

WORSHIP

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The Ten Commandments

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Exodus 20:1-17

As its concerns pop culture, there is probably no biblical text more widely recognized than the Ten Commandments. You can find these in many places in American society. Posted in courthouses, other government facilities, on monuments, murals in church's, fellowship halls, lodges, etc. Though widely known and widely accepted in recent times there has been much controversy on the public display of the Ten Commandments in the public square. For reasons I want discuss this morning. But nonetheless, they remain, very much, a part of American culture. Considering this fact in light of our country's history and the current state of affairs, I wonder if the Ten have become nothing more than a relic of history only good for tongue and cheek? That is to say, we see them in many places, we say them quite often but do value them? Do we believe these ten to be the living word of God? A word to be taken very seriously and adhered to or are they simply a good notion good for great artwork. A reasonable and fair question considering when polled the vast majority of Americans profess to be followers of Christ. Christian, that is. When these words were given to Israel, they were given with the expectation that God's chosen people would live by them. These Ten would frame communal life for them, establishing healthy life-giving boundaries that were not to be violated. Clearly, Israel had to be reconditioned considering the number of years they spent in Egypt, 430 years to be exact. And though many of these years were under the oppressive rule of the Egyptians, nonetheless they would have been very much a product of their environment. Many of their ways, habits, beliefs, dietary practices, etc. would have be drawn directly from the Egyptian culture. And so it is, God gives them His



law, which established the way of life for and the terms of God's relationship with Israel, God's chosen people. And these ten have risen to a level of notoriety that no other aspect of the Mosaic law has been able to achieve. The Ten Commandments were taught, they were memorized, and most importantly they were practiced. And this practice persists to this very day in many places, even in America. However, the protest against such practice is ever increasing for varying reasons. One such reason, which is of importance to me, is tied to the fact that we are in the post resurrection age. That is, with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ there is no need to place any emphasis on the law of God. Though I do not have the time to discredit this notion, I do want to share this morning 3 ways the ten commandants still serve the church of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ today.

The First way is this. The Ten Commandments speak to the perfect and holy character of God. And not just the ten, all of the law God. It is my strong belief that more than any other biblical text the law makes known the perfect and holy character of God and the perfect and holy standard of God. A very important side note, without the law there would be no need for the Gospel. I am the Lord your God. An emphatic declaration. One that sets the stage for everything that will follow. As God and as my people this is my standard for life for you. A perfect and holy God demands a perfect and holy standard and total obedience to that standard. This is why grace and mercy are remarkable things. Grace, receiving that which one does not deserve. Mercy, not receiving what one justly deserves. In the presence of a holy and perfect God we should be utterly destroyed, but we are not. Why? Jesus Christ. Thank God for Jesus! He is our propitiation. That is, he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. **1 John 2:2.** Not only is he our atoning sacrifice he is our righteousness, our sanctification and our redemption. **1 Cor 1:30.** He is our salvation. **Acts 4:12.** Church, great is God's faithfulness.

The Ten Commandments still serve as the prescript for life. That is, they remain good. As such, they should be taught and practiced. So that I am clear, let us not deceive ourselves in believing we can keep these perfectly. No one can and no



has except Jesus the Christ. Nonetheless, to discount these would be a grave error. Why, because it is the word of God. Whatever God speaks, God means and God intends that it be taken very seriously. The word of God is to be studied and applied. The power of the word is in its application not its memorization!

Deut. 28:1 ““Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth.”

Psalms 1:1-2 “Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; ² But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night.

Luke 6:46 “Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?” The ten commandments are more than some good notion given to strengthen our memorization skills.....

They point us to Christ. This text, like many others, make clear and evident human depravity. Our utter sinfulness. The Ten Commandments make known the need humanity has for a Savior. Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven. To be frank Jesus is being derisive. It is not possible for one by one's own means to achieve a level of righteousness that makes one right with God. How do we now this, the word declares there is none righteous, no not one (**Romans 3:10-12, Psalm 14:1-3, Psalm 53:1-3**). I can't speak for anyone else, but when I read these ten, I am guilty in many respects. And I certainly believe I am not alone in this fact. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, **Romans 3:23**, every one of us, like sheep, have gone astray, **Isaiah 53:6**. If you believe you have not you are utterly deceiving yourself. Considering this is the case what are we to do. Come to Jesus. Come to Jesus! Your faithfulness to these ten cannot save you, cannot secure for you an eternal hope. Memorize them, yes. Practice them, yes. But put your hope, your trust in Jesus Christ alone. Jesus says to us this morning, “Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”. Sisters and brothers, we can trust these words of Christ because great is God's faithfulness. All though the Ten Commandments produce indictment against us all they remain a testament to God's faithfulness for we are still here.

