

Extraordinary Relationship

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[0 : 00] Thank you.

I believe the answer would most likely be no and depend on where the proposal is taking place. If this is at the gap, we might end up reading on the news that someone got pushed over for a proposal gone wrong. A marriage relationship means two people exclusively devoted to each other. We put boundaries in place to honor and protect that relationship. If we are unwilling to accept anything else less than that standard, I wonder why we are not treating God with the same standard, who has loved us exclusively.

There is no one on earth who failed a relationship higher than the extraordinary God of the Bible. We have been looking into the book of Exodus of the Old Testament to see the interaction between the extraordinary God and the ordinary people.

[1 : 41] The event of Exodus is about God saving and redeeming the people of Israel, taking them out of slavery under Egypt's king's pharaoh to a land he promised.

Instead of letting his people, his sons, serve an earthly king, the heavenly king and father of all nations want his people to serve and worship him alone.

Recapping from chapter 4, verse 21 to 23 is a background and the context of the book of Exodus. The Lord said to Moses, when you return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders I have given you the power to do.

Then say to Pharaoh, this is what the Lord says, Israel is my firstborn son. And I told you, let my son go so he may worship me. But you refuse to let him go so I will kill your firstborn son.

We have spoken of Moses' wonder and events of God killing Pharaoh's firstborn over the last five weeks. If you have missed any of those sermons, please visit our website and use our app to catch up.

[2 : 57] With today's passage, we come to a significant moment of Exodus. God led his people through the wilderness between chapter 15 to 18, then came to a mountain in the Sinai Desert.

The mountain also called Sinai. After chapter 19, God's people stationed in front of the mountain Sinai and took their toll to move again in the later book of the Old Testament.

At Mount Sinai, God established his confidence with his people by giving his law. The giving of the law is one of the most significant redemptive historical events.

Through his servant Moses, God set forth the foundation of his redemptive relationship with the nations of Israel and his world.

He called us, he tells us his expectation of how we would approach him and treat one another. At Mount Sinai, God's people received the heart of their old confidence.

[4 : 05] And Moses reached the pinnacle of his work as a mediator. Let's look at three ascents in the preparation to receive the law. The law itself in its two dimensions.

And the mediator, the one and only. So three, two, one. When we read between chapter 15 to 18, it may seem that Israel was constantly putting God to the test.

They went, they want to turn back to Egypt. They grumble and complain when they were hungry and thirsty. When God give them bread, they want the meat.

However, it was God who was putting them to the test. The wilderness was God's way of ripping Israel's self-love and self-sufficiency out of his people.

Much as he had done with their leader, Moses. Remember Moses spent 40 years in a desert wasteland, transformed from a prideful fugitive to God's servant.

[5 : 09] God is preparing his people in the wilderness. What needed to die in the wilderness and Sinai was their sense that they could go it alone.

They also need to learn that life after redemption was not meant to be easy. It's hard road to the land of promise. If you ask any of your Christian friends, they will most likely have a wilderness experience about their life that they can share with you.

The whole chapter 19 to 20, verse 2, reveals something about the role, the law in God's relationship with his people. At Mount Sinai, God cemented his covenant with his baby nation that he had elected from all the nations of the earth to be his firstborn son.

God set the stage of giving the law by establishing the nature of his relationship with his people. God shared with his children how they were to serve him.

He taught them how to live and how to worship him. He gave Moses and the people a definitive distilled declaration of his moral law in the Ten Commandments.

[6 : 31] In chapter 19, Moses ascended the mountain many times to enter the presence of God. And each time he descends to share God's word with the people.

What do we learn about God and his relationship to his people from each of these ascents? The first ascents, in verse 38, verse 3 to 8, served to reassure Moses and the people that God is with them and love them.

In verse 4 to 6, it says, You yourself have seen what I did to Egypt and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.

Now if you obey me fully and keep my confidence, and out of all nations, you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

God brought the people to himself, intending for us to be his treasured possession. Although he owns the whole earth, he chose them to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

[7 : 42] God has a particular plan for his people, and he lovingly expects us to live according to his plan. The second ascents, in verse 9 to 13, which was read out earlier by Pharaoh, confirmed the holiness of God.

God, while leading to his people, may also be separated from them because of his holiness. We see that from the setting of the boundary and the command for Moses to consecrate the people before God come to them.

God's holiness and our human sinfulness is a dilemma that only God can fix, and he did fix it. The third ascents is from verse 16 to the end of the chapter.

Confirm that Moses is God's undisputed mediator. God does not speak to Israel directly, but he spoke to Moses directly in front of them.

And mediated his message through Moses. But Moses was not the ultimate mediator. I will explain this after we look at the law itself.

[8 : 56] As the second ascents demonstrate, there is no negotiation regarding the human's relationship with God. God, as a sovereign king, established the parameter of his relationship with his people.

The Ten Commandments was given in a unique, original, redemptive, and confident context. However, they have often been taken out of its original context.

Which is very easy to be done. Because those who know the Bible often go straight to Exodus 20, verse 3 to quote them. We read out verse 1 and 2 and then jump to verse 18 to highlight what is said before and after the commandments.

The law was shared with Moses and Israel when they were exhausted from their wandering in the wilderness. They wanted to enter the land that God had promised them, but they were not ready. God had not finished his preparatory work with them. The people of Israel need to understand what it means to live in a confident relationship, in confidence with God who had brought them out of Egypt.

[10 : 13] They need to understand God's love and his expectation. The law was given in this context. God emphasized this point in verse 1 and 2.

And God spoke all these words. I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. God reminded Israel that he established a relationship with them by liberating them from the bondage that they experienced in Egypt.

As I already said, when God gives a moral law, he did not give the law to establish his relationship with the Israelites. He gave it because he already had a relationship with his people.

And he wanted them now to learn how to express this relationship faithfully. Throughout the ages, the people of God meant to treat the law with this same attitude and apply them to their life. The law was given to Israel because God loved his children. And he wanted to instruct them regarding how to please him and how to live wisely and well in the land he was giving them. [11:52] We can look at the Ten Commandments in two sections, in terms of two dimensions of relationship. One goes up and down, and the other goes across. If you are a physical person, think about the cross.

The first five commandments set the boundary and parameter of our interaction with God, the vertical. The detail of the first five commandments would enforce the idea that Israel's relationship with God was not to be at the mysterious and irrational level. They were to enjoy a personal and moral fellowship with God based on his instruction as an integral part of the whole experience of God coming to them. The relationship is based on understanding and obedience. The fundamental principle of living in a relationship with God, who had graciously brought them out of the land of slavery and consecrated them to himself, is exclusive devotion.

The avoidance of idolatry, the sanctifying of God's name, the observance of the Sabbath, is a way of showing exclusive devotion to God, who had redeemed them.

[13:06] The second section, the horizontal, is about obedience to God in the everyday relationship of family and nation. These commandments instruct Israel on how to treat one another.

Murder, adultery, theft, false testimony were all prohibited by God. With these commandments, God reminds his people that loving their neighbors is as important as loving him, because each human being is made in the image of God.

With the last commandment addressing not just the action, but also what is going on in the heart, God emphasized the most critical lesson of his expectation.

God does not just want your outward obedience. He wants your whole body, your mind, and most of all, your heart. Jesus said in Mark chapter 7, verse 21 to 22, All these come from the heart.

Looking at the Ten Commandments in the shape of the cross was taught by Jesus in Matthew 22, verse 36, when he was asked, Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?

[14:38] He gave the best summary of the nature of these commandments by replying, Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.

And the second one is like this. Love your neighbor as yourself, as the Lord and the prophet hang on these two commandments. Like so much of the Old Testament, Revelation, the Ten Commandments can only be fully understood through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Moses was a human vessel that God chose to communicate his law to his people. But Jesus was the one who fulfilled that law, both in meaning and in practice.

God gave his law through Moses. And we read in the end of chapter 20 that the people also want Moses to mediate for them. They were very fearful of seeing God themselves.

Moses is considered one of the greatest prophets in the whole Bible. But his significance was not ultimately found in his role as a mediator. His significance was in fact due to him being a preacher of Jesus Christ.

[15:54] While he was not fully aware of his service, Moses ultimately pawned to Christ when he shared the law with Israel. Jesus Christ is the most excellent and final mediator.

Apart from the Ten Commandments, God also gave Moses the blueprint of the tabernacle at Mount Sinai. We will be speaking about the tabernacle in coming week.

Eventually, you will see how the law and the tabernacle merge in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Jesus clarifies and expands on the meaning of the law through the gospel and the teaching of his followers.

His Sermon on the Mount in the early part of Matthew's gospel is the most concentrated of his teaching on the law. He gave them new meaning and pawned directly to the heart.

Jesus said in Matthew 5, 21-22, You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, you shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.

[17:01] But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Jesus continued in verse 27 and 28, You have heard that it was said, You shall not commit adultery, but I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery

with her in his heart.

Apostle Paul taught the following in Ephesians 4, 28, regarding stealing. Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hand, that they might have something to share with those in need.

And earlier from the same chapter, in verse 22-25, Paul also said this about false testimony. You were taught regarding your former way of life to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by his deceitful desires, to be made new in the attitude of your mind, and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Therefore, each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for you are all members of one body. Even more importantly, Jesus fulfilled all the laws through his active obedience.

It is Jesus who now resides in the center of our life and serves as a constant reminder to God's people of God's holiness. Our need for a mediator and the glorious redemption from bondage to sin. The greatest gift that Jesus gave to his people was not his explanation of the law.

[18 : 44] Instead, it was his own perfect life, lived in fulfillment of that law on our behalf. That is something Moses could not have done on behalf of his people.

We must remember that our redemption was secured through Jesus' death on the cross and the righteous life that he lived upon his earth.

Jesus lived for our salvation as much as he died for it. Without the life and death of Jesus, the law that came through Moses could only bring condemnation and death to us, but by Jesus' perfect obedience imputed to us and by his perfect sacrificial death on our behalf, Jesus accomplished what the law never could.

He made his people righteous and holy. For what the law was powerless to do because he was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own son to the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering.

And so he condemns sin in the flesh in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh, but according to the spirit.

[20 : 00] The most significant contrast between these two mediators is that Moses' law could only bring death, but the law fulfilled by Jesus brings life and liberty.

As Apostle John reminds us in his Gospel, chapter 1, verse 17, for the law was given through Moses, grace and truth come through Jesus Christ.

At Mount Sinai, God established his confident relationship with those that he has chosen out of the world. God's plan for his people to be his treasured possession, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, and to bless the rest of the world through them.

God kept our relationship with him by Jesus, the most excellent mediator. He surpasses Moses because he did not just give or explain the law.

He fulfilled them for us. Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus, the law of spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.

[21 : 11] The law was not given to earn redemption, but rather to express gratitude for that redemption. So how is your relationship with God?

Are you growing in your gratitude and appreciation of what God has done to redeem you? Are you still fearful of approaching God because there is some part of you that you have not entirely devoted to God?

God demands exclusive devotion from you because he is exclusively devoted to you. He is so devoted to you that he has given his one and only son to you that when you believe in him, you shall not perish but have eternal life.

God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. If you have not yet to believe in Jesus and accept God's relationship with you based on what he has done for you, what is holding you back?

What are you pushing back on? Remember God said to Israel that if you obey God fully and keep God confident, then out of all nations, you will be God's treasured possession.

[22 : 28] It's so amazing that even though Israel failed to obey God fully, God still treat them as his treasured possession because of Jesus who fully obeyed God.

And we can also be God's treasured possession because of Jesus. I would love to chester Jesus with you together soon. Contact us. Speak with me.

Or join me to worship our extraordinary God, our Father in heaven. Amen. Lord for a Mostior, and we are God's treasured within this world.

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