

The 10 Commandments & the Cross

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[0 : 00] it's nice being introduced as a hick. So I've got a question as I get up here. Oh, grab your swords.

If you don't have one, there's one in the head of you because we'll be looking at scripture, focusing on a passage. So I've got a question as I'm up here. How relevant are the Old Testament laws to us today?

Some are relevant, some maybe not. I'd like to look at one. Leviticus 19.27. Do not cut the hair on the sides of your head or clip off the edges of your beard.

Wonderful. Thankfully, no men here need lamb chop sideburns anymore. But that was an Old Testament law. And you can see some of the Jews today still do that.

Another one, Leviticus 4.27-31. If any member of the community sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the Lord's commands, when they realize their guilt and their sins they have committed become known, they must bring as their offering for the sin they committed a female goat without defect.

[1 : 19] They are to lay their hands on the head of the sin offering and slaughter it at the place of the burnt offering. Then the priest is to take some of the blood with his fingers, put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar.

They shall remove all the fat, just as the fat is removed from the fellowship offering, and the priest shall burn it on the altar as an aroma pleasing to the Lord.

In this way, the priests will make atonement for them and they will be forgiven. This is a sin offering. As Christian believers, we no longer need to offer female goats without defect.

When the Israelites followed the laws of God, the temple was literally a blood-stained slaughterhouse. Christ's death fulfilled the sacrifice for a sin offering.

And many of the Old Testament laws are not in effect for us today, yet there are some laws that apply every bit as much today as they did over 3,000 years ago.

[2 : 30] So grab your sword, grab your Bible. Exodus, second book in the Bible, Exodus 20. It should be very familiar to people.

Exodus chapter 20, and I'll read 1 to 17. This is the Ten Commandments.

Is it relevant today? I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourselves an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You 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 their parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

[3 : 42] Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you nor your sons or daughters, nor your male or female servants, nor your animals or any foreigner residing in your towns.

For 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. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male or female servant, his

ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

That's the Ten Commandments. When the Lord talked to Moses from the burning bush, he introduced himself as, I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

[5 : 04] He now introduces himself in verse 2 as, I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. Every Israelite that crossed the Red Sea knows this God.

Every one of them would have seen the plagues that crushed Egypt. Every one of them would have remembered the loss of the firstborn of every house in Egypt that did not wipe blood on the door frame, so that the angel would pass over and not kill one of their own children.

Everyone remembered crossing the Red Sea while the Egyptian army was in pursuit, and that the sea flooded back in destroying that threat. The first commandment, verse 3, The nation Israel had spent 430 years in Egypt, living with and worshipping the false gods there.

The Egyptian plagues were God's way of showing his people how worthless that was. Because the Israelites did not have faith in God to lead them back to Israel.

None of the generation crossed into the promised land except Caleb and Joshua. 40 years. And that whole generation, even Moses, could not make it into the promised land except Caleb and Joshua.

[6 : 38] As God's chosen people, Israel rarely followed this command, and most of the Old Testament tells the story of what happened to them or is prophesied of what would happen.

The relevant question for us today is, do we even believe in a God? For many people, the idea of a great God that created the universe out of nothing is nonsense.

Not just so, you know, so many people just, oh, it's evolution, it's, we can answer the questions with these other answers, but it really, it's shallow.

It doesn't really answer how things happened. Philippians 3, 18 and 19.

For as I have often told you before and now tell you again, even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destruction, or their destiny, is destruction.

[7 : 44] Their God is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. So that's what so much of the world is.

Their God is their stomach. Whatever feels good, I need this satisfied right now. That is what their God is. The book of Ecclesiastes tells of the futility of chasing after stuff and not making God the most important focus of our lives.

Next commandment. You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.

You 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 their parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

We look at idols as a foolish idea. Isaiah in chapter 44 summed it up well, pointing out the nonsense it is.

[8 : 58] Isaiah 44. If a man's fuel, it is a man's fuel for burning. Some of it he takes and warms himself. He kindles a fire and bakes bread, but he also fashions a God and worships us.

So that's what they were doing. They were making wooden idols in their houses, but it was just out of the same wood that they burnt for fires. To us this is foolish, but this was a real and horrible problem in Israel.

Having a tangible object you could see and feel made it real. They would at times mix temple worship and idol worship.

They would do the sacrifices to God, but then they would also do their own worship to the Baals and to the other gods. So it was a, yeah, trying to mix two things, and this was really, really disturbing to God.

In our modern Western world, we don't make wooden idols, but we do place high value in many things. Houses, work, sports, money.

[10 : 12] These are all objects that are necessary or entertaining, but for many, they are more important than God. they are our idols. God warns us about coming deception in the last days, being focused on stuff or pleasure in a way where you're being deceived and lulled into a complacency and have no fear of God.

As we're told over and over to fear God because of what He can do to you, but He is a God in heaven that is so powerful.

We don't have a full appreciation of who God is. Next commandment. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses His name. That one's easy. I don't go around swearing by God's name, by using God's name. This one is impossible to follow, though, since I claim to be a Christian and my actions don't always follow this declaration.

Commandments 6-10 point out what I'm like too often. I may not murder, but I'm tempted to pass on information about someone else that is not edifying.

[11 : 40] It's called a gossip. We live in a world that increasingly does not believe in God or that Christ was an actual person. It is easy to do all things like everyone else.

Paul, in Romans 7, nailed it. Romans 7 is just, connects to the Old Testament to the Ten Commandments so well. Romans 7-21.

So I find this law at work. Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law. But I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me.

What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord.

So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

[12 : 49] It's just, we want to do the right thing but we're human. Now I just want to take a step back and look at these first three commandments and they, and see how they apply to our triune God.

Number one, first commandment, or the first commandment, God the Father is supreme. There are no other gods at all. He is seen in scripture as a king sitting on his throne.

Now remember that Satan's goal has always been to be seen as equal to God. Not above God but equal. You know, it's like comparing a matchbox you know, a little car to a 1932 Rolls Royce silver shadow.

You know, like, they're not even comparable. But Satan, his goal in all of eternity is to be elevated to that same level as God. But God is supreme so we can picture him have no other gods before me.

Second commandment, we're not to make idols. Jesus, the Son, came to earth and lived as a physical man.

[14 : 15] All throughout history, mankind has imposed their ideas onto idols. Babylonian, Greek, Roman cultures all depicted their gods in human form.

Depicting Jesus this way would lead us to imposing our idea of who God is by what we think he would look like. By imposing our ideas on Christ, we could then manipulate him.

Idolatry was Israel's greatest problem and we would be no different. So what you can see in your mind and you try and say make this work and I can make an idol do for you what I want it to do, that's why God doesn't want us to have a preconceived idea.

Pictures of Christ are always wrong. The third, misusing the name of the Lord, misusing the name of God. Think about your own name.

It's not a physical part of you but it is your identity. Proverbs talks about having a good name. This is not in the spelling but in how you are perceived in the community.

[15 : 35] Likewise, the Holy Spirit is not the physical representation of God but the invisible spirit that abides in us.

being known by the name Christian has great implications since we are to be ambassadors of Christ. So we can see that yeah, you know, we are, we don't see the Holy Spirit but it's just like our name.

It's part of us but it isn't. Okay, let's carry on with the Ten Commandments. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

Six days you shall labor and do all your work but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall do no work, neither you nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your town.

For 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 he made it holy.
[16:51] As believers in Christ, we do not follow the Sabbath the same as the Old Testament Jews did. We worship God on the day he rose from the grave, which is Sunday.

The Sabbath was always Saturday, we worship on a Sunday. The reason to worship God has not changed. He is the creator and redeemer. We truly benefit from a day of rest, but mostly we benefit from not focusing on our idols and then worshipping God instead.

So Sabbath, so the Sunday is, there's no one here that says, boy, I wish I would work every day of the week continually, but it is, God has designed us to have a day of rest, change of pace, but a time to focus on him.

Next verse, honor your father and your mother so that you may live long in the land the Lord is giving you. This is the only commandment with the promise.

What does honor mean and is it relevant today? Honor is a lot more than saying a few nice things and a semi-annual visit. It means taking time for a relationship.

[18:03] It means investing time. It means sacrifice. Just a story I have. January 2nd, 1995.

I drove to Medicine Hat where my parents lived and took them to the doctor for a follow-up appointment for dad. He had been having headaches and a general sickness feeling. We expected the diagnosis of mini-strokes since he had had quite a few before and, you know, this is just probably what it was.

But the doctor floored us with the announcement that, Henry, you have brain cancer. After dad's treatment in Calgary, I made almost weekly trips to the Hat to help wherever I could.

Dad was not a believer and our relationship was not the greatest, but I made the choice to honor dad with all I could, with all I could give.

Dad passed away almost two years later, and then mom was diagnosed with an autoimmune disease brought on by exhaustion because she cared for dad day and night.

[19:17] Still more trips south. Mom, it was much easier to help, but still time consuming. It is interesting that I could start all the vehicles, punch zombie mode, even the semi, and in two hours we would be in a medicine hat.

We just, every week we could just go back and same fields, same this, everything, just driving down every week for three years. Honor, interestingly, is not a one-way street.

Ephesians 6, 1 to 3, repeat the fifth commandment, then in verse 4 it says, fathers, do not exasperate your children. Instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

To gain honor, you must be honorable. The last five commandments focus on interpersonal relationships. You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

[20:27] You shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor. You will notice that the last five commandments have a descending level of severity.

Just take a look at that. You may get very mad at someone, but to commit murder is truly rare. Adultery happens more frequently, often as clandestine as possible, but always with consequences. King David would have known this commandment, but still committed adultery with Bathsheba, resulting in the death of Uriah and the loss of his throne to his son Absalom. David never regained the stature with his people that he previously had.

So there's always consequences to what we do. If you commit murder, you're going to be sent to jail if you get caught.

And that's why we have policemen in our midst here to help us so that criminals like that get caught. Adultery, if you know found out, you'd lose your stature in the community.

[21:40] People do not respect you. Next commandment, you shall not steal. Straightforward, but done all too often, in many ways.

We can all think of things or time. We have stolen from others or God. People brought defective sacrifices to God as an example in the Old Testament.

Surely a blind or crippled lamb was all right. It is easy to be deceitful in business dealings. You know, it's, oh, we misrepresent that or cheat on weights or anything.

Honoring God is important in how we deal with others. Next, you shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

This is not only a court of law, but also known by the name gossip. It is easy to try and make ourselves look better by exaggerating or twisting this story to make the other person look bad.

[22 : 42] An example right now is the election campaign in the States. Truly, have you heard either candidate say anything nice or uplifting about their opponents.

No one is ever as good or as bad as they are painted in the media. Finally, you shall not covet your neighbor's house, you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

I find this next to misusing the name of the Lord. Lord, this is the hardest commandment to follow.

This is done in your heart, in secret, with a smile.

Jealousy is very poisonous. Examples. Dead has not worked as hard for his house as I have.

The clumpets are always going on exotic vacation. My exotic trip is to the garden section at Walmart. Math is easy when you're a teacher's pet like Ellie May.

[23 : 54] We all face real or perceived that puts us issues, we all face issues that real or perceived that put us at a disadvantage to someone else.

The most dangerous result is when we focus on what others have and not on the fact that as believers in Christ, this world is not your home.

This lifetime is the period in which we make an eternal decision about eternity. After they died, sore-infested beggar Lazarus and the rich man fell out, when the rich man in hell was in torment, begging for a drop of water to cool his tongue.

After the last week, we can imagine that. And Lazarus was comforted by Abraham. So that's the result of the choices they made.

Owning money, possessions, is neither good nor bad. What we do with them is the key. More, bigger, faster, newer. These are all reasons for jealousy.

[25 : 06] Contentment is what God wants us to strive for. This is not easy. It's harder to see somebody have stuff when we don't, or it's not fair because they don't have this.

You'll notice in the last five commandments, descend in severity. You know, stuff in your mind, in your heart is less severe than murder.

Jealousy is not seen as a crime to go to jail for, but murder is. We all grade ourselves on what we have done, so not murdering your sibling as a youth is a great accomplishment, isn't it?

But also notice, as the severity descends, the possibility to commit these sins increases. Not many of in this room have ever committed murder, I hope.

but the idea of coveting, the idea of gossiping, that's, you know, for a lot of us, that's a daily activity. I would not kill to have another half section of land, but if it were mine, not Jed's, just think of what I could do with it.

[26 : 27] when we grade ourselves, we can have excuses for each and every breaking of the Ten Commandments. Again, in Romans, Romans chapter 7, Paul states, what shall we say then?

Is law sinful? Certainly not. Nevertheless, I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law. For I would not have known what coveting was if the law had not said, you shall not covet. But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of coveting. for apart from the law, sin was dead.

Once I was alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me and through the commandment put me to death.

[27 : 38] And this next, verse 15 in Romans 7 is me, is me. I do not understand what I do.

For what I want to do, I do not do. But what I hate, I do. That is so much me.

Yes, I want to do the right thing, but I'm tempted to do the wrong thing. Wow. How relevant are the Old Testament laws.

If God had not laid them out, we would have an excuse to say that judgment is not fair. Most of us are much better than we are evil.

Maybe only Hitler, Stalin and mass murderers and the likes should spend eternity in the judgment for hell for eternity. But when we look at the Ten Commandments and other applicable laws from the books that Moses wrote, we see that we have all broken, all of them, if not physically, then at

least mentally.

[28 : 49] Isaiah 64 makes it clear. All of us have become like one who is unclean. All our righteous acts are like filthy rags. We all shrivel up like a leaf, and the wind our sins sweep us away.

Yeah, we are all, our actions are like filthy rags to God. Revelations 21.8 is this dark list of all who will be separated from God and spend an eternity in judgment of God in hell.

Verse 20, chapter 21.8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters, and all liars, they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur.

This is the second death. That list is contained and is covered in the Ten Commandments in some form or other. This, to us, would be totally devastating except for one eternal fact.

God wants no one ever to face this judgment. He hates sin but loves the ones he created. Romans 6.23 makes it clear.

[30 : 13] For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Nothing we can do, say, pay, is anything more than a filthy rag to God.

He is very clear in the rules that we must live by. John 3.16 to 18 makes it clear that faith in Jesus is the one true answer to the impossible task of following the Ten Commandments.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only son.

No excuse. No excuse. Now is the time when we see how relevant God views the Ten Commandments.

[31 : 36] Before us is the communion table. Partaking of these simple sacraments, the bread representing his body, the blood his life reminds us of what Jesus did for us by dying in our place.

Believers are no longer held guilty of breaking the laws of God, but this is a time to examine and measure our styles by the Ten Commandments.

God knows no one is perfect, but he wants us to confess to him our wrongdoings and make amends where we can. Christ's substitutionary death is available to everyone, but applies only to those who believe he died in our place and verbally acknowledge him as the holy God.

So as we pass out the sacraments, then if you don't feel you are a believer at this time, just pass them by. It's not good to take them if that's really not what you believe.

So we'll just take before we pass out the sacraments, we're just going to take a few minutes. Examine yourself.

[32 : 55] We know what the Ten Commandments talks about. We know where we grade on that scale, but now is a time to really reflect.

And to really appreciate Christ's sacrifice. That he died for us. He took our death.

So we'll just, in a few minutes, we'll ask the two men to come up and pass them out. But just take a few minutes to think about what this means. Thank you. God God, God, say, God, God, him, go here.