**BCM Bible Study: November 18/19, 2020**

**Exodus 20: 1 – 21: The 10 Commandments**

**Read Exodus 20:1-2**

* Why does God begin with the statement in v. 2? What is its purpose?
* Why should we also remind ourselves of what God has done in our lives?
* How have you seen God reveal himself in your life?

“Before God commanded anything of Israel, He reminded them what He had done for them. This was a clear foundation: because of who God is, and what He has done for us, He has the right to tell us what to do – and we have the obligation to obey Him.” - Guzik

**Read Exodus 20: 3-17**

* Why does the first commandment say “no other gods” as opposed to saying there is only one god? Does that imply that there are in fact, other gods?
	+ No, at least not in the way that we think about our God. Instead, he is warning the people of Israel not to worship any of the other gods or powers that they might have seen in Egypt which He has at this point proven Himself to be superior to.
* What does it mean in v. 5 that God is “a jealous God”? How does this affect God’s love?
	+ How have you seen your own disobedience come back to bite you?
* **Read Exodus 31:12-17**
	+ Why does God use such harsh language here regarding the Sabbath?
	+ Adam Mabry says in *The Art of Rest* that, “Constant work turns human beings into human doings.” How have you come to define your life by the work that you do?
* What do the first four commandments tell us about the character of God?
* **Read Deuteronomy 6:10-19**
	+ Here we see the fulfillment of God giving Israel the promised land. We also witness the goal of the 10 Commandments: that Israel would remember God, worship Him, and truly be a different nation. This alludes to obedience as part of inheriting the land and why it took so long for Israel to enter the Promised Land.
* It can be easy for us to distance ourselves from these commands as there is an inherently cultural aspect to them. In what ways do they still apply? (We still build idols i.e.)
	+ What should the balance for us as followers of Jesus be between faith and obedience then? (Romans 5:19, 6:16 as potential references)

Commandments 5-10 should not be understood merely as a moral code. Nor should they be read only as an instruction manual for the society of Israel. Instead, these commandments reveal the character of God and what His desires are for the re-creation. If Israel is to be a nation of light, full of priests (Exodus 19:6) then they must be different and what better way then by having the character of God?

* **Read Ephesians 6:1-4.** Paul here references the fifth commandment.
	+ The long time in the land should be understood from a communal sense, that the time of Israel in the land will be long if they are obedient ultimately to God.
	+ Do you struggle to understand God when he calls for obedience?
	+ How does this command in the context of a parental relationship help/hurt that?
* Does the lack of definition in some of these commandments bother you?
	+ Don’t worry, the Law is coming up in a few weeks so that should help.
	+ Why do you think God would deliver these broad commandments to all the Israelites? Is that helpful?

Part of our fundamental understanding of the 10 commandments should be that they are God “training them [Israel] to be his people in Canaan, to be order amid chaos, to be a holy people and a kingdom of priests so that by looking at them, the nations will come to know the true God.” – Peter Enns

* What do we learn about God’s character from looking at all 10 commandments?

**Read Exodus 20:18-21**

* How does the 10 commandments being delivered by the presence of God in v. 18 change or affect the understanding that you have of them?
* As a note, in v. 20 many versions say “test”, however, this is not an accurate understanding of the Hebrew. Instead, “train” is probably better suited to describe this. So, God hopes for the people to experience and know his full glory and power.
* Verse 19 describes a very visceral reaction from the Israelites about this experience with God. Is this surprising to you? Does it make Israel’s future any easier or harder to understand?
* Contrast this with the reaction of Moses in v.21. Is it easier for you to react to God like the Israelites or like Moses?

The 10 commandments are reviewed again in Deuteronomy as Moses prepares the people to finally enter the Promised Land. Yet, it is clear that these commandments are merely a minimum of the moral hope which God has for his people. This becomes apparent through the law which follows in Exodus and even more so in Jesus’ sermon on the mount as he speaks about the nature of the human heart and what perfectly keeping the law looks like.

For many this also might bring to mind Jesus ‘explanation of the commandments. **Read Luke 10:25-29**.

* Which part of the command to love God in v.27 is it easiest for you to do? Which part is the hardest?
	+ What can you do to cultivate this area of your relationship with God?
* Where in your life do you try to narrow down the reach of God asking for your obedience? (Like the expert’s question in v. 29)
	+ How can we work to overcome this?

**Challenge this week:**

Spend some time working on the part of loving God that is most difficult for you. (Heart, soul, mind, and strength)

Heart – pray your emotions to God (positive and negative ones); work on contentment; etc.

Soul – finding the day’s satisfaction in God, read a Psalm (63 for instance); etc.

Mind – listen to some sermons; find engaging, thoughtful Christian articles; etc.

Strength – obey God’s word; serve someone; etc.

**Nerd Notes**

* There is discussion about the chronology of the passage, as in: did God deliver the commandments first to Moses on Mt. Sinai? Did God deliver them directly to the people? Based upon the context, it seems most like God delivered them directly to the people.
* There is a large amount of discussion about the second commandment and what it means as well. The essential question is: “But does ‘idol’ refer to an idol of one of the gods spoken of in verse 3, or does it include any sort of representation of Yahweh himself.”
	+ It absolutely refers to the not making idols of other gods and therefore kind of continues verse 3’s command.
	+ However, it also implies the second as well, because it would otherwise risk people worshipping a created thing as opposed to the Creator himself.
	+ The statement of punishment (implied in v.5) is seemingly contradictory to other places in the Old Testament (Deut. 24:16 and Ezek. 18:4) where it states that one will die for their own sin. Those might be focused more so upon the individual and their sin, whereas there is an impact upon the community for the worship of idols and it affects the long-term health and well-being of Israel.
* The Third Commandment is important as “Yahweh’s name… must be honored, blessed, praised, celebrated, invoked, pronounced, and so shared. To treat Yahweh’s name with disrespect is to treat his gift lightly, to undermine his power, to scorn his Presence, and to misrepresent to the family of humankind his very nature,” – Durham.
	+ It is therefore ultimately for Israel’s protection
* The Ten Commandments are given to Israel again in Deuteronomy 5:6-21 as Israel prepares to enter the Promised Land.
	+ This is an awesome moment and should be considered as part of their preparation for the task of being a nation of priests
	+ The people who are receiving the commandments here had not received them before as it is an almost entirely new generation, with a few notable exclusions