



***What does the first commandment require? Pastor leads his family in today's "Hopewell @Home" passage. Exodus 20:3 looks forward to the evening sermon on the coming Lord's Day. In this verse of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that God alone must be our ultimate purpose, praise, and power—to the praise of God alone.***

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## **Friday, May 6, 2022 ▫ Read Exodus 20:3**

Questions from the Scripture text: *What must there not be? Who must not have them? Before Whom (what)?*

Very literally translated, the commandment reads, “There must not be unto you gods, other ones, unto the face of Me.” The sense of the original is, “There must not be for you any other gods against My face.”

There are many ways to construct a prohibition in Hebrew, but this one is emphatic. The first three and last five of the commandments all use the same construction, and it's a very strong, absolute forbidding. No one, and no thing, may ever be allowed to be in competition with Yahweh.

### **He alone is Creator and Sustainer**

This is part of the truth that we considered about His Name—Yahweh, the great “I Am”—when thinking about v2. He alone is uncreated Creator. Everything else owes its existence to Him. He alone has ongoing existence in Himself so that He is Self-sustained. Everything else must be sustained continually by Him.

But when we live for anyone or anything else, we deny that we were made by Him, and treat something else as if we were made for it. And when we depend upon anyone or anything apart from the Lord, we deny that He is the One Who upholds all things by the word of His power. Instead, we act as if there is a created thing/person that sustains not only itself/himself but us as well.

### **He has purchased us for Himself**

This is what we saw in the phrase “your God” in v2. Along with everything and everyone else, we owe Him our devotion and dependence, simply as His creatures. But more than everything and everyone else, we are bound to Him by that special binding relationship called a “covenant.”

### **He is not like the idol-gods of Egypt**

The idea of worshiping only one God would have been very foreign/contrary to their experience so far. Egypt had a panoply of them! They were wicked, like their human idolizers, but they coexisted in a delicate balance. Yahweh, however, refuses to coexist—precisely because He is NOT wicked and properly honors His own holiness. Idolatry is evil and exhausting; the properly exclusive worship of the one true God is not only righteous but a relief!

### **If we are not for Him, we are against Him**

Not only as His creatures, but especially as His covenant people, the Israelites were always the special focus of His attention. Whether they ate, or drank, or whatever they did, they did unto His face—either unto His face for His glory, or against His face with offense or contempt. There are no “moments off” with God, particularly as His people. As all things are to be done personally for Him, so any wickedness that we do is personally against Him. And the greatest possible wickedness is to have another god. Every sin that we commit is also a version of this particular sin.

**In what situations do you find yourself living for (or depending upon, or delighting in) something or someone apart from the Lord? What are you living for at those times? In what way are you interacting with God at those times?**

*Sample prayer: Lord, all things are from You and through You and to You; to You be the glory forever and ever! And in You, we live and move and have our being, so that whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we ought to do all unto Your glory. But often we think and speak and act as if we are devoted to some creature rather than You—especially to our own selves. O forgive us, and make us to receive all that is genuinely good in us or others as a gift from You. And make us to enjoy it all and employ it all unto Your glory, we ask through Christ, AMEN!*

**Suggested songs: ARP16A “Keep Me, O God” or TPH174 “The Ten Commandments”**

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**(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)**

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Exodus 20:3. These are God's words. You shall have no other gods before me.

Listens just reading of Gods inspired and and there aren't word.

Very literally translated.

This commandment reads, not there may be unto you gods. Other ones onto the face of me or there must not be for you and the other Gods against my face. Now, there are a bunch of different ways that you can bind a negating particle in Hebrew with a stated situation or a verb.

This is and emphatic. One eight of the commandments, all, except for numbers four, and five use this emphatic, negation. It's a reminder already that we are sinners. If there was no such thing as sin Then God's commandments would all be positive and directive. They wouldn't be forbidding us to do certain things because we would have had no inclination to do those things.

So the the way the commandment is formed reminds us that we are sinners. It's not like You shall not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That's a negative commandment, isn't it? They were sinless but the eating of that tree was not something in and of itself.

Wicked, except that it transgressed to the commitment of God. It is, of course, positively wicked to treat anyone else as God. So, we have an emphatic negative command. The first of eight of them among the Ten Commandments and the main idea of the commandment is that, no one. And no thing may ever be allowed to be in competition with the Lord for the god of your life.

Now he has just introduced himself as you all. Are your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt and then he turns around, he says there must not be for you any other gods against my face. And so the the commandment is true for all men, but it has a special significance or emphasis for those who whom the Lord has taken to be his own, covenant people and he has defined by using his covenant name.

Yahweh what it really means to be God the apostle Paul in Acts 17 uses a similar definition, probably drawn from his knowledge. Remember he had been a Pharisee and so he knew the Hebrew scriptures very well and then he came to be converted and discovered that Jesus as Yahweh.

And that transformed his understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures, which he knew very well. And so he tells the Athenians and act and act 17 that there is one, true and living God who has made from one blood all people and that in him. We live and move and have our being Yahweh.

The I am that I am He identifies himself. Therefore, as the only Creator, everything else gets there. I amness gets there being from him. He is a creator. Everything else must be sustained in their being from him. He is their sustainer, nothing gives him his being. He is uncreated and nothing sustains in, he sustains himself.

So he alone is creator and sustainer of all things and in the way that we are using the phrase, all things that means you. He made you. He is the one keeps you alive and makes you able to do anything. You yourself not just everyone else. You have to listen to his word as a dressed to you.

And so when he says there must not be unto you, God's is saying you must not live as you are created by or for anyone or anything else. There are many things that God puts into a person that gives them unique characteristics and abilities and enjoyments. We must of course enjoy every good thing that he made but it's not wrong to find that he has made you in such a way that you find particular, things more pleasant and yourself able to do particular things more easily.

There are reasons, he gave you taste buds and that those of you who are learning to cook, learn to balance, salty and sweet and use all the things that God has given you. And sometimes you find a task that he has given you in life. And the way that he has the way his creation of you and his providence towards you, it's gone.

Tempts you to have this feeling, and many people will say say it as they do it and they enjoy it. I was made for this. Well, a human should only have that I was made for this feeling in an ultimate sense in the worship and enjoyment of God. There was a sense in which a believer is someone who's art is in.

I was made for this training and I was redeemed for this training whenever we worship God, whenever we lift our hearts to him, whenever we read his word and have him communicate himself to us, whenever we sing from the heart, His word that he communicated to us to put in our hearts and have it.

Come out of our lips and be addressed to him what a wonderful thing. Singing the Word of God is, but we are to find our purpose and our pleasure in him because he made us, and he redeemed us were made for him. We're redeemed for him, whenever we start to find our chief purpose or our chief pleasure in any created thing and anything, God forbid, that we create.

And we are having another God. We are treating it even if we don't think that it made us or come up with theories of how we get our life from it. We are treating it as if it had as if our purpose and our pleasure are found in it, but he is not only creator.

He's also sustainer. He alone gives life and ability to all things. And whenever we depend upon anything apart from him and his providence, then we are treating something else. As God, the one that we most often do this with is myself. Well, not you. Well, maybe you is tempting to do that with your daddy to depend upon your daddy, the way that you should depend only upon God.

Now it's not wrong to say, God gave me a daddy and these ways including leading me in family worship together, not to replace private worship, but just like the gathering on the Lord's day. So also, the gathering in the family is helpful to us in worship. It's easier when we're all focusing on it together to keep our minds directed.

It's actually takes a lot more practice and walking with God in your spiritual life. To keep your mind focused in private worship than it is to keep your mind focused in family worship. And so you say, daddy is a gift from God. Thank you, Father, that you have commanded family worship.

Thank you, Heavenly Father, You have commanded family worship and given me an earthly, father whom you have given grace. And now he and I independence upon your grace heavenly Father, you see how it's God, who sustains us all even the means that is helpful to you. So this isn't saying don't use

means, but at the same, don't put your trust in.

The means depend upon God for the power, Give God the credit for it. So that all of your praise and all goes to God because all of your power comes from God. If in your life, there are things that you depend upon, and I'll give you an example of one of the ways that I am tempted to break this commandment all the time.

Because I think that if I get my routine right, everything will be better. And of course, my heart and God's mercy to me and maturing me over the years frequently now and especially as I get older and, and weaker and more needy, or at least better at perceiving a needy.

I am and he makes your body and mind break down to help that perception constantly asking God for help lifting up these. The quick exclamations of the heart, Lord sustain me. Help me and you know whatever it is but I can still slip into thinking. This is what is going to make me able to serve God.

Well to serve my wife. Well to serve my children. Well to serve the church. Well, and even in pursuing right things, we can treat something else as the ultimate source of our power. The one thing that will fix everything for me and then if things actually go, well, you have the flip side and the temptation to give praise and God forbid, you would think it was something of yourself kind of because that praise would be a pat on the back to yourself.

And so you see how easy it is to fall into finding our purpose or pleasure in something else as if it was our creator or finding our power in or giving praise to something else, as if it was our sustainer. And so he alone is creator and sustainer, we are to have no other gods, but he has purchased us for himself when he says there must not be unto you.

Any other gods? We are reminded immediately of what we heard in verse 2. That that he has purchased a people for himself. He said I am Yahweh. Your God, we owe him. Our devotion, and dependence as creator. And sustainer merely because we're creatures. That's true. Everything owes him devotion and dependence.

But in a way that is, greater than the way, that everything else owes it to him, We owe it to him because he's bound us to him. He's bound us to him himself. Mmm By that special binding relationship called a covenant. And so, when he says for you, there must not be any other gods for you.

It doesn't come out that much in the English doesn't. It says, you shall not have, and you have to invest just that. You where with Covenant relationship, but this is what you were created for and this is what you were redeemed for. If God and His providence, and mercy to you, picked this family for you and has preserved his word for you.

Not only in the Greek and the Hebrew, but in having it translated, and, and copied and distributed, so that you could hear from that word, that he has preserved for you, both in your family. And in the church, the good news of himself whom he has given for you.

One of the reasons he's done all of those things, particularly for you, you're not realize that there are many children who owe him devotion and dependence, but he did not give them to be in a Christian family. There are some children, even in places where the Bible is not available, in their language, where they've never heard The preaching of the Lord Jesus.

And this is one of the reasons we pray for missions and we pray for Bible translation work. But when you realize that God's specific providence to you was to bring you to faith in Jesus Christ through all, these means that he appointed in order to do so. Then you must remember that he has purchased you for himself that you would find in him alone, your ultimate purpose and pleasure schools.

The Lord says a great help for that or only to have pleasure in him on that day. And if we have pleasure in the fact that he gave us a day to do that, then we'll start to have our pleasure in him. He has purchased you. He's done all those wonderful things for you personally, individually, so that you would find in him alone, your purpose and your pleasure and you would find in him alone, your power.

So that you would give unto him alone. All your praise Next. We see that he's not like the idol gods of Egypt. There must not be unto you any gods. Other ones. Now, that doesn't sound strange in your ears because you have grown up in my home. And as a member of the church, these Israelites wear had they grown up.

All of them in Egypt. Did Egypt just have one God. Egypt had Now I don't know enough about other cultures to say that they have had the most gods ever But it seems like they had as many gods as they could. Like you couldn't figure out how to have more gods than the Egyptians did and they all operated in this delicate balance with one another because they were like the people who invented them.

And so they were all sinful and didn't honor one another and and so forth. This is very different Then what they had grown up with but God is a very different than idolatry and all the idle gods and so he is defining himself over against what they thought. Divinity was like because here God is righteous.

And holy and one of the ways that he, he acts righteously is by demanding perfect allegiance. People make those coexist bumper stickers and it is true that we should love our enemies and coexist with them, serving them until they kill us. Loving not our lives, even unto death and overcoming by the blood of the Lamb and the Word of his power.

But God would be wicked to coexist with other gods. He would be failing properly to honor his holiness and therefore part of our righteously. Following him in his righteousness is refusing any other God that we cannot say that. Oh well. There are many ideas about God or even oh well, there are many ways to God.

No, there is one God and one, mediator the God man, Jesus Christ, the man, Jesus Christ, who is God and became man. In order to be that mediator, He is not like the idol gods of Egypt and so it's righteous to worship him alone. That's also a relief. The imagine how exhausting it would be to try to worship and get straight all those different gods.

The Egyptian pantheon. It is a relief to find in God alone, your purpose to find in God alone. Your pleasure to find in God alone, your power to live unto the praise of God alone, even in our own lives. All those things that that we are tempted to find our purpose in or pleasure in it gets exhausting to pursue all those things and and try to fulfill all of those.

You know, different things that people will think of as their purpose and to try and and, and get all those things in which they find their pleasure and which never please. And so, you have to try to get more and more of, to be satisfied, a little when, whereas a little bit of God, infinitely, satisfies, and he keeps giving you more and more of himself which is exactly the opposite.

And so so it's not just righteous to have got alone as your God, It's a relief. Same thing. As far as power and praise When you find out that whatever you're depending upon doesn't work, you go, you could go from one thing to another to another trying to find something that works, but you never find anything that works.

Unless through faith in Jesus Christ and dependence upon him by the help of the Holy Spirit, you depend on the the goodness and the strength of your heavenly Father, that works because even when you're not depending the way you should that, he gives more depending and it's it's to him that you look for it and he says not to grow weary.

Then in our well-doing. So he's not like the out of gods of Egypt. It is both righteous to worship Him alone and a relief that it is him alone, even that we may worship. And then there's this dreadful phrase at the end of the commandment against me. It's not for those of you who took Hebrew Lifnay or lipineet towards my face.

It's all. Can I? It's upon me or against me that when someone finds his or her purpose in pleasure, in power, in something, other than God, it's an attack. Upon God. It's not just in his presence and God forbid, we should read this in the English and say, oh, you shall have no other God before me.

So you can have a great big list of Gods as long as God is first. And the other Yahweh is first and all the other gods are no, it's a presence word. But even more than a presence word, it's a relational work that the having of other gods is something that God takes personally against him.

He's when we get to the second commandment, he's going to specifically identify the breakers of that commandment as then that hate me. But the against me that is at the end of this first commandment His translated in almost all the English translations before me. This against me shows that the breakers of this commandment are haters of God.

We do say because they under the power of their sin and their guilty and wicked for it. But sometimes we'll say core sinners, They're no, not God, they are without hope and without God in the world but they are against him. And when in the last day he casts them into the hell of his wrath forever and ever, we will not say oh, poor sinners, we'll say just and true and righteous you are.

Oh God, for they were your enemies, they were against you and then we turn. And rejoice in the Lamb. Were there you to be praised in the land, who was slain for his redeemed, us by his blood even though we were against him. But if you know him and you love him and he's redeemed, you and the last thing you want to do with any part of your life is to be against him, to find your purpose and something else.

And have him say that's against me to find your pleasure and something else and have him say that's against me to depend for your ability and your life along, something else. And to have him say, that's against me. God, forbid. Quite literally that we would be against him and then let's pray.

Father, thank you for your word. Thank you for your good and righteous and holy statutes. And commandments. Thank you for this first of the Ten Commandments. Thank you for Christ whom you gave who obeyed it perfectly in our place.

Thank you for his atoning sacrifice, which is taken away. The guilt of our having been against you that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us and he died for his enemies, your enemies. And we pray now that as you have made us righteous in your sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone.

So also that you would work in us more and more to die to the sin of breaking this commandment, and to live unto the righteousness of having you alone, as our ultimate purpose and pleasure and power. So that everything else that we find purpose in in it, we would have our purpose in you and everything else that we find pleasure in and it we would find pleasure in you and that we would have no purpose or pleasure.

That is incompatible was being having our purpose or pleasure in you. Help us. Our God. We pray and Jesus name, Amen.