

The Same Law Written on Stone

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[0:00] So, last week, we considered what happened to the law of God after the fall in the Garden of Eden.

Adam sinned, but as we saw, God's moral standard did not suddenly disappear. Human beings remained moral creatures made in God's image. The work of the law remained written in the heart. The conscience continued to operate by accusing or excusing our thoughts and actions. And we saw how people continued to sin and were held accountable for that sin long before they ever had the Ten Commandments written on stone.

Cain, he knew murder was wrong. Joseph knew adultery was wrong. Jacob knew theft was wrong. Pharaoh could be judged for his wickedness.

So, there was a moral standard and people were being held accountable. Well, if that's true, if humanity already possessed a knowledge of God's law, what exactly happened at Sinai?

[1:07] Why the mountain? Why the thunder and lightning? Why the audible voice from heaven? Why the stone tablets? What was the point of God giving the Ten Commandments at Sinai?

Well, if I haven't made it clear already, the answer is not that God suddenly invented morality at Mount Sinai.

It's not as though he were delivering a set of rules that never existed before. Instead, the same moral law that had been written on the human heart from creation was now publicly, verbally, clearly, and permanently articulated.

In other words, God took what sinful humanity knew imperfectly and so often suppressed in their unrighteousness and gave it to them in unmistakable written form.

Or, as the confession says, the same law that was first written in the human heart continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness after the fall.

[2:15] It was delivered by God on Mount Sinai in Ten Commandments and was written in two tablets. The same law. The form is different.

In Adam, it was written upon the heart. At Sinai, it was engraved on stone. Obviously, the historical circumstances are different. The law is now being given to Israel in the context of God's covenant with that nation.

But the moral substance has not changed. So, what exactly did change? I think it can be summed up with one word.

Clarity. Clarity is what changed. The Ten Commandments, or the Decalogue, brought clarity to God's moral law. Now, if you want to follow along, go to Exodus chapter 19 in your Bible.

So, we'll look at mostly chapter 20, but turn to Exodus 19. So, by this point, Israel has been brought out of Egypt.

[3:21] They crossed the Red Sea. God carried them through the wilderness. He fed them with manna. He provided them with water. He protected them from their enemies. And three months after leaving Egypt, they arrive at Mount Sinai.

Now, listen to what God says to them in verse 4. He says, You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.

So, before God says anything to Israel about what they must do, what this law is that He is going to deliver, He reminds them of what He has already done.

He defeated Egypt. He delivered Israel. He carried them, and He brought them to Himself. Now, why is that significant?

Well, we'll come back to this, but it's a subtle reminder that human achievement had not redeemed Israel. In other words, the Israelites, they were not rescued because they kept God's law so well.

[4:30] No, first God brought His people out of bondage, and then He gave them His law in clear written form.

So, had the order been reversed, had God said, Keep my law perfectly, and then I will rescue you from Egypt, there never would have been an exodus. But something else is happening here.

God is about to speak with a clarity Israel had never experienced before. Now, the law written on their heart, that was real.

But sin, as we discussed, had affected their understanding of it. Again, we often suppress what we know to be true. We often rationalize the truth.

We can even train our conscience to tolerate things that should trouble us, and maybe at one time did trouble us. We saw that last week in Romans chapters 1 and 2, right?

[5:28] So, let's say you're trying to see something through a dirty window. The window is too dirty. It's hard to make out what's on the other side. But now, let's say you clean that window. Well, what's on the other side becomes much clearer.

And that's basically what happened to our moral perception. The law remained, but sin distorted our apprehension of it. So, at Mount Sinai, God gives the people something that cannot be misunderstood quite so easily.

You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness, and so on. Now, the conscience may suppress those commandments, but a written command, especially on stone, that remains.

There it is. Black and white. It's as clear as day. Of course, as we talked about last time, greater revelation also brings greater responsibility.

So, from this point forward, Israel can't say, well, we didn't know. We didn't know what your will was. We didn't know your law. No, God has spoken.

[6:40] He has written His commandments for them. In fact, Exodus 20, verse 20, tells us one of the reasons for this dramatic revelation at Mount Sinai.

Moses says, God has come to test you that the fear of Him may be before you, that you may not sin. So, why give this revelation of the moral law?

It's for clarity. God gives us clear revelation, so His people will understand more clearly how they ought to live in obedience to Him.

So, again, the Ten Commandments are not the first appearance of morality in human history. They are, instead, the authoritative, written publication of the same moral law God had already placed within human beings of creation.

They're a fresh copy, if you will. They're a republication in clear and summary form of God's will for humanity. Now, as we turn over to Exodus 20, it's worth noting not merely what God says in the Ten Commandments, but how He gives those commandments.

[7:56] The Bible seems to go out of its way to distinguish these Ten Commandments from all of the other laws that Israel would receive. And let me show you what I mean.

Look at verse 1 of Exodus 20. And God spoke all these words, saying, Stop right there. Here, God speaks directly to Israel.

Moses is present, of course, and afterward Moses will serve as a mediator for much of the legislation or the law that Israel receives. But the Ten Commandments are different.

The people themselves hear the voice of God. And that distinction is made even clearer throughout the writings of Moses. For example, Deuteronomy 5 looks back on this event.

And Moses tells Israel, in verses 4 and 5 of that chapter, 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.

[9:08] And then, after repeating the Ten Commandments, Moses says in verse 22, These words the Lord spoke to you, 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.

He added no more. Well, what does that mean? Well, it doesn't mean God never gave Israel another command. Obviously, he did. Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, they contain hundreds of additional commandments, beyond the Ten Commandments.

The point is that this direct, divine proclamation ends with these Ten Words, or these Ten Commandments. God himself speaks them to the assembled nation of Israel, and then he changes

his mode of revelation for the rest of his law.

And I think Deuteronomy 4 makes this distinction even clearer. Listen to what Moses says. And he declared to you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments, and he wrote them on two tablets of stone.

And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and rules that you might do them in the land that you are going over to possess. So God declared the Ten Commandments.

[10 : 37] In fact, he wrote them down. In other words, he personally delivered them to the people of Israel. But then, he used Moses to teach all of those additional rules and statutes.

So, clearly, the Ten Commandments are to be seen as something distinct from the rest of the law delivered through Moses. And we could go further, because Exodus 31, verse 18, says that the tablets were written with the finger of God.

Exodus 32, verse 16, says the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God engraved on the tablets.

And you may remember that in Deuteronomy chapter 10, we're told that the tablets were eventually placed inside the Ark of the Covenant. That wasn't true for all of the other statutes and rules.

So, when we take all of these details together, I think it's safe to say that the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments, possesses a unique position within the Mosaic legislation, or the Mosaic law.

[11 : 52] And that distinction is going to become very important later when we consider Israel's ceremonial and civil laws. God gave Israel regulations concerning everything, from sacrifices, to priests, to clean and unclean foods, to property boundaries, to criminal penalties, to festivals, and all sorts of matters, right?

And of course, all of these laws had real divine authority. No one in Israel could say, well, that command came through Moses rather than directly from God, so I can ignore that one, right?

And yet, I believe Scripture teaches us that there should be a distinction made between the Mosaic moral law and those civil and ceremonial laws.

I think the Bible teaches us to recognize that not every Mosaic command had the same purpose or the same lasting duration. And then at the center of all of the law that was given stands the Decalogue, the written moral summary of the moral law.

Now, getting back to Exodus 20, there's a detail that can be easily overlooked when we begin reading the Ten Commandments. You'll notice that the chapter does not begin with God saying, you shall have no other gods before me.

[13 : 25] It actually begins one verse earlier where God says, I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. We might consider this the preface to the Ten Commandments and it's really important.

God does not begin by saying, if you keep these Ten Commandments, perhaps I will become your God. He also doesn't say, keep them and perhaps I'll rescue you from Pharaoh.

That's already been done. Pharaoh has been defeated, the Passover has already happened, the Red Sea has opened and closed, Israel has been redeemed. In other words, this law did not get Israel out of Egypt.

And this goes back to what I was saying before. The pattern we see here is law following grace. Not the other way around.

Deuteronomy 5 reiterates this when Moses repeats the commandments and again he quotes God as saying, I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt out of the house of slavery.

[14 : 39] So, sometimes you'll hear Christians speak as though grace and obedience were somehow opposites of one another.

Now, they are opposites if we mean that our obedience earns grace, which it doesn't. They are opposites if we mean that keeping the law can justify sinners, which it can't.

But grace and obedience are not enemies or opposites when obedience is in response or the response of a redeemed person to our Redeemer.

So, think of the Exodus itself. God did not free Israel from one master so that Israel could belong to no one or could live completely autonomously.

He delivered them from Pharaoh so they could belong to him. Do you remember Moses when he stands before Pharaoh? Let my people go so that what?

[15 : 45] They may go out and worship me. Again, Exodus 19 4 says, I brought you to myself. Redemption brings us into a relationship with the Redeemer, and that relationship comes with certain commitments.

So, if I say, I love my wife, there are certain things that that love requires of me. Faithfulness, for example. Faithfulness is one of the forms that love takes.

Well, in the same way, when God says, I am the Lord, your God, and then delivers these commandments, these commandments that follow, they tell Israel what covenant faithfulness to God looks like.

Now, I'll probably touch on this more later in the study, but I just want you to see that there is no reason to think that God's law becomes irrelevant to the redeemed person.

But sadly, that's how some Christians think. They think, Christ has redeemed me from the law, therefore, the law in all its forms is no longer binding on me.

[16 : 56] But that's never been the case throughout redemptive history, has it? In fact, God rescued his people from Egypt so he could bring them to this moment when they would receive the moral law with clarity, and, of course, could obey it, or should obey it.

At the same time, though, we should not think that the commandments have authority only over redeemed people. God did not suddenly acquire moral authority when he rescued Israel from Egypt.

He is the creator and lord of every human being. Again, murder was sinful in Genesis 4. Adultery was sinful in Genesis 39.

So, this preface to the Ten Commandments tells us why obedience should be especially precious to redeemed people. But it does not imply that universal morality is merely a private rule for believers. It's for everyone. This is the law for everyone. In other words, the same law is doing two things. It condemns the rebel, but it also guides the redeemed.

[18 : 14] You shall not murder, for instance. That judges the murderer whether he loves God or not. And yet, the same command teaches the Christian how to love his neighbor.

So, the confession says that the first four commandments contain our duty to God and the other six our duty to humanity.

Now, that's not an artificial division created by theologians along the way. Jesus himself taught us to read the law in this way. So, in Matthew 22, a lawyer comes to Jesus and asks, teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?

And Jesus answers, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul. Then he says, this is the first and great commandment and a second is like it.

You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets. Now, you'll notice that Jesus did not quote any of the Ten Commandments there.

[19 : 23] Instead, he quotes Deuteronomy 6-5 and Leviticus 19-18. Yet, these two commandments summarize precisely the structure of the Decalogue.

The first four commandments concern our relationship with God. The first tells us whom to worship, no other gods.

The second tells us how the true God is to be worshipped, not according to images or inventions of men, nothing of our own making. The third concerns reverence for his name.

And the fourth concerns the ordering of our time for worship and rest. And then the law turns toward our neighbors. The fifth commandment concerns authority, beginning with father and mother.

The sixth protects human life. The seventh protects marriage and sexual purity. The eighth protects property.

[20 : 30] The ninth protects truth and reputation. And the tenth reaches beneath everything visible into our innermost desires, you shall not covet.

love for God. And Jesus summarizes these two tables as love for God and love for neighbor. Now, when I say he summarizes, I don't want you to misunderstand what I mean by that.

Jesus does not replace the Ten Commandments with this vague principle called love. I've actually heard people say that we don't need the commandments anymore because Jesus told us simply to love.

Love God and love our neighbor. But the obvious follow-up question to that is, what exactly is love? How do we love?

So let's suppose someone says, I love my neighbor. Wonderful. But he's having an affair with his neighbor's wife. Well, the seventh commandment tells us that regardless of whatever he feels, whatever he wants to call it, it is not love.

[21:45] Or suppose someone says, I love my neighbor, but they're damaging someone's reputation through spreading lies, gossip, and that sort of thing. Well, the ninth commandment tells us that that can't be love either.

And Paul reasons exactly this way in Romans 13. Listen to what he writes in Romans 13, verses 8-10. Oh, no one anything except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

For the commandments, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet, and any other commandment are summed up in this word, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Love does no wrong to a neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. So, clearly, Paul doesn't think that love has made the commandments irrelevant.

Not at all. In fact, he actually quotes the commandments to explain what love is. And James does the same thing. In James chapter 2, he says, you shall love your neighbor as yourself, and he refers to this commandment as the royal law.

[23:01] And then, just a few verses later, he quotes, do not commit adultery and do not murder. So, again, we see how the law of love and the ten commandments belong together.

Love is at the heart of the moral law, and the commandments show us precisely what love is. You cannot separate the two. Now, it's helpful to recognize that the ten commandments are what we might call a summary of the moral law.

In other words, they're not an exhaustive case book, if you will. For example, when God says, you shall not murder, he did not intend for us to read that and conclude that the sixth commandment has nothing to say unless someone actually dies.

So, we might think of the ten commandments as headings under which the Bible organizes whole families of moral duties. Okay? And then the rest of the Bible elaborates on those headings and shows us what all is included under that heading.

So, the Decalogue itself does not exhaust every moral duty in these ten short sentences. And let me give you some examples of what I mean.

[24:28] One of the commandments says, you shall not steal. Now, obviously, you would break that commandment if you go and stole someone's wallet.

But the Bible goes further than that. Employers could steal from their employees by withholding wages. workers could steal by refusing honest labor while accepting pay for that labor.

Merchants could steal through dishonest scales. Borrowers could defraud lenders. In fact, the New Testament gives us this command positively when Paul says in Ephesians 4.28, let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor doing honest work with his own hands so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

So, there the eighth commandment is not merely stop taking what doesn't belong to you. It's also start working and start being generous with what you've earned.

Or consider the ninth commandment. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. Now, obviously, that prohibits lying in court, which is the most obvious setting for a false witness.

[25:50] But the Bible also extends this principle to lying, to slander, to gossip. So, positively, this command calls us to be truthful.

And to protect our neighbor's good name where truth allows us to do so. And then there's the tenth commandment.

You shall not covet. Now, this is an area where no human courtroom can actually persecute someone. I mean, there's no police investigation that can discover exactly what you secretly wish belonged to you.

But, of course, God sees it. So, with the tenth commandment, we realize that the law applies even to our desires. It's not merely a matter of what we do.

It's also a matter of what we think and what we feel. Now, this is where some simple rules of interpretation could be very useful.

[26:54] Now, by rules, I don't mean something that clever theologians have invented over the years to make the commandments say more than they actually say. These are patterns that I

believe Scripture actually teaches us to recognize, and I believe we see both Jesus and the apostles using them.

So, I have seven. Seven rules for interpretation. First of all, where sin is forbidden, as we see in the Ten Commandments, the contrary duty is commanded.

So, if God says, do not murder, He is not merely telling us to avoid homicide. He is requiring us within our calling and within our ability to preserve human life.

If He says, do not steal, He is commanding on a stewardship. If He says, do not bear false witness, He is requiring that we tell the truth.

Where sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded. Second, where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden.

[28:14] So, reverse the first rule. Honor your father and your mother, for example. not only requires honor, but it also condemns contempt or rebellion.

Remember the Sabbath day? That requires something positive, but it also condemns the attitudes and practices that oppose that duty. Third, the commandments reach the whole person.

actions, words, desires, motives, and omissions, in some cases. They reach the whole person.

Now, this is where Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5 becomes indispensable.

And I'll quote just part of what He said. In Matthew 5, His Sermon on the Mount, He says, You have heard that it was said to those of old, you shall not murder.

But I say to you, that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment. And He continues from there. And if you continue reading all that Jesus says in His Sermon on the Mount, you realize that He is by no means changing the commandments.

[29:30] He's actually showing us the depths of those commandments. The real purpose of those commandments. He does the same thing with adultery. Jesus says that the command relates even to lust in our eyes and hearts.

It's not just about the act itself. So God is not merely interested in preventing a certain physical act. He condemns even the desire that produces that act.

Fourth, a command includes the ordinary means necessary for keeping it. A command includes the ordinary means necessary for keeping it.

So, if God requires us to preserve life, then we cannot knowingly behave in ways that needlessly endanger life.

Right? It's not as though we can later say, well, technically, I didn't murder anyone. Moral obedience includes reasonable precautions.

[30:41] If you know the railing on your porch is collapsing and someone is likely to fall through it and maybe it's on the second floor someplace high, somebody could really get hurt. Well, the duty to preserve life means you fix the railing.

Or at the very least, you warn people before they lean against it. If you're responsible for a child, you don't leave dangerous chemicals around that they could potentially drink.

If the speed limit on the highway is 55 and you're driving 100 miles an hour, well, you're endangering life. You're contradicting, you're rebelling against the duty to preserve life.

So, when God gives a command, that command relates even to the ordinary means by which its purpose is accomplished. Fifth, the commandments forbid avoidable occasions and provocations that lead toward the prohibited sin.

Let's say that again. The commandments forbid avoidable occasions and provocations that lead toward the prohibited sin. So, the Bible doesn't merely tell us to refuse sin at the moment that sin is offered to us, if you will.

[32:04] We are to flee even from those situations that knowingly tempt us. Proverbs warns the young man not merely against committing adultery, but against wandering toward the adulteress's house.

Paul doesn't tell Timothy to resist youthful passions only after they've reached full strength. When you know you can't take it anymore, then run away.

No, he simply tells him to flee youthful passions. Run as far from him as you can. Now, of course, we can't avoid every possible temptation.

We do live in a fallen world and even Jesus faced temptations, as we know. But knowingly feeding that temptation while claiming we have not technically committed an act of sin, is that really obedience?

Certainly not wise. And I would say it's a violation of the moral law. Now, sixth, the greater sin includes lesser expressions of the same corruption.

[33 : 15] The greater sin includes lesser expressions of the same corruption. What do I mean by that? Well, murder is the extreme form of hatred against another person, right?

But we saw it in Matthew 5. Jesus teaches us that sinful anger belongs to the same moral family, if you will. Adultery is a particularly destructive expression of sexual unfaithfulness, but lust, that belongs to the same family.

Perjury is a grave form of falsehood, but ordinary deception or maybe malicious gossip, run-of-the-mill gossip, belongs to the same family.

Now, that's not to say every sin has identical consequences or carries the same weight. Murder is obviously worse in its effects than a moment of unrighteous anger.

Jesus himself speaks of greater and lesser sins, but the point is that, I guess, a seed is still a seed, even if it's not grown into a full tree yet. Seventh and final, our responsibility sometimes extends to helping others obey God within the callings God has given us.

[34 : 40] Our responsibility sometimes extends to helping others obey God within the callings God has given us. So, for example, parents cannot obey the fifth commandment for their children, but they can teach their children to respect authority.

Perhaps another example would be that employers should not create conditions that effectively require employees to lie or cheat.

Now, there are limits here. We're not appointed as moral police over everyone around us, as if that were even possible, but Scripture certainly condemns people who entice others to sin or approve of sin or refuse to restrain sin when God has actually given them the opportunity and the responsibility to do so.

In short, these principles help us to see how the Ten Commandments are not merely ten very narrow prohibitions. They're actually something much larger. They are a moral framework for the whole of life.

Now, maybe it would help to work through one of the commandments so we can see exactly how this works. And we'll go back to the Sixth Commandment, you shall not murder. Now, at the narrowest level, the meaning is pretty obvious.

[36 : 13] Human life, as we've talked about, is sacred because it bears God's image, so we do not have the authority to take innocent human life. But we also need to read the entirety of Scripture.

Again, Jesus teaches us in Matthew 5 that even malicious anger belongs under this commandment. 1 John 3.15 says, everyone who hates his brother is a murderer.

Now, that doesn't mean hatred and homicide have identical consequences, but they share a common root. Now, we can apply the positive side.

If murder is forbidden, that would mean preserving life is commanded, right? Which means that we should have reasonable concern for the safety and welfare of other people.

And we have an excellent example of this in Deuteronomy 22.8. So, the Israelites, they typically built their houses with flat roofs that were used as additional living spaces.

[37 : 15] And in Deuteronomy, God commands, when you build a new house, you shall make a parapet, or a railing, if you will, for your roof that you may not bring the guilt of blood upon your house if anyone should fall from it.

Well, that is the sixth commandment applied, oddly enough, to the construction of a house, to the building of a house. Now, when you just read the sixth commandment, you think, that has nothing to do with architecture.

Oh, but it does. It does. Of course, it would be a blatant violation of the sixth commandment to maybe push someone off your roof, but it's also a violation if you create an obvious danger and you just leave it at that.

So, indifference to someone whose life is in genuine danger, that also violates the commandment. But we can take this even further. In Matthew 5, when Jesus discusses murder and anger, he goes on to speak about reconciliation.

He says that if you remember that your brother has something against you, go and be reconciled to him. That's your responsibility. Go and be reconciled to him.

[38 : 35] So, you see, you shall not murder reaches all the way from homicide to the way we handle anger at the dinner table.

It condemns the hand that kills another person, but also the mouth that lashes out or the heart that quietly nurses hatred towards someone. Positively, it calls us to protect life, to practice patience with people, to pursue peace, to take reasonable precautions for the safety of others, and to seek reconciliation where reconciliation is needed and where it's possible.

So, that's what I mean when I say the Ten Commandments or the moral law is summarized in the Ten Commandments. It's not exhaustive. It's summarized.

Now, I'm going to anticipate that at least one person in this room has their Bible open to Exodus 20 and they are thinking to themselves, what about the Fourth Commandment?

If the Ten Commandments summarize the abiding moral law, what about that commandment regarding the Sabbath? Well, as you may know, Christians have disagreed over the precise application of the Fourth Commandment under the New Covenant and I really don't have time to answer all of the potential questions.

[40 : 06] If you want, you can read chapter 22 in our confession and see what it has to say, learn more of the details. But for now, I want to point out something a bit more fundamental. Obviously, the Fourth Commandment stands within the Decalogue itself and we should not be tempted to wave away its moral substance because we're not entirely sure about its application.

At the very minimum, we can say that it teaches that our time belongs to God. Human beings were not created for uninterrupted production or consumption for that matter.

God has established a pattern of work and rest and He calls us to order our time around Him, around His will, and around His example. Now, eventually, we have to ask, how does Christ's resurrection and the new covenant affect the form of our Sabbath day observance?

But keep in mind, no one would ever say, well, you know what? Christians disagree about precisely what it means to honor father and mother, especially in their old age.

Therefore, we should no longer observe the fifth commandment. No one would say that. Difficult applications, they require careful interpretation, but they do not erase the command.

[41 : 36] And I believe that's true for the fourth commandment as well. God's moral law is not to cut God's moral law into pieces and toss out parts of it.

Now, in summary, what we have in the Ten Commandments or the moral law is not an arbitrary list of regulations. This is God giving humanity a written expression of the moral order that has existed from creation.

The law, once written upon the human heart, is now spoken aloud. It is engraved upon tablets.

Now, humanity has suppressed the truth, and we continue to suppress the truth.

But the Ten Commandments are God making His moral will very plain to us. And that explains why these commandments reappear in the New Testament.

Jesus summarizes them as love for God and love for neighbor. Paul quotes them in Romans 13 and says love fulfills them. James quotes them in James chapter 2 and calls this standard of morality the law of liberty.

[42 : 46] So, clearly, love does not make the law obsolete. Grace does not turn righteousness into something that is just hazy and undefined.

We don't know exactly what it is. Just feel it out. The redeemed person can now look at the commandment and say, this is what love for God looks like. This is what love for neighbor looks like.

And there's something especially appropriate about James calling it a law of liberty. Think about it. Israel received the commandments after leaving the house of slavery.

And then, the God who said, you shall not, was the same God who had broken Pharaoh's chains. In other words, his law was not another bondage like they had experienced in Egypt.

You know, we often think of freedom as having nobody to tell us what to do. We don't have to listen to anyone. But the Bible gives us a much richer picture of what freedom is.

[43 : 52] Freedom is actually being delivered from masters who destroy us so that we can live as the creatures God designed us to be in the first place.

I mean, a fish is not liberated when you throw it into the grass. And human beings do not flourish by escaping the moral character of the God who made us in His image.

And again, that's why the commandments begin where they do. God says, I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. And then, He gives them the moral law, which is not a law of bondage, but in fact a law of liberty.

Let's pray. Father, thank You for giving us Your law so clearly. I pray that You would keep us from treating Your commands as a burden.

I pray that You would teach us to see them as wise and Your good will. You are the God who made us and redeemed us. Of course, Lord, we should desire to follow Your will.

[45:02] Help us to love You with all of our heart and to love our neighbors in the ways that Your Word has described for us. And we ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.