

PM Exodus 20:1-21 Commandment 1: "God wants Your heart"

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Date: 24 October 2021

Preacher: Mr Allan Thomson

[0 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[2 : 30] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[4 : 59] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[7 : 29] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[9 : 59] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[12 : 29] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[14 : 59] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[17 : 29] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

This command.

Thank you.

[19 : 59] Thank you.

Thank you.
everyone.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[22 : 29] We cannot stop.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

[25 : 29] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. and love him and to serve the Lord with all your heart and with all your soul. You see how it's very demanding?

You see, idols come from within us. From our hearts. You see, idols are a symptom of spiritual heart disease.

Idolatry is the heart disease of replacing God as the centre of all things with anything else.

And it's something that our sinful hearts gravitate towards so naturally. That's why the psalmist warns us and says guard your hearts for out of your hearts are the issues of life.

[27 : 35] You see, anything anything may become an idol to us. Someone has said, I think it was G.I. Packer said, there is the unholy trinity of sex and shekels and our stomachs.

Sex and money and our appetites. We can worship all of these things. We can pursue them all. We can make them the priority in our lives.

Or we can make pleasure and possessions and position gods and idols in our lives.

Anything that usurps the prime place, anything that we go after at the expense of putting God in the first place becomes an idol and becomes a god to us.

And we do it so easily. We can even put ourselves there, can't we?

[28 : 42] That we are number one. That's what the world tells us. Look after number one. Look after yourself. But God in this commandment, you shall have no other gods before me, is calling us to whole-hearted devotion to him.

You know, we talk, don't we, about setting our hearts on something. What do we mean by that?

Well, we mean that we have something that we desire, that we really want, and we set our hearts on on that one thing.

But that object is meant to be God. That's what this verse is saying.

You shall have no other gods before me. John Calvin, the reformer, said that the human heart is a perpetual idol factory.

We are really good, aren't we, at replacing God with many, many things. The thing that you replace God with in your life may not be the thing that I replace God with, but we are all natural idolaters.

[30 : 04] We all turn into self and turn away from God. And he says, the human heart is a perpetual idol factory.

You see, your God God is what you love and what you seek and worship and allow to control you.

That's what your God is. But this verse is saying that God is to be our God. The God of the Bible.

Not a God of our own making, but the God of Israel. But then this command finally, this command finally is a command to have only the true God as your God.

You shall have no other gods before me. translated another way, besides me. In front of me.

[31 : 20] The emphasis that Moses is portraying here, that God is saying is, you shall have no other gods, no other gods shall stand in my presence, in the presence or in the court of the king, the great king God.

It's the fundamental position of their covenant king God that he will not tolerate any rival to himself. God is a jealous God.

Further down our passage, we read that, didn't we? Because God is a jealous God visiting the iniquity of the fathers, verse 5, unto the generations that hate him.

He's a jealous God. God. No other God is fit to be in his presence. And he will not share his glory or his worship with any other person or thing.

And so it's an exclusive demand, isn't it? You see, the great kings of the ancient worlds, the ancient empires, demanded the exclusive loyalty of their subjects.

[32 : 39] It was deemed high treason to enter into a relationship with any other king or ruler.

And so in a much higher way with God, exclusive allegiance is what is commanded. You see, one of the dangers of not only replacing God with another God in our lives, another one of the dangers for Israel and for us as God's people is thinking that we can have God and something else. Jehovah is to be God alone. Christians cannot serve two masters. You know, in the workplace, in some organisations, if you've had to work in some office organisations or office facilities, sometimes there is a thing called a matrix organisation where you may have two managers, you might have to report to two managers, one is called a line manager and one is called a functional manager. It doesn't really work having two masters to serve because either one boss will be asking you to do one thing at the expense of the other boss asking you to do something else and they compete for your attention and devotion. It's difficult to please two masters. In fact the Bible tells us that it's impossible to please two masters. [34 : 39] Listen to what the writer in 2 Kings 17 and verse 32 and 33 says. This was said of the people of God.

It wasn't said of the pagan nations. It was said of those who had been redeemed. It said so they feared the Lord but also served other gods after the manner of the nations from among whom they had been carried away.

Israel was forever setting up rival gods and worshipping rival gods and also trying to worship the one true and living God. But God says it's impossible to do that.

God says no other gods before me. Not even one is the emphasis. So God is calling for exclusive single whole hearted devotion from us.

Do you remember when the Lord Jesus was in the wilderness and he was being tempted by Satan and in Luke 4 Satan came to him and Satan wanted his devotion and wanted his worship.

[35 : 59] If only Christ would bow down to Satan in the wilderness then everything was an offer Satan was offering him. If only he would fall down and worship Satan.

But you remember Jesus' response he quoted from Deuteronomy and he said worship the Lord your God and serve only him.

Serve only him. You know this relationship that God had with his people his redeemed people is sometimes pictured as a marriage in the Bible between God and Israel between Christ and his church.

The picture is of a marriage. Now I want to pause at this illustration to you. Suppose a husband there's a few here tonight suppose a husband came home and said to his wife hi dear it's good to see you.

I want to introduce to you someone who's special to me. Don't worry don't get me wrong you're special to me too but I've met someone I've met someone else she's lovely and I'm going to spend some time with her but also I'll spend time with you.

[37 : 36] I just want to let you know that some nights that I am going to be with her instead. I think you two will get on okay together.

I think you'll get on just fine. You'll be good friends. You both mean so much to me. Well what would the wife say?

Oh that's a great idea. That's great dear. I'm honoured that I can still be part of your life. Well I don't think so.

I think that the reaction would be completely the opposite. I think the wife would say no way is that taking place. It's either me or her.

You better make up your mind. You need to choose. It's either her or me. And if she were to say that with wholehearted passion, would anyone think that she was cruel or unfair or intolerant?

[38 : 48] I don't think so. She is being the wife she ought to be, isn't she? She has every right to be jealous.

We'd be concerned surely if she wasn't angry. You see, some relationships in life are either or. It's either her or her. And marriage is a relationship, isn't it, that demands forsaking all others.

Can you imagine being at a wedding and someone officiating and turning to take the vows? And the officiant says, do you take this woman or this man to be your lawful wedded husband or wife, forsaking all others apart from Agnes?

It'd be so stupid, wouldn't it? Marriage, our relationship with God demands an undivided heart.

[40 : 09] no split loyalties are allowed. That's the way it has to be with God.

You shall have no other gods before me. Nothing must come between, be placed alongside, take precedence in our lives over obedience to the living God.

And the New Testament corroborates that, doesn't it? The Lord Jesus in Luke chapter 14 verse 26 says these words, if anyone comes after me, if anyone wants to follow me, if anyone wants to be my disciple, and hates not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

and whosoever does not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

So likewise, he goes on to say, whosoever he be of you that forsakes not all that he has cannot be my disciple.

[41 : 34] you see, to have God as your God, what does this mean for us? It means that you live for him in faithful and loyal obedience.

What does that mean? It means that within the 101 things that come your way tomorrow and demand your attention. You approach them as ventures of loving service to God and you do your best in everything for God's sake.

All your work is to be done for the Lord God. The use of your money is to be done as a steward of God. In all your actions we are to ask ourselves the question is this honouring to God?

God demands our hearts undivided devotion. He demands the first place in our lives.

And so this first commandment comes to us all as individuals. It's short, it's simple, it's demanding. You shall have no other gods before me.

[43 : 12] May God help us to live our lives with God at the centre and God on the throne for his name's sake.

Let's pray together. Let's pray. Let's pray together.