

This is what the Heart Looks Like // Exodus 20:1-3 // "God's Laws and Our Lives"

a couple of things I am very excited about before we begin...

- A few weeks ago we passed the 1 million mark in our Believe campaign... I wasn't here to celebrate it with you...
 - the Believe campaign is specially designated money we are giving beyond the tithe...
 - God is moving in our church, and we are responding to that.
 - I want you to look at this like an investment. You have investments of all kinds that you expect a return on... this is an investment that never fades, the dividends of which you will reap for eternity.
- More excited about... 250 people at our Orphan Care ministry meeting. Prayer has been it will become a part of our culture here.

icked up a book a while back in Barnes and Noble... It's not a Christian book'; in fact the author describes himself as an agnostic. He says, *"I'm officially Jewish, but I'm Jewish in the same way that Olive Garden is officially an Italian restaurant."*

he premise of the book is that this guy, who has no substantial religious upbringing, sets out to read the Bible and attempt to follow every rule in it to the letter. It's called *The Year of Living Biblically* (AJ Jacobs).

o, the 1st thing he does is he reads the entire Bible for a month and writes down every single directive that he finds, big or small... so, that includes things like the Ten Commandments, but it also includes

lesser known Old Testament laws for diet and ritual cleanliness. And then he journals his experiences.

As you can imagine, the outcome is pretty entertaining... for example

- Leviticus says that men should leave the edges of their beards unshaven, so this guy stops shaving and ends up with a massive beard that makes him look like a member of ZZ Top.
- He stops wearing clothes made of any mixed fibers
- He plays a ten string harp
- He refuses to shake hands with women who might be ceremonially unclean; (that had to be awkward, right?—I mean, *how do you tell?* Your skirt is a little too short... I bet you're unclean...)
- And (this was one of my favorites), he tries to fling tiny pebbles at people without them noticing in order to stone adulterers.

This whole process almost drove his poor wife crazy for a year... But the book reveals, I think, how most people feel about the Commandments... they're out of date; backwards; restrictive...

- That's certainly how I felt as a teenager... I didn't want to wall with God because it would restrict my freedom; and for a while I didn't want to be around people who knew God or talked about God because they would just make me feel guilt and ruin my life.
- Some of you are probably like that... some of you are not excited about being here... maybe a friend has been bugging you to come, and you're here to get them off your back... but you don't want to get too close, because you know, the next thing you know, you're going to be in some Jesus-camp religious cage wearing corny Christian T-shirts like "Jesus is my homeboy" and saying "God bless you" when people sneeze.
- Others of you, while you may be Christians... you have this dread during my sermons because you are afraid I'm going to say something *else* you're not doing... and you're just not excited about learning more ways that you stink as a person...

... you're not excited about hearing me tell you a bunch *more* stuff you should be doing... some other law you didn't know about... you think, "Ignorance is probably best..." less I know, less I feel guilty about.

Vell, today, I want to start a series that shows you those perspectives re exactly the opposite of what the 10 Commandments really are...

want to show you that the 10 commandments are not a path not to bondage, they are the path to freedom. And that is because they reveal to us what our hearts are like, how they are designed; these things are like the owner's manual...

- (I know some of you don't get into any owner's manual; you never read any of them on your appliances, which is the DVD player you bought 10 years ago still flashes 12:00 AM midnight because you can't figure out how to set it...)
- But nonetheless, this is an important one...

Furthermore, these commandments show us what is wrong with our heart; and then these commandments give us clues as to how to fix it.

So that's the title of our series: **This is what the heart looks like**. And this is going to be life and salvation to some of you. Here is a promise: if you understand these commandments properly, they will be the gateway to fulfillment, purpose, freedom and joy.

- I promise... In fact, I promise because God promised... when God gave these commandments He said, **Deut 32:47, "For this is no empty word for you, but your very life."**

So in this 1st, introductory message, I want to show you what role the commandments are to play in your life. Because just as important as knowing what these commandments are, you need to know *how* to use them. You see, even if you can name them, which 92% of Americans cannot... even if you could, if you don't know how to use them you're going to mess everything up.

- Not knowing how these commandments were to be used is what instigated the 1st century Palestinians to crucify Jesus.
- (They all knew the commandments backwards and forwards, but they didn't know how to use them.)

So, today, I'm going to show you the 4 things the law (these 10 commandments) was supposed to do for us. We're going to draw from a # of passages, so, try and keep up.

Did y'all know that every major awakening in our country has been preceded by a preaching of the law?

The 1st place we're going to go is Deuteronomy.

- Note: Deuteronomy is Moses' commentary on the law. **(It's like on a DVD**, when you have the option to watch with the editor's cut? Two boring guys sitting there making random comments... "that's actually my jacket he's wearing... he spilled coffee on his) really annoying...
- That's what Deuteronomy is) Deuteronomy literally means "2nd law..." So Moses restates the law and says this:

Deuteronomy 6:20–24

²⁰ "When your son asks you in time to come, 'What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the rules that the LORD our God has commanded you?' ²¹ then you shall say to your son, 'We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt. And the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. ²³ ...to the land that he swore to give to our fathers. ²⁴ And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might *preserve us alive, as we are this day.*

Israel had been in slavery, God had brought them out... these commandments were what God gave them to *keep* them free

1. These commandments keep us out of slavery, not lead us into it.

Most people think the opposite. But these are what God gave to Israel after bringing them out of bondage to keep them free.

To get the significance of this, we need a little theology lesson. Exodus is the 2nd book in a 5-volume series.

Volume 1, Genesis, Moses, who is the series author/editor, describes the original creation of mankind. God creates the world as a reflection of Himself, and keeps using one word over and over again to describe what He creates? Remember what it is? Good.

Creation was in a state of perfect peace and harmony that Jewish theologians call **shalom... Say it: Shalom...**

But, man rejects God's rule and creation falls into total disarray. Sin brings a curse and so everything starts unraveling... first, we lose our relationship with God; our relationships are cursed so the 1st set of brothers kill each other; our bodies are cursed and they start to age, deteriorate, and succumb to disease... get fat and bald. The earth itself is cursed and there are thorns and thistles and tsunamis.

Well, God chooses to save the world through the descendants of a particular man named Abraham. His descendants are called the children of Israel."

- But God lets the children of Israel, about a million of them, fall into slavery for 425 years in Egypt. This may seem strange, but we learn that the reason for this is that this political slavery picture's our spiritual slavery to sin.
- So, after 425 years, God sends a stuttering, mousy voiced guy named Moses to deliver Israel. (You know, we have this picture all wrong...we picture Moses standing before Pharaoh with this big, booming, Charlton Heston, Val Kilmer-esque voice, saying, "LET MY PEOPLE GO?" Exodus makes clear that Moses was weak in speech... not sure what it meant: stuttered; had a very feminine voice; lisp... So, it was not, "LET

MY PEOPLE GO", but "You, you know, better let my people go."

- So, Pharaoh says, "Well, now... why exactly would I do that?" And Moses' response is classic, "Because my stick turns into a snake. Watch" And so he throws it on the ground.
- Pharaoh is like, "Big deal" and he gets a couple of his magicians to pull off something similar.
- So, God sends on Pharaoh and Egypt **the plagues**.
 - **Now**, Hebrew scholars have long noted that the 10 plagues are too systematic just to be random displays of power. If God's point had only been to show that He existed and is powerful, he could have Moses just walk in and turn Pharaoh's soldiers into tiny green men and then squashed a few of them... put them in a Darth Vader chokehold, and then looked at Pharaoh and been like, "Thou art next."
 - But that's not what he did. The plagues happen in a logical progression: The Nile turns to blood; that destroys the natural ecosystem of the Nile; out of the Nile comes the frogs; then from the frogs come the gnats, from the gnats come disease.
 - What's happening? Creation is unraveling. It's the opposite of Genesis 1. In Genesis 1, God makes creation good; here, creation is breaking down. Genesis 1: God brings order out of chaos; here, we have order descending into chaos.
 - God is showing that when we disobey Him, the Designer of creation, life and nature unravels!

These commandments are the restoration of shalom. Restoration of the rule of God.

Thus, obeying these commandments is freedom...because these commandments are how you are designed to "work." This is how your heart is designed. So, obeying these puts you in harmony with creation and its Creator.

- Think of it like a fish... you don't set a fish free by taking it out of the water... say, 'Poor fish,' always kept in the water, we want you to experience what we get to experience... put it on the road and say, "go wherever!" you'd kill the fish if you did that. The fish is designed to be in the water... and it's freest when it's in the water.
- On vacation... on top of the apartment... I want you to be free to play...

o, some of you say, "But wait a minute... they don't feel like freedom to me... they feel restrictive."

We have this assumption in our culture that if something doesn't feel right immediately, it has to be wrong. Woody Allen, "the heart wants what it wants.... And if you deny what you want then you're betraying your heart and you'll never be happy."

But, even though that is a widespread belief, that's pretty absurd when you think about it... I'll prove it to you.

- In the morning when the alarm goes off, what feels right? Anyone in here just immediately feel like jumping up...? 5 more minutes. And you keep hitting the snooze until you know, "I can't do this any longer." **MIT: "Clocky..."** Because even though staying in bed may feel right for a moment... doing that will end up causing you to lose all things you love in life... you feel sluggish all day; you lose your job; etc. Would that really be freedom? **If in that situation you only did what you felt like doing, you would actually lose freedoms, not gain them!**
- Or how about this... when you exercise... your body tells you to quit, but you know you need to tell your body to shut up and do the extra set because if you don't, you're going to die of a heart attack...
 - Here's the crazy thing... some of us *pay* people to make us exercise. I pay a person to yell at me because I know that if I don't I'll never do that extra stuff.

- Or, when I go into a restaurant, and my nostrils are filled the aroma... and I think of all these wonderful things I want to eat... but sometimes I have to say, "No! I will be disciplined and I will go to the salad bar and I will stuff my plate with alfalfa sprouts and garbanzo beans." That never really happens to me...
- **The point: we all know that what my body desires is not always best... and so we subject the aberrant desires of our heart to our minds, because our minds know what we know will give us true freedom.**
- Now, does it make any sense to do that for the body but not the soul?
- You see, medical doctors may have studied how the physical body works, but God understands how the soul, how your heart works... and these commandments are written according to the blueprint of what our hearts are like... so, as we obey them, we find freedom!
- Following these commandments is how we find purpose... enjoyment, freedom. Obeying God is life!
- **These commandments reveal God to us**
 - Again, let me take you back to the time that God gave them.
 - God has just brought people out of Egypt through the Red Sea, an event we refer to as "the Exodus."
 - Now, the whole point of the Exodus was that people might know God. Another thing the movies always get it wrong..
 - So, here they are... they have been delivered from slavery and now they are ready for the point of the whole thing, which is to know Him.
 - So God introduces Himself to them... And He does so in a pretty awesome and terrible way... He descends on the mountain... covered with fire and smoke... trumpet blast; earthquake; trumpet; terrifying. Perimeter.
 - Moses goes up into the mountain and disappears for 40 days, and comes down with these 10 commandments.

- What are they? God's revelation of Himself: His character; His face; His beauty; His holiness; His righteousness.
- So, obeying these commandments is a way of participating in the very character of God.
- And so, if you love Him, and desire to know Him and be with Him, these things are what you will pursue, because these are Him.
- All the NT writers talk about the commandments this way.
 - The Apostle Peter: "...As he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct." (1 Peter 1:15). Why should you be holy? Because God is holy and you want to be with and be like Him.
 - The Apostle John says: "When He appears... we will see Him as He is. (as He is, what is that? In all His beauty and holiness) Everyone who has this hope purifies Himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3:3)
 - If seeing and being with God is your greatest hope... then you want the makeup of your heart to be like the makeup of His... and so you pursue purity of heart and mind.
 - If you don't pursue these things, then it means that you have some other hope. **What you pursue shows what you prize.** If you are most pursuing career success and 6-digit income and early retirement and material achievement, then what you prize is money.
 - If what you most prize is God, however, then what you pursue is holiness and *purity*, because that's what God is.
 - You get this? If the only reason you obey the commandments is because you're afraid you'll be punished and humiliated if you don't, and not because you love the good and the pure behind the commandments, that shows your real

problem is you don't love God. Obedience to the commandments flows out of love for God.

- Or, one more. Paul: "*As beloved children, become imitators of God.*" (Eph 5:1)
 - We did this in the Ephesian series: children naturally imitate their parents. My kids do. I did as a child; I remember as a child trying to dress like my dad, root for the same sports teams my dad did, and use the same phrases that he used. This wasn't out of duty because I thought I'd get in trouble if I didn't, but rather from a desire to imitate his behavior because I wanted to be like him! I admired and loved him.
 - And if you had a bad father, you may be just the opposite. You wanted to be completely unlike him... because you hated him. Whatever political party He is, you want to be the opposite.
- The point: these commandments reveal God, and if we love Him, we'll do these commandments because these are what He is like!
- Now, 1 more thing before we go to point 3: *The fact that commandments reveal God is the key to understanding their ongoing role in your life.*
- A common question people have when they start to read the Bible... which of these laws still apply to us? There's this thing we hear in the New Testament, that Christ has freed us from the law and we are not under the law, but under grace... and we know that there's a lot of strange laws we don't do anymore... we can eat cheese with our hamburgers and can wear mixed fibers... wearing polyester might be a fashion sin today, but it's not a moral one anymore... and so people wonder, "Which ones do we

still obey? I figure the murder command still applies... and probably the adultery... but what about Sabbath and tithe and honoring your parents?

- Great question: The laws basically serve 3 purposes:
 - **Ceremonial: The laws prefigured Christ through symbols and ceremonies:** Ceremonies and rituals that pointed toward Christ. Feasts and festivals and sacrifice procedures, all of which gave you pictures of Christ. Well, Christ has come, and so, of course, we are no longer required to do them. When you've got the real thing, you don't need a plastic replica.
 - **If you look on my wife's hand right now... my wife's engagement ring.**
 - In fact, in some cases, God gave us new ceremonies to replace the old ones... like, communion.
 - **Civil order: The laws helped order Israel's civil lives:** laws which ordered the civil life of Israel... these are good to study because you can learn about God's sense of justice... but they no longer apply, because we are not living in a theocratic Israeli state.
 - **Revelation of God's character: The laws reveal God's character:** These are commandments that give us a window into the heart of God; they show us His face. Now, Christ has freed us from the law, but the God they reveal hasn't changed... the things that were offensive to Him and harmful to us are still offensive to Him and harmful to us. So, these laws are still applicable.
 - For example, God still loves purity. He still loves honesty. He still knows how He designed sex to work.

- Tithing might have been part of the law, but it also reveals God's plan for how we are to treat our money... so, we still do it.

- In fact, I'd say it like this: **Our status under the law has changed; the God those laws reveal has not.**
- **You say, "Well, some of them offend me." Of course they offend you. What, you want God to be like you?**
 - What is fascinating is observing how the Bible offends different cultures in different ways. As an American, we get offended by what God says about sexual purity and justice. I lived for a while in a culture where they weren't offended by that at all... but the stuff about loving your enemies and God becoming man... that offends them.
 - You're not the 1st people to be offended. As I've often told you, the Bible is an EOO.

Alright, #3 is an extremely important one... this one determines whether you are a Christian or not...

- **The commandments reveal the state of our hearts; but they cannot provide salvation**
 - *"The law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith... For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law (Gal 3:21, 24)*
 - When we look honestly at these commandments, 1 of the 1st things we see is that our hearts desire a lot of things that go exactly opposite these commandments.
 - That's why some of them feel restrictive, like a cage.
 - We don't always desire to tell the truth; we don't always desire marital faithfulness; we

are jealous; sometimes we really enjoy seeing other people we don't like get hurt...

- If these commandments reveal beauty and holiness, then they show me that my heart desires is depravity; if these commandments are righteousness, they show me my heart desires wrongness; if these are godliness, what I desire is godlessness!
 - These commandments show us that, in our hearts, we're all atheists. We might believe God is real with our minds, but we all, at times, wish God were dead.
- And the law can't change that, it just reveals it.
- There are 2 things **the law cannot give to us...**
 - **A righteous record**
 - The universal way of thinking about good works is that if we do enough good works it will counteract our bad works. **Scales:** put our good works on 1 side; our bad works on the other... wrong analogy.
 - Think of it more like this... NY Adirondack well...
 - When you look into the mirror of these commandments, you're going to see that your heart is saturated with sinful desire...
 - Commandment #1: Have no other gods but me... how many of you, naturally, love God supremely... knowing and obeying Him is your greatest quest and greatest delight...? You get more excited about Him than about anything else...? You get more excited about a new romance or a new job promotion or even a new TV

program then you ever do about God.

- Commandment #4: Remember the Sabbath... how many of you always give God what is His? You set aside His day and you don't violate it for your own purposes... you also do that with your money...
- Commandment #5: Honoring your parents: You're submissive and obedient to God-ordained authorities... your parents, the government.
- Commandment #6: Don't kill. You might give yourself a pass on this one... until you realize that Jesus said you only keep this one if you never desire the harm of someone else. It's more than just not taking a knife to them... you don't fantasize about their harm...
 - You say, "that's not fair... you're taking it out of the realm of the action and putting it in the realm of the heart..." but that's the point... God sees the heart.
 - What if you had a lover who every time they were with you fantasized about someone else...? God is holiness, and the only holiness He wants is holiness that flows from the heart

- Commandment #7: Don't commit adultery... I've never fantasized about having sex with someone I'm not married to.
- Commandment # 9, don't lie. I'm always truthful. I never exaggerate, bend, or hide the truth.
- Commandment # 10, don't covet: How many of you can say, I'm so satisfied with God and I trust Him so completely that I never complain... I'm never greedy for the abilities, looks, position, or possessions of others. When someone gets a blessing I don't have, I'm not jealous, I rejoice with them! And I've never, not once, complained about what God has provided for me. I've always just trusted Him and been satisfied with what He gave to me."
- **Do you see this? We are completely ruined by sin... Most of us say, "I'm a good person." Compared to whom? Not compared to the law.**
 - **And remember the scene at the mountain?**
 - When Isaiah saw God, and he saw even the angels covering their face in His presence, he, the prophet of God, falls down on His face in fear and says, "Woe is me, I am completely ruined..."
 - God is so holy that if a human being with sin is in His presence he would be immediately incinerated. God told Israel when He gave them the

law that nobody could look directly at His face and even live.

- **Habakkuk 1:13**, "God is of such purity that he cannot even look at evil." You would be like a piece of paper touching the surface of the sun...

- Do you realize what that means? That means that if God suddenly ripped the roof off of your house you looked up into His face, you would immediately die
- Well, but I've done a lot of good things, too. No, you've just covered them up... *"The slightest sin has an infinite hatefulness in it so that even the smallest sin outweighs the greatest loveliness in the creature."* Jonathan Edwards
- Like urine in milk... defiled.

So, the law cannot give us a righteous record, it also cannot give us

- **The law cannot give to us... righteous desire**
 - The law has a fundamental problem: It cannot give us the power to do what it commands. The law is like a set of railroad tracks. We know we need to stay on the tracks to be able to function, but we have no power to move on them.
 - So, no matter how eloquently and forcefully we preach the law, it can never restructure our hearts and actually move us along the tracks. We can make resolutions, buckle down, decide to be radical in our obedience... but that can never change us.

- So, what do we do? **"The law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith... (Gal 3:24) We come to Christ.**
- *Jesus can do 2 things for us the law can never do:*
 - **Jesus can give us a righteous record:**
 - Jesus absorbed the fury of the wrath of God in our place. I know that this is not popular, but God has a righteous, just, furious wrath against our sin. You want to see what it looks like, you can look at 2 different places:
 - **Hell—the eternal horrors of hell are what our sin deserves;**
 - **The cross.** All the fury of God's holiness and wrath was poured into Jesus... I've heard it described before like standing in front a dam 10K feet high (2miles!) and a mile wide and having it break open all at once and right before the torrent of waters get to you the ground opens up and swallows the water so that not a drop touches you. Jesus took the cup of God's wrath, drank it to the dregs, turned it over and said, "It is finished!"
 - Salvation is trading places... Like a wedding
 - Embracing this can give us righteous desire **(Jesus can give us a righteous desire)**
 - Vietnam movie... *3 Seasons (I think)*
 - *Bicycle driver and a high end prostitute*
 - *Shows up every night at the hotel she frequents to take her home.*
 - *She says, "I hate that they kick me out early... just wish once I could wake up there."*
- *He saves up money for years and purchases her and 1 night in that hotel*
- *Tells her he just wants her to sleep and wake up there. doesn't touch her.*
- *She shows up 3 weeks later and say "You have ruined me." You used you life savings not to take from me, but poured it out to give to me...*
- *This is what Jesus does and how he changes us*
- **Church, listen: God is not just after obedience; He's after new kind of obedience.** An obedience that comes from love and delight in God, not from the threats of the law.
 - Every parent and teacher knows, coercing a child's behavior through fear of punishment is shallow and short-lived. It only lasts until the kid is in your presence.
 - Shallow and short-lived is not what God wants; He wants obedience that comes from delight.
 - He wants the kind of faithfulness I want my wife to give to me. I don't want my wife to be faithful to me because she fears punishment or embarrassment; I want her to stay with me because she loves me... because she has enamored with my boyish good looks, my snappy wit, and my studly physique. Thankfully, that is all true.
 - **How does God create that delight-filled obedience? Through *faith* in what Jesus has already done, not from *fear* of what will happen if we don't.**

- **The new obedience God is after can never be created by the threats of the law, only by the wonders of grace.**
- Listen, you can't get this wrong... Many of you think that if you're good enough, then God will accept you
 - You have that image of the scales... But here's the thing... you never know if you've been good enough. If I ask you...
 - But salvation is a gift that you receive. Gospel in 4 words: Jesus in my place.
 - I'm accepted because of what Jesus did for me, and I obey out of that.
 - Others of you, while you know that only Jesus can get you into heaven, you're always judging where you stand with God by how well you're keeping the law. Every week you're on trial for how well you've done, and based on how well you've done, that's how God feels about you.
 - I was like this. Every time somebody would talk about something at the church I'd think, "Oh, I've got to do this or I'm not a good Christian." Real Christians read their Bibles every day. Real Christians care about the poor. Real Christians do missions. Give money. Adopt children."
 - Checklist...
 - These things are fruits of the faith, yes... but you're looking at it all wrong. If you've put your trust in Christ and surrendered to Him, God could not love you more...
 - You say, "Well why would God do it that way? It seems like the whole "If you don't do it good enough you go to hell and suffer my wrath would be a good motivator!"
- Because God is not just after obedience, He's after a new kind of obedience. **The new obedience God is after can never be created by the threats of the law, only by the wonders of grace.**
- And, BTW... this is not just a NT thing... when God 1st gave these commandments, it was after He had saved them, not a condition for Him to save them. **Exodus 20:1, "And God spoke all these words, saying, ²"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery..."** He didn't approach them while they were in slavery and say, "OK, here's my 10 commandments. Keep at least 6 of them 80% of the time and I'll let you out..." He said, "I have already released you from slavery... now obey these."
- The Bible teaches something fundamentally opposite of every other religion. **(When people say, "all religions teach the same thing, that is wrong..." this is different.)** Every religion in the world, except for the Gospel, teaches you that if you obey enough you will be accepted. The Bible reverses that... It says, "Obey not in order to be accepted, but because you have been accepted." **In other religions, acceptance is rewarded for obedience; in Christianity, obedience is a response to acceptance!**
- God doesn't love you more because you are obedient; the fact that He loves and accepts you is what makes you obedient.
- **The commandments find their fulfillment, in every way, in Christ**
 - Knowing Him gives you the power to obey them
 - Makes you enjoy them... Christ is life.
 - When you know Christ, that will give you the trust to submit your will to His

can't wait to show you all this in the weeks to come. It's going to be good. **But what does all this mean for you today?**

- **You need God:**

- Your life is falling apart because you think life will work better with you in charge. You are a little Pharaoh... and maybe God is sending plagues your way... maybe not boils all over your body... but it could be deteriorating health; a bad marriage; personal dissatisfaction. You may be mad at God for all of that... but what if that is God's *mercy* to you, to help you see that you need God in your life?
- Some of you are like a planet who thinks things would be better if you were at the center... as far as you were concerned the whole UNIVERSE rotated around you. You wanted to call the shots. You have lived life for you, according to your desires... **Arguably the most important astronomical discovery ever... perhaps most important scientific discovery, was** that of Copernicus...

- **You need Jesus:**

- The high and holy God, the God of fire and beauty in the mountain, can only condemn us. But God who became man and lived a perfect life and died our death... that God can give you the forgiveness you need.
- You need to give up hope that you're just fine without Jesus... No, you are guilty of unspeakable violations of the law, and you have *no* chance of making it in heaven.
 - UNC: "Jesus is just a crutch for you." Yes, but I'd take it 1 step farther. If you want to use medical terms, I'd say Jesus is not a crutch, but a stretcher... because you can't even limp into heaven without Jesus.
- You have no hope without Jesus. Life won't work, and you'll be lost forever in eternity.

- Jesus alone gives fulfillment in life and peace in death; you need to come to Jesus today.

Bullpen:

Keeping the 1st commandment is the key to keeping all the rest

- Martin Luther pointed out... Bookends
- Can't wait to show you this... The reason we sin goes back to a worship problem... there is something we deem more fundamental to our life than God. So if you correct the worship problem, the problem of disobedience will correct itself. Obedience to the commandments is the fruit; worship is the root.

The heart of these commandments is worshipping God and God alone

- The 1st commandment is the key to all the rest...
- "No other gods before me."
 - Speaks to what we love, trust in, obey. We were supposed to love nothing more than God; trust in nothing more than God; obey nothing more than God.
 - The reason we break the commandments is because we don't obey this one.
 - You steal because there's something you need for the future more than God... usually money. You love and trust in it more than you love and trust in God... so, you steal to get it.
 - You commit adultery because... because you need relationship or you need pleasure more than you need God. You love and trust in it more than you love and trust in

God, so you're willing to turn your back on God to get it.

- You break the Sabbath because you need to work to get ahead... why, because that's how you get ahead, and how you make money. And, you love and trust in money more than you love and trust in God.
- See how that works?
- In fact, I'd say most people can't obey the commandments, no matter how much they are commanded, because something else is their God.
 - RYR...
 - I can't see into your heart... but Jesus' commandment is the same. The only way you can follow Jesus is for Him to be what you love, depend on, trust in... more than anything else.
 - Matthew 6:33, "Seek 1st"; In this passage Jesus explained why most people can't do that... he said most people serve money rather than Him. They look to money to be their security, rather than Him, and many look at having lots of money as the key to personal significance. So, Jesus used two analogies that deal with 2 personality types.
 - He told some people they need to be like the birds... He said, "The birds don't lay up money, but God makes them secure." In other words, make God your security, not money... because He can take care of you better than money can.
 - He told other people to be like the flowers. He said, "The flowers don't spend lots of money on clothes, but God makes them beautiful." In other words, make God your beauty, not money... because God can give your life a beauty and a significance that money never can.

- **When you love and delight in God more than anything else** (when you feel like knowing Him is your greatest possession and pleasing Him gives you more delight than anything else); **and when you trust Him more than anything else** (when being in His will is all you need to feel secure about the future), then you will be able to keep all the other commandments!
- It is strange to me: When you ask someone about the commandments, why do they only talk about the moral ones, and never these 1st 2?
-
- Many of you have tried to get God in your life without getting in place these 2... Copernican revolution
- **Context:** frightening holiness: ¹⁸ Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off ¹⁹ and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die."

Jesus said, "If you love me, you'll keep my commands." When John (or Jesus) talks about keeping God's commands as a way to know whether you love Jesus or not, he's *not* using the law as a way to motivate. He's simply stating a fact. Those who love God will keep on keeping his commands. The question is *how* do we keep God's commands? What sustains a long obedience in the same direction? Where does the power come from to do what God commands?

- Thus, those of us who know Him and love Him and think His face is beautiful should be like this, too. We want to be pure because He is pure. We want to be fair and just because He is fair and just. We do these things and live this way *in response* to Him.
- **A couple of quick examples:**
 - **Commandment 1: No other gods but God**

- This is probably the most important commandment for life coming together and life working. We were created for God... Human beings are created as worshippers, and the only worship that satisfies us is the worship of God. You say, "Not me, I'm not a worshipper! Yes you are. All of us look to something from which we derive ultimate meaning, ultimate security. Something about which you say, "Without that, life is not worth living." Money, fame, family, love... You say, "Not me... I don't need any of that, I just need me." I suppose you need health and independence... Everyone worships something... something they need for life to work. You can no more turn off your drive for worship by not being religious than you could turn off your drive for success by being single. It just doesn't work that way.
- Anything we substitute for God will ultimately cause us to rot and deteriorate. We have a God-shaped vacuum. We were designed so that life only works when God is at the center.
- Many of you have thought the path to happiness was exactly the opposite of that: life would be good when you were at the center; when you made the rules; when you were the point... when you were in charge.
- But it doesn't work. You say, "But I really want it to work because... who wouldn't want to be at the center?" Think of it like this... up until the time of Copernicus... Copernican Revolution.

- Many of you need to have a Copernican revolution. The reason your life is slowly unraveling is that you don't have God at the place He's supposed to be, and your life is falling apart.
- You are dis-integrating.
- **Another example: Commandment 7: Do not commit adultery**
 - Many people (including many Christians) think this is an arbitrary rule. At worst, it's God wanting to ruin our fun; at best, maybe it's a test, like, "*Don't eat the marshmallow*" just to see if we can handle it... but, in reality, sex outside of marriage is not really harmful...
 - But that's actually not true. Based on what I know, what I've seen, and what I've experienced, I could pretty confidently say now that even if there was no God, I'd still say sex outside of marriage is a very bad idea—which is why basically every religion in the world teaches you not to do it. (BTW: **some of you say, "We should find the best in every religion..."** Every religion consistently teaches you this... this is the collective wisdom of mankind, so why not start here...)
 - Why do I say is sex outside of marriage is destructive? Because sex is supposed to be a oneness of your bodies that is accompanied by oneness in every other area. **Don't mean to be graphic, but you are very vulnerable, your bodies interlock... ONE PERSON physically. That is to be matched by oneness in every other area:** emotional, spiritual, financial... you

become a complete part of that other person for life.

- **When you have sex outside of marriage, you are taking physical oneness from them without giving them the rest of yourself.** It's tearing their soul apart. Like a Horcrux in Harry Potter... and yes, as far as I know, I am the 1st one to make that comparison.
- That kind of sex, while it may be temporarily enjoyable, is both selfish and destructive. Your body is telling the person you're having sex with one thing... "I'm yours completely, forever," but that's not true... because you are not really joining the rest of you to them.
- So, in the right context it is a wonderful, love blessing, but out of that context, it is selfish and destructive. Thus, the commandment: "Don't have sex outside of marriage, because it destroys the person you're having sex with rather than building them up."

We're going to begin our study in Deuteronomy, where Moses reviews the 10 commandments.

*Now, if you've been around here, you remember that last year I did a series on the whole last half of Exodus in which I covered the 10 commandments as a whole... in 2 sermons... if you don't mind me self-aggrandizing a moment, these were 2 very important sermons, that I would suggest that you go back and listen to them... you can access them on our website, and **I'll post a link to them tomorrow**. They were so important that I was tempted to go back and just re-preach them for the next 2 weeks... but, instead, I'm just going to review them*

oday in 4 points in one giga-sermon... this is not even a mega-sermon, it's a giga sermon... but we're just going to touch these things, and you should go back and dive in deeper.

ome of you do that every week... You go the gym and let someone yell at you to do what you don't want to do... "Do that extra set!" Don't give up! And many of you even pay that person. Do you ever think about how crazy that is? I am PAYING someone to yell at me... because I know that unless they do, I will obey the impulses of my body which will not grant me freedom, but take it away! We willingly subject our desires to what we know is good for the body.

- are a response to the beauty of God. *You know, in a sense: all of the Christian life is a response to God.* Think about it...

- Worship
- Repentance: majesty of God
- Belief: response to the promises of God.
- Even evangelism and ministry are a response to what God has declared He wants to do. such an important principle. All of the Christian life is a response to God.

- Listen... this could be life-changing. *God is not just after obedience... he's after a new kind of obedience!* He doesn't want a nation of slaves, He wants a nation of people whose obedience flows out of the pit of their stomachs.
- If you "obey" only because you feel guilty, or fear God's wrath... if you'd rather sin, but you don't because you're afraid of being caught or embarrassed or losing your family or being punished... something *bigger* is wrong. Your aberrant desires reveal that

your heart is severely out of alignment. You have what Dorothy Sayers called a "deep interior dislocation of the soul."

- You don't have to tell me, "Don't abuse your kids. Don't try to give them away. Don't encourage them to play in traffic. Feed them. Help them make good choices.' If there were a law manual that said I must do these things, I'd say, "Of course I'll do these things. I love them!" In fact, sometimes those laws help me see the best ways to love them.
- **God is not after obedience... he's after a new kind of obedience!** Obedience like that of King David, who said: "*I delight to do your will, O God. Your word to me is like honey on my lips and water to my thirsty soul.*"¹ David didn't say, "I tolerate your will. Or, I'll put up with it so I don't have to go to hell." He said, "I delight in it."
- **So, let me restate this 2nd point: These commandments reveal God to us (and we obey them because we love God want to be like Him).**
- **G.K. Chesteron used an analogy...** we were up on a high balcony... you could play and bounce around... as long as the railing was there
 - Or think about the show... *The Biggest Loser* is the same... you got somebody who can't break their bad habits... so they go on national TV... where somebody will humiliate them and we'll all sit at home and make fun of them... you know you do it. "that dude's never going to make it. He should just

¹ Psalm 40:8; Psalm 119

go home and get his Twinkies and embrace reality.”