

## DESERT LESSONS

HOLINESS

Exodus 19:25 – 20:17

Pastor Brian Rayburn

May 1 – 2, 2020

## MESSAGE NOTES

We left off in our Desert Lessons series last week with the nation of Israel seeing God's clear provision in manna and quail. Since then they had complained about water and God delivered yet again. When the Amalekites attack in chapter 17 God again proves His faithfulness to His people and this morning we skip to chapter 20 where God will confront Moses on Mount Sinai and give him the 10 Commandments.

The covenant or contract cannot be removed from its context, this is a newly liberated people, the Hebrew is the same as redeemed, and the 10 Commandments or (10 words in Hebrew) mutually obligate this people to God and God to His people. If this redeemed people will listen to the Lord and obey His Commandments, in return the Lord agrees to treat them as a people who are His special possession, a kingdom of priests. Showing God's goodness to all the world.

The Law will not be what saves Israel, they are already a redeemed and rescued people, the keeping of the Law is an act of recreation. Every time we honor the Law as a response to God's salvation we push back brokenness and sin, it is a simple act of restoration to the created order.

*So Moses went down to the people and told them. And God spoke all these Words: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before Me." — Exodus 19:25 – 20:3*

v3 — I have been reading this verse wrong my entire life. "Before me" is not a word meaning in priority, but location. It is not, you should not prioritize other things before you think of me, BUT I am the God who is everywhere, and unlike Egypt's gods, I don't dwell in temples or in statues, I am the God who is above all of creation, have no other god in my sight! I am not location bound or sight limited. The question this provokes for me is "Am I trusting in anything other than God for my safety and provision?" Idolatry is trusting ANYTHING else to solve your problems.

*You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments. — Exodus 20:4 – 6*

Moses says, you (Israel) have just lived for several hundred years in Egypt among a pantheon of gods. You walk everyday by statues and temples and idols. I am not like those gods. Those primitive images are in your past, do not mistake me for a god like them. I am "OTHER" from this material world and cannot be depicted.

v5 — God is said to be "jealous" the Hebrew term is red or impassioned. A term used of unfaithfulness in marriage relationship.

*You shall not misuse the Name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses His Name. — Exodus 20:7*

The third command is do not use My name for valueless purposes. The Hebrew is "do not take it upon your lips." Specifically, do not misrepresent Me to humanity by taking oaths or cursing others with My name, it's not who I am.

*Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. — Exodus 20:8 – 11*

Rabbis for generations after the Law would create lengthy lists of all that could be and could not be done on the Sabbath. You couldn't walk further than this, harvest, or pick anything that day, load a donkey, or kindle a fire. But during the construction of the temple in Jerusalem, all the rabbis concluded that the construction of the temple was ESSENTIAL WORK and could happen on the Sabbath. Their point was that WORSHIP is always essential. In these difficult quarantine days, we

agree that worship is ESSENTIAL to honoring the Sabbath, keep gathering, even digitally, its essential.

*A true sabbath requires ruthlessly closing some options. You cannot marry all the pretty girls you meet. You cannot work for every company in town. You have to close some options. You either turn away from the worship of gods created by human hands or you pay the consequences.* — Leonard Sweet

*Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.* — Exodus 20:12

*You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.* — Exodus 20:13 – 16

*You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.* — Exodus 20:17

The word covet specifically “desire or yearn” for your neighbors things. Coveting refers to an inward desire being fanned or entertained that eventually leads to action. This very command seems to run rival to a sense of gratitude for what you have. This has provoked a few questions for me lately: Am I honestly excited for someone else when they succeed or get something I don't have?

I want to offer you three GREAT pieces of news:

1. Don't miss that this means God has obligated Himself to us. That's how contracts work!

*Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear Me and keep all My commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever!*— Deuteronomy 5:29

2. These commands were offered that we would be a distinct people among those in our neighborhoods.

3. The compassion and grace of God means when we fail, we GET TO TRY AGAIN!

*And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.* — Exodus 24:6

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stuck out to you about the sermon today?
- What new idea did you have about the 10 Commandments?
- How does the idea of mutual obligation, God committing Himself to us as much as we have committed ourselves to Him, make you think and feel?
- What are the most important ways we are to be a distinctive people in our current culture?
- Brian defined idolatry as anything we trust to solve our problems before God. What are some of the most popular idols in our current place in history?
- How does keeping the Sabbath look different for us than maybe Moses' audience and in what ways can we keep the Sabbath that sets us apart?
- What does honoring your father and mother look like for you?
- How does the idea of “desiring or yearning” for your neighbors things apply to you? What type of “things” are you most likely to struggle to want?