

EXODUS 20:1-17

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Exodus chapter 20 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

Keep in mind that Exodus chapters 19-24 deal with the Law! And this is difficult for many. The reason it is difficult is that some believe that we are to keep the Law and if we don't, then we are not saved. I will deal more with this in a minute and in our study this evening.

In our study of Exodus, we have seen how God has delivered the Children of Israel, His people, from their bondage in Egypt. And in doing so He has brought them through various trials, teaching them lessons of faith.

And now they have come to Mount Sinai in Arabia, the mountain of God and they will spend 11 months in this spot, receiving direction from God for the nation.

In our study tonight we will be looking at the Ten Commandments.

Now I do realize that we are not under the Law, we are under Grace, so why should we even study this?

Please understand this. The Law was *NEVER* given for a person's salvation – *NEVER!*

You cannot attain righteousness through the Law. Paul put it like this in Romans 3:20, **“Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”**

Also, in Galatians 2:16a, we are told, **“knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law . . .”**

You see, salvation always comes by faith, that is true today just as it was true back in the time of Moses and even the time of Abraham, the father of faith not the father of the Law!

Notice how Abraham was saved by faith and not by works, not by the Law. We are told in Genesis 15:6, “**And he [Abraham] believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.**”

And Paul picks up on this verse in Romans 4:2-3, justification by faith and not by works back then and today!

Listen to what Paul said, “**For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’**”

And it is out of that faith we see Abraham do good works, not for salvation but out of his love for God! Again, that is true for us today.

Then what was the function of the Law?

The function of the Law was to show them their sinfulness and to show us as well!

In saying that, please understand that the Law is good, the Law is perfect! There is nothing wrong with the Law of God.

The problem is sinful man. You see, as we look at the life of Jesus, He fulfilled the Law completely and thus, only God can fulfill it. And as we know in our own lives, man falls far short.

Thus, the Law not only shows us our sinfulness, but it is there also to drive us to Jesus, the One who can cleanse us from all our sins. And for the children of Israel, it was to drive them to the coming Messiah!

Paul puts it like this in Galatians 3:19-26, **“What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.”**

Thus, we don't keep the Law for salvation but out of obedience, out of love for God because He knows what is best for our lives!

What we will see as we go through Exodus chapter 20 is that God will give the children of Israel the Ten Commandments, not the Ten Suggestions!

And then, in the succeeding chapters He will give His entire Law to them, chapters 21-24.

As we will see, and we will not go into detail with all these Laws because there are 613 of these commandments in the Old Testament.

From those 613 commandments, 248 were positive ones. And the idea here is loving the Lord their God with all their heart, mind and strength, honoring your father and mother and so on.

Then there were 365 negative commandments. And the idea here is God forbidding His people from worshiping idols, false Gods, stealing and so on.

In saying that, are some of these Laws written for us to keep?

Some yes and some no.

You see, there are basically three types of Law in the Bible.

There is ***THE MORAL LAW***, and this is a declaration of what God requires of man. We call these the Ten Commandments spoken of in Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21.

In the New Testament Jesus summed it all up by saying in Mark 12:29-31, **“Jesus answered him, ‘The first of all the commandments is: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.” This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” There is no other commandment greater than these.’”**

The love for God focuses on the first four commandments, the first table of the Law and it deals with our relationship with God.

It is only when that is established that man can fulfill the second table of the Law or the last six of the commandments, man’s relationship with his fellow man.

If your vertical axis is off, if your relationship with God is off, then your relationship with your fellow man, your horizontal axis will be off and the way you treat your spouse, your friends will also be off.

And it will not be back in line until you first get right with God, and it is only then that your relationship with your fellow man will be in line! (See also Matthew 22:37-40, Luke 10:26-28).

Many today wonder why people can't get along. Why they are fighting, and it seems to be getting worse. The reason is simple. Man's relationship with God is off and thus, their relationship with others is off as well. And this can happen to us as Christians as well. How you treat people is the evidence of your relationship with God, if it is in line or it is off!

Then there is *THE CIVIL LAW* or *THE JUDICIAL LAW*, which dealt with how they were to function as a nation. How they were to live.

Examples of this Civil Law can be found in Exodus chapters 21-23 and Deuteronomy 16-21.

And lastly there is *THE CEREMONIAL LAWS*, which focus on the religious life of the people, instructions on the tabernacle, on the sacrifices, on the feasts, on the priesthood, on ceremonial purity, on dietary laws, and-so-on. You will find these Ceremonial Laws in Exodus chapters 24 and Leviticus and Deuteronomy 12-18.

Why did God need to do this?

Because God was crafting a nation out of a people that was not a people - and their life revolved around their deliverance.

Because Israel was a people called out by God, a theocracy, there is some over-lap between the civil and ceremonial laws - there is not always a sharp distinction between religious and civil duties, and the moral law, which undergirds them both.

There is nothing wrong with the Ten Commandments, we are to obey them, but not for salvation, but for our identification with God! The Civil and Ceremonial Laws were for Israel, and they do not apply to us today for the Messiah has come and what was a picture in the Old Testament is now a reality in Christ!

With that as our background, let's begin reading in Exodus chapter 20, starting in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word!

EXODUS

VERSES 1-2

God wants His people to remember what He has done for them. He wants them to know His great love for them so that as He establishes His Moral Law, they will understand that these things are for their good. He is not some cosmic killjoy trying to ruin all their fun, but this is what is best for their lives!

We are to do the same. Remember all that God has done for us, His great love that He shows us so that as He tells us what to do and not to do, we will obey Him knowing that He loves us and wants what is best for our lives!

Also, we need to keep in mind that the Law was not just for the religious elite but for all the Jews. It didn't matter who you were, this applied to all of them as one writer put it, *"These commandments were after all addressed to the ordinary Israelite, not to the religious elite of the day: they are expressed in strong simple terms, understandable to all, and deal with the temptations of the common man, not of the theologian."* (Cole)

These Laws are not hard for us to understand but they are hard to obey because of the hardness of our hearts.

Now, what some do today is that they try to earn God's love. Folks, you can't earn it. God's love is there for us to receive!

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

You see, you can't earn God's love by keeping His commandments, but in keeping His commandments you will find His love! Sinning tends to push us away from God because of the conviction that He brings into our lives to draw us back. But God will not disown you. He loved you so much that He died for you so that you can live with Him!

And think about this for a minute, “*It is wrong to steal, or murder, or covet, not primarily because these sins are forbidden by the Decalogue. They are forbidden by the Decalogue, because they were previously forbidden by conscience; and they are forbidden by conscience because they are forbidden by the nature of things; and the nature of things is God.*” (Meyer)

I hope we understand that God has placed in our hearts what is right and what is wrong and then it is up to us to listen and obey or sin against what He has said. And the problem for us is what Jeremiah said, “**The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?**” Jeremiah 17:9.

That is the problem! God knows our hearts and we can't imagine the depravity we can sink to as we harden our hearts to the things of God! Don't go down that path.

Now let's begin looking at the first table of the Law or the first four commandments that deal with man's relationship with God. This is where it all begins, and it is out of this that we see our relationship with our fellow man will also be in line!

And keep in mind how this chapter opened up – “***AND GOD SPOKE ALL THESE WORDS, SAYING . . .***”

Let's look at what He told Moses and the children of Israel.

VERSE 3

Here we see - ***THE FIRST COMMANDMENT: YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME!***

What does that mean?

This means God demands to be more than added to our lives. We don't just add Jesus to the life we already have. We must give Him all our life.

Think about it. In marriage our spouse wants us to be committed to them. They don't want us to have other girlfriends for the husband and boyfriends for the wife.

God is no different, the worship of these other gods is committing spiritual adultery since we are married to the Lord!

Also, this failure to obey this commandment is called idolatry.

Keep in mind that in the world at that time the people were polytheistic, or they worshiped many gods. And here God makes it clear that He alone is to be worshiped!

In Isaiah 44:6-8 we are told, **“Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: ‘I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God. And who can proclaim as I do? Then let him declare it and set it in order for Me, Since I appointed the ancient people. And the things that are coming and shall come, Let them show these to them. Do not fear, nor be afraid; Have I not told you from that time, and declared it? You are My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one.’”**

God is God. I know, that was profound. But put that into perspective. God is God and that means everything else is not God and thus, they are not to be worshiped!

And please understand that the god's of the Old Testament are still being worshiped today.

There was the god Baal or the god of power.

There is the god Ashtoreth or the god of sensuality.

There is the god Molech or the god of pleasure.

There is the god Mammon or the god of wealth.

You see, we tend to worship these same gods even though we may call them by different names!

It is not that we worship Jesus plus these other gods, He is to be worshiped alone – ***YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME!***

And this is just not an Old Testament teaching. Let me show you what I mean.

We see in I Corinthians 10:14 that we are to – ***FLEE IDOLATRY!***

What are the results of not fleeing idolatry but embracing it, to be habitually involved in it? Paul tells us in I Corinthians 6:9-10 that – ***YOU WILL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD!*** That is a big deal! (See also Ephesians 5:5, Revelation 21:8, Revelation 22:15)

Why is this such a big deal? Because, as Paul tells us in Galatians 5:19-20 – ***IDOLATRY IS A WORK OF THE FLESH!***

And, according to I Corinthians 5:11, Paul tells us that – ***WE ARE NOT TO ASSOCIATE WITH THOSE WHO CALL THEMSELVES CHRISTIANS WHO ARE IDOLATORS!***

The Lord is very clear on this one – ***YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME!***

VERSES 4-6

Now we come to - ***THE SECOND COMMANDMENT: YOU SHALL NOT MAKE CARVED IMAGES!***

Now as some read this, they feel it is saying what the first commandment has already said. It is not.

You see, the first commandment forbids the worship of false gods. But here, in the second commandment God is forbidding the worship of God in the wrong way.

A good example of that is when the children of Israel forced Aaron to make them a golden calf to worship God by. The calf was not made to worship another god but to worship the true God and this was not what they were to do.

Remember what they said as they looked at this golden calf, “**. . . ‘This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!’**” Exodus 32:4.

In other words, they were saying that this golden calf represented God. They had brought God down to an image!

And how did the Lord respond to this?

We don’t have to guess because in Exodus 32:7-10 we are told, “**And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, ‘This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!’**” **And the Lord said to Moses, ‘I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people! Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation.’**”

Do you think the Lord was happy with them?

Of course not! They broke this second commandment, and they broke it very quickly!

Here's the thing. God does not want us to create an image of anything in which you will bow down and worship. To me, that is the key!

Now in saying that some have taken this to the extreme and not the Biblical extreme. They don't believe we should have the carved dove and the cross may even offend some, they see this as a carved image.

Now let's think about that for a minute because people who feel this way have not thought this through.

You see, if that is how you feel, then you must not have any pictures of animals, stuffed animals, no carvings of anything, right!

They would fight against that, and the reality is, that is not what God is saying here.

Here's the thing once again. You can make artistic images; I don't think it is right to make an image of the Lord because we don't know what He looks like and what usually happens is people bow down and worship that image.

Let me show you that God Himself commanded Israel to make images of cherubim.

In Exodus 25:18-19 we are told, "**And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat. Make one cherub at one end, and the other cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim at the two ends of it of one piece with the mercy seat.**"

Also, in Exodus 26:31 we are told, "**You shall make a veil woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen. It shall be woven with an artistic design of cherubim.**"

Now, if they were to fall down and worship these cherubim, then that would be a problem. If someone came and knelt before the cross, that is an image that is being worshiped, it is not God and it is not to be done!

Cole puts it like this, ***“If the making of cherubim was permitted, then the prohibition of the ‘image’ will refer only to the making of direct objects of worship.”*** Exactly!

The bottom line is this and it is very simple. We are not to make anything that we bow down before and worship as God.

The idea here is that our worship of God is to be spiritual and not material – not carved images!

Now I grew up in the Roman Catholic Church and as you probably know, they have many carved images in these churches and people bow down before them, pray to them.

So how does the Roman Catholic Church deal with this second commandment?

The reason that they can get away with this, and they really can't, but in their mind they can, is because they leave out this second commandment.

If they do then there is only nine commandments and not ten, right?

No, because they divide the tenth commandment into two, thus, still giving them ten!

But again, it still does not make them right!

Now I also need to deal with this and there is a lot here in Exodus 20:5-6.

First of all, how can God be Jealous?

I like the way that Redpath put it. He wrote: ***“God’s jealousy is love in action. He refuses to share the human heart with any rival, not because He is selfish and wants us all for Himself, but because He knows that upon that loyalty to Him depends our very moral life . . . God is not jealous of us: He is jealous for us.”***

I like that.

But doesn't the Bible say that jealousy is a sin? If that is true, then how can God be jealous towards us?

Jealousy itself is not a sin, but many times it leads to violence and that violence is then a sin!

But think about this. Jealousy is a righteous response toward the one you've entered into a marriage covenant with when another is trying to come between you or trying to take them from you.

It is absolutely legitimate for a husband to be jealous for his wife when he sees another man flirting with her or trying to woo her away from him. And make no mistake about it, the same is true for God.

One more point here before we move on, and that is this idea of generational curses that are passed on. They get this from Exodus 20:5 and all I can say about this is – *FOOLISHNESS!*

That is not what God is saying here and you truly need to look at Exodus 20 verses 5 and 6 together to understand what is being said.

You see, you are not punished for the sins of your father and in Ezekiel 18:19-20 we see God tells us that very thing.

We are told, “Yet you say, ‘Why should the son not bear the guilt of the father?’
Because the son has done what is lawful and right, and has kept all My statutes and
observed them, he shall surely live. The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the
guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the
righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.”

The idea here in Exodus is that if the children carry on the sins of their father; these curses will also come upon them.

If they love God they will not be punished, and thus, we are responsible for our actions, we can't blame our parents or whoever else people blame today!

Listen again to what the Lord says here in Exodus 20:6, "**but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.**" I think that is very clear.

God extends His mercy to those who love Him and that is consistent throughout the Bible!

And thus, the second commandment - ***YOU SHALL NOT MAKE CARVED IMAGES!***

VERSE 7

Now we come to - ***THE THIRD COMMANDMENT: YOU SHALL NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD YOUR GOD IN VAIN!***

Now some take this to mean that we should not swear or use the Lord's name in a vulgar way. We shouldn't but I don't think that is the point that is being made here in this second commandment.

Keep in mind that the Hebrew language doesn't have any cuss words. That means if a Jew wants to curse, he has to do it in English or some other language! So I don't think that is the thought here.

What is this speaking of?

First of all to honor the name of God speaks of all that He is, His holiness and-so-on.

We represent God in all of our actions and as we are living out our lives, we need to honor Him in all that we do or we are misrepresenting Him!

We are not to use the name of God in a foolish way or a superficial way, we are to honor His name, who He is.

In Leviticus 19:12 we are told, “**And you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the Lord.**”

And in Psalm 139:20 we are told, “**For they speak against You wickedly; Your enemies take Your name in vain.**”

When we swear falsely against the Lord or promise to do something and not do it as we are supposedly representing the Lord, that is wrong.

When we falsely represent the Lord, that is wrong.

I think that is the thought here. That by our actions we are falsely representing God and thus - ***YOU SHALL NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD YOUR GOD IN VAIN!***

VERSES 8-11

Now we come to - ***THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT: REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY!***

God set apart one day a week when they would rest, spend time totally devoted to the Lord and their families. They worked hard in the fields and thus, they needed that time off. And for Israel it was Saturday or sundown on Friday evening till sunset on Saturday evening, that was the Sabbath.

And please understand that this was a special covenant for the Jewish people and not for us.

How do I know that?

Because in Exodus 31:16-17 we are told, **“Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.”**

I think that is clear!

Now in saying that I also believe it is important for us to have that day we rest in the Lord, taking a break from our normal work to be refreshed in Him and spend time with our family.

I do realize that there are some out there who think we need to keep the Sabbath day, that we should worship on Saturday, and some go as far as saying that if you worship God on a Sunday you are going to Hell!

Well, the early church was in trouble then because they gathered on the first day of the week, which is a Sunday, the day Jesus rose from the dead!

But it really doesn't matter what day you want to worship God, just worship Him!

Paul makes it very simple when he tells us in Colossians 2:16-17, **“So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.”**

You see, the substance is Christ, and the Sabbath was a picture of what we have in Christ, ***REST!***

It doesn't matter what day you worship God and the reality is, we should worship Him every day of our lives and not just one day specifically.

But as a body of believers, whatever day you gather to worship Him, don't neglect that time!

Thus - ***REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY!***

One more point here for those who think the week of creation spoken of in Genesis chapter 1 took place over millions of years and not six literal days. Even though it says, **“evening and morning were the first day”** and-so-on. Those are not millions of years but a literal 24 hour period of time!

God tells us here that He did create the earth and all that is in it in six literal days and He rested on the seventh, giving us a pattern to follow, to work six days and rest in the Lord on the seventh.

And if you really think about it, God did not say to work for six million years and rest in the seventh million! That would make no sense.

So these are the first four commands on the first tablet of stone, written by God and they deal with our relationship with God, the vertical axis.

Now, in the last six commandments we will be looking at man’s relationship with his fellow man or the horizontal axis and apart from Christ, we will never be in line with our fellow man!

Also, when you look at what these next six commandments say you may wonder why God has to tell us these things, how we should treat others.

Do you know the reason?

Because apart from God’s Moral Laws, we would be out of control, we would do whatever we want.

Even with these Moral Laws man still rebels and we reap the consequences of that rebellion. We need to remember that they are there for our betterment, if we would only obey!

VERSE 12

We now come to - ***THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT: HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER!***

Why is honoring your parents so important to God?

Because a society that has lost respect for the older generation, when there is a breakdown of the family unit, the foundations of a society will be destroyed!

Now listen how severely God took this in Exodus 21:17, and he does not give them a time out!

We are told, "**And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.**"

Also, in Proverbs 20:20 we are told, "**Whoever curses his father or his mother, His lamp will be put out in deep darkness.**"

And in Leviticus 20:9 we are told, "**For everyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. He has cursed his father or his mother. His blood shall be upon him.**"

This does seem harsh, doesn't it?

Yes, it does but we also need to understand that if there is no respect in the home there will be no respect for authority - ***PERIOD!***

And please understand we are not speaking of little children. We are talking about children who have grown up and are behaving like this. It is serious and if it is not dealt with, it will destroy a nation as we see happening today.

Several years ago the Minnesota Crime Commission, in the face of a growing juvenile delinquency epidemic, made this assessment. And listen carefully to what conclusions that they came to and yet today, we ignore these things and let children do whatever they want.

We are told, *“Every baby starts life as a little savage. He is completely selfish and self-centered. He wants what he wants when he wants it: his bottle, his mother’s attention, his play-mates toys, his uncle’s watch. Deny him these once and he seethes with rage and aggressiveness which would be murderous were he not so helpless. He’s dirty; he has no morals, no knowledge, and no developed skills. This means that all children, not just certain children, all children are born delinquent. If permitted to continue in their self-impulsive actions to satisfy each want, every child would grow up a criminal, a killer, and a rapist.”*

Exactly, if we would only pull that report up and listen to it and then train up our children in the things of God!

In the New Testament Paul picks up on this in Ephesians 6:1-3 where he tells us, **“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise: ‘that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.’”**

My wife changed this a little and would say, *“Obey your parents lest you die!”*

I guess it is the same idea here.

And a life that is lived in rebellion is a life that is shortened many times, just as God has told us.

But what about children who obey their parents, and they die?

It is not always the quantity of life but the quality of life that is lived! You can live 90 years and there is nothing to show for it or you can live 10 years and you can have an amazing impact on those around you for the Lord!

And as we see in the New Testament, the Scribes and Pharisees used their traditions to neglect the commands of God.

In Matthew 15:1-6 we are told, **“Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, ‘Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.’ He answered and said to them, ‘Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? For God commanded, saying, “Honor your father and your mother”; and, “He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.” But you say, “Whoever says to his father or mother, ‘Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God’ - then he need not honor his father or mother.” Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.”**

They were to take care of their parents but instead of caring for them they ignored their parents and said that they dedicated everything to the Lord, which wasn't true, but they looked good, and they were out of the responsibility of caring for their parents, but not in God's eyes!

Thus - ***HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER!***

Now the result of this rebellion is seen in the next commandment. Let's read on and you will see what I mean.

VERSE 13

We now come to - ***THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT: YOU SHALL NOT MURDER!***

Here's the thing. If there is rebellion in the home as the child is growing they will then manifest that behavior in society and many times it leads to all kinds of crimes, even murder!

We also need to understand that God is not speaking against capital punishment here. I now some like to twist the Scriptures to say that or show why they are pacifists.

That is wrong, we are not to murder but there are times that there is legal justification for putting a person to death.

But in murder there is no justification for it.

Murder and killing are different!

I hope that is clear. Premeditation or just murdering someone is wrong and in God's eyes, it is a capital crime that deserves death. Remember what the Lord said in Genesis 9:6, "**Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man.**"

And as we get to the New Testament it is even more than an outward action, it is a matter of the heart. You can murder someone by the things you say!

Thus - ***YOU SHALL NOT MURDER!***

VERSE 14

We now come to - ***THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT: YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY!***

How much clearer can God be – He is condemning extra marital affairs and yet man makes all kinds of excuses for his sin.

“God has brought us together!” Give me a break!

“My wife doesn’t understand me!” That sounds like you are the problem and not your wife and an affair is not going to change that!

“We are in love!” No, you are not in love you are in lust!

Let me show you what I mean, how we can justify our sin.

Many years ago now, there was a Christian singer by the name of Michael English who was involved in an adulterous affair and he not only lost his marriage but he lost his record contract also.

But, instead of repenting, this is what he learned through it all.

“Maybe God allowed this to happen to make me see I needed some freedom.”

My, how we can justify our sin!

It is as Proverbs 6:32 tells us, **“Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; He who does so destroys his own soul.”**

Yes, and it does affect those around them also!

You see, the home is to be the foundation for the family and society, and thus, the enemy tries to destroy it, don’t let him!

You can see why our nation is in such a mess today. It is the breakdown of the family unit that God established. Adultery destroys marriages and it destroys families and relationships and ultimately a society as I have said.

And again, this is also a matter of the heart. Not just the outward actions, but it begins in the heart and then it is manifested in action!

Thus - ***YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY!***

VERSE 15

We now come to - ***THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT: YOU SHALL NOT STEAL!***

Once again this command is important for any society to be healthy. It speaks of the right to have personal property without the fear of another taking it from you.

This seems so obvious, doesn't it?

We should not steal and yet, have you ever taken a pencil from work, or even a paper clip? Do you steal time from your boss?

And what about stealing from God in regard to your tithes and offerings?

As a new creation in Christ these things should not be a part of our lives.

How can we stop this wrong behavior?

Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:28, "**Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.**" There is the solution!

Thus - ***YOU SHALL NOT STEAL!***

VERSE 16

We now come to - ***THE NINTH COMMANDMENT: YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS!***

In other words, we are to be honest, we are not to bear false witness in telling tales and-so-on.

Listen to what Alan Redpath has to say regarding this sin of bearing a false witness. He wrote, *“Slander . . . is a lie invented and spread with intent to do harm. That is the worst form of injury a person can do to another. Compared to one who does this, a gangster is a gentleman, and a murderer is kind, because he ends life in a moment with a stroke and with little pain. But the man guilty of slander ruins a reputation which may never be regained, and causes lifelong suffering.”*

He goes on to tell us that, *“Talebearing . . . is repeating a report about a person without careful investigation. Many, many times I have known what it is to suffer with that. To repeat a story which brings discredit and dishonor to another person without making sure of the facts, is breaking this commandment . . . How many people, especially Christian people, revel in this, and delight in working havoc by telling tales about others. To excuse the action by saying they believed the report to be true, or that there was no intention to malign, is no justification.”*

Now, what about inappropriate silence?

He continues on and tells us, *“When someone utters a falsity about another and a third person is present who knows that statement to be untrue but, for reasons of fear or being disliked, remains quiet, that third person is as guilty of breaking this law as if he had told a lie.”*

Thus, let us not go down that path, God has warned us!

Now, in the New Testament we are told in Colossians 3:8-11, **“But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.”**

Again, Redpath tells us, *“How very strange that we have ever come to think that Christian maturity is shown by the ability to speak our minds, whereas it is really expressed in controlling our tongues. . . . What a startling revelation it would be if a tape recording could be played of all that every church member has said about his fellow members in one week!”*

Something to think about!

Thus - ***YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS!***

VERSE 17

We now come to - ***THE TENTH COMMANDMENT: YOU SHALL NOT COVET!***

The word, **“covet”** means *“to pant after.”*

I think that hits the nail on the head, don't you?

You see something someone has, and you want it, you have to have it, and you are not content in what you have. You will even go to the extreme wishing they didn't have it if you can't have it!

Look at our society today and it truly is based on covetousness or panting after what others have. We call it *“keeping up with the Jones's!”*

And the reality is, we don't just want to keep up with them, we want more than they have!

Is there satisfaction in that?

Absolutely not! That is why we have to get more and more!

And yet our whole economy is built upon this concept of coveting or lusting after people and things!

And these desires are being fueled by the advertising industry which has spent millions of dollars on research to study human nature in an effort to capitalize on man's basic unhappiness by trying to get us to covet what they're selling.

Paul, in Hebrews 13:5 tells us, **“Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’”** You see, true satisfaction, lasting satisfaction is not found in things, but in the Person of Jesus Christ!

Also, in I Timothy 6:6-12 Paul tells us, **“Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”**

When you rest in the Lord, you will be content in what you have.

You see, money, possessions are not the driving force in your life, at least they shouldn't be, God needs to be and in that there is great contentment because He has given to you just what you need.

If you are not there, then heed the warning of Jesus in Luke 12:15, "**And He said to them, 'Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.'**" Exactly!

So we have looked at these 10 commandments and there is nothing wrong with them. Well, I guess the only thing wrong with them is we fall far short of keeping them.

Paul was a man who struggled with this. In Romans 7:7 Paul tells us, "**What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet.'**"

I think this was an area that Paul struggled with; covetousness and we will look at that but let me say this first.

The Law shows us that we are sinners, it exposes our sins.

And for the Jews and for some people even today, they seek to be righteous before God by outward actions, keeping the Law but the reality is, it is a matter of the heart.

What a heavy burden the Law became upon the Jewish people, all those rules and regulations, what kind of relationship with God did that bring?

It was a horrible one!

Can you imagine a marriage relationship like that, based upon 613 commandments? Of course not! Then why do we try to have a relationship with God by the Law through works?

Paul, in Philippians 3:3-6, speaking of his life before he was saved, said **“For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.”**

That is how Paul felt but then I believe God was working on his heart as he began to see his failure in keeping the Law, he saw it more than just being external, it was internal.

Thus, he saw how he began to covet and thus he was guilty of breaking the Law that he once prided himself in keeping. It was the work of the Holy Spirit beginning to break Paul.

And he finally saw himself as he really was, a sinner separated from God and he said in Romans 3:20, **“Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”**

Thus - ***YOU SHALL NOT COVET!***

We will finish up this chapter next time, but I did not want to rush through this chapter for it lays the ground work for the children of Israel how they were to live. And, as we will see, they get themselves in trouble when they break the first four commandments that deal with their relationship with God and then we see how it is manifested in their lives or the last six commandments, their relationship with their fellow man.

If you have any doubt about this, just read the book of Judges and that will clear things up for you, how man acts apart from God! Not a pretty picture, not even close!

Let me close with this.

What about us today, what about the ten commandments?

We are not to live lawless lives, but we don't follow the commandments that were written in stone.

Keep in mind that we are under the New Covenant and God has written His laws in our hearts. Again, our obedience is not from external laws written on tablets of stone, but from a new heart given to us by God at the moment of salvation!

Praise God for the grace that He has extended to us and thus, may we live for Him!