“Law of Love and Liberty: The Heart of the Father”

Exodus 20: 1-21

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Steve Massey, Hayden Bible Church, 6/21/20)

A father’s heart strongly desires what is best for his children. Love compels a father to instruct his children and lead them into a life of God’s blessing. The 10 Commandments describe the best life for God’s children. The 10 Commandments lead us into the life of blessing that our Heavenly Father desires for us. (Q1)

Read today’s scripture.

Aren’t our hearts quieted simply by the reading and hearing of God’s Word? That’s the kind of fear referred to in verse 20. Pastor Steve used this metaphor to help us apply this scripture: Imagine that you are hiking with your children along a narrow mountain ridge with steep drop-offs on either side. You will do anything to keep them safe. On one side you have the danger of legalism (law-keeping to make you right with God). But we know that the gospel of grace tells us to trust only in Jesus. On the other side is the danger of license (the fruitless notion that redeemed people no longer need to care about God’s law). This heresy is often seen in “Christian” circles today. The law of God and the grace of God are partners, not opponents. The gospel leads us to life and liberty in Christ. [relate Virgil’s story about his son’s bike] God shows His love by giving these commandments; we show our love by trusting Him and obeying His commandments.

Read verses 1-2 again. God’s moral laws are not instructions for how to get out of bondage. They are rules for a free people to stay free. True freedom is found in willing submission to God. To be set free from something is to be set free to something. (Q2) License is simply rebellion candy-coated in lip-service to God. Read Deut. 5:29. God speaks to us as a loving Father, desiring His children obey Him for their benefit and His glory.

What does the law tell us about God? He is our Lord and our God. He is all powerful, the Creator, our sustainer, and our judge. (Q3) Every one of these commandments describes the only right response to who God is and what He has done for us. Read Isa. 46:9-10. God is in charge! It is His very nature to save and to rescue. Our eternal, self-existent, sovereign God chooses to save and protect and provide for His people. The law shows us that we are alienated from God. The good news? HE REACHES OUT TO SAVE US! Even the name “Jesus” means “Jehovah saves”. Read Heb. 1:1-3. Jesus is the rescuer and deliverer of His captive people. He is our mediator. He paid the penalty for OUR lawlessness. Read John 14:6-7. This is definitely NOT a ladder to heaven. If you know Christ, you know the Father. What is grace? Undeserved favor, unmerited blessing. Once you are saved by grace, the law acts like a picture of Jesus, pointing us to what we will look like one day.

Verse 3 says to have “no other gods.” Seems like a no-brainer, right? Loyal love is the only right response to who God is and to what He has done for His people. God has exclusive rights to my supreme, sole devotion. BUT… Have you just added Jesus to your other gods? Humans have the tendency to cheat on Him. The Israelites wanted to keep their high places, just in case. Many of us today are happy to have Jesus in our lives as long as He stays in the “religious corner” of our lives. Know this: God is worshipped alone, or He is not worshipped at all. Your God is what you seek, worship, and love. Your God is what controls you, what gets your best energy, what consumes your thoughts. Pastor Steve used a marriage metaphor to drive this home: your relationship with your spouse is a relationship that demands the forsaking of all others. J.I. Packer, in his book Keeping the 10 Commandments, said, “God, being the only proper claimant of our devotion, rightly asks for it all.” Supreme devotion, reflected in obedience, is not a condition of God’s love, rather, it is the atmosphere in which God’s people enjoy His love. Loyalty to God is not a concept I’m asked to agree with, but a life I am commanded to live. (Q4) (Q5)

A father’s heart strongly desires what is best for his children. He will gladly go to great expense to carry out this desire. That is why God gave us His law. That is why God gave us His Son.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. How does a command from a parent lead to a blessing?
2. Let’s say I have been set free from alcohol. What am I set free to? (In place of “alcohol”, put in: pornography, selfishness, sloth, etc.)
3. What else do these 10 Commandments tell us about God’s character?
4. Pastor Steve described some of our other “gods” as pleasure, position, possessions, self, and sex. Do you have anything else from our current culture to add to the list?
5. If Jesus is just an “add-on” to your already overflowing life, what is God calling you to change?

“Trust and Obey” (Sammis and Towner)

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| 1 | When we walk with the Lord   In the light of His Word, What a glory He sheds on our way;   While we do His good will,   He abides with us still, And with all who will trust and obey. |
|  | Trust and obey, For there’s no other way To be happy in Jesus,   But to trust and obey. |
| 4 | But we never can prove   The delights of His love, Until all on the altar we lay;   For the favor He shows,   And the joy He bestows, Are for them who will trust and obey. |