

SUMMER 3 - The Gift of the Law

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 09 January 2013

Preacher: Andrew Reid

[0 : 00] Well friends, I want to begin this exposition this evening by getting you to imagine some scenarios. The first one comes from Australia. I imagine it's the 1960s.

Australia then had a system of conscription for 18-year-old males, and Australia was also engaged in war in Vietnam, and some of you will remember those days. Significant numbers of Australian conscripts were being sent to war.

Well, many were dying. Many were also engaged in killing Vietnamese. And a young Christian man is called up, and he's worried because he knows the Ten Commandments.

And in particular, he's read the commandment about killing. And because of these words and the teaching of Jesus, he has become a pacifist. Now how would you advise him? And how would you encourage him to understand the Ten Commandments?

Another man in Australia has just been convicted of the most horrific crimes. They involve the brutal rape and the murder of an elderly woman. Australia has not had the death penalty for a number of years.

[1 : 08] A number of people are now lobbying to bring back the death penalty because of what this man has done. What would you say? Some of those who are in favour are actually citing and arguing from the Old Testament, where the Old Testament says a life for a life, and they argue that we should follow Old Testament law.

What do you think about that argument? Does it have weight? Would you support it on Christian grounds, and why? I want you to imagine another scenario.

A Christian businesswoman is very successful in her career. She's single. She's climbing the corporate ladder. Her work calls upon her to make significant sacrifices of her time.

She starts missing church occasionally. Her friends begin to worry about her, and they tell her she must rest and arrange time to meet with God. As part of their argument, they quote the Sabbath commandment to her.

Her response is that Christians do not need to keep the Old Testament law. Is she right? Does the Sabbath commandment have any relevance for Christians?

[2 : 17] Friends, these are just a few of the dilemmas posed by the law. And in this Bible study tonight, we're going to examine the Ten Commandments. And we're going to see what we can learn from them.

And I need to warn you that we're not going to answer all the questions that I've posed tonight. I can't possibly do that tonight. Nor am I going to explain all the commandments. But I am going to give you a framework for understanding them.

And I am going to explore one particular commandment at some length. That will be a commandment that we'll get to after we've laid the groundwork for what we're going to do.

In the coming three talks, though, I am going to address the principal issues regarding Old Testament law and Christians and Christian apprehension of Old Testament law, Christian use of Old Testament law, how we ought to think about this.

My hope is that by the end, you'll be able to answer those particular questions at the beginning. I won't have answered them for you, but I hope I will have equipped you to answer them yourself.

[3 : 18] Now, I want to give you two most important principles there. By the way, there's an outline there. You might like to follow it. I want to give you two of the most important clues, if you like, for understanding the place of the law in the Old Testament itself.

Both are, I think, often misunderstood by Christians. Both will lead you to think wrongly about the Old Testament. The first clue, if you want to understand the Old Testament law, is to understand this, that grace comes first.

You see, grace precedes law. If you want to put it another way, you might put it this way. Relationship comes first. And then the obligations of that relationship follow after.

Let me explain what I mean. Think about the context of where we have been to in the book of Exodus and even in Genesis. If you know your Old Testament, you'll know that the nation of Israel begins in Genesis chapter 12, 1 to 3.

There God graciously chooses Abraham. He gives him promises. And we see him at work. Then in chapter 15, he forms a covenant with Abraham.

[4 : 30] Then in Exodus 2, 23 to 25, God graciously hears his people's cry for help and remembers his covenant. He stretches out his hand to save them.

In Exodus chapter 19, verse 4, remember last week? It said that he carried them on eagles' wings and brought them to himself. In other words, God's gracious salvation of his people has preceded this giving of the law here that we're about to look at in chapter 20.

God's act of grace precedes his demand that they obey his law. Although if you notice back in chapter 19, it's even there as well. God graciously forms a relationship with his people before he tells them how they ought to respond within that relationship.

So please, please hang on to this one. Grace precedes law. That is true in the Old Testament. It is true in the New Testament.

We must not let that slip out of our minds because it's very easy to do that. And if you get them around the wrong way, you will get into massive problems. Now, let's move to our second point.

[5 : 45] When you hear the word law, what comes into your mind? Perhaps you might think of, well, speed laws or tax laws or other sets of laws that operate in modern society, represented by policemen and governments and jails and all that sort of system.

And so we know that those laws that we think about in our brains have behind them authorities such as police to enforce them and governments to impose them upon us and to extract money from us or prison sentences or whatever.

And it's because we think that way that we don't quite understand the breadth of the term law in the Old Testament. The Hebrew term is a term that can have a breadth of meaning.

It probably comes from a word that has the sense of pointing the way. So Torah means, can be seen to mean something like or comes from the sense of pointing the way.

And that in turn gives rise to a meaning of direction or guidance or teaching and all of those sorts of words. So law in the Old Testament is therefore not law in our particular sense.

[6 : 55] It may have some of those elements, but it is somewhat different. It's direction or instruction or guidance about how people should conduct their lives. So even a story in the Old Testament can be called Torah.

It can be called that technical term law. So the Ten Commandments and the laws, the specific laws, even the narrative of God's ways with his people, therefore offer guidance to his people as to how he would have them live.

I would even think that the narrative imposes in the Old Testament, imposes stricter guidance often than the actual specific laws.

So there's our background. Now let's take a quick overview of the Ten Commandments. I'd love to spend time looking at all of them. And when in a congregation in Perth, we looked at this chapter and looked at Exodus, we stopped in the middle and we spent 10 weeks working through the Ten Commandments.

I'd love to do that, but we don't have time to do that. So let me give you some clues as to how these laws function. First of all, have a quick look at them again.

[8 : 06] I mean, most of you will know them quite well, but have a quick look at them. Did you notice these things? Sorry, I've just lost my page for a moment.

I think the commandments can be summarised in this particular way. Sorry, again, I've lost my place. Ask yourself, who is the focus of these commandments?

Think about them. Run quickly, quickly scan through them and say, and see for yourself, who is the focus of them? Who is the centre of attention of each of the commandments? Look at the first commandment and ask yourself that question.

Who is the focus of it? Who is the centre of its attention? It's easy to answer, isn't it? It's God. That one's easy. Well, commandment number two, the same, isn't it?

It is God. Commandment number three, it is God. Commandment number four is about the Sabbath. Its focus is also on God. Verse 10 says that the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God.

[9 : 13] Now, what about commandment number five? What's its focus? Well, it's not God, is it? No, instead, it's your parents. The focus, in other words, is on other people.

And the same goes if you look through it for the rest of the commandments. Although, number 10 may just, we'll have a look at a bit later and we'll see what's going on there. But these other commandments, perhaps right up to chapter 10 and including chapter 10, are focused on people. In other words, if we were to take an overview of the 10 commandments, it might go like this, mightn't it? Love God and love your neighbor. That would be a decent summary of the 10 commandments.

And of course, that is what Jesus says, isn't it? Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it. Love your neighbor as yourself.

So if there's a principle behind the commandments, then it is this. Love God, love your neighbor. If you are in relationship with God that's been formed by grace, here is what you should do.

[10 : 21] Love God and love your neighbor. Now that sums up the 10 commandments. By the way, if you really want a really interesting exercise to do, and I'm not going to give you the answer for it.

Take a look at the first commandment concerning relationship with God. Then take a look at the first commandment concerning relationship with others. That one about parents. I want you to think about, is there any similarity between the two?

What is the similarity? Now, I don't want you to spend the rest of the talk doing this. But put it aside. Come back to it later. See if you can work out what is going on there.

See what you think. Okay, let's now give you some other ways to summarize the commandments. First way to think about all the commandments is that they are about, in one sense, taking things away from another person that rightly belonged to them.

Let me explain and get you to think about it for a moment. What are you doing when you worship another God other than the Lord? Well, you were bought with a price.

[11 : 24] That is, he redeemed you. What are you doing when you worship another God other than the Lord? You're taking away the right he has to an exclusive relationship with you.

And what are you doing when you misuse his name? Then you're taking away from him the right to have his name respected in your company and on your tongue.

And what are you doing when you work on the Sabbath? You are taking away the right to have the Sabbath as a day totally belonging to him. And what are you doing when you don't honor your parents?

Well, you're taking away their right to have a special place of honor and respect that is due to them because they are your parents. When you commit murder, what are you doing?

Well, that one's easy, isn't it? You're taking away someone's life. Okay, you're taking something that belongs to them, their life itself. When you commit adultery, what are you doing?

[12 : 23] You're taking away your spouse's right to faithfulness, to your faithfulness to her, as well as the right to the other spouse, person's spouse.

When you give false testimony, what are you doing? You're taking away your neighbor's right to justice and you're slandering them. You're taking away their reputation. So I think that the commandments, in some sense, can be summarized as taking away from or depriving someone of something that is rightly theirs.

Does that make sense? It's a great way to think about them. It has some, you know, it may not be perfect, but it's a good way to start thinking about them. But how can you, think about it for a moment, how can you be loving someone if you keep taking things away from them that rightly belong to them?

Okay? How can you be caring for someone when you're constantly wanting something that belongs to them? So there's a practical way of thinking about how you love God and love your neighbor. If your actions are taking something away from God that belongs to him, then you are not loving God, are you? If you're taking away his honor, if you're taking away his place in your life by your actions or your deeds, you are not loving God, are you?

[13 : 46] If your actions take something away from others that belongs to them, then you're not loving them either. You might like to think that over this week. Here's a good way to think about it.

Think about your actions this week. Think about your thoughts. Think about them in relation to your spouse, your employer, your children, your parents.

Think about your thoughts. Think about your thoughts. Think about your thoughts. Think about your thoughts. Think about your thoughts or your actions taken something away from others that belongs to them.

Then if so, I think that you've broken the core tenets behind the Ten Commandments. Think about your thoughts. You may have done it in your heart. And you may have done it in your mind.

Or you may have even done it in your actions. But if you have taken away from God or your neighbor something that belongs to them, then you have breached, I think, the core of the commandments.

[14 : 55] Is that helpful? You see, I think it really gets at the core of what is going on here. It's not perfect, but it's helpful. And I think it helps us to understand because we tend to think, oh, tick, tick, tick, tick, cross.

Okay? We tend to think in that sort of way. So we might actually have never committed adultery, but we may have been unfaithful in a number of ways to our spouse.

Okay? Now, another way to summarize the commandments is to think about them as reflections about the person who gave them. Let me give you one or two examples.

Think about the Sabbath for a moment. God is holy. And he considers that his people should be holy like him. And one of the ways they're holy is by setting aside days that belong to him.

Think about adultery. What is adultery about? It's about breaking faith with your spouse, isn't it? In other words, it's about unfaithfulness.

[16 : 02] And therefore, the commandment about adultery is actually a commandment to be like God, isn't it? God has been faithful to you. He will always be faithful to you.

Mimic his faithfulness in your relationship with your spouse. Do not be unfaithful to them. And so the book of Malachi, when it's talking about adultery, talks about unfaithfulness.

Because that, in essence, is what is going on. Be faithful to your spouse as God is faithful to you.

Now, there's one more thing to notice about the commandments.

And I wonder if you've noticed it yourself. Did you notice that the Ten Commandments seem to be more than basic attitudes and principles? A good example is commandment number 10, which we're going to spend a lot of time on.

But have a look at it. Think about it for a moment. Coveting is not something that you can take someone to court about, can it? Okay, so imagine.

[16 : 59] You think someone's coveting. Okay, and you go to court and you say, Joe Bloggs, they're coveting what I've got. How do you know?

How can you prove it in court? It's something that's going on in here, isn't it? You can't actually, you can't accuse them of it, but it is something that happens in their heart. In other words, one way to think about the Ten Commandments is that there are no penalties prescribed for some of their failures.

What's more, some of the commandments can't be easily enforced. That means that I think the Ten Commandments are sort of a summary of some central theological and ethical principles of the Old Testament.

In that sense, they are guidance. They're not the be-all and end-all. They're general guidance or instruction. They may be core in many ways. Other parts of the Old Testament will give you examples of how they work out in practice.

Now, having done that, I've got to work out what we're going to do with the rest of our time, and I have worked it out. One thing that I want to talk about later on is covenant, law, and the Christian life.

[18 : 11] However, I'm going to spend a whole talk on that in about two or three talks. So what I thought I'd do for the rest of our time tonight is to work through one commandment in particular and to show you how I think it ought to be interpreted in the light of Christian faith.

That's what I'm going to do. So to get started, I want to tell you four stories. Two of them come from the Bible, and others are reflections on encounters I've had in Christian ministry.

So here they are. And as I tell you these stories, I want you to do something. I want you to ask yourself, what is common between these stories? Okay? Don't bother looking up the passages for the first two.

Just think about it. First story is this one. It's the story of a man called Naboth. And it's a story about a vineyard, and it comes from 1 Kings 21, which you might like to look up later on.

Naboth, you see, lived during the time of a notoriously wicked king, King Ahab, and his wife, Jezebel. And Naboth's vineyard had probably been in his family since the time the first Israelites had occupied the land during the time of Joshua.

[19 : 19] Anyway, King Ahab's palace was not very far away from the vineyard. And he looked at the vineyard, and he liked what he saw.

And so he offered to buy it from Naboth. Now, Naboth, understandably, refused, because it was his. It belonged to him. It had been in his family for ages.

And Ahab the king became very depressed at this. And his wife saw his depression. She said, what's the problem? And Ahab explained. And Jezebel expressed her amazement that the king should see something that he liked and not be able to get it for himself.

He is king. He should be able to get it. So she said, I'll get it for you. And the way she did it was to arrange for some false testimony to be given about Naboth.

And Naboth was accused of cursing God and the king. And he was condemned to death as a result. Now, the people of the city took him out and they stoned him.

[20 : 18] And Jezebel went home and told Ahab, the vineyard's yours. I've got it for you. As I said, I would. And so Ahab takes possession of Naboth's vineyard.

That's the first story. So think about it and see the similarities between it and the ones that follow.

Second story comes from 2 Samuel chapter 11 and chapter 12. Well-known story.

So I'm just going to refresh your minds. 2 Samuel chapter 11, we're told that David's armies are out fighting holy war. David decided he wouldn't go with them this particular time.

And late one afternoon, he gets up from his bed and he walks around on his palace roof. And he sees Bathsheba naked and bathing. And he likes what he sees and wants her for himself.

So David sends his servants to bring her to him. He sleeps with her. As you know, she becomes pregnant. And David gets worried, decides he'll try and cover up what he's done.

[21 : 16] And so he arranges for the murder of Bathsheba's husband, a man called Uriah. That's our second story. Can you see similarities emerging? Third story about a young university student.

He's a very gifted young man. He has high ambitions in life. He wants to make his mark in his chosen profession. However, in the first year of university, he happens to be invited by someone to hear someone else speak about Jesus.

And he's soundly converted. He becomes a very keen Christian. And he gets involved in a number of good, solid Christian causes. However, the ambitions that he had still sit there under the surface. And then he graduates. And that ability that he has is recognized by people in his profession. And he's offered promotions. And he likes the lifestyle that the promotions bring.

And before long, the demand of his work becomes more and more profound. And the lifestyle that his work brings with it requires free weekends.

[22 : 21] At first, the goals of using his gifts and his wealth to promote the cause of Christ is strong. But then gradually, it weakens.

Then attending church and Bible study gets squeezed out as well. And then church disappears at all, totally, except for Christmas and Easter with the kids.

And then finally, Christ himself disappears from any thought or any aspirations. That's our third story. Fourth story concerns a young woman brought up in a strongly Christian home.

She loves her parents. She respects their views and their values. And she particularly loves the family focus. And such a family becomes the thing she wants most in life.

She really wants what they had. She's not an unattractive woman. She has a vibrant faith in her teen years during her 20s and her 30s. However, at the same time, she begins to wonder what God is doing to her.

[23 : 22] For none of the relationships that she has have ever made it to marriage. And increasingly, the men are no longer showing her any interest at all. And then she meets a guy at work whose values are so different to hers.

And he himself has no interest in the faith that she holds. But he does have an interest in her. And that interest stretches to the proposal of marriage.

And she's always, she's been brought up understanding that Christians should only marry other Christians. But she so desperately wants to be married and to have a family that she decides to go ahead.

The day comes, they're married. And the work, his work takes them all around the country and her associations with other Christians just gradually lessen. The Bible is before long never read.

And she only prays now to thank God for the birth of children or before tucking them into bed at night. Sport and schooling and music for the children somehow squash out any Christian commitment or communication of faith to them.

[24 : 25] Besides that, she's finding it hard to go places without her husband. And when the kids no longer want to be involved in anything Christian, he doesn't oppose her, but he can't offer her any support either.

And so Godly, God gradually becomes a distant reality for her too. So there are four stories, friends. Now, the situations may change and you have different stories that you could tell.

However, and the context may be different. However, there is one thing that can be repeated time and time again. Did you spot what was common between them all?

Did you notice the thing that they all shared? The thing that they all shared, the thing that they all had in common, the thing that overlapped between all of them was this, was that the beginning of every shift in their obedience to Christ began similarly.

It began with a desire. It began with something they really wanted. It began with a yearning for something. It began with, in the language of the Bible, coveting something that was not in their possession.

[25 : 38] And it's that desire, that coveting, that is what the 10th commandment is about. So have a look at it now in your Bibles, the 10th commandment. And let's concentrate on it now.

And I want you to remember these stories because we're going to return to them at the end. Let's have a look now at Exodus 20, verse 17. The Hebrew word for covet literally means to desire something, to take pleasure in something.

The word can be used in a positive sense or a negative sense. So underneath both senses is the idea of seeing something that stimulates a craving to possess that thing.

Seeing something that stimulates a craving to possess that thing. Often the word includes the hint of actually taking the possession of the desired object itself.

Can you see now how that belongs to each of the stories?

[26 : 41] Think about David and Bathsheba for a moment. Or think about Naboth for a moment.

What does Naboth want? He sees a vineyard. He craves it for himself. And then he puts, or his wife puts into place, the thing that will actually get it for him.

What about David? What happens? David sees a woman. He likes what he sees. He forgets his ethics. And he just launches into making sure he gets it for himself.

Now, what about the other people that we saw? What do they do? They do exactly the same thing. So now, have a look now at the details of the commandment.

Look there. It talks about your neighbor's house. Can you see what's happening here? You see something. You see your neighbor's house. You want it. And you just do what you can in order to grab it for yourself.

The picture conveyed is comprehensive. An Israelite is not to covet anything that belongs to their neighbors. Anything that is within their household. The term household and the covering phrase means absolutely anything that belongs to your neighbor.

[27 : 56] Nothing is exempt. What belongs to your neighbor belongs to your neighbor. It is not to be the object of any of your desire. Now, can you see how the 10th commandment is an appropriate end to the series of commandments?

You can see, can't you? Because it really summarizes what's at the heart of everything. Because what is at the heart of coveting? It is me, isn't it?

It is that I want something for me. And I have a neighbor who has something else and I couldn't care whether it is theirs or not.

I want it for me. What dominates is me. You see, the 10th commandment captures what sits under most of the other commandments.

Covetousness is about not being God-centered, isn't it? It is about being me-centered. It is not being about other people-centered.

[29 : 01] It's about being self-centered. It's about thinking that you and your desire are what matters and nothing else will stand in its way. Covetousness sits under every breach of the 10 commandments, in my view.

When Jezebel arranged the breaking of the 9th commandment by organizing for some false witnesses, coveting had already occurred in the heart of Ahab.

When David committed adultery, theft and murder, why? He had already committed the 10th commandment, hadn't he? He had already coveted something. When the man and the woman in our earlier story slowly shifted from Christ, what they had already put their desires for Christ second to their desires for themselves and the things that they thought worked best for them.

Think about even Adam and Eve in the garden. Remember what the evil one says to them, the serpent? He really indicates to them that if they had this, they'd be in a better place.

You see, all other breaches of the commandments in many ways come from our deep, self-centered nature. They come from our desire to have what works for me.

[30 : 18] And it's that, I think, that undergirds some thoughts in the New Testament. I want you in your Bibles to move forward to Ephesians chapter 5, verses 3 to 5. So Ephesians 5, look it up now.

And let me read it to you. Ephesians 5, 3 to 5. But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you as is proper among saints.

Let there be no filthiness, no foolish talk, no crude joking, which are all out of place. But instead, let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure or who is covetous, that is, an idolater, has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Now keep your eyes on that passage. And while you've, well, you can't keep your eyes on it and do the next thing I want you to do. Keep your finger there. That'd be the best. Have a look at Colossians chapter 3, verse 5.

Keep your finger in Ephesians. Look at Colossians 3, verse 5. Put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you.

[31 : 35] Sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire and covetousness, which is idolatry.

Do you see what both passages say? In both passages, Paul draws a link. In both, he really says that breaking the tenth commandment is breaking the first commandment.

Coveting, that is, desiring something for yourself as the focus, is to engage in an act of idolatry. It is idolatry. It is idolatrous because it amounts to moving God away from the centre of your existence and placing yourself there.

That is idolatry. And if you've placed yourself in the centre of your existence, you have moved God out of the centre. You've also moved your neighbour out of the centre, haven't you?

Because you've placed yourself there. And the tricky thing about that action is that of all of the commandments, this is the one that is easiest to hide.

[32 : 40] Isn't it? You see, you may not have engaged in adultery. You may not have stolen.

You may not have murdered. You may not have dishonoured your father and your mother. You may never have set up an idol in the corner of your lounge room. But which one of us has not been covetous?

Who among us has not been guilty of the most heinous of all sins? Therefore, the sin of idolatry.

The tenth commandment, I think, really exposes us if you have a look at what it means.

It really exposes us. God exposes us with this tenth commandment. And what's more, he exposes us before him. And that's where I want to finish up tonight.

See, as we reflect on the long list of commandments, I want you to reflect on what you find at the core. See, how many of you have worked through the Ten Commandments and heard sermons on that?

[33 : 50] Or if you're Anglican, every time you celebrate the Lord's Supper, using one of the forms of the prayer book, you go through all Ten Commandments.

Okay, and how many of us have found ourselves ticking them off as we go? Saying, that one's all right, I'm okay there. Well, when you get to number ten, it's pretty hard to tick it off, in my view, if you're being honest.

I bet there are none of us here today who has never desired something that is not rightfully ours.

So, there's not one of us here that is not said of ourself or to ourself, I must have that for myself, no

matter who it belongs to, and no matter what God thinks about it.

Now, I'm being very brutal, but I bet there's not one of us here who hasn't been like that. It can be an object, a person, an idea, anything. I'm confident that there is no one here tonight who has not said in their heart at some time or another, I don't care what God thinks.

This is what I think I will do. And this is what I think I must have. And the reason I'm confident is because I know my heart, and I know that what God says about my heart is true.

[35 : 24] And I know if he says it about my heart, he says it about your heart as well. You see, there lies in my heart and in your heart a deep disposition toward myself, a heart inclined toward myself and not toward God, a heart which does not regard God as its highest good, its highest goal, its greatest joy.

And that's the number, the problem, isn't it? This is the issue highlighted in the 10th commandment, the problem of human sin, and let's not put it so distant from us, the problem of me and of you.

And the worship of me and the worship of you, that is you worshipping you, above God is what the Bible calls, what God calls idolatry. And all of us are guilty of it.

So the only question left for us here tonight is, where can we go? If our covetousness exposes us as idolaters, where can we go? If we're not convicted by our actions in commandments 1 to 9, we are convicted by our heart in commandment number 10.

And if we're found guilty of commandment 10, we're found guilty of commandment 1. Can you see the logic of the whole thing? And if we're found guilty of commandment 1, we have committed the worst of all sins, haven't we?

[36 : 49] We're the worst of sinners. And it's here that the New Testament comes to our aid again, for the New Testament tells us that God knows this predicament. He knows our hearts. He knows our deep self-centeredness.

And He knows our inability to cure ourselves of it. And so the New Testament tells us that God has acted in Christ. And it tells us that while we were still sinners, while we're still God's enemies, Christ died for us.

It tells us that He sent His only Son into the world to die in our place so that we might be the friends of God. But God did even more than this. For God poured out in our hearts His Holy Spirit, the Spirit of holiness, the Spirit who inclines our hearts and our wills to do His will, the Spirit who is renewing us day by day into the likeness of His Son.

And that Spirit inclines us beautifully towards the things of God to love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

The Spirit inclines us away from the things forbidden in the commandments. Things such as sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies and things like this.

[38 : 18] It is Christ who rescues us from ourselves and enables us to be forgiven before God. And it's Christ who drives us toward the love of God and our neighbour, the heart of the commandments.

It is Christ who is the one who enables us to fulfil the royal law reflected in the Ten Commandments. And it's that that we're going to spend time on in these next two or three studies as to how this happens.

So let's pray.