

“Introduction to the Ten Commandments”
Deuteronomy 5:1-6
(Preached at Trinity, August 11, 2024)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citation will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Moses ended his first sermon with **Verse 40** of **Chapter 4**. **Verses 41-43** serve as an interlude. They provide a condensed account of God's maintenance of justice and provision for three cities of refuge on the East side of the Jordan. There would be another three built inside Canaan for a total of six. The three within Canaan are described in **Chapter 19**.
2. With **Verse 44** Moses begins his second sermon. This will continue through **Chapter 11**. This sermon opens with a recitation of the Ten Commandments, a reminder of their covenant obligation before God.
 - a. Moses takes them back to Mount Sinai. Most of the people who were present when the Law was given on Mount Sinai were dead.
Deuteronomy 4:44 NAU - "Now this is the law which Moses set before the sons of Israel;"
 - b. He uses three different words to describe God's Law with little difference in meaning.
Deuteronomy 4:45 NAU - "these are the testimonies and the statutes and the ordinances which Moses spoke to the sons of Israel, when they came out from Egypt,"
 - c. This is the heart of the words of Moses to the people of Israel.
Deuteronomy 4:10-13 NAU - "*Remember* the day you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, when the LORD said to me, 'Assemble the people to Me, that I may let them hear My words so they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.' ¹¹ "You came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire to the *very* heart of the heavens: darkness, cloud and thick gloom. ¹² "Then the LORD spoke to you from the midst of the fire; you heard the sound of words, but you saw no form-- only a voice. ¹³ "So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, *that is*, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone."
3. Moses holds the Ten Commandments before them this second time from the plains of Moab. This begins Moses' second sermon and will be followed by other laws that would govern Israel's conduct and worship as they entered into Canaan.

4. In **Chapter 6** Moses gives the well known words known as the Shema from the Hebrew word meaning "Hear."
Deuteronomy 6:4 NAU - "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!"
 Although, less famous, Moses uses the same words to introduce the Ten Commandments in **Chapter 5**. It is in the imperative that carries the command to obey.
Deuteronomy 5:1 NAU - "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I am speaking today in your hearing, that you may learn them and observe them carefully."
5. The Ten Commandments were given to Israel on Mount Sinai in the form of a Covenant. It was the same words written on the heart of Adam as well as every human being. On Sinai God was pressing the Ten Commandments upon Israel as His Covenant people. It was imperative that they keep God's Covenant, but not as covenant of works that would grant them God's favor, but as a covenant of grace whereby they were to follow the God who had chosen and blessed them.
Exodus. 19:5-6 NAU - "Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; ⁶ and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel."
6. The same love motivation continues into the New Covenant.
John 14:15 NAU - "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."
John 14:21 NAU - "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."
7. God has progressively revealed His Covenant to His people. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did not have the blessing of the Mosaic Law. But those standing before Moses had received it.
Deuteronomy 5:3 NAU - "The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, *with* all those of us alive here today."
 - a. God's Covenant is generational and transcends time. It includes the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. Although the Ten Commandments were not delivered as a covenant until God wrote them on the stone tablets at Mount Sinai, God's Law predated Sinai. It extended backwards into eternity as it reflects the holy character of God.
 - b. Sin is the transgression of God's Law. The Ten Commandments are God's standard of obedience and the standard by which all men will be judged.
8. Beginning with **Verse 7** Moses reiterates the words God spoke to them 40 years before. He republishes before them the Ten Commandments. I want to spend several Sundays rehearsing them before you. In many ways, I will be republishing them before you since I preached the Ten Commandments from Exodus 20 back in 2007. Most of you were not present when I preached those sermons from the Book of Exodus just as most of the people hearing the sermons of Moses were not present when he delivered the words 40 years before.
9. He begins with the same preface he put before them originally.
Deuteronomy 5:6 NAU - "I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."
10. Although the Law is written upon the heart of all men and all men are subject to it, Moses reminds them that it had particular importance to Israel as His Covenant people.
Deuteronomy 5:6 NAU - "I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."

- A. Over and over God referred to the Israelites as “My people”
His charge to Pharaoh was, “Let My people Go”
- B. God was their Deliverer.
Deuteronomy 5:6 NAU - "I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."
11. As God delivers His law we must remember the nature of God’s covenant.
God has always had but one eternal plan of redemption.
And God has always had but one Covenant people.
- A. All of redemptive history is the progressive revelation of God’s eternal covenant between the Father and the Son.
- B. God’s eternal purpose was to save His people from their sin.
There is an inseparable continuity between the Old Testament and the New Testament—the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.
- C. Many falsely believe that in the OT salvation came through keeping the law but in the NT salvation is by grace.
Salvation has always been by grace. The law has never been opposed to grace.
12. There are several important things to remember as we consider the Ten Commandments in the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.
We need to understand the perpetuity of the Law. It is permanent and timeless. It reflects the holy character of God and demands perfect obedience.
Our problem is we have not obeyed.
We need to remember the three-fold use of the Law –
- It restrains sin, even among the reprobate – the law through our conscience directs our actions. Fallen man resists the restraint of the Law.
Puritan Samuel Willard wrote in *A Complete Body of Divinity* in 1726 –
“Man’s life, chastity, estate, good name, and property must be preserved, and how is this done, but by imprinting on men’s hearts an apprehension of these rules of justice and equity, making them approve them and holding a curb on their consciences? And in this way God upholds His government of the world.”¹
 - It shows us our guilt and condemnation and points us to Christ.
 - Then there is the third use of the Law. It provides God’s people with a standard of obedience.
- I. The Ten Commandments still have relevance in Christ?
- A. God was speaking to Israel as their Deliverer
Deuteronomy 5:6 NAU - "I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."
1. God gave the Law after their deliverance, not before. Had he given the Law before their deliverance the conclusion would be, if you obey Me, I will deliver you. Their deliverance was all of grace.
2. After they were delivered God gave them His Law as a standard of obedience. With Israel’s deliverance came a change of masters.
“I am your God, Obey Me’

¹ Willard, Samuel, *A Complete Body of Divinity in Two Hundred and Fifty Expository Lectures on the Assembly’s Shorter Catechism*. Boston: Green and Kneeland, 1726.

3. Israel's deliverance is a type or example of our deliverance
Romans 6:22 NAU - "But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life."
- B. God has given His people the standard by which they are to live
1. The Law has gone out of favor today – even among some reformed people. For some any mention of the Law brings immediate cries of legalism.
 2. The Law must be proclaimed today.
 Without the Law how shall we know God's standard of righteousness?
 Without the Law how shall the sinner know his sin? How shall he know his guilt before God? How shall he see his need of a Savior.
- C. God's New Covenant people are an obedient people
1. These same Ten Commandments that were written upon the stone tablets are now written upon our hearts - (The Ten Commandments have not been abolished)
Jeremiah 31:33 NAU - "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."
Ezekiel 36:27 NAU - "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances."
 - a. The New Covenant says that everyone will have a heart to obey
 - b. Your attitude about the Law will say much about your heart. It will tell you much about whether or not you know Christ.
 2. For the Christian the law is sweet, not burdensome.
1 John 5:3 NAU - "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome."
 The word for burdensome is βαρῦς - heavy in weight, severe, weighty
- D. Jesus made it clear that He did not come to abolish the Law.
Matthew 5:17-18 NAU - "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸ "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished."
1. He fulfilled it by meeting its demands.
 2. He then placed it before His people as the standard of their obedience
Matthew 5:19 – "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."
 3. In order to rightly obey there must be a standard
 - a. This is true with training children. You set before them standards for obedience and then hold them accountable.
 - b. God has given us His standard summarized in the Ten Commandments. And holds all men accountable.

II. How do we apply the Ten Commandments?

- A. The Law has always been meant to be understood beyond the mere letter
1. Jesus made this clear in the Sermon on the Mount.
Matthew 5:27-28 NAU - "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; ²⁸ but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart."
 2. Jesus wasn't changing the Law or adding to it. He was giving an exposition of the Law—its proper interpretation.
 3. The Ten Commandments are best understood as the summary of what God requires of man. They are ten categories of obedience. We will see this over the next several weeks as we examine God's Law
- B. God looks not only upon the outward appearance but upon the heart.
1. He looks not only upon outward adultery but upon lust of our heart. He looks not only upon murder but the attitude of our heart toward our fellow man.
 2. A wicked heart will always oppose the law
Matthew 15:19-20 NAU - "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. ²⁰ "These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man."

Conclusion:

1. We are about to examine *God's Law*.
If it is God's law, then it must be obeyed or else we are rebelling against His rule.
If it is God's law, then it must be perfect in every way, for God is perfect.
If it is God's law, then we have no right to tamper with it or change it or diminish it.
2. God is speaking to His covenant people. "I am the LORD thy God"
God is delivering a standard of living for His own particular people.
3. God is speaking as Deliverer. This is the Law of God's redeemed people.
Deuteronomy 5:6 NAU - "I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."
4. The Law still stands today. It still serves a threefold purpose
 1. It serves to restrain the sinfulness of man.
 2. It serves to convict men of sin – it demands perfection but we are unable. It points us to our need of a Savior.
 3. It shows God's redeemed people how to live in His kingdom
5. God's Law is His perfect standard for us. It is perpetual, written upon stone tablets.
It is ten laws not to be disregarded or abused by man.
6. May God grant us to have a mind and heart to obey - the mind of David
Psalms 119:97 – "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day."