

SN002 – 04/07/13

“No other gods before Me”
Exodus 20:1-3

Introduction

- We are taking a few months to go through the 10 Commandments found in Exodus Chapter 20
 - Now why in the world, in New Testament age of Grace times, would we want to do that?

Well for one reason on Wednesday Nights we are looking at the Book of Exodus from which the 10 Commandments come in its entirety

- And seeing the context for what we are studying is so important and so I want to connect the two
 - This week.....

Okay, sounds interesting but why are we studying the law with all its weird customs and dietary laws

- Well remember the first five book of the Bible are called the Law, but much of it is what the New Testament calls the Law of Moses
 - the holiday the Jews were suppose to keep
 - the rights of cleanliness that the Jews were to do
 - the Law of Moses was given to the Jewish people for that time
- The 10 commandments are different – they are given to all people for all time
 - Why???

Why are the 10 Commandments Important?

#1 – The Law Drives us to Christ

- We wonder why people don't see their need for Christ. Why do people walk away from Jesus?

I think one of the reasons is because we do a disservice to the gospel of Jesus Christ when we say things like – Give your life to Christ, He will make your life better

- It has been such a good experience for me!

We are like the flight attendant I talked about the first night who had been told by the pilot, 3 of the 4 engines have failed and we are going down, get the parachutes out

- But that flight attendant, like many of us, we don't want to offend, we don't want to impose

So she says, hey, sorry to interrupt your in-flight movie, sorry to interrupt your diet coke drinking – but would anyone like a parachute

- see how good it looks on me, it should make your seat more comfortable
 - and most people are like why is this person interrupting my movie
 - and the few who take one, realize right away, it doesn't make my seat more comfortable and they want to take it off

But if that flight attendant would have been honest with the people – We are going down

- but good news, we have a parachute, who wants one
 - well then no one would care about the movie or their soda
 - no – help me, give me the parachute

And so too when we in love, help people to see there is a standard, and you have fallen short and the wages of sin really is death

- but good news, there is a savior
 - The law doesn't save us, doesn't make us more acceptable to God
 - But when we understand it, it drives us to Christ

Why are the 10 Commandments Important?

#1 – The Law Drives us to Christ

#2 – The Law Directs us in Christ

- The Law show us our duty to God and to our fellow man – this is how you love God and love people
 - And in a day and age where so many including Christians do whatever is right in their own eyes, because we have lost the standard
- We live in the age of Grace which I am thankful for, we could not be saved without grace
 - But we sometimes think well then it doesn't matter how I live, grace brother – no friend there is a standard

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

- You learn something about the Law giver from the laws

Some of the laws on the books in our city governments let us know that at one time someone making laws was dumb

- In California it is illegal to let your dog peruse a bear – and all dogs say amen – do we really need that one?
 - In California it is illegal for a car without a driver to go more than 60 miles an hour
 - Good to know, because when my car is out for a spin by itself, I am always telling it to slow down
- We will look at other states as this series progresses

But those laws tell you something about the lawgivers

- well the 10 Commandments are the same
 - and what we primarily will discover about God from His law is that He is love

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

- As we keep His commandments
 - Not to save us, not to qualify us for His love
 - But just as we are directed in Christ - I experience His love for me

- You that are parents know this – my kids love candy, but when they eat too much they get sick, my son has a stomach problem and so he gets really sick, just the other week, he was pounding, and I said no more – I could see the look on his face – Dad, why are you trying to steal my joy
 - And he went to his room, but took some more candy with him – about an hour later he comes down with this queezy look on his face – what’s wrong – I kept eating candy – Dad, I’m sorry – awwwwwww
 - And I said – son – my commandments are not burdensome..

Well we discover God’s love for us again as we get to the first commandment...

“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me.” – Exodus 20:2-3

- God begins here with a general statement that will apply to all the commandments
- “I am the Lord your God – who brought you out of Egypt – out of the house of bondage”
 - In this opening statement we discovered a couple of things about the Lord

We discover about God

#1 - Who He is – “I am the Lord your God”

- Notice it is “your” God - not I am the Lord God
 - I am the man, you need to listen

Kind of like the kid who says why Dad, and Dad says, because I’m the Dad, so you obey!!!! No – God says, I am telling you this because I am your God, I love you!

I had an opportunity to share with this girl today who was really going through it, really doubting God’s love for her

- and as she shared it was obvious that almost every thing you would direct a young Christian girl to do with her life, she had done the opposite
 - and yet here she was saying to me – I don’t feel like God loves me
 - But I had the opportunity to share with her – no – He does and has never stopped
- But you are not experiencing that love because in His love He has told you things to avoid and things to embrace
 - And you have done the opposite in almost every instance
 - And that doesn’t make God angry at you or Him wanting to judge you
- But it has stopped you from experiencing the love of God in your life
 - Because again His commandments are His love for us
 - I love you Jason – so this is how you will see it, walk in these things and you will see they are good and I am good
- And I shared that with her not to lay some legalistic trip on her – because we are saved by grace, not by works – but so that she would walk in and experience the love of God –
 - He never stopped loving her, she stopped walking in what is the expression of His love toward her – His commandments

- The Commandments are there to bless you – God is saying am for you!!! – I am your God!

We discover...

#1 - Who He is – “I am the Lord your God”

#2 – Where you were – “The land of Egypt”

- God is telling His people you have been in Egypt for 400 years
 - And that has corrupted your view of things
 - You don’t have my priorities, you don’t have my heart toward the world
 - For 400 years you have been in Egypt and though at this time God had taken them out of Egypt, by giving them His law He is trying to take Egypt out of them

And friends this is something we need to hear as much as they did so many years ago

- we live in a society that is backwards
 - evil is called good and good is called evil
 - and because we see it on TV and in music and movies, if we are ever going to have the heart of God, we either need to do one of two things
- Either become a hermit and turn it all off
 - And for some of you that might be a good idea, at least for a season
 - But just turning off the world influence won’t do it because it has already effected your heart, your priorities, your values
- So what we must do is align our hearts under the Word of God – let His word wash us, direct us
 - Just like the original audience, we need to put are presuppositions, we need to put our opinions aside
 - And honestly say – God I want your heart, what is your heart for me?
 - For some of us we are so messed up we don’t even know anymore

But the word of God, it is sharper than any two edged sword, able to divide between the joint and the marrow of my heart

And this is what we want as we hear the first commandment - “You shall have no other gods before me”

- As we consider this commandment, as we let God’s word shape our heart, I think there are 3 things to write down and consider, pray through and think in

“You shall have no other gods before me”

#1 – A Premise

- what is the premise? – there are other gods
 - oh man – This is the last Sunday Night I am going to, this weirdo – believes there are other gods
 - If you define God as a supernatural supreme being in control of everything, then you are right there are no other gods

“I am the Lord, and there is no other; There is no God besides Me.” – Isaiah 45:5

- But when we define god as that which has the foremost part of your heart, that which you worship, then you bet there are other gods

In fact all religions of antiquity encouraged the worship of other gods

- What were the gods of other religions – well in Moses day there was

Other “gods”

Baal & Mammon (Prosperity)– worshiped to bring an excess of crops and things into their lives

Ashtoreth (Pleasure) - goddess of sensuality – the people would meet at altars and commit all type of gross sexual sin – of course to them it is just the worship of Ashtoreth that made me do it

Molech – (Practicality) – most cruel - if you want to be successful, do whatever it takes

The records of the Canaanite culture that was in Israel at the time of the Exodus tells of this god Molech who had arms outreached and they would heat the arms until they were burning hot and you would drop your child in those arms, killing them to please this God so you would do well in business

- Archeology have found that then they would bury the bodies of these charred children in the walls of their business again to bring their business success.
 - Oh that is just disgusting Jason – all of those things, I am so glad we live in such an advance culture where we don't do things like that

Yeah I am so glad we live in a culture that isn't addicted to prosperity and pleasure even if it costs us our kids

- are you kidding me – that is a definition of our culture sometimes
 - you have to do what is best for you
 - to your own self be true
 - if it feels good it can't be wrong
- These are all slogans of a culture in America that worships something other than Jesus Christ

We may not call it Baal, Mammon, Ashtoreth or Molech

- But our society heads after these things that take the place of the other gods
 - Baal – just one more deal and I will be happy
 - Ashtoreth – pornography, cable TV – these imagines aren't fair to our wives or our future wives – You too girls, Romance novels and General hospital – how come my husband doesn't love me like that
 - Molech – sacrificing kids to move ahead in our business or getting ride of them because we don't have time or money

We worship these other gods – the god of prosperity and pleasure and practicality

- and every culture before us and our culture as well says, no big deal
 - go ahead and worship these other gods, its good to have a healthy balance in your life

- only the 10 Commandments – says no way, that is not good – you shall have no other gods before me
- Why is God trying to kill our fun
 - No its because He loves you
 - Its because all of those other things are liars and deceivers
 - because everything they promise, they never produce and that brings us to our second point

“You shall have no other gods before me”

#1 – A Premise

#2 – A Prediction

Isaiah chapter 46:1-6 – read it

- Not only is this commandment a premise – there are other things that will compete for your heart, watch out
 - But this commandment is also a prediction
 - you not going to have any gods before me
 - you see nothing will ever compare to God

The children of Israel trusted in other gods, and when the day of trouble came – the other gods could not help

- And so it is true in our lives – you can not trust in your power, or your playboy or your prosperity or your practical lives
- It is a prediction – you will have no other gods before me
 - You will never have one that will meet your needs

I think a great biblical example of someone who violated this first Commandment was Solomon

- This King of Israel started off so well
 - He just wanted to serve God, He just wanted wisdom to rule God’s people
 - He started off so well and God blessed him not only with wisdom but riches and victory over his enemies
- But then the scripture tells us that..

“Solomon loved many foreign women” – I Kings 11:1

- That sounds like a violation of the 7th commandment or the 10th commandment
 - But although it certainly was – understand what came with those foreign wives, their foreign gods
- God is not saying interracial marriage is not good, to God we are one in Christ – But what He is saying inter-god worship is not good
 - And we see it, as Solomon brought all these other gods before the one true’s God presence, instead of being blessed by a well rounded worship life which is what our world would tell us today would happen
 - Solomon was ripped off in his heart

He writes the book of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament and really until the final chapter it is real bumner, because He talks about every experience in His life and who all of it was empty and vain

- Here is man who started with such a love for life and God and yet

- Once his heart was divided, he became disillusioned and depressed
- And maybe that is where you are at

“How weak the gods of this world are,” wrote Elizabeth Browning, in her poem “Idols” “and weaker yet their worship made me” – Elizabeth Browning “Idols”

- Maybe that is where you are at - you are down and you are disillusioned and you are depressed
 - And the world will tell you – it is because you need more you time

Maybe the real reason is your heart is divided

- and those other things you are trying to find fulfillment in
 - well those others things lie, they don't deliver, because as god said “you shall have no other gods before me” - they won't be like me, they won't deliver what they promise
 - so what do we do???

“You shall have no other gods before me”

#1 – A Premise

#2 – A Prediction

#3 – A Promise

- My heart is divided and it is ripping me apart what do I do, where do I turn
 - Hey listen – this commandment is not just a premise and a prediction, it is also a Promise
 - You shall have no other gods before me

“No other God's before Me” – by the way, doesn't mean that He just wants to be first on the list – “before Me” means “before My face” or in My presence

- and that reminds of a story, we need to hear and get into our heart tonight.

In I Samuel 5 – Israel had lost the Ark to the Philistines in battle and in that day they would take your god into their temple, saying no only did we defeat you, but our god defeated your god. Well we read in I Samuel chapter 5 that as they brought the Ark into the temple of their god Dagon, in the morning, Dagon had fallen over before the ark –now by the way, if your God can fall over, I have fallen and I can't get up, that is not a good god

But they thought, Oh its just a mistake, so they propped up their god and the next morning – Dagon was fallen over again and this time he had lost his hand and hands – and the priest saw their god Dagon like this and probably said, Dagonit – Dagonit what happen to Dagon – and they realize, listen– the philistines realize these gods can not hang out – so they sent, sadly, the ark away – and continued to worship this false god – now personally I would choose the God that didn't loose his head and hands and need my help to get propped up, but you know whatever floats your boat

- But listen – understand the point of the story – the point is - it's a promise – these false gods that are getting a hold of your life, these false gods that you have allowed to disillusion you, to depress you
 - And now you are addicted, now you don't see a way out

Oh precious one, here the promise of the Lord – You shall have no other gods before me

- you see the answer is not to figure out how to get the false gods off the throne of your heart
 - the answer is not how do I dethrone this false god
 - the answer is just to enthrone Christ

David was became King at age 30, but just over the area of Israel known as Judah, it wasn't until 7 year later at 37 he became King over all of Israel, but the minute he did, some amazing things began to happen – first and foremost, strongholds in the land that had been there for year began to fall –

- Israel had many great military leaders from the time of Joshua to King Saul but one group he could not conquer were the Jebusites that lived in Jerusalem
 - and as the age of judges came and went
 - Israel had great military leaders, men like Gideon and Barak and Samson

But still during the lives of all those men, Jerusalem stayed in enemy hands

- And when Saul was King, he had some military advances, but Jerusalem stayed in Jebusite hands
 - And when the Kingdom was divided – though David had many military victories, Jerusalem remained a stronghold for the enemy in the middle of the nation of Israel

Part of the practical reason for that was the location

- Jerusalem sits atop a hill
 - And in those days of walled cities, it was very easy to defend
 - In fact the Jebusites would mock the Israelites that even the lame and the blind could defend their city against all oppressors
 - And for generation after generation, that was exactly what happened - Israel had a stronghold of the enemy right in their midst

That was until David became King not just over a part of the nation, but over all of the nation of Israel

- And I mention that because I feel this is such an important spiritual principal for our lives

Many of us even as believers have strongholds of the enemy in the midst of our lives

- and those strongholds can of course be many things
 - but they are areas you wish were not there, they are areas that are a drag to your relationship with God and maybe others
 - And for some of us those strongholds have been there for a long, long, time, many for some of us, it has actually been generations

And we try everything to be free from these strongholds, we go to classes, we listen to CD packs, we read self help books, but for many of us, this doesn't do it

- And we get frustrated
 - I known in my life personally I felt sometimes like the enemy is laughing at me like they were laughing at Israel
 - Jason all I need is the blind and lame demons to deal with you on this issue, you are so weak, it is such a stronghold
- And if you have ever felt that way you understand what I am saying
 - But understand the principal

This stronghold in the middle of Israel finally falls when David, the rightful King was crowned King of all, not just a part of the nation, but King of all

- And the strongholds in my life and yours will continue to be there as long as our hearts and our lives are divided between two Kings, between various gods
 - But when I realize the promise, you shall have no other gods before me
 - And I invite God to be God of all, not just a part, but God of all
- the strongholds begin to fall

You enthrone Christ – really enthrone

- Let Him be who you worship, what your heart is after
 - And He will not share His throne with anyone
 - Let me into the temple of your heart, fully, completely – I will deal with them
 - When I am your God, there will be no other gods before Me