



Deut. 5:22-33

A Heart to Fear Me and Keep My Commandments

22 " These words the LORD spoke to all your assembly, in the mountain from 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.

23 " So it was, when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, that you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders.

24 "And you said: 'Surely the LORD our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire. We have seen this day that God speaks with man; yet he still lives.

25 'Now therefore, why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the LORD our God anymore, then we shall die.

26 'For who is there of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?

27 'You go near and hear all that the LORD our God may say, and tell us all that the LORD our God says to you, and we will hear and do it.'

28 "Then the LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me: 'I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They are right in all that they have spoken.

29 'Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!

30 'Go and say to them, "Return to your tents."

31 'But as for you, stand here by Me, and I will speak to you all the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which you shall teach them, that they may observe them in the land which I am giving them to possess.'

32 "Therefore you shall be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

33 "You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess.

Moses has finished giving the history of the Ten Commandments, and now he gives this concluding exhortation, and summary. As a good preacher he makes a final application of what God has taught them.

In verse 22, He speaks of how the Ten Commandments were given, because the way they were given sets them apart from all the other laws. These Ten Words of the Lord were spoken by God, in a loud voice from the top of Mt. Sinai amidst terrifying fire and smoke. Then when God had finished He wrote them with His own finger on two tablets of stone and gave these tablets into the hands of Moses.

This speaks of their permanent and abiding nature. They are an expression of the nature and holiness of God and the duties of man. While the Ceremonial laws God gave to Israel to guide their worship were fulfilled with the coming of Jesus Christ, because they had served to point to Him, He being the reality while the laws were but types and shadows as the author of Hebrews tells us. And while the Judicial and

Civil laws of Israel expired with the destruction of that nation. These laws continue on forever and have three abiding uses that we will discuss in just a moment.

But notice first that they are split into two tables, the first table or commandments 1-4 speaking of Our Duties to Man, and the second table or commandments 5-10 speaking of man's duties to man.

Jesus of course summarized these two tables in Matthew 22:37-40

37 Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'

38 "This is the first and great commandment.

39 "And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

40 "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Every other Law that was given to the people, was given through Moses and in some sense was an application of these foundational ten laws. Moses points out that God added no more, so we must not add ourselves, nor take away, the law of the Lord is perfect, as the Psalmist puts it. You have to emphasize that, because man's constant desire is to either add to the Law, creating his own laws for men to obey as the Pharisees did, or reduce the law, taking away the commandments we do not like as too many modern day evangelicals are wont to do. ***We like images of God, goodbye commandment 2. We don't like to have to observe the Lord's day, so long commandment 4. God wants me to be happy, Adios commandment 7, and so on.***

But in fact, there has never been a time when the violation of these commandments by commission or omission has not been a sin. Do we expect in heaven that suddenly stealing and lying will be ok? Or that because we have been saved by Jesus from the curse of the law that it is ok to violate them? No they are an expression of God's holiness, and when in glory His people dwell with Him, there will be no law breaking. Because of course the initial breaking of His Law is what brought about the fall in the first place and the separation between God and Man.

In the garden, Adam and Eve had God's laws written in their hearts, and in their unfallen condition they delighted in his presence. Adam walked with God in the cool of the day, and he spoke with him familiarly face to face. But once they had broken that law by disobeying the Lord's commandment, the presence of God terrified them. What was the first thing they did? They hid from Him! Because they knew that God was Holy, but they were sinful and deserved death for their disobedience.

The people at Mt. Sinai recognize the same thing, the presence of God does not delight them it terrifies them! They wonder, "we've survived the initial giving of the Moral Law, but how long can we remain in His presence like this before He utterly destroys us?" You see an echo of this attitude in Isaiah 6 when Isaiah comes into the presence of the HOLY, HOLY, HOLY God and he cries out – ***"Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts."***

Kids I grew up in a house full of antiques, and there was a shelf full of things I was told I was never to play with. Well one day when I was about 6, I did, and not surprisingly I broke one. I was terrified, so I remember thinking, I can't face my Father's wrath, I had better run away. So here I am 6 years old throwing things in my back-pack and making my plans. Because I knew I was guilty. Here I am terrified of just my parents wrath, and they weren't going to destroy me utterly for disobeying them, well you can just imagine then the terror of sinful people in the presence of the CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE.

So the people wisely ask Moses to be their mediator, don't let God speak to us anymore, Moses you go, you hear what He has to say, and then you tell us what we should do and we'll obey it.

Now the Lord says that they were right in their thinking and what they said. If they had kept His commandments it would be well with them, they would experience His blessings and not his wrath. But there is one fatal defect. ***Deut 5:29 'Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!'***

You see the problem is that despite all their assurances and their covenanting, they don't have a heart to obey Him. The Lord knows full well, that in just a little while they will be disobeying Him and rebelling against the very mediator they asked for.

So one of the things that mediator, Moses is going to have to do is intercede for them. After the break his explicit commandments regarding worship in Exodus 32 by worshipping him with a golden calf, Moses has to intercede for them to stand between them and God and pray for them: ***Psalm 106:23 Therefore He said that He would destroy them, Had not Moses His chosen one stood before Him in the breach, To turn away His wrath, lest He destroy them.***

But what will happen when Moses dies? Who will intercede then?

Well Moses tells them that in a little while a greater Mediator will come, a mediator of whom he is but a dim foreshadowing. ***Deut 18:15 " The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear,***

16 "according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.'

17 "And the LORD said to me: 'What they have spoken is good.

18 'I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.

Who is that Mediator? The Prophets spoke of His Coming and the Apostles announced that He had come near to make that once and for all intercession. But a much greater intercession than Moses could ever make. You see Moses could intercede for His people, but He was powerless to take away the problem that made that mediation necessary, He couldn't take away their sin debt, and make them Holy, He couldn't reconcile them to God or give them a new Heart to obey Him, only God Himself could do that and the God News is that He Did by sending the ultimate mediator Jesus Christ:

"A mediator is one who intervenes between contesting parties for the sake of making reconciliation. The term is sometimes applied to independent and disinterested parties called in to arbitrate a difficulty; sometimes to a dependent messenger or agent of one of the parties to the contest employed to carry overtures to the other party. In this sense Moses was a mediator between God and the people of Israel. (Deut. 5:5; Gal. 3:19.) Sometimes it is applied to an intercessor employed by the weaker party to influence the stronger.

The Scriptures apply the term, in a higher sense than any of these, to Christ. They teach that he intervenes between God and man, not merely to sue for peace and to persuade to it, but, armed with plenipotentiary power, efficiently to make peace and to do all that is necessary to that end."

Jesus came once to make atonement for our sins, and he will come again to make full restoration of all that has been ruined by that sin.

Acts 3:19 "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

20 "and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,

21 "whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

22 "For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you.

23 'And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'

Applications:

First we see that good intentions, are never enough to save or to reconcile us to God, Matthew Henry wisely points out that while the Law may rightly frighten us or convict us of sin, it can never save. *That now they were in a good mind, under the strong convictions of the word they heard. Many have their consciences startled by the law that have them not purified; fair promises are extorted from them, but no good principles fixed and rooted in them.*

Second, Only the Mediator between Jesus Christ can do that: Tyndale writing to a fellow preacher said: "Expound the law truly, and open the veil of Moses, to condemn all flesh, and prove all men sinners, and all deeds under the law, before mercy have taken away the condemnation thereof, to be sin, and damnable; and then as a faithful minister, set abroad the mercy of our Lord Jesus, and let the wounded consciences drink of the water of him. And then shall your preaching be with power, and not as the hypocrites. And the Spirit of God shall work with you; and all consciences shall bear record unto you, and feel that it is so. And all doctrine that casteth a mist on these two, to shadow and hide them, I mean the law of God, and mercy of Christ, that resist you with all your power." - William Tyndale

Three, Only through Closing with Christ in that way will you then will you have that new heart God speaks of in verse 29: "such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!"

"The God of heaven is truly and earnestly desirous of the welfare and salvation of poor sinners. He has given abundant proof that he is so: he gives us time and space to repent, by his mercies invites us to repentance, and waits to be gracious; he has sent his Son to redeem us, published a general offer of pardon and life, promised his Spirit to those that pray for him, and has said and sworn that he has no pleasure in the ruin of sinners." – Matthew Henry

2 Cor. 5:18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,

19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

NKJ 2 Corinthians 6:1 We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

2 For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.