“Law of Love and Liberty: God’s Narrow Way”

Exodus 20:1-14

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Steve Massey, Hayden Bible Church, 8/30/20)

The narrow way is the way of love toward God and your neighbor. It leads to God’s best for you. Read Matt. 7:13-14. We are to enter by the narrow gate. The Christian life is neither easy nor common. The gospel life is a life of love toward God in a world that hates God. (Q1) The gospel life is a life of obedience, not a life of “anything goes”, as our culture screams at us. Exodus 20:14 calls us to live in sexual purity outside of marriage, and sexual fidelity within marriage. Gal. 5:19-21 gives us the flip side: adultery and fornication are descriptors of those who are to inhabit Hell. This is serious, folks! Anyone who repeatedly and habitually lives an unrepentant, adulterous lifestyle faces God’s wrath.

Once again, we need to look at the heresies of legalism and license. The legalist cares about the outward act, but not the condition of the heart. The one who mistakenly believes in license says, “I’ve been saved by God’s grace; I can do whatever I want.” NO!

Jesus makes all of this clear in John 8:2-11 where we read about the woman caught in adultery. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus explains the 10 Commandments (see Matt. 5:27-28, as an example). He explains that it not just the external acts, but it is also the internal condition of the heart. Those Pharisees stood willing to condemn an adulteress despite their own adulterous hearts. Here’s the truth: ANY sexual gratification outside of marriage (one man being married to one woman) violates the law. The same law that prohibits the act prohibits the equivalent heart attitude, even if it is hidden. The legalist pretends to be pure… he just hasn’t been caught. Sex is precious and to be enjoyed. But pornography, lesbianism, homosexuality, and ANY sexual gratification outside of marriage is expressly prohibited by the seventh commandment.

If you are feeling the weight of the law, rejoice! Your conscience works! When Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dirt before the Pharisees, he was giving time for their consciences to work. We don’t know what He wrote, but we do know what He said. There is no hope in legalistic, man-made religion. The 10 Commandments are to remind us of our sin so that we will run to God for salvation. Read Rom. 3:9, 19-20. Just like those Pharisees, we’re all law-breakers at heart.

After all of the Pharisees left, from the oldest to the youngest, the woman was left with but one accuser: her own conscience! Just like her, we’ve all broken the commandments, some more than once. The only One with a perfectly clean conscience stood next to her still. Jesus has no condemnation for those He intends to save (see John 3:17 once again). (Q2) Have you acknowledged that you are a law-breaker in your sin nature? The gospel of Jesus Christ is the only cure for a conscience rightly burdened by the law.

People that think they have the license to do whatever they want now that they are under grace don’t care about the law. Notice what Jesus did after He forgave the woman: He sent her away to live a holy life. (Q3) Jesus came to forgive His people’s sins and set them on a new course. He saves us from the penalty of sin and saves us from the power of sin. The law serves as a tutor, leading us to Christ, and then it serves as a blueprint- a way to live for God’s best. God’s desire is for us to be faithful in our marriages. God’s desire is for our sexual appetites to be enjoyed rightly. Let’s be clear: you can’t manage sin. (Q4) Shut the door to temptation. Run from it! Jesus came to forgive people’s sins AND to set them on a new course of holiness and purity and obedience.

**QUESTIONS**

1. Why does the world hate God?
2. Why didn’t Jesus condemn the woman caught in adultery?
3. When Jesus told the woman (and us, by the way) to “go and sin no more,” why might He have expected a different result this time around?
4. Give examples of trying to manage sin. Give examples of running from temptation.
5. Who do you know that might benefit from this sermon? What will you do about it?

“Great is Thy Faithfulness” (Chisholm)

1

“Great is Thy faithfulness,” O God my Father,

There is no shadow of turning with Thee;

Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not

As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

Refrain:

“Great is Thy faithfulness!” “Great is Thy faithfulness!”

Morning by morning new mercies I see;

All I have needed Thy hand hath provided—

“Great is Thy faithfulness,” Lord, unto me!

2

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,

Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,

Join with all nature in manifold witness

To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

3

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,

Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;

Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,

Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!