

Walking in the Truth - the foundations of real faith

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- [0 : 0 0] Good, well let's turn now for our Bible reading to Deuteronomy chapter 4 and verse 44. Deuteronomy chapter 4 and verse 44 and we're reading down to the end of chapter 5. Now you'll see partway through chapter 5 we have the Ten Commandments. But they're described as the Ten Words. So do bear that in mind. These Ten Commandments are known as the Ten Words. So chapter 4 and verse 44. This is the law that Moses set before the people of Israel. These are the testimonies, the statutes and the rules which Moses spoke to the people of Israel when they came out of Egypt. Beyond the Jordan in the valley opposite Beth Peor. In the land of Sion, the king of the Amorites who lived at Heshbon. Who Moses and the people of Israel defeated when they came out of Egypt.
- [1 : 0 7] And they took possession of his land and the land of Og, the king of Bashan. The two kings of the Amorites who lived to the east beyond the Jordan. From Arower, which is on the edge of the valley of the Anon. As far as Mount Syrian, that is Hermon. Together with all the Araba on the east side of the Jordan. As far as the Sea of the Araba under the slopes of Pisgah. And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and rules that I'm speaking in your hearing today. And you shall learn them and be careful to do them. The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. Not with our fathers did the Lord make this covenant, but with us. With all of us here alive today. The Lord spoke with you face to face at the mountain. Out of the midst of the fire. While I stood between the Lord and you at that time. To declare to you the word of the Lord. For you were afraid because of the fire. And you did not go up into the mountain. He said, I am the Lord your God.
- [2 : 1 8] Who brought you out of the land of Egypt. Out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image. Or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above. Or that is on the earth beneath. Or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God. Visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children. To the third and fourth generation of those who hate me. But showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me. And keep my commandments. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. For the Lord will not hold him guiltless. Who takes his name in vain. Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy. As the Lord your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God.
- [3 : 1 9] On it you shall not do any work. You or your son or your daughter. Or your male servant or your female servant. Or your ox or your donkey. Or any of your livestock.

Or the sojourner who is within your gates. That your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt.

And the Lord your God brought you out from there. With a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

Honor your father and your mother. As the Lord your God commanded you. That your days may be long. And that it may go well with you. In the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

You shall not murder. And you shall not commit adultery. And you shall not steal. And you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

[4 : 16] And you shall not covet your neighbor's wife. And you shall not desire your neighbor's house. His field. Or his male servant. Or his female servant. His ox or his donkey.

Or anything that is your neighbor's. These words the Lord spoke to all your assembly at the mountain. Out of the midst of the fire. The cloud and the thick darkness.

With a loud voice. And he added no more. And he wrote them on two tablets of stone. And gave them to me. And as soon as you heard the voice.

Out of the midst of the darkness. While the mountain was burning with fire. You came near to me. All the heads of your tribes. And your elders. And you said. Behold. The Lord our God has shown us his glory and greatness.

And we have heard his voice. Out of the midst of the fire. This day we have seen God speak with man. And man still live. Now therefore. Why should we die?

[5 : 14] For this great fire will consume us. If we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more. We shall die. For who is there of all flesh. That has heard the voice of the living God. Speaking out of the midst of fire.

As we have. And has still lived. Go near. And hear all that the Lord our God will say and speak to us. All that the Lord our God will speak to you. And we will hear and do it.

And the Lord heard your words when you spoke to me. And the Lord said to me. I have heard the words of this people. Which they have spoken to you. They are right in all that they have spoken.

Oh that they had such a mind as this always. To fear me. And to keep all my commandments. That it might go well with them. And with their descendants forever.

Go and say to them. Return to your tents. But you. Stand here by me. And I will tell you the whole commandment. And the statutes. And the rules. That you shall teach them.

[6 : 14] That they may do them. In the land that I am giving them to possess. You shall be careful therefore. To do as the Lord your God has commanded you. You shall not turn aside.

To the right hand or to the left. You shall walk in all the way. That the Lord your God has commanded you. That you may live. And that it may go well with you. And that you may live long.

In the land that you shall possess. Amen. The words of the Lord. And may they be a blessing to us today. All right. Well turn with me if you would in your Bibles.

To Deuteronomy chapter 5 page 150. In the church Bibles. A chapter which is all about walking in the truth.

Which is the foundation of all real faith. Let me start with a question. What does it mean to really have faith?

[7 : 11] People are often confused in their ideas about that. But it's absolutely vital to understand. That according to Jesus Christ. Faith is not just some sort of natural character trait.

That some people have and some people don't have. No. For Jesus. Indeed for the whole Bible. Faith means a decisive response.

To the command and call of God. It's a personal response. To the personal revelation of God. From God himself. That's why faith.

And obedience. Are used. All the way through the Bible. Almost interchangeably. In fact Paul calls it doesn't he. The obedience of faith. Because all true faith in God.

Means obedient submission to God. And all true submission to God. Is the expression of real faith and trust in God. The call of God's eternal kingdom.

[8 : 13] Is a call to repentance. That's clear. To a turning away. From the path of this world. From our own way of self-rule. And towards.

Again God's way. And to walk under God's sovereign rule. That's what it is. That's why Jesus called to his kingdom. Is a call to follow me. To follow the sovereign God.

Revealed at last. In the flesh. So at the beginning of Matthew's gospel. Jesus begins his ministry like that. The kingdom of God is at hand. Therefore. Repent.

And follow me. What does that mean. To repent and follow Jesus. Well. Jesus goes on immediately. To teach. Doesn't he? Exactly what that means. Proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom.

All throughout. Galilee. And that gospel of course. That he taught is. Is summarized for us. In Matthew 5 to 7. What we call the Sermon on the Mount. And of course.

[9 : 12] It's a call isn't it? To absolute. Surrender. It's a call to surrender. To Jesus. The sovereign Lord. The king. To hear the word of God.

And obey the father in heaven. Says Jesus. To hear. My words. And do them. Is what makes you wise. For salvation. That's what it means. To follow Jesus in faith.

In the way of his heavenly kingdom. And absolute. Surrender. To the sovereign. Means. According to Jesus. Absolute sacrifice. Of ourself. Whoever does not take up his cross.

And follow me. Is not worthy of me. It's whoever who loses his life. For my sake. In that kind of glad surrender. Whoever loses his life.

Will find it. Find true life. In all its fullness. That Jesus came to bring. For to surrender. To the true sovereign.

[10 : 06] Is. To find liberating release. In life. Because he's our loving redeemer. Take my yoke upon you. And learn of me. And you will find.

Rest. For your souls. For my yoke is easy. My burden is light. And that's the way it's always been. From the very beginning. Of God's dealings in grace.

With his people. The people he's called to himself. To be his own. To hear. And to heed. The command. Of the sovereign Lord. Is to answer the call. Of the saving Lord. The Lord.

Whose service. Is perfect freedom. God's call. Is an amazing. Liberation. And yet. It is also a call. Always.

To absolute loyalty. And so. J.I. Packer. Is absolutely right. When. He. Defines. Biblical faith. This way. It is credence. Plus commitment.

[11 : 00] It's assurance. Plus allegiance. It's devotion. Plus. Discipleship. Or as the apostle John. Puts it in his third letter. It is. Walking.

In. The truth. And here's a chapter. Written for us. As the apostles remind us. Where we see. So very clearly. In God's call to Israel.

Right back at the very beginning. Where we see. What the foundations. Of such real. Biblical faith. Really are. What it means. To respond truly. To the God.

Who reveals himself. As both. Savior. And sovereign. As both. Redeemer. And ruler. Walking. In his truth.

Is the only way. To life. And blessing. And fullness. Look at verse. 33. You shall walk. In all the way. The Lord your God. Has commanded you.

[11 : 56] That you may live. That it may go well. With you. And that you may live long. In the land. That you shall possess. Walking. In the truth.

Is the way of life. Now we're not going to examine. Today. The Ten Commandments. In great detail. Because. That's precisely. What Moses does. In the next 20 chapters. Of Deuteronomy.

And we will. See that. As we go along. But what I want us to see today. Is the impact. Of this chapter. As a whole. As it tells us. That following. The Redeemer.

In faith. Really means. Walking in his ways. Walking in his truth. Really means. Hearing his voice. And heeding his words.

And going on. And being humbled. In his presence. Look first. At chapter 4. Verse 44. Down to the fifth verse. Of chapter 5. Which are all about. Hearing.

[12 : 51] The abiding voice. Of our Redeemer. And the focus here. Is on the nature. Of this great revelation. That took place. At Sinai.

At Horeb. As Deuteronomy calls it. And the last paragraph. There of chapter 4. Recaps the history. That we've already seen. In much more detail. In chapters 1 to 3. To ram home the point. That Moses words.

Are not just. Of mere academic interest. But rather. They press home. A sense of. A sense of destiny. And a sense of decision. These people.

Are the people. Who have been rescued. Out of Egypt. Notice the repetition. Of that. In verse 45. And again. Verse 46. Out of Egypt. But now. At last.

On the brink. Of a new future. In other words. This is a new start. A new start. For a new generation. And this.

[13 : 44] Was to be their. Sinai experience. And as the people. Responded. Back then. At Sinai. So must they respond. But they must go on. Responding. Not turning back.

It's a moment of destiny. For them. And so. It's a moment of great decision. Because they stand. On the brink of the land. And again. This is to be their. Kaddish Barnea moment. When previously.

The people. Stood on the brink of the land. But unlike them. They are not to fail. Not to turn aside. To the right. Or to the left. But to go on. Following God. Wholeheartedly.

And you see friends. When God. In his mercy. Gives us. A second chance. In life. Because. Sin. And disobedience. Has perhaps left us. In a mess. Left us. In the wilderness.

For many times. When God. In his mercy. Gives us a second chance. We're not to blow it. We're to listen. And to follow him. He is gracious.

[14 : 41] But. We must never meet. God's grace. With an attitude. Of presumption. But with penitence. And with a renewed. Obedience. To his gracious call.

And every day. Of our life. Is a new today. As we journey. Through our life. With God. Isn't it? An obedient faith.

Always. Begins. With hearing his voice. Afresh. Today. This day. That's the first word of Moses. In verse 1. Of chapter 5. Do you see? Hear.

Hear. O Israel. The statutes. And the rules. That I speak. In your hearing. Today. And you shall know them. And be careful. To do them.

Actually. If you look down. To chapter 6. Verse 3. You'll see that. This introduction. To Moses. Great speech. Really ends there. And it's bracketed. In the same way. Isn't it? Hear.

[15 : 34] O Israel. Today. And be careful. To do them. So that it may go well. With you. It's our response. To hearing. The voice.

Of God. The Redeemer. That is the foundation. Of all. Real. Faith. Because our God. Is above all. The speaking God. We saw that last time.

Repeatedly. In chapter 4. But it's. It's foundational. Isn't it? Right from the very beginning. Of the Bible. Page 1. Of your Bible. God speaks. The creation.

Into being. And God said. And it was. And the whole creation. Responds. To honor God's voice. All was very. Very good. And God goes on.

Speaking. He speaks. Covenant relationship. Into being. With his people. His call of grace. Elicits. That response. Of faith. And Abraham. And Isaac. And Jacob. And all down. And notice here.

[16 : 30] Two things. About the word. That he speaks. To his people. First of all. It's a perennial word. It's ceaseless. It's permanent. It's imperishable.

It's a living. And abiding word. As the apostle Peter. Calls it. The Lord. Who spoke. First at Horeb. In verse 2. Back at Sinai. He speaks. To this new generation. Today.

Through those. Very same words. Which are living. And abiding words. Look at verse 3. So much so. You see. That Moses can say. Not with our fathers. Did the Lord.

Make his covenant. But with us. With all of us. Who are alive. Today. The Lord spoke. With you. At the mountain. He doesn't mean. Of course. He didn't speak. To their fathers.

Who were at the mountain. It's an expression. He means. He didn't speak. Only with them. Though. But he was speaking. And is speaking. With you. Also. Today. It emphasizes.

[17 : 25] That God's word. Is never. Ever. A thing. Of the past. Because he is. The living God. His word. Is a living word. Once it's spoken.

It goes on speaking. It goes on speaking. In the same. Powerful way. To future generations. And future generations. Can't fail. To relate to it. Either. In obedience. Or in disobedience.

And therefore. Either for weal. Or for woe. Look at verses 9 and 10. Do you see. Visiting iniquity. To the third.

And fourth generation. Of an entire family. As a. A typical. Typical Israelite family. Would live. Three or four generations. Together. If. The father. Spurns. God's words. That's an important warning.

To those of us. Who are fathers. And yet. Showing abundant love. To the thousandth. Generation. Of those who do love. And obey his word.

[18 : 20] God's word. Abides. Because. God's covenant abides. And his words. Are covenant words. It's a creative word. It creates.

Real and living relationship. With his people. Now. Those of you students. Of language. And linguistics. You'll know all about. Speech. Acts. Just a way of saying.

That words. Actually do things. They have a force. To create. To change. And to go on doing so. Yesterday. At Kelvin Grove.

Kelvin Grove building. Innocent Megan. Stood before us. And performed. Very profound. Speech acts. They said. I will. In the answer. To the question. Will you have this man. And will you have this woman.

To be your. Wedded wife. And those words. Established. A marriage. But not just for yesterday. They don't need to wake up today.

[19 : 13] And say all those words again. To each other. And do it again tomorrow. And so on. No. No. No. Those words are living. And abiding words. They pledge fidelity. One to another. And they go on doing so.

So that in 20 years time. That one can say to the other. It wasn't just. 20 years ago. That we spoke those words. To each other. It's today. And every day. That those words go on.

And having their binding force. Because that is a powerful. Covenant word. You see. God's words. Are similarly. Perennial words. And therefore. Powerful words.

Once his word. Is uttered. It goes on. Speaking. The same word. The same command. The same call. Down. The generations. And that's why.

Also. We see so clearly here. Secondly. That God's word. Is a personal word. A personal word. To each new generation. Verse 4. The Lord spoke. With you.

[20 : 09] Face to face. It's a personal word. For you. In this generation. He's saying. It's to you. Verse 5. That he's speaking. Everything. That now follows.

To you. Face to face. Because his word. Is perennial. It's living. And abiding. And therefore. It can be. Personal. To every new generation.

As long as it's called today. That's why. Centuries later. The apostle Peter. Can quote from the Old Testament. Scriptures. From the book of Isaiah. And say. The word of the Lord. Remains.

Forever. And he says. To his own readers. And this word. Is. The good news. That was preached. To you. And through which. You. Have been born again. Through the.

Imperishable word. The imperishable seed. Of the living. And abiding. Word. Of God. And do you see. How important it is.

[21 : 06] To grasp that. Because that means. That wherever. The Bible is opened. And God's words. Are spoken afresh. Even if they are. Ancient words. Like these ones. Then God.

Is speaking today. A personal word. Face to face. With you and me. God's word. Brings us. Face to face.

With the redeemer. In a deeply. In a personal. Encounter with him. We're not just. Hearing about God. When his word is open. We are hearing him. Face to face.

And that means. Of course. That if you long. For your friends. For your loved ones. To meet God. To encounter. The living God. Then you know. What to do. Don't you? Bring them.

To hear. The abiding voice. Of the redeemer. Open the Bible. With them. Let God's word. Speak. And he speaks to them. Face to face. Above all.

[22 : 02] Bring them to a gathering. Of the church. Where God's word is spoken. From the scriptures. And as Paul says. To the church. In Corinth. Do you remember. Even the most unlearned. Even the most ignorant. Will be convicted. Will be conscious.

Of the presence. Of the living God. Here among them. And they will say. Surely God. Is among this people. They encounter him. Face to face. We meet him. In his word.

As we sang. See this generation. Of Israel. Didn't have to go back. To have a repeat. Sinai experience. Its power lived on.

In that personal. Powerful word. Of God. And nor do we. Today. Need to go back. And have a repeat. Pentecost experience. In order to have an encounter.

An intimate encounter. With the living God. No. The spirit. Once for all. Delivered. Goes on. Bringing us. Face to face. With the living God. Through. His living and abiding word.

- [22 : 58] That we have. In the scriptures. And real faith. Begins. For every single generation. Begins with hearing. The abiding voice.
- Of the redeemer. How are they to believe. Says Paul to the Romans. In one. Whom. They have never heard. Faith. He says. Comes from hearing.
- And hearing. Through the word of Christ. The living and abiding. Covenant word. Of God. But of course. Paul goes on there.
- Doesn't he. To say. That not all. Obeyed. The gospel. There is a kind of hearing. That merely deceives ourselves. As the apostle James. Reminds us. When we hear.
- He says. We need to receive. With meekness. The implanted word. Which is able. To save your souls. That is what he says. As true hearers of the word.
- [23 : 54] Will be doers of the word. As Jesus himself. Constantly taught. Don't call me Lord. And not do. What I tell you. My true mother and brothers. My true family.
- Are those who hear the word of God. And do it. And that's exactly. What Moses makes. Utterly plain to us here. Doesn't he. In verses 6 to 22.
- He makes absolutely clear. That following the redeemer. In faith. Means heeding. Heeding. The authoritative words. Of the redeemer. And the focus here.
- Is on the. The character. And the. The substance. Of the revelation. At Sinai. Which is all about. How to walk. In the way of the Lord. Which is. Notice again. Look at verse 33.
- The way of the Lord. Is the way of life. It's the way of blessing. It's the way of fruitfulness. Not. A way of legalistic bondage. Chapter 6. Verse 2. Do them.
- [24 : 50] That your days. May be long. Verse 3. That it may go well. With you. In the land. Full of abundance. Milk and honey. God's commands. Are a blessing.
- Of his grace. And they show his people. The way. Of gracious blessing. The Lord. Is the shepherd. Who restores his people. Who leads them.
- In right paths. Paths of goodness. Paths of mercy. Do not pass. Of harm. And the good shepherd. Says Jesus. Calls his sheep.
- By name. And leads them. And they follow him. Why? Because Jesus says. I'm the good shepherd. Who came to bring you life. Life in all. Its abundant fullness. And these ten words.
- As they're called here. Not laws. Notice verse 22. But these words. These are God's words. To guide us. In life. In the realm.
- [25 : 48] Of God's grace. First notice. That they come. Don't they? In the context of grace. Verse 6. I am the Lord. Your God. Who brought you.
- Out. Of the land of Egypt. Out of the house. Of slavery. He is their redeemer. He's their rescuer. First. Before. He even talks about. Being their ruler. That's so important.
- To grasp. God's deeds. For us. Precede. His demands. From us. Always. And God's. Torah. His instruction.
- His law. Is about. Expressing. Our life. Within. His covenant. Of grace. And mercy. And liberating. Redemption. It's not about. How to get into.
- His salvation. Not at all. It's about. How to love. The God. Who has first loved us. With his abundance. And his mercy. It's after.
- [26 : 44] He has promised. I will take this woman. To be my wedded wife. To have and to hold. For better. For worse. For richer. For poorer. In sickness. In health. To love and to cherish.
- Till death us do part. After. That is. Promised. That the bride. Therefore answers. Therefore with my body. I thee honor.

With all my worldly goods. I thee endow. It's an expression. Of utter loyalty. And fidelity. And love. In response. To what has already been promised.

And offered. And that is what the Lord asks. Of his people here. In this covenant call. It's not so much for them. To do something. But for them to be.

Something. He is saying. Be mine. Be mine alone. Give me your heart. And me alone. Look down to chapter 6.

[27 : 39] Verse 5. That's what he's saying there. Love the Lord your God. With all your heart. With all your soul. With all your might. And that's what God's law.

Is and does. It teaches us. What it means. To be his. And only his. To be the loyal lover. Of one Lord. Having no rivals. It's no more legalistic.

Than Jesus. Saying to his disciples. Whoever has my commandments. And keeps them. Loves me. And whoever loves me. Will keep my words. It's just exactly.

The same. So never miss. The context. Of grace here. Yes. God's grace. Always. Demands. Great response. But God's grace.

Evokes. Response. We can only live. As God's people. If God has made us. His people. But second. Notice the clarity.

[28 : 33] Also. Of his grace. Expressed. In these commands. Verse 22. These words. The Lord spoke. To all your assembly. And he wrote them.

And he gave them. To me. See. See. God's words. Are clear. Public truth. They're available. To all. To know. And to understand.

And therefore. To obey. Unlike the pagans. The pagans. Could never know. If what they were really doing. Pleased their gods. They lived in ignorance. And fear.

No. No. God's people. Know exactly. Where they stand. With their God. Remember. First century Athens. That place. Full of great wisdom. And philosophy. And when Paul went there. What did he find.

Among all those magnificent buildings. An altar. To the unknown God. Blessed in all their worship. And all their religion. They might. Be a God that they've missed.

[29 : 28] With laws that they didn't know. And just in case. They better offer these other sacrifices. That is the dark night. Of paganism. But we can know exactly.

God's will for our lives. What it really is. About everything that matters. There's great grace. In the clarity. Of God's law. We have it with absolute clarity.

And absolute authority. What God has spoken. And written. And given to us. So this is not the realm of debatable advice. This is the realm of absolute divine authority.

And how much more so is that true for us. Who live in these latter days. That Moses could only look towards. From the distance. For we have not only the words of Moses. And the prophets.

But also the words spoken. Ultimately in the person of Jesus Christ. The world became flesh. We can know. With absolute clarity.

[30 : 27] Exactly what God's will for our lives is. And what Moses shows us here. And what Jesus and the apostles show us. In the New Testament. Is that God's great concern.

His real will for our lives. Is not focused on material issues. But on moral issues. Divine guidance for life is not a thing that can be found in horoscopes.

It's found in holiness. Isn't that the exact reverse. Of the way that most people think in the world today. They want guidance.

Knowledge about what to do. Where to live. Who to marry. What to buy. Even Christians. When we talk about guidance. So often. Are nearly always focused on guidance.

About our circumstances. But God's will. Always focuses. On godliness in our characters. Whenever anybody asks me about.

[31 : 26] Guidance. Or is confused about guidance. As I open up Paul's letter to the Thessalonians. In chapter 4 and 5. This is the will of God. Says Paul. Your holiness. That you flee sexual immorality.

That you love one another. And that you live and work worthily. Before outsiders. For God has not called us for iniquity. But for holiness. So you can be a fireman.

Or a physicist. You can be a teacher. Or a trumpeter. You can be married or single. You can live in Scotland. Or Singapore. God doesn't mind anything about that. He hasn't given us his preferences. What he has said is.

Whatever you do. Do all. For the glory of God. Because through Jesus Christ. Our great redeemer.

We belong to him. And that's God's will for our lives. Lives that he has redeemed. By his grace. That is exactly what the Decalogue here.

[32 : 25] Expresses so clearly. So notice thirdly. The claim of grace. That is expressed in these commands. Quite simply. God claims. The whole of our lives.

He claims our worship. The whole of the love. Of our heart. And soul. And mind. With all of our strength. So verses 11. He alone. Is to be the object of our worship.

None other. Verses 8 to 10. He directs the manner of our worship. There's no idolatry. And verse 11. He prescribes the reverence. That we're to accord.

To the worship of his name. That's the first three commands. He demands. And claims our worship. And then verses 12 to 15. He claims our work. And our rest.

We're to live. According to the liberating rhythms. Of our redeemer himself. Rest you see. Is the blessing of the liberated. There was no Sabbath rest. Was there in Egypt? But you see.

[33 : 23] Work. And material gain. That comes with work. That can become. The object of our worship. Can't it? And so God's Sabbath rest.

Keeps his people. From becoming slaves. To the material. And turning work. And those rewards. Of work. Into our God. And when we come to chapter 15 and 16.

That expand. And press home. The implications of this command. We'll see that giving away. Generously material things. Is also. A key part. Of what it means. To keep the Sabbath.

And then verses 16 to 20. We see that he commands. And claims. In the fifth to the ninth commandments. All our relationships. With family.

With society. With life itself. With prosperity. Property. People's reputations. Again. All of these relationships. Can. Can be twisted.

[34 : 19] And become false gods. Idols. To rival. Our true allegiance. To God. As our one Lord. But no. He claims all of our relationships. For him. And then verse 21.

The tenth commandment. He reminds us. That he claims. Above all things. Our whole hearts. Which are the root. Of idolatry. And all unfaithfulness.

Covetousness. Says Paul. Is idolatry. Because it means. Setting our hearts. Our real affections. Our love. On something. Or someone. That isn't.

Our true love. The Lord. Who redeemed us. And so. In a way. To break the tenth commandment. To covet. Is also. To break the first commandment. Is to put other gods. Before the one true God.

God. But no. His grace. Claims all of us. Our love. Our desires. Our affections. Everything. And you see.

[35 : 18] How. The decalogue. Is so concise. And yet. It is so complete. In its claim. And so comprehensive. There are. Almost limitless. Applications.

To every possible area of life. That we can imagine. So yes. The Lord is. In the midst of us. Here. In the congregation. In the midst of us. But when our service ends. He doesn't stay behind.

He doesn't say. Oh. I'll see you next Sunday. No. His demands. Follow us home. They permeate. Our diaries. Our calendar. They follow us.

Into our. Public life. Into our private life. Into our family relations. Into our sexual relations. Into our business life. Into our professional life. Our banking life.

Every part of life. Into our small talk. Into our testimony. About others. Whether it's in the courtroom. Or whether it's on Facebook. Or wherever. And above all.

[36 : 11] His demands. Follow us. Constantly. Claiming. Our heart. He is the Lord. Who redeemed. Israel. Out. Of the house of bondage.

And he's the Lord. Who redeemed us. Through the precious blood. Of the Lord. Jesus Christ. From the slavery of sin. From the sentence. Of hell itself. How much more then.

Should his love. So amazing. So divine. As the hymn says. How much should it demand. Our soul. Our life. Our all. How much more.

Surely we want that to be so. Don't we? We know that as Jesus said. The commandment of the Lord. Is eternal life. And we say.

Don't we? With the apostle Paul. That the commandment is holy. It's righteous. It's good. And we delight. In our inner being. In the law of God. God. But also like him.

[37 : 18] The more we see. Of God's righteousness. His holiness here. The more conscious we are. Of the weakness of our flesh. More conscious we are.

Of the war. Still raging. With the indwelling sin. In our members. That we know. Bedevils us. And will bedevil us. As long as we have to live. In these still fallen bodies.

And in this still fallen world. And so we find ourselves. Don't we? Deeply humbled. Ashamed. Because of just how far short.

We do fall. Again. And again. And again. Of walking in the truth. Walking in the way of true faith. That he has called us to. And claims from us.

And so we realize. That to truly hear the voice. And to hear the word. And the call of our redeemer. We need. To go on. Being humbled. Being humbled.

[38 : 17] By the awesome presence. Of the redeemer. And that's what happened here at Sinai. And it's what verses 23 to 33. Show us.

The impact. On the people. Of the revelation. That they received. As God's self-revelation. Of his glory. His majesty. His holiness. In these words. Spoken and written.

As they instilled. In that people. A humble. A reverent. Fear. For the Lord. And God says. Look at verse 29.

God says. That's the right reaction. That's the reaction. I'm looking for. Always. In response. To my word. Of covenant grace.

That my people. Should fear me. And keep. My commands. Serve the Lord. With fear. And rejoice. With trembling. Is what the psalmist.

[39 : 11] Says to us. In Psalm 2. That's the eternal gospel. That's. The gospel. To all the earth. Through our Lord. Jesus Christ. That John proclaims. In Revelation chapter 14.

When he saw the angels. Proclaiming. Fear God. And give him glory. And worship him. Who made the earth. And the sea. And the springs of water. Father. It's only the penitent.

Who bow down. It's only those. Who cry out. God. Be merciful. To me. A sinner. It's only those. Who humble themselves. Before the holiness. Of God.

That Jesus says. Can be. Exalted. Only the poor. In spirit. Who mourn. For their sin. Who hunger. And thirst. For a righteousness.

They need. But know. They do not have. And that's. What these verses. Show us. In the unbearable. Impact.

[40 : 07] Of holiness. On sinful people. When their ears. And their hearts. Are touched. By the word of God. In God's gracious. Revelation. Of both his. Great righteousness.

And therefore. Our terrible sin. In the face. Of his righteousness. As John Newton's. Hymn says. It was grace. That first.

Taught my heart. To fear. And then. My fear is relieved. And you see. In his grace. God's word. In his commands. And his promises. Of the eternal gospel.

They show us. Don't they. Our urgent need. And God's word. Make us. Cry out to him. For mercy. To meet the need. As we're humble.

To see. Just how helpless. We are. And these. Verses. Reveal. Three. Great. Ongoing needs. Of God's people. If they are. To be enabled. To walk in his truth.

[41 : 02] In real faith. Following his ways. All the days. Of their lives. And the first. Is that we need. A real mediator. That was the people's cry.

Here in verses. 24 to 27. God has revealed himself. And who can stand. The great fire. Of his holiness. All flesh. Verse 26.

All flesh. Is exposed. Before him. Why? Well. Paul tells us. In Romans 3. 20. For through the law. Comes the knowledge. Of sin. And the people.

Here cry. To Moses. To be a mediator. Verse 27. That's what they're saying. Stand between us. And the holiness. Of God. You see.

To truly. Understand. God's law. His claim. Upon our lives. It could lead us. To abject despair. But the one thing. It could never lead us to.

[41 : 57] If we truly understand it. Is the self-effort. And self-righteousness. No one. At Sinai. Here. Ever imagined. That they could somehow.

Just try a little bit harder. And then impress God. With their own righteousness. Absolutely not. They were overwhelmed. By the reality.

Of their own sinfulness. And God's awesome holiness. But they also knew. That this God. Is their great savior. Their great redeemer.

The God of sovereign grace. And therefore. They knew. That what God was asking of them. And commanding of them. Was not. Impossible. To use Moses' own words.

Later on. In chapter 30. It is not too hard for you. It's not a far off. It's near you. It's in your mouth. And in your heart. So that you can do this. What God is asking of you.

[42 : 54] If. If. You'll do it his way. That is the way of humble trust. In the covenant grace.

That he's revealed to you. In these words. And humble obedience. To his appointed mediator. Not. In haughty pride. And presumption of your own.

And that's what Israel did here. Verse 27. They said to Moses. You go here. Go near. Hear everything that God will say to you. And tell us. And we will do it.

Sinful people need. A real mediator. And they need a right mind. As is endorsed. By God himself. Here in verses 28 and 29.

That is they need. The humble obedience. Of real faith. You see. It's the attitude of our hearts. And our minds. That always governs. Our response to God's commands.

[43 : 50] And tells. Whether it's real heart obedience. Out of love and reverence. For the Lord the Savior. Or whether it's just. Religious law keeping.

It's all about. Love for ourselves. And for our own reputation. The one you see speaks of. A real living relationship. With God. By faith. The other just speaks of.

The dead religion of works. It's all about. Whether your mind. Whether your heart. Is right. Whether it's been touched. By God's word.

So that you've been humbled. By his grace. To submit to him. His way. As the people did do here. But alas.

Not forever. Forever. And as Paul explains to us. Sharing indeed. The passionate longing. That God himself shows here. In verse 29.

[44 : 47] Israel in the main. Did not go on. Pursuing. God's instruction. Of righteousness. By faith. But he tells us. In Romans chapter 9. They did so. As if.

It were by works. That is. They were seeking. To establish. Their own. Righteousness. They did not submit. To God's righteousness. In Moses words. And the prophets words later.

Nor ultimately. In the Lord Jesus Christ himself. They rejected him. Why? How could such a thing happen? Well we know what happened.

We've read the rest of the Old Testament. We know what happened. All through Israel's history. By and by. They began to forget. The awesome holiness of God.

They began to forget. What a fearful thing it was. To be exposed. By God's command. They neglected. God's word. And the Bible. Became a lost book. It became a dusty relic.

[45 : 41] Its message was just. Vaguely remembered. All the religion. Carried on. All the sacrifices. All that sort of thing. But the reality. About the real.

Terrible seriousness of sin. About the real. And terrible holiness of God. Became muted. As people neglected. God's word. And so people began to think. That well.

They're okay really. Some probably thought. Because they were. Far superior to many. That God would look on them. With favor. And he. God owed it to them. To be impressed.

With their righteousness. Others. No doubt. Thought. They had great pride. In their spiritual pedigree. Once an Israelite. Always an Israelite. That's what they love to say.

They probably. Congratulated themselves. That they at least. Could recite. The ten points of Judaism. Or the horror. Confession of faith. You see.

[46 : 38] They were no longer humbled. By the awesome presence. Of the redeemer. No longer humbled. By God's grace. But rather hardened. By their own spiritual pride.

And presumption. And friends. That's something. The New Testament. Warns us about. Repeatedly. We need to beware. Lest any of us.

Be hardened. By the deceitfulness. Of sin. Spiritual conceit. Is a very dangerous thing. Evangelical conceit. A very dangerous thing. We need. A right mind.

And a right heart. To keep. Leading us. To our real mediator. The Lord Jesus Christ. Through whom alone. And whose mercy alone. We can approach God.

And if we're to have that. We need also. What God gave. To his people here. Through Moses. And that is. A recurring. Ministry. A teaching ministry.

[47 : 36] That Moses had. To go on. Expounding. And applying. The whole counsel of God. To the whole people of God. Look at verse 31. You stand here by me. Said the Lord. And I will teach you.

Moses. The whole commandment. That is. The whole covenant revelation. The whole. Counsel of God. And all its application. In terms of statutes.

And rules for life. As my people. In my land. And you will teach it to them. That they may live. And go on living. You see.

He's. He's saying. That's how. The God. Whose living word. Has such impact today. That's how it will go on. Having impact. Tomorrow. And the next day. And all down the years.

All the days of your lives. That's how God's word. Will keep. Arresting. And humbling his people. So that they do have. A right mind. And right heart. So they do.

[48 : 31] Keep on. Having access to him. Through the mediator. So they do. Keep walking. In the one way of life. That's how they'll keep. Hearing their redeemer.

And his abiding voice. And keep heeding. His authoritative words. And go on. Being humbled. By his awesome presence. So they can. Go on.

Walking in the truth. In the way the Lord. Has commanded. And so that they will know. The life. That is abundant life. Only. If they have. That recurring ministry.

Of the whole. Counsel. Of God. So they don't forget him. And his greatness. And his glory. And his holiness. And don't forget.

Their own sinfulness. And don't become. Hardened. To his grace. Instead of humbled. By his grace. In his word. And Paul.

[49 : 27] The apostle knew that. Didn't he? He tells us. In Acts chapter 20. About his whole. Teaching ministry. In Ephesus. And says. I never stopped. Teaching you. The whole.

Counsel of God. And he says. To the leaders. Who will lead. After he's gone. Go on. Doing as I've done. Because there will be. Dangers. And snares. And fierce wolves.

And it is only. He says. The word of his grace. Which is able to go on. Building you up. And giving you an inheritance. Among the saints. They needed. A recurring ministry.

Of the whole. Counsel. Of God. And so do we. How much greater.

Is the privilege. That you and I have. To whom God has spoken. Not only through his servant. Moses. But through his son. The Lord Jesus Christ. And is revealed to us.

[50 : 24] In the cross at Calvary. Both the terrible. Terrible. Just. Anger. At sin. But also the wonder. Of his redeeming love.

And mercy. Towards sinners. A message that humbles. Every one of us. Utterly. And completely. Beneath the sheer weight. Of his grace. How much more. Do we need to keep.

Hearing that message. That so humbles us. And keeps us. In the faith. Therefore. Says the apostle.

We. Must pay much. Closer attention. To what we have heard. Lest we drift from it. For how shall we escape.

If we neglect. Such a great salvation. Take care. And exhort. One another. Every day. As long as it is called today. That none of you. Be hardened.

[51 : 18] By the deceitfulness. Of sin. For we share in Christ. If we hold our original confidence. To the end. But friends.

We will go on. Walking in the truth. Till the end. If we help. One another. Every day. As long as it is called today. To go on.

Hearing. The Redeemer's. Abiding voice. And heeding. His authoritative words. And so being humbled. By his awesome presence.

We will walk. In the truth. Till the end. That way. Amen. Let's pray.

Almighty and everlasting God. Give us. We pray. The increase of faith. And hope. And love. And that we may obtain.

[52 : 17] What thou dost promise. Make us to love. That which thou dost command. Through. Jesus Christ. Our Lord.

Amen.