned before Almighty God.

There is nothing humans can do to redeem ourselves.

But because of God’s great love for us He came in the person of Jesus, lived the law of God perfectly and Jesus died as if He was a lawbreaker.

When Jesus rose from the grave Jesus broke the power of death so that we could live with Him throughout eternity.

Jesus perfectly fulfilled the law of God and Jesus paid our debt for violating God’s law.

God did this so we could enjoy a personal relationship with Him.

If we do not recognize our sinful nature and our sinful acts we will never recognize the wonderful things Jesus has done for us.

You see it is only when we have a clear undistorted view of our sin that we will be truly thankful for the grace of God.

Jesus ran and won the race and we get the gold medal.

Jesus scored an A+ and His test score is recorded on our report card when Jesus is our Savior and Lord.

God’s gift of The Ten Commandments provides us with a thermometer of our love for The Lord.

Jesus made this crystal clear in Matthew 22 when a Pharisee asked Jesus, ***“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?” Jesus answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it. Love your neighbor as yourself. All the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments.”***

And in John 14 Jesus said, ***“If you love me, you will obey what I command” and “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching”.***

You see, if I love God as I should, I will want to keep commandments 1 - 4. If I love my neighbor as I should I will want to keep commandments 5 - 10.

We need to be clear.

Moses did not deliver God's Ten Suggestions for living.

Moses delivered God's Ten Commandments for living.

The 10 Commandments force us to look at the person in the mirror.

On our own, we can never live up to God's standards of righteousness.

But remember Philippians 4:13 tells us, ***"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."***
Jesus gives us the power to live a righteous life.

Can you imagine what would happen if there was a sudden spiritual revival in America.

What if America turned to God and we all began actually live by The Ten Commandments.

With revival would come a wave of morality, purity, and purpose that would sweep our land.

A nation living by the Ten Commandments would also cause some immediate unemployment problems because every drug dealer, every prostitute, and every pornographer would be out of business.

We could quit building prisons and start paying teachers a descent wage.

Teen pregnancies would cease and sexually transmitted diseases would end.

Adultery, theft, price gouging, and frivolous lawsuits would also end.

The 6th Chapter of Ezekiel makes it clear that God withdrew His blessings and protection from Israel and God allowed the Babylonians to destroy Jerusalem and make slaves out of His people because Israel dishonored Him by not keeping His laws.

And that should certainly be a clear warning to us today.

God gave us the Ten Commandments so that all of society could enjoy the life God gave us.

God gave us the Ten Commandments because He wants us to have a close personal relationship with Him.

God is holy and we must be free of sin if we want to be in God's presence.

God gave us the Ten Commandments to show us how sinful we are when we compare ourselves to His standards.

God gave us the Ten Commandments to lead us to Jesus The Christ because we can never achieve God righteousness on our own.

God gave us the Ten Commandments to hold His people accountable.

God gave us the Ten Commandments so that we can measure our love for The Lord.

It is only when we obey all of God's commandments we will enjoy the abundant victorious life that God planned for us.

You see if you love The Lord with all that you are, you will always seek to do those things that please our creator God.

Jesus said; "*if you love me you will obey my commandments.*"

Obeing all of God's laws is the path to experiencing a joyful and fulfilled life.

Obeing The Ten Commandments will not get you into heaven because you are saved by faith.

Keeping The Ten Commandments is the fruit of your salvation; not the means of your salvation.

Obedience to God's laws is our response to The Lord for saving us from burning in hell.

Jesus said, "*If you love me, you will obey what I command*"

AMEN