

The God Who Commands

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Date: 09 July 2017

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, as I said, we're going to be talking about the law, and that's maybe the part of the Bible that makes Western Christians feel the most confused and the most uncomfortable.
- That Old Testament law, that law of Moses, and this is a legal code that is well over 3,000 years old. It's spread across the first five books of the Bible, the first five books of the Old Testament, and this legal code is a set of rules and regulations that most Christians in my experience, most Christians don't really know what to do with.
- We tend to look at the law as sort of an obsolete historical artifact now that Jesus Christ has come. And then on rare occasions when we do, we might blow off the dust in that old rule book.
- For example, in an argument about sexual expression in modern culture, you might refer to the prohibitions and laws in the book of Leviticus. And then when you do, the person you're talking to might dismiss those prohibitions because the Old Testament law also includes rules that are forbidding things like the eating of pork and shellfish, blending together two kinds of fabric, picking sticks up on the Sabbath day.
- And these commandments, they seem to belong to another world that has passed away. It's 2017 now. We've progressed to better things. And then within the church, most of us know people who seem to be obsessed with rules, obsessed with regulations, people who on their good days, they're bean counters.
- [1 : 3 7] On bad days, they're self-righteous jerks and hypocrites. And so we start to see the Old Testament law with all of its strange precepts, all of its severe punishments. It feels like you've got this stern, this repressive old aunt who's always looking for an opportunity to express her disappointment in you.
- And that's often the way we look at the law. Now, here's the problem. Those commandments that we are going to encounter in Exodus chapters 20 through 23 over the next number of weeks as we study the Ten Commandments, these commandments that we're going to encounter, they aren't man-made codes.
- They aren't invented by some sort of grouchy relative of ours. They aren't invented by a theologian in a dusty room. These rules and regulations, this legal code, this was spoken by the God who commands.
- These laws are given by the Lord God, by God the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit. And so if you and I, if we stand as judges over the law, then we are standing as judges over God himself.
- Now, this God who commands, this is the same God who rescued the people of Israel from slavery in the land of Egypt. The God who overpowered the king of Egypt with great plagues, who drowned his army in the Red Sea.
- [3 : 0 0] And we've seen that this winter and spring. And then this spring and summer, we've seen that this is not only a God who is great, but this God who commands is the same God who cared for them.
- As they journeyed through the desert of Sinai, as he supplied them with water, provided them with food, protected them from desert raiders. This is a God who is good.

God is great. God is good. God is with us. And now this God is issuing to his people, he's issuing a set of instructions. Now, this set of instructions is well known throughout the world.

Later in the book of Exodus, this set of instructions is going to be labeled as the ten words. The ten words. And we more commonly call them the ten commandments.

So first, you know, let's start with some of the really obvious stuff. There's ten of them. There are ten of these words at the beginning of Exodus chapter 20. Now, here's the really funny thing. Not everybody agrees about how to break down the ten commandments.

[4 : 03] What are the ten? Different Jewish and different Christian traditions have different approaches for where each word ends and where the next one begins.

Now, as Protestant Christians, most Protestants tend to think of the ten commandments as beginning in verse 3 with, you shall have no other gods before me. And then they end in verse 17 with, you shall not covet.

Now, I actually find really interesting one alternative. It's the Jewish tradition that regards the first of the ten words as verse 2. Verse 2 is the first of the ten words in Exodus chapter 20.

So in this scheme, in this breakdown, that first word or that first commandment is this. I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

Now, in our tradition, we often make the mistake of glossing over that statement. You leave it out when you're, if you're ever writing out the ten commandments, we don't even include that on there. But this statement is absolutely critical to understanding the remaining ten.

[5 : 13] To understanding the remaining ten commandments. And it's helpful to think of this statement, I like to think of it as what you might call a preamble. A preamble is a preliminary or an introductory statement at the beginning of a legal document.

Now, one of the most famous preambles in history is the preamble to the Constitution of the United States of America.

So a couple of weeks back, I compared Exodus 19 to the Declaration of Independence. And then last week, Kyle Radburn came in and preached and accused me of treason. And so, you know what?

I might as well embrace it. I might as well just be an absolute traitor. And let's keep going with this analogy. And we'll compare Exodus chapter 20 to the United States Constitution. The preamble to the Constitution, it reads as follows.

We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

[6 : 24] So the preamble to the Constitution, it establishes the purpose and it establishes the intent of the Constitution. And then it offers a source of authority.

The source of authority is we, the people. We, the people. And if you ever look at the original document, the we, the people is in gigantic letters at the very beginning.

It's the authority. Now compare this to the preamble to the Ten Commandments, the Constitution of the people of Israel. I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

So notice here the authority is not we, the people. The authority is, I am the Lord your God. I am the Lord your God.

And the Lord's purpose and intent, it's already been achieved. He has brought his people out of slavery in the land of Egypt.

[7 : 31] He has already shown them grace. He's shown them this unmerited favor, this kindness toward them that they have done nothing to earn. And so from this preamble to the Ten Commandments, we learn that the Lord's commandments are founded on grace.

The Lord's commandments are founded on grace. We learn that God does not expect his people to obey him as a means to earning his salvation.

He didn't say, obey me and then I will rescue you from slavery in the land of Egypt. The Lord does not expect his people to obey him in order to win him over to a relationship with them.

The God who commands is the God who has already saved them, who has already brought them into a relationship with him. Now this is critical.

It's critical to understanding not only the Ten Commandments, but understanding all of the Christian faith. Our God is not like the gods of many other religions. For example, like the God of Islam, who require their adherence to earn their favor, to win them over with good deeds, with acts of obedience.

[8 : 40] Our God has already favored those who believe in him. He has already given his own son. He's already given Jesus Christ to save us from slavery to sin and to death.

Jesus lived a perfectly good and obedient life on our behalf. Jesus did this so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Jesus was crucified and died for our sins, died for our disobedient law breaking. Jesus was buried, but he rose again to life. So that we who believe would also be granted new life.

We would also be granted a promise that we too will rise from the dead when God makes this world new again. This gospel, this story of grace, it is foreshadowed.

It's hinted at in the preamble to the Ten Commandments in which we learn that the Lord's commandments are founded on grace. Now if you were to continue reading past the preamble and scan through the Ten Commandments, you might notice they are not placed in random order.

[9 : 55] There is an order and a structure to them. So the first four commandments prohibit the worship of other gods, the making of idols, the misuse of the Lord's name, and they require a Sabbath day devoted to the Lord.

So the first four commandments, they cover the vertical relationship. The vertical relationship of every Israelite, the relationship between that person and the Lord their God.

That's the first four commandments. And then the final six commandments, they require the honoring of one's parents. They prohibit murder, adultery, theft, false testimony, and coveting. So the final six commandments, they cover the horizontal relationships of each Israelite.

The relationships between that person and the other people that he or she encounters. The Ten Commandments cover one's vertical relationship with the Lord, and they cover one's horizontal relationships with other people.

And so it's no wonder that when Jesus Christ, long after this, is asked what he thinks the two greatest commandments in all of the Old Testament law are, Jesus actually lists, he doesn't list any of the ten.

[11 : 01] What he does is he lists two commandments that summarize the ten commandments. So Jesus says that the greatest commandment is found in Deuteronomy chapter 6. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. Love the Lord your God.

And then Jesus says that there is a second great commandment, and it's found in Leviticus chapter 19. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.

Love your neighbor. And then Jesus concludes in Matthew chapter 22. He says about these, On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. The entire Old Testament. So what Jesus is saying is that these two commandments, love the Lord, love your neighbor, they are the summary, they are the totality of the entire law of Moses.

[12 : 09] If you just boil it down to its absolute basics, that's what it's about. That's what the law of Moses is about. And we've seen this in the structure of the Ten Commandments. That greatest rule, to love the Lord your God, that's made more clear and more specific in the first four commandments.

Then the golden rule, to love your neighbor as yourself. That's made more clear and more specific in the final six commandments. So the Ten Commandments, they teach God's people how to express their love for Him and how to express their love for one another.

Because we all have very different, we can often come with very different ideas about what love should look like. We need rails. We need, it's, these Ten Commandments act like rails on a train track that guide and direct our love.

They show us how to put our love into practice, what real love looks like. So the Lord's commandments are founded on grace to be obeyed out of love.

The Lord's commandments are founded on grace to be obeyed out of love. Now in addition to these two great commandments and then these Ten Commandments, there are also hundreds of other commandments.

[13 : 30] There are hundreds of other commandments scattered throughout the first five books of the Bible. In fact, Jewish tradition says that including the two and the ten, there are 613 commandments.

And, you know, I figure, hey, that's a good number. We'll just run with that. Once again, it depends how you break it down. So let's say there's two, there's ten, and then there's 601. 601 other commandments if we number them according to Jewish tradition.

So the Ten Commandments, they hang on the two. The Ten Commandments hang on the two. The 601 commandments there at the bottom, they hang on the ten. And these commandments, all of them, were given to teach the people of Israel the broad implications of the Ten Commandments.

They were given so that the people of Israel would know how to put into practice the Ten Commandments for the many circumstances that they would encounter in their lives. So these 601 commandments, first of all, they help particularize the Ten Commandments to specific situations.

They particularize them. So for example, they show how that commandment, do not steal, they show how you put that into practice when you're just walking down the road and all of a sudden you encounter the runaway donkey of a personal enemy, somebody that you and he, you're just not even on speaking terms.

[14 : 50] What do you do? You just let the animal go? Do you take it for yourself? The law says you return it to him. Do not steal. Do not steal. Or if you damage something that you borrowed.

Or if you set your neighbor's field on fire. That's one that's in the following chapters. The 601 commandments, they also help to generalize, not only particularize, but also to generalize the Ten Commandments.

So for example, the commandment, do not commit adultery, is expanded to forbid many other forms of sexual activity beyond adultery. The commandment, do not give false testimony against your neighbor, that's a very specific situation, a courtroom situation.

But then we see later that that is expanded to include all forms of lying, all forms of deceit. In short, these 601 commandments, they provide a sort of a case law, a bit of a case law that helped the Israelite judges know how to interpret the Ten Commandments, know how to apply them to the complex, complicated situations of real life.

They show how to ensure that a just and a right decision are made. So the 601 commandments, they teach the people how to express the Ten Commandments and therefore, how they can express their love for God and their love for one another.

[16 : 15] The Lord's commandments are founded on grace to be obeyed out of love. Now you might be thinking, well, okay, nice history lesson, that's great for the Israelites.

What about us? What about us today? After all, most of those 613 commandments, a lot of them don't seem very relevant to us.

I mean, most of us, we don't own oxen or donkeys anymore. There's a lot of commandments that keep under control the institution of slavery, which was part and parcel of the ancient world.

Rebandoning slavery in the ancient world was absolutely unthinkable because it was so much a part of all the culture, but we have abandoned it now. Thank God. And so now, what's the point of all those laws that restrict and regulate the slavery?

Under the new covenant, under this new relationship we have with God that's established by Jesus Christ, Christians no longer offer animal sacrifices. We no longer perform ritual washings.

[17 : 14] We no longer restrict ourselves from eating certain kinds of food. food. So what's the point? What's the point of all these old laws? And you could go on and say this new covenant, this new regime established by Jesus, even in the New Testament, it is contrasted sharply with the old covenant that was established at Mount Sinai in the book of Exodus.

The New Testament authors, they describe the old covenant as a shadow that points to the reality of the new covenant. The old covenant is an earthly imitation of the heavenly realities of the new covenant.

The old was only meant to be temporary. It's grown obsolete with the coming of the new and eternal covenant. The old covenant corresponded to a specific geographical location of worship, a specific people group, the nation of Israel.

The new covenant extends the worship of the Lord throughout the earth to all the nations of the world. The ministers of the old, they were these priests from the tribe of Levi. The minister of the new covenant is the great high priest, Jesus Christ.

The old covenant, it was written in letters on tablets of stone. The new covenant is written on our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Under the old covenant, God was the master. His people were his subjects.

[18 : 29] Under the new, God is our father. His people are his sons. And so we've got this massive regime change, this great revolution in God's relationship with his people.

So, given that, you might be tempted to start thinking, should we do as the world around us suggests? Should we abandon the Old Testament law?

Should we abandon the rules and regulations that maybe you think are embarrassing? Should we regard this Old Testament law as some sort of extra credit for seminary students, for keener Christians?

For the rest of us, it's unnecessary. Should we discard the law like we would discard an old-fashioned dress, an old computer, an old and obsolete cell phone? Well, you might already guess what my answer is going to be.

No. No. Here is why. The Lord's commandments are founded on grace to be obeyed out of love, and they are authoritative today. They are authoritative today.

[19 : 35] Now, how can I say that they have authority over us when I've just offered a long list of reasons that we could give to say that they don't have authority over us?

How do we reconcile this? Well, this is an issue that Christian scholars, I mean, frankly, they've written volumes and volumes about for 2,000 years, and there is absolutely no way to cover all of this in a single sermon, not even in a year's worth of sermons.

This is an enormous subject, but I think it's helpful for us to consider an illustration of how legal authority works. And so, once again, third and final time, I'm going to go back to American history.

Again, I promise you, this time I really, really tried hard. I wanted to use Canadian history. Okay, I wanted to throw you guys a bone a little bit, so I started studying the process of Canadian independence, and it was so complicated.

We'd have to spend a year's worth of sermons just going over the Canadian independence just so I could use an illustration. So forget it. We're going back to something much simpler, the process of American independence.

[20 : 42] July 4, 1776, Declaration of Independence is signed. The United States of America severs its loyalty to Great Britain. Okay? Simple, right? Now, if you were an American colonist at the time, you could truthfully say after this date, Americans are no longer under British rule.

They are no longer under British law. Now, part of British law is the English legal system that includes this system that's called common law.

Common law is a long history of court decisions, and together, this long history of court decisions have set a legal precedent over the centuries. So how common law works is that a judge is, a case is brought before a judge, and what the judge does is in order to offer a ruling, the judge will look back to previous decisions, look back to the decisions of the judges that came before.

That's how legal precedent works. That's the system of common law that is followed not only in England, not only in English Canada, it's actually followed in the United States as well.

And what's really interesting is that after 1776, Americans, they're no longer under English common law, so you'd think, okay, English common law, this legal precedent, that no longer has authority for them.

[22 : 06] Throw out all those law books. That's not what happened. The Americans actually continued to recognize English common law as an authority for their own courts.

So let me give you an example. One of the very first decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court. It was like, I just started searching from the very first ones because I figured it wouldn't take long to find this, and it was like the third case. The case was Chisholm versus the state of Georgia, decided in 1793, and we have an argument from the first attorney general of the United States, a man named William Randolph, and here's the advice that Randolph provided to the Supreme Court.

In the succeeding paragraph, we read a comment on these words when it is said that in cases in which a state shall be a party, the Supreme Court shall have original jurisdiction. Is not a defendant a party as well as a plaintiff?

If authority be necessary for so notorious a definition, recur to the practice of the Court of Chancery by Joseph Harrison, Volume 1, page 35, where it is observed that in this court, that is, in the High Court of Chancery of England, suits are generally commenced, prosecuted, and defended by parties in their own names only.

Well, most of that doesn't matter, so don't worry about it if you didn't follow all the legal mumbo-jumbo. What matters is this. Randolph needed to find an authority to appeal to. The authority that he appeals to is the practice of the High Court of Chancery of England.

[23 : 38] This is English common law. Randolph is no longer under that law, and yet he appeals to that law as an authority to govern the people of the United States. Very interesting.

It still has an authority. And that being said, English common law was no longer binding in the same way now that the United States was independent from Great Britain.

So, for example, the Constitution was amended with a Bill of Rights. This Bill of Rights guaranteed rights to its citizens that hadn't been guaranteed to English citizens. Rights like freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly.

those were at that time not rights granted to English citizens. But thanks to the Bill of Rights and to many other American innovations, new legal precedents were formed.

New legal precedents that caused American common law to diverge from English common law. So English common law, it was authoritative for the new American nation, and yet Americans were not under the law.

[24 : 39] Both are true. Now, as Christians belonging to the kingdom of God, a nation under a new covenant, we are in a similar position. The Apostle Paul, he explains his attitude toward the old covenant in 1 Corinthians 9, and Paul is telling the church in Corinth about his approach to evangelism.

Paul is proclaiming, announcing the good news of Jesus Christ, and Paul is explaining how he adapts his lifestyle to the people that he's living among. He adapts his lifestyle.

When he's with Jews, he's adapting his lifestyle to the Jews who are under the Old Testament law. If he's living among Gentiles, he adapts his lifestyle to Gentiles who are outside the Old Testament law.

And so here's what Paul writes. Though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all that I might win more of them. To the Jews, I became as a Jew in order to win Jews.

To those under the law, I became as one under the law, though not being myself under the law, that I might win those under the law.

[25 : 48] To those outside the law, I became as one outside the law, not being outside the law of God, but under the law of Christ, that I might win those outside the law.

So notice some things here. Paul is portraying himself as no longer being under the law of Moses. He's no longer under the law of Moses. And yet he is not living in some sort of state of anarchy.

You know, no laws apply to me anymore. That's not the case. He's not freed from all legal restrictions. Paul is not outside the law of God. That's what he says. Rather, he is under the law of Christ.

He's under the legal code of the new covenant. Now what is this legal code of the new covenant? It's the law given by Jesus Christ in Matthew chapter 22. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

This is the great and first commandment and a second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. So how do you and I, how do the people of God under the new covenant, how do we obey these laws of love?

[26 : 57] How do we love the Lord? How do we love our neighbor? Well, what we do is thankfully we've been given an authority. We've been given a legal precedent that's set by the Old Testament law.

This precedent has authority over us even though we, like Paul, are no longer under the law of Moses but are instead under the law of Christ. And so the old covenant law that is given through Moses, it is authoritative today.

It is authoritative today to those of us who believe in Jesus Christ and who are living under his new covenant. And you can see how this plays out. You can see this play in all sorts of places in the New Testament where the Old Testament law is quoted and referred to.

In one of Paul's letters in 1 Timothy chapter 5, I always found this one really interesting. Paul is writing about, of all things, leadership in the church. That's something that the Old Testament law had nothing to say about because there was no church at the time.

And in order to regulate how a church should be led though, Paul doesn't say, well, the Old Testament law has nothing to say about this so I'm just going to make up some rules here. And what he does is he turns to the authority of precedent found in the law of Moses.

[28 : 08] And so here's what he says in 1 Timothy chapter 5. Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor. And he's referring there to financial compensation.

Be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the scripture says, you shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain. Why is it that when he's talking about elders he immediately starts thinking about oxen?

I don't know how to feel about that. But you shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain and the laborer deserves his wages. Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.

witnesses. So, that reference to muzzling an ox, this idea that, hey, if an ox is working, don't prevent it from eating the food that it's working for.

And then that requirement of two or three witnesses. Both of those are drawn from the book of the law in Deuteronomy. Now notice that Paul uses them as a legal precedent and he does that by examining the original intent of each law.

[29 : 19] What's the principle behind this? What's the idea this is teaching us? And then he takes that principle and he adapts the laws to a new cultural setting. And this is exactly the way the common law works.

That's how common law works. And this is how we as Christians are meant to use the old covenant law today. And at the same time the reason that we have a new covenant is because Jesus Christ our Lord when he came to earth 2,000 years ago he inaugurated his new kingdom.

And so we not only have cultural and geographical differences to consider there's one other big difference. We have a new era in salvation history because Jesus has fulfilled the law of the old covenant.

And that's why the apostle Paul writes in Colossians chapter 2 let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.

These are a shadow of things to come but the substance belongs to Christ. These are a shadow the substance the reality belongs to Christ.

[30 : 26] It's kind of funny it's like Jesus Christ he portrays him as standing astride history and his shadow is being cast back in time. And that shadow is the old covenant and these laws.

these are points of divergence with the old covenant law that's what Paul is saying questions of food or drink questions about special days in the Jewish calendar.

Just as American law began to diverge from English law with the advent of the Constitution now the new covenant law of Christ diverges from the old covenant law of Moses because the law of Moses including its food its calendar regulations it was meant to direct us to Jesus Christ as the Messiah as God's chosen king.

And now that the reality has come the shadow is obsolete and yet as we study the shadow the shadow helps us understand who this Messiah is that cast that shadow back in time back over the old covenant that directs our attention toward him.

Even this shadow this old covenant law has authority for us today. The Lord's commandments are founded on grace to be obeyed out of love they are authoritative today. And so that leads us to our final question our question of purpose.

[31 : 46] Why? What was the purpose of giving the old covenant law? Why did God give this law to the people of Israel? What response did God expect from the people of Israel?

What response does he expect from us today? Well when the Lord spoke the ten commandments to the people of Israel from Mount Sinai here's how they responded in Exodus chapter 20 verses 18 through 21.

Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking the people were afraid and trembled and they stood far off and said to Moses you speak to us and we will listen but do not let God speak to us lest we die.

Moses said to the people do not fear for God has come to test you that the fear of him may be before you that you may not sin. The people stood far off while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was.

Now a few weeks back we examined this response of fear. We saw that the people's response of fear it has both good and has bad elements to it. Both good and bad in here.

[32 : 59] What's good here is that the people understand the Lord is not a safe God. There is a danger in approaching his presence. He is great. They are obedient to the warning that the Lord has offered them.

Don't approach the mountain. They're recognizing that God is great. What isn't good here is this servile fear that they have.

This fear that Moses warns them again against in verse 20 when he says do not fear because they're perceiving the Lord as dangerous but not delightful. Dangerous but not delightful.

How many of us can say the same about the way we perceive the Lord and the way we perceive his laws today? Strict, dangerous, severe, but not delightful.

The people are perceiving his glory as a threat not as a test. They perceive the Lord as great but not as good. and they're cowering before him as slaves the way that they cowered before their cruel and abusive master Pharaoh.

[34 : 06] They think that he's like Pharaoh. But a real full-fledged fear of the Lord will see God as both great and good.

When we fear the Lord we see that the Lord's commandments are founded on grace to be obeyed out of love. They are authoritative today and demand a reverent response.

They demand a reverent response. The Lord expects a reverent response to his law. He has given it for the purpose of producing a reverent response.

Now, once again, that's a nice pie-in-the-sky idea. A reverent response to his law. What does this mean in practical terms? Well, it means by giving the law the Lord has three uses for it.

Three ways that we are to respond with reverence. The theologians call these the three uses of the law. And the first use of the law is to act as a mirror. To act as a mirror.

[35 : 06] The law reveals the God who commands. The people know that he is great but the law reveals that he is also good. And you and I are meant to reverently examine the law to see how it reveals the nature of the Lord.

And when we do the law serves as a mirror that is held up to us. The law shows us that we are neither great nor good. And in so doing the law demonstrates to us who God is and who we are.

That's why the people of Israel were so afraid. One reason. Because they got a clearer picture of who God was and therefore of who they were. The first use of the law is to act as a mirror.

The second use of the law is to curb our sinful behavior. It's to curb our sinful behavior. Now the law can't curb our sinful thoughts. It can't make your heart stop desiring wrong things.

But the God who commands his warnings and penalties in his law they do limit our tendency to act on sinful thoughts when we reverently listen to the law. The law won't change your heart but the law can help us function in an orderly manner in the church and in society by hindering the sin inside of us from being acted upon.

[36 : 24] And that's one of the reasons why Moses says that the law is given that you may not sin. So that's the second use of the law to curb our sinful behavior. And then finally the third use of the law is to guide us in righteous living.

The God who commands has given us expectations for our behavior. His law it teaches us how we're to conduct ourselves in the household of God as part of God's royal family.

So you and I we reverently study his law so that we know how to honor him, so that we know how to imitate him as our father. How to be a chip off the old block as you might say.

That's the other way that the law is given. That you may not sin. The third use of the law is to guide us in righteous living. So taken together these three uses of the law, they help you and me respond with the proper fear of the Lord.

The law mirrors, curbs, and guides us so that the fear of the Lord empowers us to love him and to love one another in specific concrete ways.

[37 : 36] And over the next ten plus weeks we're going to see how this takes place. These specific concrete ways in which our fear of the Lord and our love for the Lord are expressed.

That's why Jesus treasured and valued the law of the Old Testament. The law, it reveals that we are not great, we are not good. We don't obey it.

But it reveals that Jesus is great, that Jesus is good because he obeyed it perfectly, he loved the Lord his God perfectly, he loved other people perfectly.

the law curbs our tendency to act on our sin. With Jesus there was nothing to curb. He was pure and holy, he is without any sinful thoughts or desires.

The law guides us in righteous living. Jesus revealed his own righteousness by memorizing the law, by studying the law, by quoting the law as his guide to perfectly obey his father.

[38 : 41] father. Jesus loved the law of the Lord with all his heart. And so Jesus perfectly fulfilled the law. He did the one thing no other human being has ever done.

He perfectly fulfilled the law. He fulfilled the terms of the old covenant on behalf of all who believe in him and who are united to him by faith. And so Jesus welcomed you and me into his kingdom by inaugurating a new covenant sealed in his blood that he shed on Calvary at his crucifixion.

That's why Jesus told his disciples in Matthew chapter 5, do not think that I have come to abolish the law of the prophets. I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

For truly I say to you until heaven and earth pass away not an iota not a dot will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.

But whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. I urge you if you want to be called great in the kingdom of heaven, if you want to spend eternity with Jesus Christ our Lord, eternity in love for God, love for one another, the only way is through faith in Jesus Christ.

[40 : 16] The Jesus who loved the law that calls us to listen to it and to do it. Over the next three months as we teach these commands to learn how to live the righteous love of the God who commands, we're going to find that in the law we see that God is good.

The Lord's commandments are founded on grace to be obeyed out of love. They are authoritative today and they demand a reverent response. Let's pray.