

Kingdom: The Law

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[0 : 00] If you would open your Bibles to Exodus chapter 19, Exodus chapter 19 and 20, and while you're turning there, let me just share with you a couple of things background-wise on the law of God.

Number one, in the Old Testament, there were three different types of law, just sort of basically. One was what you would call moral law, the other is called ceremonial law, and the third is called civil law.

Moral law is summarized in the Ten Commandments. These are things that are universal in nature concerning behaviors and the ways that we're supposed to live. They are applicable to every society under the sun.

Ceremonial law governs the priests, the sacrifices, the festival days, the temple, tabernacle, food laws, those kinds of things. And then civil law was to govern a specific nation at a specific time in a specific place, but always grounded upon the moral law of God.

Let me just give you an example of how all this would work. We know that in the moral law, the Ten Commandments, it says that we should not murder. So if you break that moral law, how are you going to be made right with God?

[1 : 17] That's where the ceremonial laws would come into play. But then the society would need to deal with you in such a way, and that's where the civil laws would come into play. So there's that three.

Then there's three other things I want to share with you, and that's the three uses of the law. And I'm telling you all this for a reason. For a reason. We're going to get there.

Okay. Anyway, for a reason, the first is that the law can be used as a mirror, as a mirror so that you can see yourself in your sin, and then it drives you to the Savior.

Secondly, as a restraint to evil. You say, well, how does the Ten Commandments, or how does the law of God work as a restraint to evil? You ever been driving down the road faster than you should have, and then you saw a cop sitting on the side of the road, and then what do you do?

That representative of law was right there, and it restrained the evil. Well, that's how it works, right?

The fourth, or the fourth, the third use of the law is as a light, so that those who are saved might know how we ought to live before God.

[2 : 29] What does he expect of us? How does he want us to live? Now, the reason I'm telling you these things is because as we go through and talk about the law this morning, we're not going to talk about the civil ceremonial, but we're going to talk about the moral law, and we're not going to talk about the mirror and restraint, but we're going to talk about the law as light.

So the moral law as light, that's what we're talking about here this morning. So in Exodus chapter 19, then, beginning in verse 1, hear the word of the Lord. In the third month, after the sons of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that very day they came into the wilderness of Sinai.

And when they had set out from Rephidim, they came to the wilderness of Sinai and camped in the wilderness, and there Israel camped in front of the mountain. Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the sons of Israel, You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.

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, 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. Let's pray together. Father, we come to you and we confess with the psalmist that your law is perfect, and it restores our souls.

[4 : 00] And we need your restoring work in our own hearts. We need your restoring work in our own families. We need that restoring work in our communities, in our states, in our nation, in this world.

And so we pray, Lord, that you would help us to have the light of Christ shining to help us understand what we have in front of us this morning, that we might be pleasing to you in all things. And we pray this in Christ's name. Amen. So just to catch you up to speed on our series, Encountering God, we started with the triune God, the King of the universe, who created all things for his praise and for his glory.

He made a promise in Genesis 3.15 that the offspring of the woman would crush the head of the serpent. In other words, the offspring of the woman would put an end to the hostilities that had developed between God and man by crushing the head of the serpent.

God demonstrated and illustrated what sort of God he is when, by means of this promise, God's narrowed that promise to one man in order to establish a people.

[5 : 20] And as he established his people through Abraham, they went off into slavery, but he rescued them physically by judging Egypt. And he rescued them spiritually by covering them with the blood of the Passover lamb.

And now that God has rescued his people, it's time for them to become a formal community together. It's time for them to be established as a nation.

And for them to be established as a nation, they need to know two things. What law will they follow? And what are they going to do if they fail to obey? And this week's sermon and next week's sermon will hit those two questions.

But let me just see if I can illustrate it this way to help us understand where this is. Like, why are we talking about this? Why is it important? And I just want you to think about the young man who's being courted either by a college team or a professional football team.

They've chosen him to be on their team and they offer him a contract. He signs the contract. Now that he's on the team, now that he's with them, now that he's a part of things, he's got to go learn how to be part of the team.

[6 : 34] You understand what I'm saying? I mean, just because you signed the contract doesn't mean you know how this particular program works. You've got to get in there. You've got to understand who the coaches are. You've got to understand who it is you have to listen to.

You've got to understand the plays. You've got to learn all the things. Well, that's the way the nation of Israel is. God has saved them. He's redeemed them. He's brought them out of Egypt by a powerful hand.

And they are his people, his redeemed people. Now he's giving them instruction about how they can really be on his team. Because here's the truth of the matter. The truth of the matter is that if we say that we love God, then we ought to obey him.

If we say we've been saved, then we ought to live in a certain way that he requires of us to live. And so I want us to see how we can sort of get our training in about how we ought to live by looking at three things about God from chapters 19 and 20.

As we look at God coming down to give the law and the giving of the two tables of the law, what do we see about God that helps us to understand how we ought to live? So I want to see three things about God.

[7 : 44] The first is we see God's holiness. We see God's holiness. Now if we were to keep reading through chapter 19, one of the things that you'll see is you see a display of God's holiness.

Now let me pause there and say sometimes when we talk about God's holiness, we begin to talk about it in terms of what the word means, what all that entails. But I just want you to look at it from the standpoint of that when God who's holy shows up, it's terrorizing.

It's a fearful thing. And so if you look there in your Bible at chapter 19, you look at verse 9 for instance, it's telling us that God shows up in a thick cloud.

If you look at verse 16, it talks about how God is showing up with thunders and lightnings, thick cloud and a very loud trumpet. You see in verse 18 that the Mount Sinai is wrapped with smoke and the Lord descends with fire and the whole mountain quakes violently.

And in verse 19, you see God answering with thunder. All of these images, all of these sights and these sounds that are going on here are meant to drive the Israelites to a place of recognizing that God is a holy God who is not to be trifled with.

[9 : 05] As a matter of fact, you can see the consequences of this. Look at Exodus chapter 19 verse 10 through 13. It says, Do you see what's going on here?

God is showing up on this mountain. He's showing up in this visual auditory spectacle of fear. And God's people are told, don't come past this boundary.

God has put a boundary between him and his people. And he says, do not transgress that boundary. And if someone does, don't touch them to execute them, but stone them or shoot them through.

Because God is a holy God. He goes on to say, whether it's a beast or man, he shall not live. Now, for our modern sentiments, that all sounds like that's a terrible God.

But that's because we don't understand how holy God is and how sinful we are. No one deserves anything other than death and hell.

[11 : 01] No one. No one. Because God is holy and we are not. And so what we see in this passage is God's coming to give his law.

As we see this spectacle of God's majesty coming down in this overwhelming, fearful sight. Like a great army marching across the plains and the dust sort of billowing up and surrounding them and hiding them from view.

God rides on the wings of the clouds. He's coming in darkness and lightnings and thunders with this deadly sight. And every moment he gets closer, the Israelites back up from the mountain in fear of the presence of the Lord.

God's holiness is a terror. There's another story in the Old Testament that illustrates this point.

There's a gentleman named Uzzah. He's in 2 Samuel 6 and 1 Chronicles 13. David has the Ark of the Covenant and he wants to move the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem.

[12 : 09] But there are specific instructions about how to move the Ark of the Covenant, right? The Ark of the Covenant, this big golden box. It's got this big lid with angels on top of it. Inside there's the Ten Commandments. Aaron's budding staff.

There's some manna in there. And this golden top, the mercy seat. This is all about the presence of God. Sacrifices, blood being dripped on the mercy seat. God being pleased with the sacrifice and forgiving them of their sin.

And they're supposed to move this thing by putting poles in the sides and the priests carrying this on their shoulders. But as David begins to have this thing moved, he puts it on a cart that's being drawn by oxen.

How many of you know the story of Uzzah? Okay, so just a few of you, some of you, okay. So here's what happens. As they're taking this thing and they're going into Jerusalem and they're celebrating before the Ark as they're trying to take it into Jerusalem, the oxen slips and sort of stumbles.

The cart begins to wobble. And the Ark of the Covenant has this sort of too tall, going to tip over and fall to the ground, sort of look to it. And Uzzah, being a priest, knowing all the instructions that he's been given about the Ark of the Covenant, reaches his hand up to steady the Ark.

[13 : 26] And when he touches it, God strikes him dead. You see, our modern mindset would say, but you know, he was trying to keep it from getting dirty, because that dirt would hurt the Ark of God.

You know, that dirt would defile God. Or that dirt would like, you know, not be clean. And that dirt would do something to sort of lessen God. And the answer back to that is, remember, the dirt never rebelled against God.

Mankind did. We are the most defiled thing upon the planet. And the touch of a human hand is more defiled than the dirt scattered across the earth.

God is a holy God. And that holiness is a terror to us. And one of the things that we learn about how we ought to live, is that even though we are Christians, and even though we've been saved by the blood of the Lamb, and even though we know that if we were to die today, we would stand before God, we must still fear the Lord.

That's what his holiness demands. If he has saved us, then real Christians who are going to be on his team must live in fear of a holy God.

[14 : 42] Because here's what happens if we don't live with a fear of God. If we don't live with a fear of God, then we will act like we can do whatever we want to do.

You want to know the answer to the question, why is the culture around us just decaying off into the nether regions of terribleness? Because there's no fear of God in the eyes of those in this world. If we do not live with a fear of God before our eyes, we will act as though we can do what's right in our own eyes. Just like the book of Judges.

You think that life around us is terrible and full of wickedness? Go read the book of Judges. But we also need to fear the Lord because the Proverbs tell us that the beginning of knowledge, the beginning of wisdom, is the fear of the Lord.

Without a fear of the Lord, we cannot really know anything rightly. I mean, if God's Word says that homosexuality is a sin and we have no fear of God before our eyes, then we will dismiss that as not being very clear teaching.

[15:56] We'll dismiss it as though we don't really care what God says. The thing is that a fear of the Lord helps us to say, this is the Word of the Lord. This is what God has said.

This is where I will stand. So what does it look like to have a fear of the Lord? Let me just tell you two things. Number one, it means that you recognize that God is the boss.

You recognize that God is the boss of everything. And that what He has said in His Word is the only infallible truth in all the cosmos. Let me just say that again.

To have a fear of the Lord means you recognize that God is the boss of everything and that what He has said in His Word is the only, the only, the only infallible truth in all the cosmos.

That may sort of hit you and you'd be like, that's great, but that has so many implications that we just can't chase out today. Maybe one day we'll come back to it. But that, this is how a Christian is to think, that from fear of the Lord, His Word tells us infallibly what is true about life.

[17:08] And secondly, it means that then we must take that Word of God and judge everything by it. In other words, we're to try to examine, is this a good thing, a bad thing? Is this what we should do with our lives?

Is this what we should not do with our lives? We use the Word of God to judge everything. Now there's some of you, I know that perhaps, maybe you're here this morning, or maybe you'll hear this audio sometime later, you're going to be thinking to yourself, you know, well, I'm not really a Christian, so why should I even worry about any of this at all?

And my answer to you is that you should fear God in a different way. Because you've broken His law, and you're not His child.

And as the Apostle Paul says, it's a terrible thing to fall into the hands of living God. It's a terrible thing because God, who is holy, will not allow His name to be dragged through the mud without consequences.

He will not allow the law that He has established based upon who He is to be broken, and for that to go unpunished. And maybe you're not a Christian, but I will tell you that you ought to be afraid.

[18:28] But there is hope. There is hope. For the person who's never trusted Christ, you can today trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and when you do that, you're covered with His righteousness, and it's as though you have obeyed the law perfectly.

And so, in that sense, you won't ever have to fear the Lord again. And so I pray, I beg you, look at your own life and say, am I really a Christian or not?

If I'm not, then you need to turn to the Lord in salvation. The second thing that we want to see is we want to see from the first part of the law, then God's worth.

God's worth. In Exodus chapter 20, here's the first table of the law. Begins in verse 3. The first commandment, You shall have no other gods before me.

Second, You shall not make for yourself an idol or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me, but showing loving kindness to thousands to those who love me and keep my commandments.

[19:48] Now that's the second commandment. A lot of words in that one, right? When you get the first one, it's like so short, right? And then you get this one, it's really long, because God's got a lot to say there. And one day maybe we'll come back to it.

Third, in verse 7, You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes his name in vain. Fourth, remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.

Each one of these laws deals with the relationship between God and man. It is about worship. It is about worshiping God because he's worthy of it.

So when we obey these commands, we're showing that God is worthy. And if we think that God is worthy, then we ought to obey these commands. Think of it this way. To say you should have no other gods before me means that God is worthy to have all of our affections.

That we are satisfied in him and him only. That we don't need God and something else. You know, as a teenager, I used to sit around thinking about, even before I was a teenager, thinking about the statement, if only.

[20 : 57] If only. Think about that. Think about how many times maybe in your life you said to yourself, you know, I would be happy if only. I would be at peace if only.

Things could be better in my life if only. There would be significance in my life if only. And the problem with if only is that it doesn't, it almost never ends with if only, I just had God.

It always has something else there. For God, for us to show that he is worthy to us, it means that we cannot be satisfied with anything in this life over him.

But the second commandment, think about this. It says, do not make for yourselves idols. You know, the old King James, no graven image. And sometimes what we do is we begin to think to ourselves that what that means is, is that we can't have little statues.

But that's not all it means. It means that we cannot imagine what God is like and say, this is what God is like. I can't tell you the number of times that I read something from, from say the Old Testament, like we've read this morning, that sounds so harsh and difficult.

[22 : 03] And somebody will respond to me and says, well, but my God's not. And I stop right there and say, that's a violation of the second command. When you say, my God's not.

And what you're saying isn't based upon scripture, then you are making a God of your own imagination, violating the second commandment. He is worthy.

And when we refuse to try to imagine what he's like, but just receive what he's like from his word, then we're showing his worth. Or think about, don't take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

You know what that means, right? Well, you don't use the Lord's name as a guz word. Well, okay, yes, it does mean that, but it means more than that. As a matter of fact, I want you to think about it this way. When I was young, my dad would tell me, he says, listen, when you're at church, you need to obey me and do what I say.

When you're at school, you need to obey me and do what I say. Because everywhere else you're going to be in your life, I'm going to be with you. Because my dad was a pastor, so he was up in the pulpit, and I'm back there. So sometimes he'd call me out, sometimes he wouldn't.

[23 : 07] But his whole point was that when you act a certain way, you represent me. And you know, it's crazy. As a pastor's kid, the number of people who kind of connect those things together, and they say, wow, your dad's a pastor.

I can't believe you act that way. Not that anybody ever said that to me. I'm just saying. But there's something about the way that we act makes some sort of impression upon the name of our parents. When we take the name of the Lord God in vain, what we're doing is that we have his name on us, and when we don't represent him well, we're taking his name in vain.

Do you understand what I'm saying? Because you see, this is not just your Sunday morning country club kind of thing for us to do just to kind of mark off our little checkbox for the day.

Like, if we're going to be Christians, then, my goodness, let's do this thing. It's 24-7. 365 days.

[24 : 14] Whether you're sleeping, whether you're awake, no matter what, our lives are to be bent upon the Lord Jesus Christ. And to take his name in vain means that we're not imaging him well, we're not representing him well in this community.

In your family. In your world. To remember that the Sabbath day, we show his worth because we refuse to treat the Lord's day like it's just some ordinary day.

And so, Christians, let me just sort of summarize the kind of the big sort of application of this. And we'll get into some of this. And there's going to be a lot of questions you may have, and you can ask me later. That's fine. But here's the big picture.

If you want to know what it means to love God, obey the first four commandments. Say, well, wait a minute.

Shouldn't I, like, feel something? Well, I mean, you might. Like, that could be a part of it. Sometimes the feelings, you know, lag behind. But if you sit around wanting to feel something about God, then

you're probably not going to spend time being obedient to God.

[25 : 23] You want to know what it's like to love God, you need to look at these first four laws. Because if you have other idols and other gods and you love comfort and work and duty and respect more than you love God, then you're not treating Him as worthy.

If you're not, you know, living in such a way as to image Him around in the world that we're in, we don't represent Him well in our community, then we are not, we are not loving Him with all of our heart and mind.

Let me just, let me take that, imaging Him well, because I just really want to focus in on something and stomp on a few toes for a second. Starting with my own.

If you get angry and you bite people's heads off in order to get your own way, you're not representing Christ properly.

If you complain about anything, then you're not representing Christ well.

[26 : 35] Do you see what I'm saying? The whole point is this big law that we should not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, and that means we represent Him everywhere we go.

We don't get a pass just because we're not in church. We don't get a pass just because we're at the workplace and they refuse to allow you to say the name of the Lord in any of your work.

You don't get a pass just because you're with family that doesn't like God. We don't get a pass anywhere, anytime, at all. We represent Christ all the time whether you like it or not.

And so, how are we doing representing Christ? if we're going to love God, then we need to take a look at these four commands.

I need to make sure that they're in our life. They show that He is of worth. So, Christians, let me just give you a couple things to help you and then we'll go on to the next one and that's this.

[27 : 35] Number one, you need to try to learn to grow in your satisfaction with God. That's a way of talking that maybe you're not used to. But, let me just say it this way.

Nothing should bring you more joy. Nothing should bring you more thrill. Nothing should bring you more delight than God Himself. Including all of the beautiful, good gifts that He's given to us.

I mean, He's given to me a beautiful, glorious gift in my wife. And I love her dearly. I do not deserve her. I'm married way over my head. Amen.

Hey, listen. I'll amen with you because it's absolutely true. But I cannot, I cannot put my wife above my Lord. I cannot draw out of my marriage the satisfaction, the delight, the rest, the peace, the joy that I need for life to be able to survive from my wife.

That is a weight she has not created to bear. But that is a weight that God richly supplies in Himself.

[28 : 50] And so we need to grow in our satisfaction of God. Secondly, we need to grow in our understanding of who God is. And this is called theology. This is called doctrine.

It's a dirty word. word. People have a tendency to kind of feel all weird about saying they're going to study theology or they're going to study doctrine.

And I'm just saying theology is just understanding who God is. You do theology all the time. When you read the Bible and say, well this, I read this verse, this says God is this.

That's theology. And you're doing it all the time. You just need to be sure you're doing it right. Right. And I would also say you need to grow in your use of the Lord's Day for the purpose of worshiping the Lord.

And let me just, let me just say it this way. I can't tell you the number of times I've heard people say that, you know, it's their birthday so they took time off work. Right. You know people who take time off work because it's their birthday?

[29 : 50] Now some of you older people probably go like, that's not terrible. It's like, no. But some of the younger ones, like they'll take a whole week off because it's their birthday. You know. I like to try to look at my wife sometimes and say when it's my birthday, it's like my birthday month.

But it's like, no. You just get the one day. But anyway, the point is so many people think to themselves, this is my day. This is the day I was born. It's like you didn't do anything. Like you just kind of came into existence. But okay, it's your birthday and you're going to take time off from work because they don't want to treat it like any other ordinary day.

And I just say to you, Sunday is the day the Lord rose from the dead. Why would we treat it like any other day? So I think we need to have a purposeful use of the Lord's day.

And that means that even as we take our trips and we go out of town and we do the things we need to do, we need to do it in such a way as to be purposeful to know that we need to be under the

preaching of the word. And it doesn't have to be my preaching.

That's not the point. The point is that this is no ordinary day. This is the Lord's day. He appeared to his disciples Sunday after Sunday after Sunday.

[30 : 55] I mean, if God has done such for us and then given to us such a day to put our minds and our focus upon him, why not squeeze more out of it than we are?

Love for God looks like obeying these first four commandments. And let me just say, there's something to be said that we need to go back to and I'm going to kind of deal with somebody who's lost but also deal with this sort of lagging or this nagging thing that might be in the back of your mind.

It's like, you know, Brady, it sounds like what you're saying is that we kind of need to obey to be Christians. And I don't know if that's nagging in the back of your mind, but hopefully we can just sort of put your mind at ease here.

That would be wrong. This law wasn't given to the Israelites. Okay, this is sort of like a foreshadowing. Remember, God didn't bring Moses into Egypt and then they hand out the Ten Commandments as a little pamphlet to all the Israelites and say, now when you start obeying these Ten Commandments, I'll deliver you out of Egypt.

That's not what happened at all. He came down and he delivered them. He saved them. He brought them out of that. And to a redeemed people, he gave his law for them to obey.

[32 : 20] Why do you think, why do you think Jesus says, go into all the world teaching them to obey all that I have commanded?

What commands are you going to teach them? I mean, there's a lot, right? There's a whole lot. There's a whole lot. There's no way we can earn our salvation.

It's like the story of the great Blondini. How many of you know the story of the great Blondini? None of y'all know the story of the great Blondini? I think you're going to know this when I start telling it to you. It's a typical Baptist sort of story, right?

Baptist preachers tell this story all the time. There's this guy who was a trapeze artist and he rigged up a line across Niagara Falls. Does this ring a bell? And he would go across this thing, right? And it was a big spectacle and he was, he did all kinds of things. He would set up a table and have a little tea out there, you know, on this tight rope thing that he had out there. He then began to take a wheelbarrow and roll it across.

[33 : 20] He'd put a bunch of weight in it and he'd roll it all the way across to one side, roll it all the way across back to the other side. And then he began to ask for volunteers to get in the wheelbarrow. And you know, this is a little bit like what we're talking about with salvation.

We have to get to the other side. We have to go to where the Lord is. But we can't do it on our own. We don't have that ability. We don't have that skill. And so like with the great blondini, you could get into that thing.

But if you get into that wheelbarrow, you're putting all your trust in him. He's the one that carries you across. God is a holy God.

And no one can be with him in heaven forever who is unrighteous. we lack the holiness for that. And the only way to get that holiness is for Jesus to carry us across.

There's no way we can do it. The law is death to us. If we try to keep these first four commandments in order to win favor with God, it will be death to us.

[34 : 41] We obey because we're saved. Not because we want to be saved. Well, there's a third thing that God's law shows us about himself and it shows us his kindness.

It shows us his kindness in chapter 20 verse 12. We see the other six commandments. It says, Honor your father and mother that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you.

You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Again, it's pretty clear that this second table of the law is about the relationship we have with others. As a matter of fact, you can think of the first and second great commandment that Jesus talks about that we're to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind as the first table and to love your neighbor as yourself as the second table.

So for children to obey their parents is a best way of practicing loving others as yourself. As a matter of fact, the reason that he says, Honor your father and mother is because that's the first authority structure that a child runs into.

[35 : 59] And the point is not just parents. The point is all authorities. They are to obey all authorities in their life. This is why we have such difficulty with some people because their parents never taught them to obey themselves, let alone any other authority that is out there.

To not murder. You know, Jesus teaches us that that means that we're not to be angry. Wow. What? Yeah.

Jesus says if we're angry with our brother, we're guilty of hell fire. We're not supposed to hold a grudge. The idea of do not commit adultery is the idea of being faithful to God's plan for marriage and sexuality.

It means that we have to keep our lust under control. Refusing to steal. Refusing to steal shows that we love our neighbor by being honest in our dealings, upholding work as a God-given means of gaining wealth and prosperity.

As a matter of fact, we can, well, no, I'll just leave that off. We'll just go on. When we lie, we refuse to lie. We're trying to hold out the truth. You know, the part of this was that you should not bear false witness against your neighbor.

[37 : 13] The whole point of that was that if you knew someone was being charged with a crime and you had truth that you didn't bring forward, you were guilty of breaking this law. The idea is that we're to constantly promote the truth, to run away from these feelings of jealousy.

So just as I said with the first four commandments, if you want to understand and know what it is for a Christian to practice loving your neighbor as yourself, it looks like these six commandments.

The reason this is so important to think about it this way is because the world around us wants to tell us what it means for them, for us to love them.

But only God can command us what love looks like. And so if we're not practicing these things, then we're not practicing kindness. To live in kindness is to live in these things.

And you have to understand, these things are like case law, right? I know I'm getting short on time, so I'm just going to take one commandment, okay? Just one commandment and just think about this for a second.

[38 : 21] The do not murder commandment. Now this is my struggle. This is the core of my struggle. And you may have heard me say this before, you may not have heard me say this, but I struggle with anger.

I absolutely do. When I was a kid, I struggled with it very badly with my parents, and I feel like that I'm further down the road than I used to be. But this is a difficult thing.

And when Jesus talks in Matthew 5 about connecting anger and murder together, I mean there's some truths that just begin to come out that I think that we ought to understand. Number one, murder is the outflow of anger in the heart.

Murder is the outflow of anger in the heart. Number two, anytime we treat someone with our anger, we're murdering them. Anytime we treat somebody with our anger, we're murdering them.

Now let me just be sure to be equal opportunists here and just smack us all. A lot of times we view anger as nothing more than the explosive type of stuff.

[39 : 24] Where you're angry and you sort of explode, maybe a lot of words, a lot of actions, and we call that anger. And what happens is those who do a better job at sort of stuffing this down have a tendency to be sort of self-righteous, patting themselves on the back, that they don't struggle with this.

But the thing is, is that anger is not just that explosion. That's the expression of anger. But anger starts as this quiet judgment in the heart. And so if you treat, let me just say it this way, if you walk around giving your spouse the silent treatment, you don't explode with your anger, but you just give them the silent treatment.

You're acting like they're not there. You're acting like they're dead. It's a form of murder. murder.

The third thing I would say is that we're called to love our enemies, which flows out of obeying this commandment not to murder.

An enemy is someone who's done something wrong. Their reaction, their reaction to us is some sort of harm, and we're to be Christ-like to them, to love them, to not treat them as their sins deserve, but to give them kindness.

And last, I would say that our anger can never accomplish what we hope it will accomplish. It will never accomplish what we hope it will accomplish. Look at James chapter 1. He says, This you know, my beloved brethren, but everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger, for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

[41 : 01] The injustice we see and our anger that calls it out, we're hoping to either correct the injustice, to avoid the injustice, or maybe even to punish the injustice, but our human anger will always fail to bring about the justice and the righteousness that we wish to see.

So what are we to do? What are we to do? We see God's holy, and we're to fear Him. We see that God is worthy, and we're to worship Him. We see that God is kind, and so we're to treat others with kindness.

So what do we do if we have failed? I mean, if you think about all of these things, I mean, I got through with this part of the sermon to this point. I was just like, you know, this is really not a fun sermon to preach.

And so where can we end this? Where can we take this? And let me just give you this. Number one, and I'm talking to Christians. You see these commandments, you sort of feel the lack in your own life, you sort of see how you've sort of disobeyed, or you see how you, you know, struggle in certain ways.

Maybe it's not the same way that I struggle. Here's three things. Number one, repent. Repent. Repentance is just a change of mind, going to the Lord and saying, listen, I've been walking the wrong way.

[42 : 29] I want to walk your way now. I've been breaking the murder commandment. I've been breaking the lying commandment. I've been breaking the taking the name of the Lord God in vain commandment.

Lord, then you need, once you've dealt with God and you've gone to Him and asked Him for forgiveness, repented of your sin, then you need to confess to others and ask them for their forgiveness as well, particularly as we look at the second table of the law.

And when you ask them for forgiveness, you need to think about it that forgiveness is a circle as wide as the sin was. So if you sinned against one person, it's just the two of you, then that's all you need to go to.

But if there were four or five other people, you need to go to them as well and ask them for forgiveness. And when you ask for forgiveness, you don't say, I'm sorry. I'm sorry as a cop out. I'm sorry means I feel bad that this thing happened.

What we need to say is, I have sinned against you. Will you please forgive me? And then you leave it with them. But one last thing I just want to, I just want to hit.

[43 : 35] Is remember the cross. Remember the cross. You know, here's the thing. When we think about these commandments and we think about how we have broken God's law, the thing that we need to constantly come back to, the thing we need to constantly remember is that this is why Jesus came.

He came to live a perfect life and to die on the cross because we can't obey these commandments. He came to live a perfect life and die on this cross because He knew that we would break these commandments and that we would break them in ways that sometimes we even are shocked at ourselves.

And the thing to remember is that when Jesus came to die, He came to die for His enemies that were already breaking His law. He came to take those who hated Him and hated His Father who were hostile towards them and He came to die for them to take those who were His enemies and make them His children.

And so Christian, if you find yourself going like, man, yeah, I've broken these things. What am I going to do? I tell you, yes, repent. Yes, ask for forgiveness. But look to the cross. Look at how Christ has already paid the debt for you.

Look at how He's already set you free. And He doesn't just take the punishment for you, but you remember in the Lord's Supper we take the cup and the cup means that there's promises that have been purchased by His blood so that He has purchased for you the Holy Spirit to live in you so that you might be empowered to do the things that He's calling you to do.

[45 : 12] The New Covenant says that He will write His law upon your heart so that you will be able to obey. So Christians, run to the cross because He is there because we can't keep it together.

Let's pray. Thank you.