

SERMON NOTES

SERIES: Exodus: Set Free, Live Free

TITLE: The Grace of Law

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 19:1-25

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We are in a series on the Book of Exodus from the Old Testament. Why study this book? Exodus is the Old Testament story of the salvation of God's people that points forward to the great salvation that comes to us by faith in Jesus. Exodus helps us better understand what it means for God to *set us free* from our broken, messy lives so we can *live free* in loving, personal relationship with God.

Have you ever noticed that some of the things everyone knows aren't necessarily so? Things like bats are blind, Napoleon had a short man complex, Albert Einstein failed elementary school math, or wait to go swimming 30 minutes after you eat. None of those things are true, but many people think they're true. In some ways, that's like what some people believe about the Ten Commandments—some of what we believe may, in fact, be wrong.

This morning we are going to do a 20,000 foot fly-over of the 10 Commandments/the Law of God to help us get a better understanding of the Law and how it relates to the Gospel. We will look at three passages of Scripture—Exodus 19:2-8; 20:1-3; and 24:7-11—in order to answer three questions that will help us better understand:

1. What exactly are the 10 Commandments?
2. Why did God give them to Israel?
3. What relevance—if any—do the 10 Commandments have for Christians today?

What exactly are the 10 Commandments?

What the Law is not—

- First, the law was never intended to be a pathway to salvation. The law was given to a "saved" people, not given to save people. It doesn't have anything to do with personal salvation. (cf Gal 3:11; Heb 7:19; Rom 3:20)
- Keeping the law, in and of itself, was never intended as a way to make people holy. (think: Sermon on the Mount, Rich Young Ruler. It's the heart that God is after.)

What the 10 Commandments are—

- The 10 Commandments are the first part of 613 laws God gave to Israel.
- The 10 Commandments are the foundation for the other 603.
- The 10 Commandments are the part of the law that was actually spoken by God. (Ex 20:1; Deut 5:4)

Why did God give Israel the 10 Commandments? Three purposes:

Theological Purpose

- The law reveals the character of God.
- The law reveals and condemns sin. (Rom. 3:20)
- The law reveals our need for God to intervene on our behalf, to save us from our sin. (Gal. 3:24)

National Purpose

- The law was given to Israel to set the nation apart so they would reflect who Yahweh is to people who do not know him. (cf Deut 4:6-8)
- The law was given to Israel to prescribe how Israel was to worship God.

Personal Purpose

- The Law defined what living in relationship with God looked like.

What relevance do the 10 Commandments law have for Christians today?

- To be sure, we are not “under law but under grace” (Rom 6:14; Gal 3:25), meaning, law-keeping doesn’t make us right or keep us right with God.
- Today, our relationship with God is not based on law-keeping, but Spirit-walking. (Rom 8:3-4) Our relationship with God is defined by faith in Christ and life in the his Spirit based on God’s Word.

BIG IDEA — When rightly understood, the 10 Commandments are full of grace. It is grace that the Law reveals to us the character of God as it has now been fulfilled in Jesus. It is grace that the Law still tells us what’s right and wrong and that wrongdoing carries with it serious consequences (cf 1 Tim 1:8). It is the grace of God that, even though the Law sets such a high standard that it is impossible to attain—still—God has made a way for sinful people to enter into and remain in relationship with God. In the OT, it was through the OT sacrificial system, and today, it’s by faith in the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf. The 10 Commandments are an expression of the grace of God. There’s great grace in the law of God, when understood properly.

For Discussion —

1. Prior to this message, how would you have explained the 10 Commandments to a 10-year-old child?
2. What did you learn from Ex 19:4-5 and 20:2 that helps you see how the 10 Commandments were never intended to be a pathway to salvation?
3. Why is it that, in and of themselves, the 10 Commandments can’t make a person right with God or keep them right with God?
4. What does God speaking the 10 Commandments say about their importance?
5. Talk about why God gave the 10 Commandments? What was the theological purpose of the Law? ...The National purpose, the personal purpose?
6. If we are not under law but under grace, are the 10 Commandments relevant for Christians today? If so, how so?

