

02 - Introduction to the 10 Commandments Part 2- 2014-02-02

Call to Worship: Psalm 119:18

Scripture Reading: Colossians 1:3-14

Sermon: Introduction to the Ten Commandments - Part 2 Exodus 20:1-2

Benediction: Philippians 3:8-9

Exodus 20:1-2 And 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 bondage.

INTRODUCTION

Recall from last week the observations we made from 1 John 5:3-5

1. A study of the Ten Commandments is a study of love for God
2. A study of the Ten Commandments is a study of the new birth
3. A study of the Ten Commandments is a study of faith in Christ

Today we have a second introductory sermon, intended to put us in the right mind regarding a study of God's Ten Commandments.

How I am putting these things to you today are adapted to you, this congregation, by me, a pastor in this church. But what I say is intended to be materially the same as what the English-speaking reformed pastors have been saying for the past 400 years. I have been reading, and am drawing on several classic works on the Ten Commandments from the 17th century:

- The Westminster Larger Catechism
- Thomas Watson, English non-conformist pastor *The Ten Commandments*
- Ezekiel Hopkins, Irish conformist bishop *Expositions of the Ten Commandments*
- James Durham, Scottish covenanter pastor *The Law Unsealed, a Practical Exposition of the Ten Commandments*

Additionally, I have been studying off and on for the past eight years or so the sermons on the Ten Commandments given by 21st century Reformed Baptist pastors. The ones from whom I have received the most help are:

- Arden Hodgins in La Mirada, CA
- Mark Chanski in Harbor, MI
- Jarrett Downs in Mansfield, TX

I find that their expositions are perfectly in keeping with the classic books on the Ten Commandments that I mentioned a moment ago.

I mention this so you can understand some things about these sermons:

1. if you detect any moments of genius in anything I say to you during this study of the

Ten Commandments, you are hearing the genius of the Word of God itself, or the wisdom God has granted to the whole English-speaking reformed church, not any formulations original to me.

2. if this basic approach to the Ten Commandments doesn't seem right to you, there may be

BODY

Read the text: Exodus 20:1-2

Let us see two things:

I. God helps us understand the Ten Commandments by how He gave them

II. God helps us obey the Ten Commandments by how He identified Himself

I. God helps us understand the Ten Commandments by how He gave them (1)

We read here that God Himself spoke all these words

We read also in Exodus and Deuteronomy that God Himself wrote all these words in stone

Deuteronomy 4:12-13 And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire.

You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; you only heard a voice. (13)

So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone.

This helps us understand some things about the Ten Commandments

A. All sin is addressed in these Ten Commandments

If God spoke these Ten Commandments, then we must not imagine that only these eight sins are forbidden and these two duties enjoined upon us.

1. Each commandment is the head of a category

a. in the negative commandments, the most heinous example of that kind of sin is mentioned to represent all sins in that category

b. in the affirmative commandments, the most basic, the most obvious duty is mentioned to represent all requirements in that category

2. Whether the commandment is in the affirmative or the negative, the whole scope of righteousness in that category is commanded

3. Not outward sin only, but inward sin is prohibited; not outward obedience, but inward also is required

B. The Ten Commandments are not exclusive to the Old Covenant with Israel, but are universal

1. this is not the only way we know, but it is one way that truth is communicated to us

a. also we see the same morality before this code was given

Genesis 39:7-9 And it came to pass after these things that his

master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me." (8) But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. (9) There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

b. also we see the Ten Commandments referenced in the New Covenant church

Ephesians 6:1-3 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. (2) "HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER," which is the first commandment with promise: (3) "THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU AND YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH."

c. also we see the Ten Commandments preached to the gentiles

Acts 17:29-31 "Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. (30) Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, (31) because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

2. so, God speaking these Ten Commandments, helps us understand that they are not exclusive the the Old Covenant with Israel, but are universal

C. the Ten Commandments are not ceremonial or judicial law, but moral law

1. not ceremonial
2. not judicial
3. but moral

D. The Ten Commandments are the definitive statement of God's moral law

1. In the bible, the moral law of God is in some places further condensed or summarized

a. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength

b. You shall love your neighbor as yourself

c. Yet without the Ten Commandments, these the great commandment and the other like it are not the definitive statement of God's moral law for man

2. In the bible, the moral law of God is in many, many places further expounded and applied

3. Yet it is in this form, The Ten Commandments, that God spoke His moral law

with his own voice and wrote it in stone with His own finger

E. The Ten Commandments are superior to any man-made moral code

1. Ten Commandments minus
2. Ten Commandments plus
3. Some other code

He. The rest of the bible, which is the Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit of God, is the best and the authoritative exposition of the Ten Commandments

II. God helps us obey the Ten Commandments by how He identified Himself (2)

A. He identified Himself as your God

1. He is God who created you
 - a. He has the wisdom to know what our commands should be
 - b. He has the right
 - c. He has the power to enforce
 - d. obey the Lord, then, frail creature of dust, in holy fear of God who created you
2. He is YAHWEH, your redeemer, the one who brought you out of slavery
He is not only God, He is your God; how?
 - a. in the case of Israel, think of their slavery
 - b. in your case, think of your slavery
 - c. The law, then, is not to be thought of as a means for salvation.
 - d. obey the Lord, then, in love and thankfulness

CONCLUSION

Set your mind to understand the Ten Commandments according to how the Lord spoke them Himself directly and wrote them in stone Himself directly

Set your heart to obedience to the Ten Commandments in holy fear of YAHWEH your God, and in loving thankfulness for how He, through Jesus Christ, has redeemed you from slavery.

Calvin:

to devote the people to Himself
to claim the authority He deserves
He prepares their minds for obedience

- I. God teaches us that He Himself spoke the Ten Commandments
the other scriptures were written by a human instrument; they are just as true, just as reliable, just as much the word of God; but these Ten Commandments God spoke Himself, directly to men, in order to show their distinctiveness
- II. God teaches us what we need to understand about Him as we study these Ten Commandments that He Himself spoke
 - A. The One who spoke the Ten Commandments is Jehovah
 - B. The One who spoke the Ten Commandments deals personally with His people
 - C. The One who spoke the Ten Commandments is the Redeemer

- I. The Ten Commandments Were Spoken By God Himself
 - A. there is a distinction between these words and human words
 - B. there is a distinction between these words and other biblical words

II. All of the Ten Commandments Were Spoken By God Himself

III. The Ten Commandments Were Spoken By Jehovah

IV. The Ten Commandments Were Spoken By Your God

V. The Ten Commandments Were Spoken By the Redeemer

note that they came out with great riches, gained without violence

Chanski

-God is God; you are not God.

PAUL ON THE LAW:

Romans 3:31 Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

Romans 7:12 Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

JAMES ON THE LAW:

James 2:8-11 If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF," you do well; (9) but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. (10) For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. (11) For He who said, "DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," also said, "DO NOT MURDER." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

JOHN ON KEEPING COMMANDMENTS:

1 John 2:3-4 Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. (4) He

who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

JESUS HIMSELF ON THE LAW:

Matthew 5:17-19 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. (18) For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. (19) Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

The correct terms are "affirmative" and "negative," not "positive" and "negative," since "positive" in this context means something else.

Psalms 119:96 I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad.

Romans 7:12-14 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. (13) Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. (14) For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

Ephesians 4:28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

Larger Catechism:

Q. 99. What rules are to be observed for the right understanding of the Ten Commandments?

A. For the right understanding of the Ten Commandments, these rules are to be observed:

1. That the law is perfect, and bindeth every one to full conformity in the whole man unto the righteousness thereof, and unto entire obedience forever; so as to require the utmost perfection of every duty, and to forbid the least degree of every sin.
2. That it is spiritual, and so reacheth the understanding, will, affections, and all other powers of the soul; as well as words, works, and gestures.

3. That one and the same thing, in divers respects, is required or forbidden in several commandments.
4. That as, where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden; and, where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded: so, where a promise is annexed, the contrary threatening is included; and, where a threatening is annexed, the contrary promise is included.
5. That what God forbids, is at no time to be done; what he commands, is always our duty; and yet every particular duty is not to be done at all times.
6. That under one sin or duty, all of the same kind are forbidden or commanded; together with all the causes, means, occasions, and appearances thereof, and provocations thereunto.
7. That what is forbidden or commanded to ourselves, we are bound, according to our places, to endeavor that it may be avoided or performed by others, according to the duty of their places.
8. That in what is commanded to others, we are bound, according to our places and callings, to be helpful to them; and to take heed of partaking with others in what is forbidden them.

Downs:

You see Christ obeying these commandments perfectly, and on your behalf!

James Durham

<http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015064337259;view=1up;seq=5>

Motives in writing lectures on the TC

1. the excellency of this scripture
2. the usefulness of this scripture
3. the great ignorance, that is amongst not a few, of the meaning of this useful and excellent scripture

Conclusions we take for granted

1. this law (as 'tis moral) doth tye even christians and believers now, as well as of old
 Jesus: Matthew 5;17
 Paul: Romans 3:31
2. though this law ly on christians, yet it is not laid on them as a covenant of works, or that by which they are to seek or expect justification; no, but, on the contrary, to overturn self-righteousness; this was never the Lord's intent in covenanting thus with his people, that they should expect righteousness and life by the adjoin'd law, but only that it should be useful in the hand of grace to make the former covenant with Abraham effectual. So then, tho' we be bound to obey the law, we are not to seek righteousness or life by the duties therein enjoined.
3. both ministers in preaching, and people in practicing this law, would carry with subordination to Christ; and that the duties called for her are to be performed as part of the covenant of grace
 -Duties by the first covenant are to abide their trial upon the account of their own worth, and the inherent perfection that is in them, and accordingly will be accepted or rejected, as they are conform or disconform to the perfect Rule of God's law; but, by the second covenant, the acceptance of our performances, prayers, praises, are founded on Christ's righteousness, and God's mercy in him, in whom only they are sweet-smelling sacrifices,

and accepted as our persons are; for he hath made us to be accepted, as to both, only in the beloved Ephesians 1:4

-the great motive of our obedience in the covenant of grace . . . is love and gratitude, and that not simply to God as Creator, but as Redeemer

-by him we are freed from the law as a covenant, so that believers life depends not on the promises annexed to the law, nor are they in danger by the threatenings adjoined to it

-distinguish betwixt the moral, and ceremonial, and judicial law.

1. the first concerns manners, and the right ordering of a godly conversation; and, because these things are of perpetual equity and rectitude, the obligation of this law, as to that, is perpetual; and therefore, in the expounding of it, these two terms, *moral* and *perpetual authority*, are all one, and to be taken so.

2. the judicial law is for regulating outward society, and for government, and doth generally (excepting what was peculiar to the people of Israel) agree with the moral law; this, as given to them, is not perpetual, their policy being at an end.

3. the ceremonial law is in ceremonies, types, and shadows, pointing at a Saviour to come; this is also abrogate, the substance being come. But there is this difference, that the judicial law is but *mortua*, dead; and may, where 'tis thought fit, with the foregoing caution, be used under the new testament; but the ceremonial law is *mortifera*, deadly, and cannot, without falling from grace, Galatians 5:2,4, be revived.

-We we speak of things moral, we are to distinguish between things *naturally moral*, that is, such (as love to God and our neighbour, and such like) which have an innate rectitude and holiness in them, which, cannot e separate from them; and things *positively moral*, that have their obligation by a special, positive, superadded sanction; so that their rectitude flows not from the nature of the things themselves, as in the former.

4. the general scope is perfect and absolute holiness, even as he is holy (2 Cor 7:1; 1 Peter 1:15, 16)

5. the law is spiritual (Rom 7:14) adn that not only outward obedience to such duties, or outward abstinence from such sinful acts, is called for, but the law, ahving a spiritual meaningt, calls for spiritual service, and that in these three:

-as it requires spiritual duties, such as faith, fear, love to God, and to others, right habits, as well as right affections, and outward actions.

-in that the obligation thereof reaches to the spirit, and very inwards of the heart, affections, and thoughts; the love it requires, is love with all the soul, heart, and mind

-in respect of the manner; it requires, as to all outward duties, that they be done to a spiritual end, from a spiritual principle, and in a spiritual way, opposite to the carnal way

6. beside the duty expressed, there is more implied in the affirmative command; and beside the sin pitched on, there is more forbidden in the negative precepts, even all duties and sins of these kinds, in whatsoever degree

-where great sins are forbidden, all the lesser of tht sort are forbidden also

7. whatever duty lies upon others, we are commanded in our places to further them in it; whatever sin is discharged in ourselves, we are discharged any manner of way to partake in the same with others

8. the breach of one commandment virtually breaks all
9. one thing may in divers respects be commanded or forbidden in many, yea, in all the commandments
10. the law is holy, just, and good; therefore the least motion against it, or discontentment with it, is sin Romans 7:12
 - there is nothing so little, but it ought to be ruled by this word
 - it obliges the whole man
 - the least disconformity in habit or act is a transgression

Five key scriptures for understanding the ten commandments

1. Psalm 119:96
2. Romans 7:14
3. Romans 7:12
4. 1 Timothy 1:5
5. 1 Timothy 1:8

Take help from Christ's sermons, and the prophets, to understand this scripture; for they are the only canonical, and therefore the best commentary upo the commandments; yet ye would not despise the light holden forth in human writings, such as the larger catechism, which is very full as to this, and if conscionably improved, will prove exceeding profitable for your instruction.

Ezekiel Hopkins:

The time of the delivery of the Ten Commandments

The reason

The manner

Are they abrogated?

General rules for rightly understanding them

1. All those precepts which are dispersed in the holy Scriptures, and which concern the regulating of our lives and actions, although not found expressly mentioned in the Decalogue, may yet very aptly be reduced under one of these ten commands.
2. the affirmative commands include the prohibition of the contrary sin; and the negative commands include the injunction of the contrary duty.
3. every negative command binds always, and to every moment of time; but the affirmative precepts, though they bind always, yet they do not bind to every moment
4. the same precept which forbids the eternal and outward acts of sin, forbids likewise the inward desires and motions of sin in the heart; and the same precept which requires the external acts of duty, requires likewise those holy affections of the soul that are suitable thereunto.
5. the command not only forbids the sin that is expressly mentioned, but all occasions and inducements leading to that sin
6. the commands of the first table are not to be kept for the sake of the second; but the commands of the second are to be kept for the sake of the first
7. the commands of the first table, so far forth as they are purely moral, supersede our

obedience to the commands of the second table, when they are not both consistent
8. whereas, in the first table, there is one command partly moral and natural, partly positive and instituted, and that is our observation of the Sabbath, we may observe that our obligation to the duties of the second table often supersedes our obedience to that command of the first table

9. whatsoever is forbidden in any command, both all the signs and symptoms of it, and likewise all the effects and consequents of it, are forbidden in the same.

10. The connection between the commands is so close and intimate, and they are so linked together, that whosoever breaketh one of them is guilty of all.

Preface

all the arguments which are most prevalent and cogent are adapted to work upon one of these two passions . . . either our fear or our love, so God accommodates himself to our temper and proclaims, first, his authority, to beget fear: "I am the Lord thy God;" and then, secondly, his benefits and mercies to engage love: "The Lord thy God, that brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

Darest thou infringe his laws and violate his commands, who is so great and terrible a God that he can destroy thee by the very breath of his nostrils? Job 4:9

Hath God surrounded thee with blessings, and loaded thee every day with his benefits? Has thou received thy life, thy being from him; and so many comforts in which thou takest delight, and he allows thee so to do?

Canst thou wrong that God who hath been so kind and gracious unto thee, and is continually doing thee good?

this mercy here mentioned, of deliverance from Egypt and the house of bondage, is to be understood as well typically as literally.

Barcellos:

Three uses of the law

1. schoolmaster to Christ
2. protector of civil order; restraining effect on civil society
3. guide for the sanctification of believers; blueprint for expressing our love for Christ
-in reformed theological terms, this is antinomianism

"What is new is not true; what is true is not new."

Cairns

Positive law: It's right because I command it.

Moral law: I command it because it's right.

The law is spiritual

1. in its searching of the soul (like a light) Ephesians 5:12
2. every prohibition commands the complementary duty
3. every commandment is representative of a whole class of duties
4. every commandment includes all the means
 - not only the obvious, but everything that incites us
 - this brings our total life under divine statute
5. in the strictness of its standard: absolute perfection

Hodgins

Why study the 10 Commandments

1. it is a major part of God's word; it permeates it
2. it is a revelation of God Himself

8 rules for interpreting the 10 Commandments

1. All the abiding commands in scripture can be categorized under one or more of the ten.
2. Each of the ten has a negative and positive flipside
 - e.g. You shall hallow, shall reverence His name.
3. Every commandment extends to the heart, has a spiritual aspect
4. Under one action commanded or forbidden, all matters of the same nature are included
 - If there is a path that leads to murder, the first step down the path is forbidden.
 - the epitome or extreme is the category head
5. Although both tables of the law are never to be separated, the first is always to be viewed as primary
 - motive: obey the second table commands toward your neighbor, but unto the Lord
6. The commandments are so closely connected that to break one is to be guilty of breaking all
7. The commands forbid not only sins committed personally, but sins in which you are an accessory
 - children are to obey, but parents are not to provoke them to wrath
 - men are not to lust, but women are not to provoke them to lust
8. Included are right motive, right manner, and right end

Marvel at the obedience of Jesus Christ!

Three uses of the law of God

1. instructs - how to please God
 - Adam and Eve originally
 - continues to instruct after the fall of man
 - continues to instruct the Christian

2. inhibits - men's wickedness, society in general

3. impels

-and this is grace from God, to show sinners their sin

Barcellos on the regulative principle:

"Nothing more, nothing less, nothing else."

elements of worship; circumstances of worship