

God's Love :: God's Law

Read Ex. 20:1-12. Context coming out of Egypt! Now the Bible refers over and over again to “the Law” the “Torah” and when it does, it’s referring to the The laws in the first Five books of the Bible. Now there are a lot of laws, Jews say 613 different laws. And so we’re going to go through each law today and talk about what it means.. I’m just kidding. There are different kinds of laws. Some for civil use. Some for ceremonial use. Others are just moral. We’re going to focus on the Ten commandments. You teach these things when you’re young... and then someone asks about adultery. And we’re not even going to walk through each one of them. I’m more concerned with seeing how the Ten Commandments, functioned in the life of Israel and see how they inform the way that we read the rest of the Bible. And I want to look at three things.

The Timing of the Law

Read vs 1! Order is important!!! God gives his people the law after He saves them. He gives them is love before his law. And this is so huge because what it shows is that God’s saving Israel doesn’t depend on them obeying God or being faithful. If it did, Exodus 20 would come before Exodus 14. God gives them his love before he gives them his law. And we’ve talked about the danger of getting this backwards. Not a story about how God delivers Israel because they obeyed. God frees them and then says this is how I want you to love me. Any heard of Stefani Germanotta?

Lady Gaga 2013 came out with “Applause” 2016 Sunday morning interview. The applause it what makes her a slave!

And I might be mistaken, but I think I’m just reflecting a universal human desire: a desire to be cherished and valued and loved in a way that doesn’t depend on how well we do or how good we are. We want people to love us for something more than what we offer them. We want them to love us. Not who we should be. Who are are. To love the unedited broken genuine version of us. With no makeup. With no trophies. We want people to stay with us, even if they could do better than us. Don’t want to constantly have to perform to get people’s love. And I think in all of these desires what we’re really craving is to be loved with God’s love. He says in **Deut. 7:7-8.** **7 It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.**

By God is saving Israel before instructing them, he’s saying, “What attracted me to you wasn’t your obedience. What attracted me to you wasn’t how good you are or the things you could do for me. “But God couldn’t you do better?” I just love you. You have my affections. **Your obedience is not what attracted me to you in the first place. And it’s not what’s going to keep me around.** I love you. And I want to show you how to love me.

You need to hear this. Too many people believing God is in love with a future version of you. Constant anxiety. Future version isn’t good enough either. Message of the Gospel is not that you are good enough. It’s that there was someone who was. Don’t believe the lie. I’ve delivered you because I love you. Now I want to show you how to love me! Which is... **HOOOME!!!**

The Reasons for the Law

Now Jesus is going to provide a summary of the law in Mt. 22:37-39 And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love with Lord with all your heart soul and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself. Broadly speaking, that was the purpose of the law. To help Israel love God and love others.

In fact, the commandments have a structure that corresponds with that first 4 are about loving God, the last are about loving others. (Graphic) So the point of the law is love for God and others, but it will be helpful for us. The law helps us love God and others in 3 ways...

- It restrains ___evil___ and helps maintain order (Rom. 2:14-15)

Does damage control. In this way it functions like our laws.

- ○ It shows our sinfulness and God’s _____holiness_____ (Rom. 5:20)

Picture ANNA KENDRICK! Notorious for resting “jerk” face. “When I look at a picture of myself I think ‘Oh my gosh what is wrong with me?’” She feels like she looks happy, but she doesn’t and it’s not until she sees herself through the lens of the camera that’s she’s able to know the truth about what she really looks like. Society tells us we are great. Same with Scripture...shows us how sinful we really are. (Rom. 5:20) Drives us to Christ!

20 Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,

- It shows us how to live like we were ___designed_____ to live. (2 Chron. 24:20)

Our culture believes a lie that is toxic “Rules and authority are the enemy of my joy.” Freedom isn’t the absence of boundaries but the presence of the right boundaries. A fish is most free in the water. Living in God’s presence and under his rule is that water. The idea that boundaryless limitless living is where joy lies is false. It’s what the serpent sold Adam and Eve—God’s rules keep good things from you. Not true. Only when you live within God boundaries that you experience the flourishing abundance you were always designed to experience. God’s commands are his-non-optional strategies for joyful living. Which means this—that when we disobey it’s not just wrong, it’s stupid. (2 Chron. 24:20 20 Then the Spirit of God clothed Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, and he stood above the people, and said to them, “Thus says God, ‘Why do you break the commandments of the Lord, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the Lord, he has forsaken you.’”

He’s saying, “If you’ll honor me and let your love for me overflow to others, I’ll bless you and show you myself and you’ll prosper in the land and you’ll experience the kind of abundant life you were always supposed to have.” But does Israel obey? No. Because they don’t have the power to obey the first commandment. Have no other Gods before me. **HOOOOME!**

Have no other God’s before me, means have no other God’s alongside me. Coming out of a polytheistic context in Egypt—God’s in sky, land, depths. Fourth commandment said he made heavens earth and sea. You may not add me to your pantheon of gods. I will not be one among many or the first. I will be the only God you serve. No sun God, fertility Gods, I will dwell unrivaled in your heart. And it’s their failure to keep this commandment that sets them up for failure.

And without that, they can't keep ANY of the commandments. We mentioned earlier a 4 and 6 structure, but scholars point out that there's also a 1 and 9 structure. **1:9 Graphic** That is, without keeping one, you can't keep any of the rest of them. Jesus says the same thing when he summarizes the law.

You can't break any of the commandments without also breaking the first one. I covet because I need people's approval alongside God's. I lie because God plus my reputation is what defines me. I steal because God plus possessions is what makes me fulfilled. I have sex outside of marriage bc God plus physical pleasure makes life worth living. Israel is going to out things along side god and try to live for both—and it doesn't work. Doesn't honor God and keeps you from loving your neighbor like you're supposed to. If you don't keep #1 you don't keep 2-10.

So when it comes to loving our neighbors We love others best when we love God first. The those who love their friends best, love God first. Spouses who love each other best love God first. Parents who love their children best, love God first. You looking for someone to date and they tell you, "I put you above everything, and love you above anything else." That's going to be a rough marriage. Also, asking to be that is asking to be God! In asking someone to love you first, you're making impossible for them to love you at all. It's a supreme love for God—true love and affections from your heart—that anchors the whole thing and allows me to live like I'm designed to live in flourishing abundance and love for others.

Unfortunately Israel doesn't have that. **(Deut 29:4) 4 But to this day the Lord has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear."** Our sinful heart has other Gods, so we can't be who we should be. You see the law tells us what to do, but it doesn't give us the power to do it. John Blanchard said, "The law of God is like a mirror. It can reveal flaws but can't remove them." **Weight lifting team.** The law does not empower what it commands. We can't do it. This is why we feel like we're who we should be—even the most non-religious admit that. And there are two solutions that people tend toward to fix this brokenness.

Two responses to this. (1) Do Whatever I Want Rebel: Elsa, she's a slave to her nature "No right no wrong no rules for me, I'm free" But she's still a slave to her nature. (2) Do Everything I Should Obey: People who try to keep the law—veggie tales **"I looked back at the previous 10 years and realized I had spent 10 years trying to convince kids to behave Christianly without actually teaching them Christianity. And that was a pretty serious conviction. You can say, 'Hey kids, be more forgiving because the Bible says so,' or, 'Hey kids, be more kind because the Bible says so!' But that isn't Christianity, it's morality."** (Phil Visser) And so you can't be saved by being bad, but you can't be saved by being good either. You can't restore yourself by being bad or good! While you and I cannot keep the law and be who we're supposed to be, there was one who was.

The Fulfiller of the Law

Ratatouille. Linguini and Remy. This is a fitting analogy in two ways... The first is that He gets credit for someone else's work. We get credit for someone else's work. **(Rom. 8:3-4) For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin,[c] he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**

Another analogy we see here is that because Remy is in his hat, he's has the ability to cook like Remy. And because Remy is with him, he's able to cook the amazing food that he never could on his own.

Of course, when it comes to God, we need much more than instructions on what ingredients to put in the soup. We don't need God in our hat, we need him in our heart to cause us to speak like him and act like him and think like him. And that's exactly what we get...

Ezk 36:26-27. 26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. God unzips and puts himself inside of us. Phil. 2:12-13. Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure

Spirit empowers us to be who we're called to be. God puts himself inside of us. And causes us to obey him.

Person who is trying to keep the law.

Person who is breaking the law.

So to the person who is walking in sin, know that God commands devotion and obedience. Sin is a huge deal.

To the person who's trying but falling, know that Christ succeeded at every point where you've failed. And that the same power that raised Jesus from the dead lives inside of you. And He will keep helping you fight your sin. When God looks at you, he sees perfection. The Spirit, He will help you actually become the person God sees when he looks at you.