

Sermon Series: "Moses: God's Poster Child of Meekness and Devotion"

Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield – 8/15/10

Title: "Grace Etched in Stone"

Text: Exodus 20: 1-17 & Matthew 22: 36-40

Intro.: *Chaffing at obedience*

Theme: In Christ, when we view the 10 commandments of God, we can move beyond the rule and get to the relationship which God desires to have with and to give to us.

Understanding the Law of God in its context of relationship

Mt Sinai stood between Israel's Egyptian deliverance and the Promise Land fulfillment

1. **Illus.: Insert map of Sinai Peninsula**
2. *You have seen what I did to Egypt and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to me. If you will listen obediently to what I say and keep my covenant, out of all peoples you'll be my special treasure. The whole Earth is mine to choose from, but you're special: a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.' Ex 19: 4-5 (The Message)*
3. God not turning evil and being a killjoy but gives them the law as choice between life/death blessing/destruction
 - a. *I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Deut. 30:19-20*
 - b. **Illus.: Running out of gas causes crashes – flawed reasoning even of "good people"**

Understanding God's commandments in our lives comes by looking through the lens of His grace

1. God's tough and unconditional love revealed all as one single package **Exodus 20: 4-6**
2. Without God's law I would not have known the destructive sickness of sin which was within me
 - a. **Illus.: A simple test revealed a hidden cancer**
 - b. *Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. Romans 7: 7*
3. Without God's law I would not have given up on me so I can trust only Jesus
 - a. Human kind since the fall, partly out of rebellion/partly desperation, tries to answer the debt of sin through works
 - b. **Romans 3: 19-22**

Applying God's Law in the context of love

As a God-believer and follower of Jesus, you and I submit to God's rule in our own life **because we love Him**

1. Does my word, action, thought show love?
 - a. **Matthew 22: 36-40**
 - b. First 3 commandments – love of God means he is first above all – self, family, job, life (not beside/instead)
 - c. **Illus.: Making Idolatry a real thing**
 - d. Last 7 commandments – love neighbor as much as you love yourself (who is neighbor? – any other human)
2. Is it Lawful? *No action contrary to the plain word of God can ever be legitimate for the Christian. (4th & 5th)*
 - a. Disobedience to authority brings God's discipline and sins consequence to our life (**Rom 13: 1-4**)
 - b. End justifies the means in abortion/end of life discussions are open rebellion to God's sovereign gift of life
3. Is it beneficial or enslaving? (Spirit vs. letter of law)
 - a. *"Everything is permissible to me": - but I will not be mastered by anything 1 Cor 6:12*
 - b. Will it bring benefits, as far as I discern, so that mine/others relationship to Lord Jesus Christ is strengthened?
 - c. Will it place another's need ahead of my pleasure or convenience or rights? (**6th, 7th, 8th commandments**)
 - d. *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philip. 2:3-4*
4. Is it consistent with Christ's Lordship?
 - a. Would I be willing to take Christ there and look him in the face without shame? Is this course of action, this thought process, totally consistent with my personal confession that "Jesus Christ is my Lord"?
 - b. *We are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. 10:5 (9th & 10th commandments)*
5. **Illustration: A broken man's confession**

Chaffing at Obedience

One night our family was doing a devotional that included the story of the Ten Commandments. My husband asked, "How many commandments did God give to Moses?" Seth, our 5-year-old son, quickly replied, "Too many!" **"Life in Our House," Christian Parenting Today (March/April 2000)**

Running out of gas causes crashes

Frank Allegretti, 64, was a meticulous pilot with more than twenty years of experience—which makes it all the more shocking to hear that he crashed the plane he was piloting in a Iowa cornfield because it ran out of gas. He died in the crash. Interviewed for an article about the crash, Allegretti's wife, Cheryl, said, "Like everybody has told me, he was the most cautious, [safe] pilot they ever knew." Sadly, Allegretti's story is fairly common among pilots. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) officials say pilots run out of gas with surprising frequency. In the past five years, fuel exhaustion was the cause or a contributing factor in 238 small plane crashes in the U.S., killing 29 people "It's surprising to me," said Tom Haueter, director of NTSB's Office of Aviation Safety, "that there's a group of pilots who will knowingly push it, thinking, *I can make it the last couple of miles* and come up short." **Associated Press, "Pilots Flying On Empty Baffle NTSB," USA Today (11-30-09)**

Making Idolatry a real thing

In his bestseller *The Reason for God*, Keller further develops this line of thought, showing the reader examples of the "particular kinds of brokenness and damage" caused by idolatry:

If you center your life and identity on your spouse or partner, you will be emotionally dependent, jealous, and controlling. The other person's problems will be overwhelming to you.

If you center your life and identity on your family and children, you will try to live your life through your children until they resent you or have no self of their own. At worst, you may abuse them when they displease you.

If you center your life and identity on your work and career, you will be a driven workaholic and a boring, shallow person. At worst you will lose family and friends and, if your career goes poorly, develop deep depression.

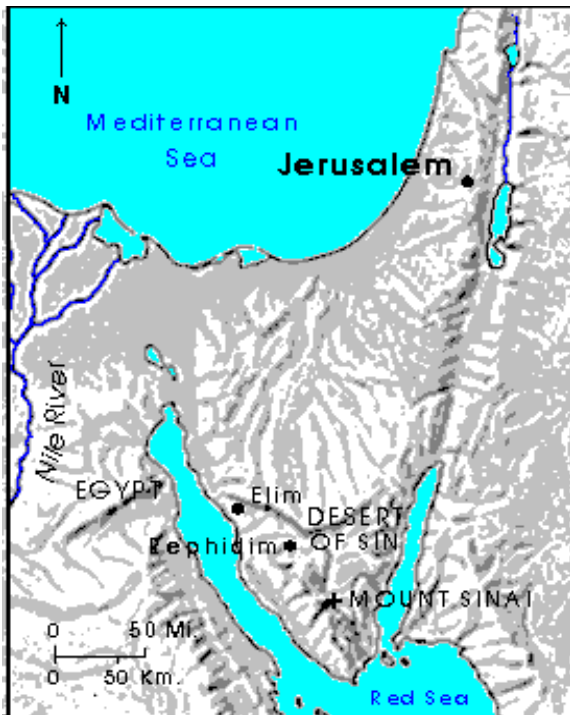
If you center your life and identity on money and possessions, you'll be eaten up by worry or jealousy about money. You'll be willing to do unethical things to maintain your lifestyle, which will eventually blow up your life.

If you center your life and identity on pleasure, gratification, and comfort, you will find yourself getting addicted to something. You will become chained to the "escape strategies" by which you avoid the hardness of life.

If you center your life and identity on relationships and approval, you will be constantly overly hurt by criticism and thus always losing friends. You will fear confronting others and therefore will be a useless friend.

If you center your life and identity on a "noble cause", you will divide the world into "good" and "bad" and demonize your opponents. Ironically, you will be controlled by your enemies. Without them, you have no purpose.

If you center your life and identity on religion and morality, you will, if you are living up to your moral standards, be proud, self-righteous, and cruel. If you don't live up to your moral standards, your guilt will be utterly devastating. **Tim Keller, *The Reason for God* (Dutton, 2008), pp. 275-276, and Tim Keller, "Talking About Idolatry in a Postmodern Age," www.thegospelcoalition.org**



Lessons of a broken man

In May of 2010, Indiana congressman Mark Souder resigned his position after confessing to an affair with a part-time staffer. In more than a dozen emails to *WORLD* magazine, Souder reflected on his downfall. In one email, he shares how difficult it is to keep people in power in check. "Politicians and any top professionals are skilled manipulators and smooth with words," he wrote.

"Holding us accountable is hard." Another email reveals the agony he feels over his failure. He writes: "My sin, while forgiven, is greater in that God put me in a position of public trust, so I deserve whatever criticism I receive." He goes on to write about what he did and how he felt in the midst of his affair:

"I prayed multiple times a day, sang hymns with emotions and tears, felt each time that it wouldn't happen again, read the Bible every morning So how in the world did I have a torrid—which is an accurate word—many-year affair? How could I compartmentalize it so much?" In yet another email, Souder adds: "Bottom line, however, is that the problem is sin The problem is getting the will subordinate to the Holy Spirit early enough that the Spirit is not quenched."

Emily Belz, "Lessons from a Broken Man," *WORLD* magazine (6-19-10)

Exodus 20:1-17

¹And God spoke all these words:

²"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

³"You shall have no other gods before me.

⁴"You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. ⁵You 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 fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

⁷"You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

⁸"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰but 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 manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. ¹¹For 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.

¹²"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

¹³"You shall not murder.

¹⁴"You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁵"You shall not steal.

¹⁶"You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

¹⁷"You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

Romans 3:19-22

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

Matthew 22:36-40

³⁶"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" ³⁷Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."