

SN001 – 03/31/13

“Why study the 10 Commandments?”

Exodus 20:1-2

Introduction

- We live in the age of Grace
 - Most of us understand that we are saved by grace
 - That righteousness has been imputed to us because we believe, not because we have earned salvation
 - We saved by grace through faith
 - We know it, we believe, we are glad that is the way it is, or we would all be in big trouble

But with that understanding, why then when we want to take these Sunday Nights to look at what we believe and why it is important today

- why would we want to begin with something like the 10 commandments
 - I mean is there a greater example of Old Testament covenant theology than the 10 commandments?
 - Why study them, why are they important for us to understand and see the importance today
 - We are saved by grace
 - We are no longer under the law

Well I think some feel that way because they have a misunderstanding about the Law

- Some think we are bound by it, made righteous by keeping it, watch Lord I will show you how righteous I am
 - Which is faulty – because the law was never meant to make us righteous
 - It is a mirror to show us our need for Christ

The other problem we do with the law is we think it has no place in our lives

- Because we are Christians, saved by the blood
 - We have no need of the law
 - We read about all the special dietary restrictions the Jews were suppose to have
 - We read about the special holidays they were suppose to celebrate and we think, that can't apply to us

Now again these two misunderstandings about the Law, that either I am saved by it or it has no place in my life comes from the fact we don't really get the concept between the difference between the Law of God and the Law of Moses

- From Exodus chapter 20 on all the way through Leviticus and parts of Deuteronomy and Numbers have what is called the Law – it has the 10 commandments, its has the Holidays the Jews are to follow, it has all the cleanliness laws, the dietary laws

But understand there are two divisions of these laws and it is critical for us to understand this

- Exodus chapter 20 - Is Called the 10 commandments or biblically – The law of God
 - Exodus Chapter 21 thru the end is know as the Law of Moses

Now we see that division – Paul speaking about the way God wants us to live, what standards God is looking for makes mention of the Law of God

- **Romans 8:7**
 - Now the church when talking about health regulations in Acts 15:5 – when Jesus when talking about regulations on the Sabbath – **John 7:23 - It is called the Law of Moses**

There is a distinction in their title

- there is a distinction in how they were given

Exodus 20 – the law of God - the 10 commandments – were spoken by God from His pulpit

- Mount Sinai seems to form a natural pulpit from which God spoke His Word and then wrote it down on tablets of stone with His own finger
 - Showing the permanence and the power

The Law of Moses was spoken not to all the people but personally to Moses

- it was not written down by the finger of God, but dictated to Moses and written down by Him
 - and here is the distinction

The Law of Moses

- all the dietary laws, all the ways to wash your hands and not boil a goat in its mother's milk
 - all the regulations on when they were to take Sabbath days and Sabbath years
 - that was given by God specially to His people, the Jewish people for that time

But the law of God – the Ten Commandments

- was given for all people, at all times
 - The 10 commandments, the Law of God wasn't just for the Jews, it isn't just for ancient peoples
 - It is for all people at all time

That does not mean that we are saved by the 10 commandments

- the people in Moses' day weren't saved by keeping the law, Abraham wasn't saved by and neither are we
 - then what is the purpose for all people for all times?
 - well a couple of things, write these down, pray them in and think them through

Why are the 10 Commandments Important?

#1 – The Law Drives us to Christ

- the Law shows us our need for a savior, because none of us keep and fulfill and lives out the 10 commandments

And when I see that and realize that, that I am guilty before God it helps me realize how much in need of a savior I am, and how blessed I am that I have Jesus

- you see most of the world, compares their lives with their neighbors, with their friends
 - and they rightly say, I am not that bad
 - I am certainly more holy than _____, so I am really not that bad
- But the truth is friend, _____ is not the standard
 - The standard is Christ and the perfection laid out in the 10 commandments
 - A standard that I and you and we all fall so short in fulfilling

We have all fallen short because we have all broken the standard of the 10 Commandments, in fact the scripture says if you have broken one of them, you have broken all of them

“Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” – Matthew 5:19

- this verse is really why I’m teaching this study – whoever teaches them will be called great
 - no just kidding – sort of
 - but Jesus says, if you break the least of the commandments – you are guilty

Now we don’t really understand why that is in our culture of 60 percent is passing, majority rules – I have kept most of the commandments, what do you mean if I violate one, I am guilty of all

- but think of it this way

What if that guy Erden Eruc who traveled around the world under his own power – the first leg of his journey was to row from San Francisco to Australia which took him like two years, it’s crazy

- but what if that guy in his 23 foot rowboat made out 10 planks of wood, what if that maker of that rowboat said, well 9 of the 10 planks are really good, but one, a little shaky
 - would you row that boat to Australia?
 - most of you would say, I would take any boat to Australia
- because if you did, it wouldn’t matter that the boat was mostly really good, you would sink in the ocean
 - and what if you did sink and they had to come out an rescue you and you are there bobbing up and down on the ocean, sharks swimming below you as they lower down the basket from the helicopter, you think oh praise the Lord – I’m saved
- but that basket is attached to the helicopter by 10 chain links – and 9 of those are really good
 - but one of the links, well, its just not that sturdy

- would that matter? Yes – It wouldn't matter how wonderful the other 9 links in the chain were – you would be going down

And it is the same way with the 10 Commandments – the standard of holiness

- it doesn't matter how close I come, or how much better I am than others
 - if I have not lived up to the standard, then I am guilty, I am going down, I am falling in the water
- And without that understanding, we never really see our need for a savior – we have to see our need!

I give this you this example – lets say you were on a flight to New York, and about half way the flight attendant gets a call from the Pilot that says, “look we have lost 3 of our 4 engines, the 4th one is sputtering

- you better hand out some parachutes, we are going down
 - but that flight attendant, oh she doesn't want to alarm anyone, she doesn't want to ruin anyone's trip
 - so she comes out from her conversation with the pilot and says to the people – hey excuse me – I have a great opportunity for all of you
- the pilot is handing out parachutes, and as you can see since I am wearing mine, they are a wonderful fashion accessory – and I would bet that in that cramped little seat of yours, this parachute would add some tremendous cushion

So if you would like to experience what I am experiencing, just the utter joy of wearing a parachute, you can lift up your hand and I will hand them out

- now most people hearing this are just wanting to get back to the in-flight movie and continue popping peanuts and sipping on their diet coke, so they are not interesting in a fashion accessory or some extra comfort
 - but a few lift up there hand, the flight attendants says – I see that hand, in the back, down in front, I see that hand and she hands out a parachutes
- but when the few people that received them put them on they realize it isn't as fun they were told
 - the parachute really isn't a great fashion accessory

It doesn't make the seat more comfortable, it take us the already little room that they have

- and so the people who took the parachutes start to lay them down thinking, this doesn't help me out at all

And I feel like Christianity today, this is how we treat the gospel of Jesus Christ and the gift of salvation that is more powerful and wonderful than anything we have ever experience

- we know hell is real, we know sin is the problem
 - but we don't want to hurt people's feelings
 - so we say to them, hey who wants Jesus, I have really enjoyed being a Christian, Jesus makes me life so much more cushy than it was before
 - anyone want Jesus – raise your hand

- And most people think, I am doing just fine, I don't need your Jesus
- And yet some raise their hand, and we say – I see that hand**
- And we hand out Jesus to a few people
 - But then they realize, hey, there are trials serving the Lord, this is hard at times, this isn't all joy
 - What bill of goods have I been sold, and they start to walk away from Jesus, and we wonder why
 - Why was there not a great interest???
 - Why do people lay Him aside so easily???

But consider a second scenario

- Lets say that flight attendant from the illustration didn't really care about hurting your feelings or ruing the in-flight movie
 - And let's say, she emerged from her conversation with the pilot and said...

Ah your attention – don't panic, but we are in a serious situation

- 3 of our four engines have failed
 - the 4th is sputtering
 - We are going down
- But, as bad as that is, the pilot happened to have on board a parachute for everyone
 - It is not a fashion accessory
 - It is not to make life more comfortable
 - It is a gift to save your life
- Who wants a parachute???
- Well you know everyone, everyone – no one would care anymore about the in-flight movie or peanuts or diet coke
- They wouldn't care that the parachute was hard at time to wear
- They would grab on and not let go, because they understood the truth – their life was in danger

And friends I believe we do a disservice to the gospel of Jesus Christ, we do a disservice to the glory of salvation by not telling people the whole truth

- oh Jesus will make your life better – true at times
 - oh I love my relationship with Jesus – and I do
 - but you need Jesus not because He is going to make your life cushy
 - You need Jesus because you are headed for Hell and you need a savior

But pastor doesn't the bible says that it's the goodness of God that leads us to repentance, not the fear of Hell or the reality that we have broken the commandments

- yes, it is the goodness of God that leads us to repentance
 - but how to you think we truly understand how good God has been to us in saving us

How is it that we understand the amazing gift of salvation?

- It is once we understand how much trouble we are really in without Him
 - How lost we really are

David said “The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul – Psalm 19:7”

Paul said in the book of Romans - “for by the Law is the knowledge of sin” – Romans 3:20

- without the Law – the world doesn’t get it – without young men and women are not going to see their need
 - but that will happen as we, even in New Testament Times understand the standard of God Holy Law and how short we have truly fallen
- You see the first purpose of the 10 Commandments is to drive me to Christ, but that is not it

Why are the 10 Commandments Important?

#1 – The Law Drives us to Christ

#2 – The Law Directs us in Christ

“There is no greater mistake than to suppose that a Christian has nothing to do with the law and the Ten Commandments, because he cannot be justified by keeping them. The same Holy Spirit who convinces the believer of sin by the Law and lead him to Christ for justification will always lead him to a spiritual use of the law as a guide in the pursuit of sanctification.” – J. C. Ryle

Princeton Religion Research Center had a recent headline that read – “Religion is Gaining Ground, but Morality is Losing Ground” – the study shows that though in recent times church attendance is growing in America and even church planting in on the rise, morality is on the decline

The reason I believe this is so is we no longer have a standard of what God requires – everyone, including believers do what is right in their own eyes.

- You see I know, you know we are saved by grace
 - But when we interpret that to mean erroneously that therefore it does not matter how I live and there is no standard by which to direct me
 - Well then my heart becomes my guide
- The very thing the Jeremiah 17 says is deceitfully wicked above all things – that, my heart is now my guide for how to respond to God and treat my fellow man
 - No – our heart is not our guide
 - The Word is
 - And not just any part of the Word...

I find it interesting that in the landmark United States Supreme Court Case concerning hanging the 10 commandments in public building - Stone verses Graham, the United States Supreme Court rejected the idea that the Ten Commandments have any place in secular society, but their reasoning intrigues me, in they decision they said,

“The 10 commandments are not simply secular in manner, but confront us with a religious duty toward God and our fellow man” - The United States Supreme Court – Stone verses Graham

- did you hear that – the 10 commandments are not simply secular
 - they don't just tell us not to kill or commit adultery, things that almost every society of humans consider good wisdom
 - No – they confront us with our duty toward God and our fellow man

In other words what the supreme court of the United States of all of things in saying, is the 10 commandments direct us in Christ, show us how to relate to Christ – they think that should keep them off public building, but at the same time it shows us our great need for them in our lives

- And help us understand what is our duty toward God and our fellow man

Why are the 10 Commandments Important?

#1 – The Law Drives us to Christ

#2 – The Law Directs us in Christ

#3 – The Law helps us Discover Christ

- What do I mean by that – I mean the Law of God helps us discover who Christ really is
 - You see you can learn something about the Law giver by what the Law says

Just one example – think of all the disability laws that go into building codes in the United States – what does that say about the people who made those laws?

- I think it says that we want everyone, no matter their disability to have access and be a part of our public lives
 - Whether that means to go to a ball game or a concert or church for that matter - We as Americans don't want you limited by your limitations
- To me it shows the compassion of the American people, the Lawgiver in that example

Well in the same way, what we will discover as we study these laws is the heart of the Law giver

- and I think what you will discover is that He is God, first and foremost, a God of love

Why would I say that? Well, consider this New Testament verse that really changed my thinking on the 10 Commandments years ago

- it really changed my thinking on the Law of God
 - now, not the dietary laws of the Jews, their holiday calendars – that is Law of Moses, for that people at that time
- but the New Testament says about the law of God...

“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” - I John 5:3

- John, the apostle of Love, the apostle whom Jesus loved
 - He tells us, let me let you what I have discovered about God from His Commandants
 - John says, I have discovered His love

- In fact more than that, what John is saying, that in keeping His Commandments I actually experience His love

Now don't misunderstand me – not earn His love, not qualify for His love

- but I actually experience His love for me, as I keep His commandments
 - I experience that they are not burdensome, they are a blessing

You see as a Father I tell my kids certain things – don't run into the street, don't stick metal into light socket

- and they can think – what a burden – I like to run blindly into the street
 - I like taking a fork and sticking it into a light socket
 - Why is Dad trying to kill my fun
- Kill your fun – I'm trying to keep you from killing you
 - It's my love toward you!!!

And the same thing as look into God's law over the next 10 Sunday Nights together

- We are going to see, man I don't measure up I need a savior
 - We are going to see what our duty is toward God and our fellow man
 - But we are also to going to see the heart of our Jesus, which is for us, who loves us
 - His love is seen in His commandments

We see this again when Jesus summarized the Commandments for the lawyer that was asking Him the questions in Matthew chapter 22

Jesus summarized the Ten Commandments by saying,

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and the greatest commandment, and the second is like it, love your neighbor as yourself.” – Matthew 22:37-39

- the 10 commandments can be summarized by Love God and Love people
 - and that is why the 10 Commandments are so relevant today
 - in this society where we long for community, we long for love
 - love for God, love for one another
- Jesus says this is where you see it, this is where you experience it
 - In understanding and in keeping my 10 commandments
 - Not as a means for salvation
 - But to drive me to Christ
 - To direct me in Christ
 - And to help me discover who Christ really is