

## **Subject: *God's Moral Law – Part 1***

**Scripture: *Exodus 20:1-17***

We have no problem thinking of God as Creator, Father, Shepherd, or Friend. But many people resent the fact that God is the Law-Giver and Judge. Yet this is a fundamental right of God to make laws and enforce them. We hear a lot about rights—human rights, workers rights, and civil rights. But what about God's rights? God is the Lawgiver of the universe. Everything is governed by the laws of God. Without laws there would be absolute chaos. God is a God of order. It has been said that the first law of heaven is order.

Notice who the speaker is in the first verse: God Himself. God gave the Ten Commandments directly. This is sometimes called “Ten Words” or Decalogue. It is a perfect moral code and serves as the basis of our laws and justice system. The Old Testament Law contained 613 specific commands, but the basis of all others and the main ones were these ten.

**Matthew 22:36-40** <sup>36</sup> *Master, which is the great commandment in the law?* <sup>37</sup> *Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.* <sup>38</sup> *This is the first and great commandment.* <sup>39</sup> *And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.* <sup>40</sup> *On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

All Ten Commandments can be summed up in a few words—love God supremely and love your neighbor as yourself. Many of our laws are based on the Ten Commandments. As you walk up the steps to the United States Supreme Court, near the top of the building are the carved figures of the world's law givers and each one is facing toward a figure in the middle. That center figure is Moses with the Ten Commandments. For the next few weeks we are going to focus our attention on God's moral law as found in the Ten Commandments. In the first message we are going to look at the existence of God's law, the reason God gave it to us, and the problem we have in keeping it.

### **1. The presence of God's moral law**

The world operates on the basis of certain laws. There are three kinds of law:

- A. Natural law – laws that govern the physical world (for example, law of gravity)
- B. Civil law – laws that govern human life
- C. Moral law – laws that govern the spiritual world

We often speak of “law and order.” They go together. Where there is no law, there is no order. These laws exist whether a person wants to admit it or not. A person may refuse to believe in the law of gravity, but that doesn't eliminate the law. A person may not believe there is a law against robbery, but that doesn't eliminate the law. A person may not believe in God's moral law, but that doesn't eliminate the law.

The existence of law means there is someone who made the law and enforces the law. God is the law maker and the law enforcer. His law can't be altered, amended, or destroyed. You can ignore it, but you can't remove it or replace it.

### **2. The purpose of God's moral law**

God's law has a 3-fold purpose:

- A. God's law reflects His character – The nature of the law reveals the nature of the lawgiver. **Romans 7:12** *Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.* The law is perfect and holy and good, just as God is perfect and holy and good.
- B. God's law restrains sin – Imagine how life would be without laws. How fast would people drive if there was no speed limit? How many people would pay income tax if there were no tax laws? Laws keep us under control.
- C. God's law reveals sin

**1 Timothy 1:5-11** <sup>5</sup> *Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:* <sup>6</sup> *From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling;* <sup>7</sup> *Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.* <sup>8</sup> *But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully;* <sup>9</sup> *Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,* <sup>10</sup> *For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;* <sup>11</sup> *According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.*

God's law is like a mirror to show us our sin. It is like an MRI to show us our sinful heart. The law exposes our sin. It is like a broom that stirs up dust on a dirty floor. The dirt is already there, but the broom exposes it. The law not only reveals our sinful actions; it reveals our sinful desires, attitudes and thoughts. Jesus said it's not only wrong to commit adultery, but it's wrong to lust. Jesus said it's not only wrong to murder someone, but it's wrong to hate someone in your heart.

**1 John 3:4** *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.*

**Romans 3:20** *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

**Romans 7:7** *What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*

### **3. The problem of God's moral law**

The problem is that we can't keep it. We are all guilty of breaking His law.

- A. The problem of our guilt

**Romans 3:19** *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.* The word "know" means to know with absolute certainty. This is not speculation, but settled fact. Every person is guilty and every mouth is stopped. The law keeps a person from

justifying himself. People say, “Well, I sin but it’s not as bad as some people” or “I know I’m not perfect, but who is?”

**James 2:10** *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. The law is all connected. We said it is like a mirror, and when a mirror is broken in one place, we know the whole mirror is broken.*

B. The provision of God’s grace

Our guilt drives us to God’s grace, like the publican who prayed in the temple (“God, be merciful to me a sinner”). The law doesn’t help us, but it leaves us helpless.

**Galatians 3:24** *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. A schoolmaster was a tutor, a custodian or caretaker of a child who took care of a child until he reached maturity. The law doesn’t save us, but it leads us to the Savior. Jesus came to die and set us free from the curse of the law.*

**Galatians 3:13** *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. Jesus took the punishment of our sin for breaking God’s law.*

**Acts 13:38-39** *Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man (Jesus) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.*

That is the good news of salvation and forgiveness through Jesus. We are condemned by the law, but we are justified by the righteousness of Christ by faith.

When God gave the moral law, He also gave instructions concerning the sacrifices. When God chose Moses to receive the law, He also chose Aaron to be the high priest. It is as when God said, “Thou shall not,” He went on to say, “But I know you will, and so this is the way you get out of it.” The high priest took a perfect sacrifice and took the blood and sprinkled it on the mercy seat, the lid on top of the Ark of the Covenant in which was kept the Law written on tablets of stone. An innocent one died in the place of those who should have died, and the blood is proof. God’s justice is satisfied and His judgment is turned back. Now God looks in grace upon the lawbreaker. Who is that sacrifice? He is Jesus, the Lamb of God. You will never see your need of Christ until you see yourself guilty before God because you have broken His law. God’s law is like a mirror. God shows us the dirt so we will turn to the soap and water. He shows us our sin so we will turn to the blood of Christ for cleansing and forgiveness.