

Moses and the Moral Law Today

The Ten Commandments

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Well, as many of you know, our friend John MacArthur issued a call for pastors throughout North America to preach on biblical morality today. I have several words of introduction that I want to say about that. He did so to support Canadian pastors who are dealing with an increasingly hostile government. A recent law, Bill C-4, which you can find online, has outlawed what is known as conversion therapy. Now conversion therapy is a not necessarily Christian approach, and I'm sure there are multiple methods of it, it's designed to help people come out of homosexual or transgender lifestyles and there is legitimate concern that this new law would be used to silence biblical preaching and counsel that would call homosexuals and those identifying as transgender to repentance and obedience to Christ. The preamble to the Bill, which I won't bother quoting, in so many words calls the biblical position on sexuality and genders, it calls them explicitly a myth and therefore seeks to imprison people who would use biblical positions and biblical terminologies to bring counsel and hope to people who want out of that and to call those that are engaged in it to repentance.

It is a very serious issue and so as a result, many pastors today across the North American continent are in one manner or another preaching on biblical morality, according to the dictates of their own judgment and conscience. It is a show of unity with our Canadian brethren in defiance against laws that would threaten pulpits with imprisonment for merely speaking out on and teaching the biblical position on these matters. It is a privilege for me to stand with them today and we gladly do so. At the same time, I want to make several comments of perspective for us in the room today as we consider these matters, and it may bleed over into Tuesday's study as well for all that I have that I want to say.

First of all, it's very important for me to say this: I am very grateful for the symbolic nature of many pastors standing together across different states and different countries, standing together on this and to be able to speak as one, as it were, on a Sunday morning, but it's important for us to realize something, the depth of the problem here far transcends any one symbolic Sunday of a pulpit approach. Governments protect sexual immorality and perversion based on things that are prevailing cultural philosophies about truth and ultimate authority. I plan to speak on this at the Truth Matters Conference in May. This is far deeper and far more profound of a problem than simply exegeting and expositing a single text can address. There's a whole deep problem of what people believe about truth

itself, is there truth, is there absolute truth, is there a single moral standard that governs all people, in all places, at all time, that question is of one matter. The whole matter of creation and evolution is wrapped up into this because if you believe in creation, the biblical account of creation, you believe that God created man male and female and assigned to them not only their sexuality but the manner in which sexuality is to be presented. To reject biblical creation is to go away from that. To reject truth is to go away from that. And also the whole matter of whether there is a transcendent moral law that applies to all people, all of these things are wrapped up into this. The Canadian Bill is the fruit of a lot of satanic thinking and satanic philosophy that has been imbibed for well over a century. There is not an easy solution to this problem and for the sake of our pulpit and for my perspective on this, is that only sustained, serious, biblical teaching over the course of years will counteract these kinds of things that have been raised up against the knowledge of God. So a one week show of solidarity is symbolically important but it is not enough to address the deeply rooted philosophies that support the prevailing, perverse, sexual ethic in our day and age. Biblical themes of authority, absolute truth, creation and the moral law must be taught over a long period of time to address this while we simultaneously pray that the Holy Spirit might be pleased to send a genuine revival upon unsaved men and to sweep them as he did in the past in American history.

So those matters are very important and that leads to a second matter, a second comment to set the context for today. Truth Community Church has been teaching on the 10 Commandments since last May with little breaks from now and then interspersed. I want you to understand that today's message is in the scheduled flow of our own pulpit. It is not a superficial reaction to current events or to a call from a trusted friend of ours. It is more than that. This is what we have been addressing for a long period of time. The content of today's message I scheduled weeks and weeks ago before John MacArthur issued his call and so it's important for you as the congregation of Truth Community Church to understand that this is in the flow, providentially this is in the flow of what had already been prepared for us to consider. This is not, we're not responding to what one call has been, this is the matter that has been occupying our corporate attention for a long period of time. Thirdly, our pulpit has long been outspoken on the matters of biblical morality. We did a five part series on homosexuality in 2015 after the United States Supreme Court authorized so-called homosexual marriage. We did a seven part series on transgenderism in 2019. Many of those messages have aired on our radio program and I have highlighted both series often on social media. This is a reflection of how complex these issues are, that they need to be addressed in that matter of depth.

So for my sake, I would be delighted if many pastors went beyond their message today to devote the time that is needed to instruct people deeply on these matters because Scripture speaks profoundly, it speaks broadly, it speaks deeply on all of these issues. And so for a government to come and try to silence that, it is an existential threat to Christian ministry that we must be prepared to respond to. Those things are all very very important and that's about all that I'm going to say about Canada and the nature of the call for today. I'm glad to support it and this message is in support of it, but there's another matter that you need to hear, you that are in this room, you that are hearing on the live stream, you that will hear it on subsequent media. My greater concern even beyond those

things that I've already expressed, my greater responsibility personally is for you in this room, for those that are actually hearing this message. The people in Ottawa are not going to hear this message in all likelihood but you will and so I need to address the people that are in front of me, not the people that are not. I need to speak to the people that are in the pews, not to the ones that are not because this congregation, this pulpit, is the stewardship that God has uniquely given to me and so I need to keep my eye on the ball that is in front of me and that is you, and I'm glad to be able to do that. And I just want to say, I'm very very convinced that several of you need to hear me say exactly what I'm about to say.

You have to decide how you are going to hear and receive and respond to this message, and consider it for yourself. Beloved, your heart is not right before God, your heart is not right before God if you come today only wanting to hear a political message that condemns a foreign government. That's not why we gather together here today. That spirit of cultural anger is unbiblical, as I will show from a text in just a moment, that spirit of cultural anger is not biblical and it does not promote your own sanctification, rather it tends toward a self-righteous spirit that says the problem is out there, the application for God's word is up north, the problem is for Ottawa to hear, and to somehow excuse yourself from the direct application of God's word to your own heart. Beloved, you must remember, you and I must remember that our first priority, our first concern vertically before God is always to make sure that our own hearts are in proper submission to the Lord, proper submission to the word of God, rather than projecting out, bypassing our own sense and responsibility of self-examination, to bypass that in order to project on a foreign government could not be any further from the right response to the word of God than anything else could be. To presume our own righteousness and to be self-satisfied with ourselves in light of the convicting work of the moral law of God for the sake of making accusations and simply to illustrate things from a foreign government, that's a complete travesty of what biblical preaching is supposed to be.

So this morning, you and I cannot bypass the question what does God's moral law mean for me? How would God have me to respond? You are not responsible for the Canadian government. You are responsible before God and you will be held accountable by God for your own personal response to the law of God. And so we want to keep that very clearly in mind as we consider these things here this morning. What we do today is we self-consciously, what you and I are doing here today, we are self-consciously adopting the posture of the tax collector in Luke 18, and I want you to turn there with me. This is all still by way of introduction, and none of this diminishes our full-throated support of our Canadian brethren, we just need to keep things in our proper balance here this morning.

Luke 18:9-14. Jesus telling a parable and addressing it to religious leaders and convicting them of their self-righteousness and their self-satisfied spirit. Luke 18:9,

9 ... He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: 10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax

collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' 13 But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' 14 I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Beloved, you and I are the sinners this morning that need to be instructed from the word of God. What I say today, yes, it applies to world leaders, it applies to foreign governments, and they will all be held accountable by God for their actions in the leadership role that God sovereignly gave to them. They will be held accountable for it but, beloved, they are not the audience in the room today. You are. This is a second person message today, what I mean by that is that we are approaching this from the standpoint of you. Second person and first person, you and I, and what God's word has to say to us today. This is not a third person message about them out there, up there. We must keep that clear. If we have the perspective of Scripture and we apply it to our own hearts, we will have the proper perspective to view things at a political worldwide level, but there is so much political love and love for politics and love for condemnation of others that we have to avoid, we have to recognize and set aside lest we find ourselves classed with the Pharisee and not with the tax collector. I want to be on the side of the tax collector here. "Lord, I'm the sinner that needs grace," rather than saying, "Lord, I thank You that I'm not like them." And that must be clear in your mind if you are to get any benefit from God's word and avoid the discipline of God in your own life.

So with those things set forth in a way that I trust is clear, I invite you to turn to the book of Exodus 20 as we return to our consideration of the 10 Commandments today. For those of you that are just joining us, that are visiting, haven't been with us, as I said, we've been preaching through the 10 Commandments for a number of months now. We have finished the first five commandments and thus have five more to go, but it's been a few weeks since we've been in it and so I had planned this message to reengage our minds before we go on to the sixth commandment; I planned this message for us to recondition us and to help us reenter into the spirit of the 10 Commandments and I want to read them all today to help reset the context for us for the weeks to come.

Exodus 20, beginning in verse 1, and for this one time out of respect for God's law, I'd ask you to stand with me as we read the law of God together. In Exodus 20:1 it says,

1 Then 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. 3 You shall have no other gods before Me. 4 You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. 5 You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth

generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. 7 You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain. 8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy. 12 Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you. 13 You shall not murder. 14 You shall not commit adultery. 15 You shall not steal. 16 You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. 17 You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

Please be seated.

That relatively brief text that I read is sufficient to convict all men, of all time, of their pervasive guilt before God. Romans 3 says that what the law says, it applies to all of the world, that all of the world may be accountable and all of the world would fall silent before God in light of their guilt before him. And the purpose of the law, one among many, is that this moral law brings to man the knowledge of his sin. It's like a man with a very dirty face who cannot see his face on his own, he needs a mirror to hold it up and to see the defects and the dirt and the grime that covers his face in order for him to be able to see it and to understand it. He needs a mirror to reflect back who he is, to reflect back who his face is. Well, the 10 Commandments function like that in a moral sense to all of mankind. It reflects back to us our sinfulness. It shows us and reveals to us the knowledge of our sin. It is a universal law that has always been in effect. No government can legislate God's moral law out of existence, and no one of us can evade the fact that it reveals our sin to us.

One of the reasons that it's necessary, in my judgment, to teach at a slow pace through the 10 Commandments is that we are all biased in our own favor. We all tend to think that we are pretty good people. We don't really enter into the spirit of the tax collector, we don't really deeply mourn over our sin, certainly left to our own devices, certainly apart from the word of God, our proud sinful hearts flatter us into thinking that we are more righteous than we actually are. Your heart is your own worst enemy because it tells you how good you are, or it excuses your sin, and the law of God cuts through that, instructs the conscience so that you are properly able to make a right judgment about yourself, and when we understand the law of God, we realize that we all have sinned and fall short of his glory. The law of God teaches us that there is no one righteous, not even one. The law of God teaches us that we have all turned aside, that we've all turned away. In the

language of Romans 3, it says that there is none who seeks for God, all have turned aside, together they have become useless, there is none who does good, there is not even one.

We need the word of God to tell us that and not simply in a general way but in a specific way that enables us to understand point by point as you go through the moral law to understand the many ways that you have violated the holiness of God. Scripture does not congratulate man on his goodness, it convicts him of his badness and warns him of the consequences and simultaneously holds Christ before him as the one and only place where forgiveness can be found. And during this brief time of life that the Lord has given us, we have a window of opportunity to acknowledge our guilt before God, to cry out to Christ for mercy, to cry out to Christ for forgiveness, but if we squander that opportunity that is given to us, judgment will be sealed at the moment of our death, we will stand before God in judgment and be cast into eternal judgment and into hell as the just punishment for being a violator of the eternal law of the eternal God. These are matters of great import and significance. This is what Scripture teaches us to do and I realize that it's not an entertaining message but, beloved, it's the truth. It's the truth that we all need to come to grips with.

Now let me just make a few comments, generally speaking, about the moral law. We've all broken it. We've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and so listen to me carefully. This is covering ground that we've covered in the past but it's good for us to review it. God's law is not given to us so that we can obey it and by our obedience earn eternal life or merit eternal life. We cannot obey our way into forgiveness. That window has already been shattered. A rock has already been thrown through that window and we cannot earn forgiveness through obedience to the moral law. The law is given to expose our sin, not to give us a path of redemption. We must trust the person and work of Christ instead.

Now along with that, for those whom Christ has saved, for those of us that are in Christ, I want to emphasize this as well, that the moral law, for those of us that are in Christ, it does not threaten our eternal punishment anymore. Christ paid for our punishment at the cross. If we are in Christ, our debt of sin has been paid in full. It is finished. Christ has covered us for it so that the moral law does not threaten us in that way, it is not given to us as an instrument of obedience to earn eternal life, and for those that are in Christ – that's so important – for those of us that are in Christ, the moral law does not threaten us with eternal condemnation. Scripture is abundantly clear on that. Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." The cross is the place where our sin was paid for, where Christ endured the curse on our behalf. Christ took the condemnation on himself and therefore when we are in Christ and the debt has been paid in Christ, then we are free from that threat of eternal condemnation. We can't obey it to earn eternal life, we're no longer threatened by its threatenings of eternal judgment if we are in Christ.

Now that leaves a question, then, that is more the subject matter of today's message: how then does the moral law apply to Christians? What are we to think about the moral law in our relationship to it as believers in Christ? Does the fact that it no longer condemns us

mean that we have no responsibility to it? Does the fact that we can't obey it in order to earn eternal life mean obedience is not important? Those are very significant questions and it's very easy, especially for those that have drifted into the classic dispensationalist teaching or those that have drifted into hyper-dispensational teaching, to think that the moral law has nothing to say to Christians at all. That's not true. That's very bad theology because the moral law is enduring, as I'm going to show you. The moral law teaches us in the first table, the first four commandments, it teaches us how to love God, and the second table beginning with, "Honor your father and mother," it teaches us how to love our fellow man. And so there is an enduring enforceability, there is an enduring application, there is an enduring authority that the moral law has over Christians today.

Now I'm just going to repeat myself here one final time just to make sure that to the best of my ability I'm not misunderstood. We do not obey God's moral law to earn salvation and we have been saved from its condemnation. That said, the moral law applies to you as a Christian today with different purposes than that. It has other purposes that you are to hear and to heed. The moral law teaches us what the will of God is. It shows us our sin. It shows us with increasing clarity our need for Christ. The moral law shows us, it instructs us in what the will of God is for us now that we are in the family of God.

And that very important statement and principle needs to be explained from Scripture, not merely asserted. How do we know that the moral law applies to Christians in that way today, that Christians are responsible to obey the moral law, to study and learn it and apply it? How do we know that the moral law still has authority in our lives today? Well, you can see it in the teaching of the Old Testament, you can see it in the teaching of Jesus, and you can see it in the teaching of the apostles. In other words, there is a comprehensive sweep from Genesis to Revelation in the teaching of Scripture that leads us to that conclusion, and that's what I want to try to help you understand and see here this morning, and if we can get through it all today, we will.

First of all, let's consider the teaching of the Old Testament. The teaching of the Old Testament. Now when God gave the moral law through Moses to Israel in Exodus 20, it is important for you to realize that this was not a new moral code that he was giving. The moral law had already been written on Adam's heart at the very start of creation. God wrote his morality on Adam's heart and it did not take Exodus 20 in order to establish that, it had already been established in the heart of men before the time of Moses.

We can see this in many ways and I'm just going to quickly give you some illustrations here without turning to them that we can consider from the book of Genesis. For example, when Cain killed his brother Abel, he knew it was wrong in Genesis 4:7 and 8. He knew it was wrong and he rebelled against God and said, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Cain knew that murder was wrong without the benefit of Exodus 20.

In Genesis 12, Abram lied to Pharaoh about his wife Sarah. When God struck the king down, the king complained to Abraham about the deception. He said, "You deceived me!" And what he's saying and what he is appealing to there is, "Your deception of me was wrong." That was before Exodus 20:16 said that, "You shall not bear false witness to

your neighbor." He complained about the deception because it was established in the heart that this deception was wrong.

Let me give you another example. Joseph's brothers, as you will recall, sold him into slavery. His brothers sold Joseph into slavery. What did they do? They hid that fact from their father Jacob. They slayed an animal, they dipped Joseph's coat in the blood, they showed it to Jacob and made him think that an animal had killed Joseph. Why the deception? They practiced the deception because they knew it was wrong. They knew what they had done was wrong and that's why they had to cover it up. In the same way that you try to cover up the wrongs that you do, your act of covering it, of hiding it, is an expression of the fact that you know that what you've done is wrong even if you try to evade biblical conviction over the fact.

Later on, their brothers feared retribution from Joseph, this is in Genesis 37 is where you can find the story about selling him into slavery. In Genesis 50 after there had been a measure of reconciliation and they were in Joseph's presence, they feared retribution from Joseph. They were afraid that he would pay them back and they pleaded for forgiveness. Why did they ask for forgiveness from their brother Joseph? It's because they knew that they had wronged him and they had wronged him centuries before God gave the law through Moses. This is very very significant to understand. Beloved, it shows that those men knew about sin and they understood sin in their own heart before God gave the law to Moses.

So what does that mean? We're building a case here like an attorney builds a case before a jury. Beloved, what these things mean is this: it did not become a sin to lie because God gave the 10 Commandments to Moses, it was always a sin, it was always wrong. It did not become a sin to murder because God said, "You shall not murder," in Exodus 20, it was always sinful, it was always wrong as shown by the way that the patriarchs responded to these things in the book of Genesis. So what that tells us is this, is that whatever else the law of God is doing in Exodus 20, it is expressing a universal moral code that existed before it was put down in writing. That moral code existed beforehand.

You can see the same point from a different angle if you'll turn to the book of Leviticus 18. This is very very compelling in my judgment, very very compelling for us to consider. Leviticus 18 where there is an extended moral code given to expand upon the law of Moses given in Exodus 20, and so for example just to pick one verse kind of plucking it out of its content rather than going through all of the perversity that's addressed in Leviticus 18, in Leviticus 18:22 it says,

22 You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination.

And that is one example of a surrounding moral code against incest and other forms of sexual perversion that is being described in the book of Leviticus there in chapter 18.

Now with that said, look at what it says in verse 24. Leviticus 18:24-27. This is a critical critical text on what we are discussing here this morning. God tells the nation Israel,

24 'Do not defile yourselves by any of these things; for by all these the nations which I am casting out before you have become defiled. 25 For the land has become defiled, therefore I have brought its punishment upon it, so the land has spewed out its inhabitants. 26 But as for you, you are to keep My statutes and My judgments and shall not do any of these abominations, neither the native, nor the alien who sojourns among you 27 (for the men of the land who have been before you have done all these abominations, and the land has become defiled);

What is the significance of that? It means that these nations that predated Moses who had no benefit of the law of God given through Moses, God is judging them. God is judging them for their perversions which they conducted with no knowledge of the written law of God and that they did before the law of God was given to Moses. They were guilty of violating the moral law so much so that God judged them and brought judgment upon them through the armies of Israel and they lost their land, they lost their lives because they were guilty, and they were guilty of these abominations even apart from the written law of God. They had defiled themselves apart from the written law. What does that mean? What is the significance of that for what we believe about the moral law? It means that this moral law has always been in effect even before it was put down in writing. God who is a righteous judge, God who is holy in all that he does, judges these nations, judges them for sin because the law was in effect and they knew it in their hearts.

Now one of the things, one of the objections that is often raised against the gospel of Jesus Christ, you know, as we say that there is salvation in no one else, you can only be saved in Christ, Jesus is the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father but through him, a common but I don't mean this in a pejorative sense, a common but a biblically ignorant objection to that in the hearts of those who do not want to confess sin, who do not want to submit to Christ, a diversionary tactic, you might say, is, "Well, what about those who have never heard about Christ? How can they be judged if they have not heard about Christ? How is that fair? How is that righteous?" And, you know, the biblically illiterate ones think that they have shown the injustice of God and the injustice of the gospel with their objection.

Well, look over at the book of Romans chapter 2, which is a direct, kind of jumping ahead to the New Testament part of this but that's all right, it is a direct answer to that question. Scripture is very clear about this. It says in Romans 2 as Paul is convicting all of the world of its sin, Jews and Gentiles alike, Paul addresses this objection directly, clearly and definitively under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and he says in Romans 2:12,

12 ... all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law;

13 for it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.

Now look at what he says in verse 14. He says,

14 ... when Gentiles who do not have the Law

They haven't heard the written law but nevertheless their lives do something, they do something, what is it? They.

do instinctively the things of the Law,

They don't have the written law but they do the things of the law instinctively out of their own understanding and that becomes a law to themselves, verse 15,

15 in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, 16 on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

What this means is that God wrote his moral law on humanity in a way that is undeniable, and for those that do not have the benefit of written revelation, the written law of God, they still have a law that they are accountable to because they understand in their heart, they understand in their conscience the difference between right and wrong and God will judge them for breaking the law that is written on their own heart. They are guilty apart from the gospel, they are guilty apart from the written law of God, they are guilty because God put his law in their heart and they don't even keep that. So God will judge them in his great omniscience, he will judge them according to what they knew to be true, what they know to be true is enough to convict them of guilt in a way that leaves them utterly without excuse.

So they are not excused because they did not hear the gospel, they are guilty because of what they violated in their own heart and, beloved, apart from the grace of God in someone bringing you the gospel of Jesus Christ, every one of us would be in that exact same position. If God has been gracious to us in bringing the gospel to us and the Spirit working in our hearts to bring us to Christ, then we have cause to magnify his grace to us, but the fact that some do not hear is not a violation of grace, it is simply an upholding of justice. They are still guilty. The nations that were driven out by Israel were guilty because the moral law was written on their hearts and there is no avoiding that. God judged them based on what they already knew to be true.

So, then, why did God give the law in Exodus 20 if it's already written in the human heart? Why did God put it in writing if it's already written there? Well, believe it or not, beloved, the fact that God made the law, put it in writing, was an act of grace. It was an act of blessing because what God did when he wrote out the moral law in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 and other places, what God was this, he made explicit the moral law that

was written on Adam's heart and – watch this, this is really important – he did not leave the transmission of the law, he did not leave the instruction of the law to merely be passed from generation to generation, from man to man, he didn't leave that to oral transmission by confused sinful hearts. What he did was he put it in writing so that it was clear, it was objective, and it was something that was additional outside of the heart so that there was a perfect, clear, inspired standard that could always pierce through the clutter of confusion that is brought when sinful men teach sinful men. He graciously gave clarity by putting it into written form, and what Exodus 20 does in its compact brilliance, is it graciously gives clarity to what was written in the law, and as the law is taught line upon line, precept upon precept, as Scripture is compared with Scripture and we see what God says, when the Spirit of God is at work through the teaching of his word and working in the hearts of those who hear, it is making clear and bringing greater clarity to the moral law that is written on the sinful heart. It sets it, as it were literally in Moses' day, it set it in stone where it could not be changed, altered, or any question left about it.

What does that mean for us today? What's the significance of that for the topic at hand? Beloved, this means that the moral law is universal. It is always in effect. It was in effect before Moses. It is in effect through the law given to Moses. It is in effect in the hearts of Gentiles today who have not even heard the law. God's law is clear and God's moral law is valid, it is authoritative for all men at all times, for unbelievers convicting them and showing their guilt and condemning them, for believers in Christ today showing us and instructing us on the will of God. If we are to love God and love man, the 10 Commandments, the moral law give us clarity and direction on the specifics of how that is to be done. It is foolish for people to think they know the will of God and to neglect the 10 Commandments, to think that we can love God apart from specific instruction from God and saying, "This is how I want you to love me. This is how your love will take effect." And by churches neglecting the moral law, neglecting the 10 Commandments, we have taught people to think that they are loving God simply by whatever emotions or feelings are going through their heart at any given time. Well, God has told us how to love him, God has told us how to love men, and he has made his will known for us as the path forward by which we may please him.

So from the Old Testament we see that the moral law has always been in effect. Exodus 20 gave clarity to it, put it in writing so that it could be taught rightly to future generations. The moral law applied to non-Jews and Jews alike and it's applying today to those that have never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is weighty. This is significant. And for us today here in this room, it means, we need to take it from those general concepts and bring it down to personal reality. This means that the law of God, this means that what Exodus 20 says applies to you personally and individually. The way God wants you to worship him, the way that God wants you to love man is expressed in the 10 Commandments and any kind of remotely careful consideration of any individual commandment shows that we all fall short of it. We're all guilty. We're all convicted by every single one of the commandments which I think has been made clear as we've considered the first five already. We are lost apart from Christ. There is nothing good in us in the presence of God, and that conviction drives us to Christ. This is the conviction

that makes a man cry out like the tax collector did, "O God, I see how exceedingly broad Your commandment is. I am convicted at every point. God, be merciful to me, the sinner because I have broken Your law and I can't fix it!" That's the cry of the heart that understands the law of God and the Christian heart looks at Christ and says, "Ah, there is the only One who could deliver me from my awful predicament. Christ crucified for my sins, Christ taking the judgment of God, Christ in His righteous perfect life fulfilling the law of God on my behalf."

Look at Galatians 3 and we'll close with this for this morning and we'll finish the rest of this on Tuesday. Galatians 3:22,

22 ... the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. 23 But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed.

The law convicted us as guilty transgressors and there was nothing that we could do. We were convicted and we needed the gospel of salvation by faith in Christ to come to us, and therefore in verse 24,

24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.

So that we may be delivered from condemnation by faith in Jesus Christ, and once we are delivered, we no longer fear the law's condemnation, it no longer holds us captive in that sense, but as we're seeing today and on Tuesday evening, we find that the law instructs us and that Jesus Christ and his apostles all used the law of God to authoritatively instruct Christians in the nature of how they were to please God with their lives.

So let's wrap all of this up and to just come back to the opening theme of the day. When governments try to annul the law of God by their own decrees, there's a Latin term for that, it is void ab initio which means that it is invalid from the very beginning. Government does not have the authority to change the moral law of God, and government does not have the authority, does not have legitimate authority to penalize the preachers and the Christians who proclaim that law and proclaim the gospel of Christ. Government has no authority to do that. It is invalid and therefore must be disobeyed because we must obey God and not man. So whatever government and whatever royal affirmation is given by Queen Elizabeth from Britain of the Canadian laws, I don't know how all of that works, but the Queen herself does not have authority to affirm a law that denies the word of God, that seeks to overturn the moral law of God. It's invalid on its face. There's no validity to it and any imprisonment as they threaten five years of punishment for those who violate it, there may be pastors that go to jail over this in Canada, the imprisonment will be an unjust persecution which will result in the blessing of those faithful ones who endure the punishment for the sake of fidelity to Christ, Matthew 5:10-12, "Blessed are you when you're persecuted."

But for us today, we look at that, we affirm that, we support the biblical view of these things, and yet for us today in the room, we realize, "God, whatever else may be said about Canada and their government and their laws, the truth of the matter is I'm a sinner apart from Christ. I need redemption. I'm the sinner who needs justification." And having been saved, having been justified, then we gladly go to the law of God to find instruction for the way that God would have us obey his will in the remaining time that he gives us here on earth.

I hope you'll be here on Tuesday for us to finish this consideration.

Let's pray.

Gracious God, we pray that You would grant great discernment to Christian leaders in the nation of Canada as they respond to this law, this invalid law, this wicked law that would seek to silence them on matters of biblical morality. Grant them Your courage and Your protection in the days to come, and we pray that there might be an overturning of the law, and if not an overturning, that the evident injustice of it all would be used by Your Spirit to bring a sweeping revival, that You would turn against the government, its own law, in a way that brings a sweeping revival to people who would recognize the injustice of it. Save many. Turn this, Father, to good, we pray. And for our hearts, Father, I pray for every unconverted person in this room that is known by name by You. We pray, Father, that You would open their hearts and minds to see the truth of the condemnation of the law in a way that would be that which instructs them to come to faith in Christ. We earnestly pray for Your mercy upon them and that Your Spirit would impart new life to them, Father, where before sin and death had prevailed. For the rest of us that are in Christ, Father, give us grace to be faithful, give us grace to proclaim the truth in the midst of a hostile world, but give us grace to grow in our own sanctification and our obedience to Your revealed word and Your revealed will in Your word. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

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