

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Exodus 20:1-18**. (00-Introduction).
- B. This is the first in a series of sermons on the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments.
- C. While Xians do not live under the Mosaic covenant, the principles of the Decalogue are still in force today. Nine of the Ten Commandments are restated in the NT, and the principle of rest is also present.

I. AMERICA'S CHARACTER CRISIS.

- A. America has, as a whole, rejected the Code of Ethics called the Ten Commandments. God's message has not proven popular in our society. Many will scoff at anyone expressing much concern over our predicament.
- B. John Steinbeck, in his book, *Of Mice and Men*, pointed out the decline in moral values when one of his characters commented, "There is nothing *wrong* anymore." And that seems to be the atmosphere today in America.
 - Nothing is *wrong* anymore.
 - Adultery isn't wrong.
 - Lying isn't wrong.
 - Abortion isn't wrong.
 - Homosexuality isn't wrong.
 - Materialism isn't wrong.
 - Idolatry toward money isn't wrong.
 - Divorce and family abandonment aren't even wrong.
- C. Indeed, society is much like a guy who jumped off a 100-story building. About 50 stories down a lady stuck her head out and asked, "How's it going?" and the guy replied, "So far so good." Things may seem fine in the midst of the fall, but that man is headed for a deadly crash. And so is America if we don't stop the free fall of our character.

II. ON EAGLE'S WINGS.

- A. There are several books out today in both the secular and Christian bestseller lists the purport to reveal a "secret code" embedded in the text of the Hebrew scriptures. These books talk about how computer technology has revealed an intricate pattern within the ancient texts—a code that supposedly names contemporary political leaders and spells out future events.
- B. That's all very interesting, but to tell you the truth, I don't need any secret code. I don't need to read between the lines. I don't need to count all the letters and spaces, multiply them by seven, and divide them by 22. I don't need to borrow a supercomputer from the defense department and an analyst from MIT. All I need to know is what God is plainly saying to me on the pages of my Bible.
- C. And if I miss the *real* message of these Ten Commandments, I've missed a great deal. In fact, I've missed the very heart of God.
- D. Some people, of course, imagine it to be the exact opposite. They don't hear love in these statements at all. What do they hear? They hear the clank of chains and the rattle of padlocks. They hear God saying, "You mess with Me, you step out of bounds, and I'll fry you like a bug landing on a transformer."
- E. Did you know that there was a prior conversation between the Lord and Moses before He gave him those tablets of stone? Did you know that God gave Moses specific instructions about what to say to the people BEFORE presenting the Ten Commandments? *It was God Himself who set the context.* It's all right here in the book of Exodus (19:3-6).

And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: [4] 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. [5] 'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; [6] and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. 'These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel."

- F. God said,
1. "I heard your cries. I saw your tears. And I came down to buy you back out of slavery. Do you remember, My children?"
 2. "I made a way for you where there was no way. Do you remember, My people?"
 3. "I opened up a spring for you... a stream of fresh, sweet water came gushing over the parched desert floor. Do you remember, Israel?"
 4. "I swooped down and bore you on eagle's wings; do you remember?"
- G. That is the context of the ten statements in Ex. 20:1-17. A God of love.
- H. Did the Lord deliver these people out of 400 years of slavery in Egypt just to browbeat them, and brutalize them in the wilderness? Do we ever stop to consider just how much the Lord longed after these people and delighted in them?
- I. And that's exactly what the Lord is saying, "Moses, please tell them--make sure that you remind them --before you give them these commands, how much I have loved them in the past. Remind them how I've watched over their lives every day and concerned Myself about their future."

III. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

A. Notice with the following chart how nine of the Ten Commandments are found in the NT.

- | <u>The command</u> | <u>OT</u> | <u>NT</u> |
|--|-----------|--------------------------|
| 1. "...no other gods..."
(Ex 20:3) "You shall have no other gods before Me."
(Ac 14:15) and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you, and preach the gospel to you in order that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, WHO MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM. | Ex. 20:3 | Ac. 14:15. |
| 2. "...no graven images..."
(Ex 20:4) "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth."
(1Cor 8:4) Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one.
(1Jn 5:21) Little children, guard yourselves from idols. | Ex. 20:4 | 1Jn. 5:21; 1Cor. 8:4. |
| 3. "...Lord's name not in vain..."
(Ex 20:7) "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain."
(Mt 12:36,37) "And I say to you, that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment. [37] "For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned."
(Jas 5:12) But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but let your yes be yes, and your no, no; so that you may not fall under judgment. | Ex. 20:7 | Jas. 5:12; Mt. 12:36,37. |
| 4. "...remember the Sabbath..."
"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." | Ex. 20:8 | No verses found. |
| 5. "Honor father and mother..."
(Ex 20:12) "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you."
(Eph 6:1) Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. | Ex. 20:12 | Eph. 6:1. |
| 6. "...shall not kill."
(Ex 20:13) "You shall not murder."
(1Pet 4:15) By no means let any of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler;... | Ex. 20:13 | 1Pet. 4:15. |

7. "...not commit adultery." Ex. 20:14 1Cor. 6:9.
 (Ex 20:14) "You shall not commit adultery."
 (1Cor 6:9) Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals,...
8. "...do not steal." Ex. 20:15 Eph. 4:28.
 (Ex 20:15) "You shall not steal."
 (Eph 4:28) Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have *something* to share with him who has need.
9. "...not bear false witness." Ex. 20:16 Col. 3:9.
 (Ex 20:16) "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."
 (Col 3:9) Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices,...
10. "...do not covet." Ex. 20:17 1Cor. 6:10.
 (Ex 20:17) "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor."
 (1Cor 6:10) nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

IV. MODERN REVISIONS TO THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

- A. (1) "I am the LORD your God, ...You shall have no other gods before Me."
 --unless have an inordinate love for money, are a sports fanatic, or would like to be more like worldly celebrities than the Lord.
- B. (2) "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth."
 --unless it looks really nice, you could make a tidy profit on it, your religion says it's really okay, or it makes a pretty necklace.
- C. (3) "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain."
 --unless you're an actor, politician, athlete, feminist, supervisor, or want to show how macho you are.
- D. (4) "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."
 --unless you can make double time for working on Sunday in the Christian dispensation.
- E. (5) "Honor your father and your mother,..."
 --except when you disagree with them.
- F. (6) "You shall not murder."
 --unless you are rioting to protest an unjust jury verdict, your mother drank, she smoked, she ate too many fatty foods, you were brought up in a rough neighborhood, you didn't get enough attention as a child, you got too much attention, there was not enough discipline in your home, there was too much discipline, or you just want to send a message to society.
- G. (7) "You shall not commit adultery."
 --unless you are a homosexual, tired of your wife or husband, you feel that a sexual liaison would be good for your marriage, you and your mate don't communicate well, your wife is not responsive as you would like, or you just want a little variety in your life.
- H. (8) "You shall not steal."
 --unless you are poor, do some looting during a riot, are mad at your employer, you have to pay too many taxes, the world has been unfair to you, or you are just too lazy to work.
- I. (9) "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."
 --unless you want to get even with sexist men, want to attract some attention to yourself, one of your peers is doing better than you, you want to make a little extra money, or are just mad at the world.
- J. (10) "You shall not covet... anything that belongs to your neighbor."
 --unless she dresses provocatively, flirts with you, her husband is away, you are tired of your wife, you think you could have a truly meaningful relationship with her, or your wife doesn't

understand you and her husband doesn't understand her... You shall not covet thy neighbor's possessions, unless he has more stuff than you do.

V. FATHER KNOWS BEST.

- A. God knows there will be times in our lives when we will find ourselves in a lonely place, a dark place, a tight place, by ourselves, and we will wonder, "What should I do in this situation? What does my Father say about this? What His heart in these matters? How does He feel about this?"
- B. He did it out of a heart of love:
 - 1. ...wanting to remove confusion from our lives.
 - 2. ...wanting to keep us from the traps and snares of the Destroyer.
 - 3. ...wanting to spare us from the wasting, life-sapping ravages of sin.
 - 4. ...wanting us to find our destiny as His own sons and daughters.
- C. When God wrote the Scriptures, He knew very well what kind of world you and I and our children would be living in *right now*. It's no surprise to Him at all. He is shocked by any of it. He omniscient. He knows exactly what we need to survive in this fast-changing, high-tech, low-morality culture we live in.
- D. What did Paul call these last days? "Perilous times" (2Tim. 3:1). Terrible times. Difficult times. Grievous times. Dangerous times. And when we watch the news, it should not surprise us that *no one seems to know what is right, ethical, and moral anymore*.
- E. *God, better than anyone else anywhere, understands how life works!* The reason he gave us these commands is because He knows the consequences of each decision. He knows that the results will be of living without putting Him first (Psa. 119:97-100; Isa. 55:8,9).
(Psa 119:97-100) O how I love Your law!
It is my meditation all the day.
98 Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies,
For they are ever mine.
99 I have more insight than all my teachers,
For Your testimonies are my meditation.
100 I understand more than the aged,
Because I have observed Your precepts.
(Isa 55:8,9) "For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD.
9 "For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways
And My thoughts than your thoughts.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Do you need a new start in life? Do you think that God has abandoned you?
 - 1. Let's come back to God.
 - 2. Let's come back to life.
 - 3. Let's come back to morality.
 - 4. Let's come back to lives of character.
 - 5. Let's come back to what works.
- B. Let's come back to the principles of the Ten(der) Commandments.
- C. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.

THE TENDER COMMANDMENTS

A study of the Ten Commandments, but as they are repeated in the New Testament.

LESSONS

1. Introduction.
2. No Other Gods! (1st Commandment from Ex. 20:3; Ac. 14:15).
2. "...no graven images..." Ex. 20:4 1Jn. 5:21; 1Cor. 8:4.
3. "...Lord's name not in vain..." Ex. 20:7 Jas. 5:12; Mt. 12:36,37.
4. "...remember the Sabbath..." Ex. 20:8 No verses found.
5. "Honor father and mother..." Ex. 20:12 Eph. 6:1.
6. "...shall not kill." Ex. 20:13 1Pet. 4:15.
7. "...not commit adultery." Ex. 20:14 1Cor. 6:9.
8. "...do not steal." Ex. 20:15 Eph. 4:28.
9. "...not bear false witness." Ex. 20:16 Col. 3:9.
10. "...do not covet." Ex. 20:17 1Cor. 6:10.