

No Other God

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Preacher: Ray Sweet

[0 : 00] Well, hey, good morning. My name is Ray Sweet from First Christian Church in Greensburg, Indiana. And as always, you can check us out at FCCGreensburg.com or you can go to the FCC Greensburg Facebook page.

But hey, thank you so much for tuning in to hear the Word of God preached today. We are all about getting into the Word, but most of all, letting the Word get into us and transform these hearts to truly beat for Jesus.

Now, a young boy of about 10 was traveling across the country by plane to spend a few weeks with his grandparents. His mom and dad had made sure that he was settled.

The airline crew take great care to make sure he felt safe. And grandma and grandpa would be right there to hug him and get to him as soon as he got off the plane. But he just so happened to be seated next to a seminary professor who saw that he was reading a Sunday school paper.

He was impressed, and so he thought he'd have some fun with the boy. And so he said, young man, if you could tell me something that God can do, I'll give you this big, shiny apple.

[1 : 09] And that's where the rather outgoing little guy piped up. And he said, mister, if you could tell me something God can't do, I'll give you a whole barrel of apples. Now, Meister Eichert once put it like this.

He said, all things are therefore possible to me if I am united to him who can do all things. So, hey, welcome back here to the second week of our series called 10.

We're jumping into Exodus chapter 20. If you got your Bibles there, go ahead and go to the second book of the Old Testament of the Bible, Exodus right after Genesis chapter 20.

And we're even letting it just kind of take us forward into the New Testament as we take this good, hard look at the Ten Commandments. Most of us have heard them recited.

We've for sure seen them as signs in our homes or churches, even monuments in some public places. Chip Ingram, a well-known pastor, even says that these may be the ten most revolutionary words in the history of the world.

[2 : 14] These ten commands from God have informed and shaped so many lives and so many nations throughout the history of the world. So, we sort of know them, right?

We see them. We hear them. And yet, how many of us have ever truly studied what's called the Decalogue, the Ten Words, the Ten Commandments?

And how many of us have truly come to understand them, even standing on this side of the cross? See, sometimes it's those Bible passages that are so commonplace that we've taken for granted and we've never truly dug deeper.

Now, last week we did a lot of the intro work and we talked about how the commandments, this moral law, are still relevant for today. For those who've never truly surrendered to the Lordship of Christ in a world that tells you somehow you can earn your way to heaven, these commands do a fantastic job of showing us how far we've really fallen.

Showing us that we are indeed sinners in need of a Savior, leading us to the cross of Christ where we will discover forgiveness and salvation in the name of Jesus.

[3 : 26] Now, even for us who are believers, once we discover the grace of God, the cross sends us back to the Ten Commandments to teach us how to obediently walk in our faith with Christ.

Of course, all God's Word does this, but these Ten Commandments are such incredible God-given boundaries to help us love God, love our neighbor, and even shine His grace into this world through my example, through my compassion, and through my words.

So, let's jump into Exodus chapter 20, starting in verse 1, and we're going to look at this first commandment that honestly sets the stage for the next nine.

Here's what God's Word says. And God spoke all these words. 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.

Now, did you know that in Egypt, where these Israelites would have grown up, there would have been somewhere around 14 to 1,500 little g gods, and what I mean by that is phony, fake gods that the Egyptians would have worshipped.

[4 : 38] And God sent Moses in front of Pharaoh, the most powerful man on the earth, I'm sure, and He told him to let my people go. But Pharaoh's heart was hardened.

So then came the ten plagues that we talked about last week. But here's the cool thing, and this shows why this first commandment is so important. Each plague that God sent was on purpose. It was a direct assault from the God of the universe on these phony Egyptian gods. In fact, He went after ten of their most prominent gods with these specific plagues and proved these phonies don't even compare, don't even belong in the same sentence with the one true God.

See, next week we're going to talk a lot more about our God who refers to Himself as a jealous God who either has your whole heart or He has none of it at all. Now, on a much smaller level, I think some of us parents can relate to that.

Have you ever been in public with your child, and suddenly they decide that they don't even know you anymore? Some stranger or acquaintance gets their attention, and they act like this person is like the greatest person in the world.

[5 : 48] And when this happens, I'll be honest with you, the insecurities come out and I turn into jealous dad. Oh, I see, they must have paid the \$25,000 when you were born in that emergency C-section.

Or for you moms, oh, did they suffer for 20 hours through labor to bring you into this world? Did they get up with you in the middle of the night and run on two hours of sleep for a year? Did they clean you up when you decide to rip your diaper off in your crib, go number two, and smear it everywhere?

Were they there for that scary ER visit? Are they paying for all your food and needs? Why would you rip my heart out like this, right? And the kid's like, hey, take it easy.

I was just being nice to the lady at El Reparo. It's kind of what you've taught me to do, right? And while I'm just kind of having some fun here, on a more serious note, God makes it clear from the start that He's the only one who deserves to be numero uno in our lives.

He's not one of many. He's not even the best among His, quote unquote, God peers. He's the one and only deserving of our worship, adoration, and devotion.

[6 : 55] So for the bulk of our time, let's talk about a couple attributes of our God. And you know what? For the Israelites wandering in the desert, and for us walking through every trial that life throws our way, why would we want to chase a phony alternative that will leave us empty when we can be fully committed to the one and only, the King of Kings?

So first, if you are a note taker, you can always go to the YouVersion. It's free. YouVersion. Y-O-U-Version Bible app. Go to the menu.

Go to events. Go to First Christian Church, Greensburg, Indiana. And you can see our outline that way. Even take notes off to the side. But here's the first thing. He's worthy because He's all-powerful.

He's worthy because He's all-powerful. And you can write out to the side the fancy theological word for that, which is omnipotent, spelled omnipotent, omnipotent.

And that means He's all-powerful. Now, in verse 2, He says, I am the Lord your God. And as we've taught here many times, different Hebrew names are used throughout the Old Testament to describe the different attributes of God the Father.

[8 : 12] And while it's so easy to overlook this name, the Lord your God here is the name you've heard before, Jehovah, which means Jehovah, which means He is the great I Am.

He's the one who is self-existent. He's a God that never changes. His promises will never fail. And even when you and I are faithless, which is way more often than I like to admit, He is still faithful. And as this name is used throughout the Old Testament scriptures, we see a God who is awesome in power that nothing else or no one can begin to compare.

A God who exists outside of time and space, who is eternal. A God who spoke into the void and created this beautiful creation out of nothing, even that amazing eclipse that we just watched.

A God who created man from dirt. No wonder we like to play in it. And woman from the rib of a man. And I'm not even going to make a joke there and get beat up, okay? A God who had the power to flood the earth because of man's wickedness and even care for Noah and his family in the process. [9 : 22] A God who made a covenant with Abraham and even gave, because they were childless, gave his wife Sarah a child to carry on this family line when she was 90 and Abraham was 100.

Could you imagine that? What was impossible with man became a reality in God's power and purpose. He continued to take, to keep his covenant with the line of Abraham. And even when famine threatened to destroy Jacob and his children, what would become the tribes of Israel, God took Joseph on this wild ride from being betrayed by his own blood, to being falsely accused, to being a prisoner, and then finally took him to power as the second man in charge in Egypt.

All of this to preserve the line that the Messiah would eventually come through. And then as we come to Exodus, we're introduced to Moses, an Israelite slave baby in Egypt. And when Pharaoh became fearful that the Israelite slaves were growing too large in number, that maybe they would gang up and come against Egypt, he ordered that every baby boy born be drowned in the Nile River.

[10 : 36] But Moses' mom loved her child. She hid him for three months from the Egyptians. That was impressive. And then finally, by faith, she put him in a basket and floated him down the river, praying for his rescue.

This was the best she could do to somehow give him a chance at life. And that's when God's power, God's providence, stepped in as Pharaoh's daughter found him, fell in love with this baby, took him as her own, and raised him in the royal house.

Can you imagine the education, the leadership training, all the things that he received that God would use all those years later to confront Pharaoh, to lead two to three million people for 40 years through the desert?

See, no one else has the power to orchestrate all these circumstances for our good and for God's glory. No one else but the one true God who is all-powerful.

And I don't know about you, but man, this gets me hyped up. And I think about everyone probably listening would be like, yes, that's my God, right? He's awesome in power. He's creator.

[11 : 53] He's sustainer. I mean, look at all the impossible things that he has done through the history of the world to protect and to provide for his people, even bring the Messiah into the world to set us free.

And yet, here's where God deeply convicted my heart as I was asking the Holy Spirit to prepare this message for today. And listen, I'm not pointing fingers because God was coming right from my heart to deal with some things.

But I felt him saying, Ray, you can tell this story of God's power, of my power, he was saying, but how often do you not believe it yourself in your own life?

Maybe you can insert your name there too, because God's bigger than that addiction. He's bigger than your water heater going out while your car is broken down, and you have to come up with \$2,300.

He's bigger than that wayward child. He's bigger than your depression, your anger issue, your insecurities, your baggage, your loneliness, and if you're going to meet that special someone or have that baby after all these struggles.

[13 : 03] And yet, I had to take a good, long, hard look in the mirror this week and say, God, I'm sorry for making you so small at times in my life.

I'm sorry for knowing these stories, but not always living like and trusting you like you are, that all-powerful God in my life or the life of this church.

And this is why God sets the stage for the Ten Commandments, with essentially giving his credentials, a very condensed version, of course, but he makes it known that he is Jehovah, the great I am, that he is all-powerful, and nothing else comes close.

Now, I've talked through a lot of scripture today, but now let's put our noses into the word of God for a couple minutes and look at a few passages on both sides of the cross.

So, let's look at before Jesus came into the world, that's called the Old Testament, and then after is the New Testament, as the early church went out in the power of Christ.

[14:11] Okay, so go into the Old Testament, Psalm 145.3, Great is the Lord, and most worthy of praise, his greatness no one can fathom.

And then in Psalm 96.4 and 5, that's been attributed to King David, the runt of the litter, who did things in the power of God, that no one thought would be possible. He put it like this, he said, for great is the Lord, and most worthy of praise, he is to be feared above all little g-gods.

And by the way, that word fear of God, is more so like this holy respect, and awe, and reverence of a God, who is greater than I.

Verse 5, for all the little g-gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. So, he points us back, to the only one who's all powerful.

And then we jump into the New Testament, after Jesus lived a sinless life, went to the cross, rose on the third day to conquer death, and here's what Revelation 22.13, puts loud and clear.

[15:17] Jesus says, I am. By the way, when someone tells you Jesus never claimed to be God, here you go, right here, he does it again. It's many times throughout the New Testament. But he says, I am, which is the name God uses, I am the alpha, and the omega, the first, and the last, the beginning, and the end.

So, this command from God says, that you shall have no other gods before me, because Jehovah is all powerful, and nothing else compares to him.

So, as we embark upon this first command, we're given this context to set the stage for it, that number one, my God is awesome in power.

So, he's worthy, he's all powerful. And then second, he's worthy because of grace. Because of grace.

Now, you can add other words to this, compassion, care, love, all are true, by the way, but imagine being an Israelite in Egypt, slavery is all you've ever known, freedom is hard to picture, your whole life has been governed by masters with whips, and long, hard days of labor, being spoken to like your garbage, being treated as less than constantly, and now, with Moses on the scene, God has showed up, and showed out with these ten plagues.

[16:43] Then comes the word, that the Israelites can leave. And in a rush, everything's gathered up, and the journey begins. Can you imagine, just put yourself in their shoes for a second.

Can you imagine the giddy excitement, mixed with the fear of the unknown, for the Israelites? Kind of like when you get married, or maybe you get that degree, or that training for a job, and now the real world's looking me in the eyes, and although that's a little bit scary, I have this optimism about the future, and what it could hold.

Now, look at verse two with me one more time, from Exodus chapter 20. So we've already talked about the first part, I am the Lord your God, the name Jehovah, all powerful, but now look at this.

I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. While this continues to show Jehovah's power, to get it done, against probably the most powerful nation and army, on the earth at the time, it also shows his great care, and his grace, over his people.

See, when their giddy excitement turned to fear, because of the Egyptian army, charging their way, God removed the barrier, and parted the sea, so they could escape on dry ground.

[18:01] And then, he took out the enemy. When there was no way, they could survive in the desert, with two to three million people, for 40 years, God provided a GPS system, with a cloud by day, and fire by night.

He delivered water, from the most unusual places. He sent food, called manna, that fell daily from heaven. And when they got sick of that, he was gracious enough, to blow some quail in from the sea, to give them the meat that they craved.

When the enemy came to attack, he even gave them the strength, to get the W. And even when they forgot, all that Jehovah had done for them, and their pride caused them to rebel against him, and his leader, with grumbling, with sexual immorality, with short-sightedness, with idolatry, and more, God, although he wasn't afraid to rebuke, and punish, and his perfect justice, God continued to show them grace, and forgiveness, and compassion, and care, and honestly, so much more, as he daily sustained them, even led his people, eventually, into the promised land.

Now, do you know what I've discovered, as I've now walked with Jesus, for 23 years? When I was newer to my faith, as someone who did not grow up around church, I naively thought, that I would somehow reach this point, where my struggles would no longer be there, where I would somehow arrive in my faith, and listen, we should be growing, we should be walking in victory, over things that

maybe used to shackle us, but it's easy in our human nature, to think that there will come a time, where I just arrive, or I've just got it all figured out, or we look at a pastor, or an elder, or a Sunday school teacher, whoever, and we think, well, they must just have it all together, because they seem so perfect at church.

However, the longer I walk with Jesus, I'll tell you, the more I realize, that I am a sinner, in need of the daily grace, of my God.

[20 : 04] It's like God has opened up my eyes, to see even more ugly things in my heart, that need to be dealt with. The more I live, the more I can relate to the Apostle Paul, in Romans chapter 7, when he says these words, starting in verse 15, he says, I do not understand what I do.

You ever felt that way before? I have. He says, for what I want to do, I do not do. But what I hate, I do. I can relate. Verse 16, And if I do, what I do not want to do, I agree that the law, is good.

As it is, it is no longer I, myself, who do it, but it's the sin living in me. For I know that, that good itself, does not dwell in me, that is, that is in my sinful nature.

For I have the desire, to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good, I want to do, but the evil, I do not want to do, this I keep on doing.

So, I know those words were a touch, kind of confusing, to listen to over and over, but what a powerful passage. Please understand, this isn't Paul, making excuses, like, the devil made me do it, or it's just my sin nature, it's not really me, or because I struggle with this, it's okay.

[21 : 21] In fact, the Holy Spirit speaks some strong words, through him, to say that, that we never try, to make right, what God says is wrong.

And I want you to take out, check out a passage, like Romans 6, 1 through 4. But this is Paul, being honest and vulnerable. And I'm glad he is. And it simply shows us, that what we talked about last week, that none of us can be good enough, to earn our ticket to heaven, that it's long gone, because of our sin.

And we also see, as followers of Christ, that we will still mess up. And that's not okay, it's not a license to sin, but the grateful realization, that you belong to a God of grace, who not only has set you free, but he continues to lavish his mercy, and his grace on you, every single day.

And that should always cause us, to be sincere, to pursue holiness in Christ, as we live for him. So, you know, it may feel like, I focused a lot more, on verse 2 today, than the actual command, in verse 3, that says, you shall have no other gods, before me.

But this first word from God, sets the stage, for the other nine. This first one, helps us to see, why, we want to honor Christ, by living, these commandments out.

[22 : 41] Because if you understand, who Jehovah wants to be, in your life, if you understand, his power, and his grace, over his children, then listen, there will be no desire, to break that first commandment.

So, let me end today, by simply asking you, two questions, that I just want you, and I both, just to wrestle with. Just, wrestle, this out.

Okay? And then next Sunday, we're going to dig, a little deeper, into what some of those idols, may look like, in your life and mine. So today, we just looked imperfectly, at two attributes of God, and it's hard to do, either one justice.

We could even list, a hundred more, throughout scripture, and spend the rest of our lives, going through a Sunday morning, series on it. But here's the first question, I want you to, just, just to, to let soak into your heart, and just wrestle.

First, why would you worship, anything else? See, that's what this passage, begs us to ask. Why would you worship, anything else? Once you discover, Jehovah God, for yourself, even experience the grace, that comes through Jesus, you'll never be the same.

[23 : 51] And nothing else, will ever satisfy. He is that consuming fire. He's awesome in power. And at the same time, he's personal, and he wants to walk with you, in his grace.

Here's the second question. Will you come all in? Will you come all in? He's more than worthy, to be worshipped, in spirit and in truth.

And today, I know we talked about, what he did for the Israelites, in the desert, in their belligerence, and their unfaithfulness, but I hope you can see, the parallel. We are those Israelites, in the sense that, we can go astray, so easily, and place other things, on the throne of these hearts, thinking that those shiny things, of the world, will actually work.

See, worship isn't solely defined, by the fact you sit in a pew, on Sunday morning. If that's your meal ticket, to heaven, if that's what you think, is going to get you there, you are sorely mistaken, according to the Bible.

Okay? But it's a good thing, that we sit in church, on a Sunday morning. That helps us to grow. God's word is clear, on the importance, of doing life, in community, with other believers, as we worship.

[25 : 02] But worship, may be better defined, by who you adore, and who you praise, in the quiet darkness, when no one's around. When life seems out of control, where do you actually run, for shelter?

If the titles, and the perfect Sunday school, attendance button, are stored away, where moths, and rust, rust can destroy, the question is, who really has my heart?

Now, I want to end today, with a passage, from Joshua chapter 24. So, we're fast forwarding, quite a bit, from the story, of the Israelites, getting the Ten Commandments, all the way through, their 40 years of wandering, until finally, when Moses dies, and Joshua takes over the reins, he leads them, into the promised land, God delivers their enemies, into their hands, that takes years, and now they're settled in, it's a time of rest, and peace, and Joshua's an old man, about to die.

And he brings Israel, before him, to remind them, of all that God has done, his power, his grace, his faithfulness. And this is what he says, in Joshua 24.

So, these are some famous, last words, right here, okay? Joshua 24, 14 and 15. And I challenge you, with these words as well. Now, fear the Lord, and serve him, with all faithfulness.

[26 : 25] Throw away the God, your ancestors worshiped, beyond the Euphrates River, and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. But if serving the Lord, seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day, whom you will serve.

In other words, he's not saying, I want you to go serve other gods. He's saying, you can't have one foot in, and one foot out. But he says, whether you serve the gods, your ancestors served, beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living.

But then he says this, these famous words, but as for me, and my household, we will serve the Lord. Say that with me.

As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord. So listen, there's no other big G God. There's all kinds of imitations, and we're going to talk a lot more about that next week, but there's only one true God who is worthy of your worship.

So praise him, adore him, and put him on the throne of your heart. Let's pray together. Father, we just thank you for how good you really are.

[27 : 36] Thank you for your word, how you've opened it up to us today, how you have shown us that we need no other God when we understand who the God is that we worship.

So thank you, God, that you are a God who is all-powerful, who has proven himself throughout the history of the world over and over, and you are a God of grace who loved each of us so much that Jesus went to the cross to take our place, to take our sins upon his own shoulders, that he died on that cross, and then on the third day, he rose again to conquer the grave, to conquer death, and to offer us life on this earth and life eternal.

I thank you for that simple gospel message that changes lives still today. So, Father, have your way in these hearts.

Mold us and shape us into the image of Jesus. We pray this in his precious name. God's people said, amen and amen. Let me give you a real quick invitation here, okay?

If you are listening to this and you don't know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, listen, I'm so thankful that you listened today. I'm so thankful because I believe that God is up to something and he wants to move in your life in a powerful way.

[29 : 02] So, if you've got questions about faith, if you'd like to talk more about what's it mean and what's it look like to give my life to Jesus, we'd love to come alongside you. Once again, we're First Christian Church, Greensburg, Indiana.

My name is Ray Sweet. I'm the lead pastor here. I'd love to help, so please give us a call in the office, 812-663-8488 or you can email me at ray at FCCgreensburg.com.

Hey, thank you so much for tuning in today. God bless you and have a good week.