

The Worship of the One God

Deut. 5:1-7; 6:1-9

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It is a blessed thing to be called into fellowship with the One God. As the writer of Hebrews says, the lesser is blessed of the greater; hence, God is not blessed by His worshippers; as though they added something to Him, but rather, they are blessed of God.

Today, we are beginning a series on the Law of God, specifically the Ten Commandments. The commandments are found in Exodus 20 and in Deuteronomy 5. It would be very edifying for you to read the commandments in both of these chapters and to study the circumstances in which they were given.

Sometimes when I am preparing sermons I find that I have more than one sermon floating around in my skull. I have sometimes tried to preach them all at once and that leads to difficulty, confusion, and tedium. It is a great trial to both you and me. So I have learned usually to pluck them apart from each other, put them in their own place, and preach them one at a time. So it is today. I was going to use Psalm 119:1-16 and illustrate it from Deuteronomy 6, but I find that both of these passages have legs of their own, and therefore I am going to divide them. I will speak on Deuteronomy 6 today, and come back to Psalm 119 at a later time. Matthew is speaking next week, so I will not get back to the Law until the first week in August.

The first commandment is a very simple one: "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me." There were two tablets of stone. The first had four commandments written on it; the second had six commandments. The first tablet had to do with our duty and love toward God; the second had to do with our duty and love toward man. Thus Jesus Himself summarized the law by quoting from it: the First and Great Commandment is to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, with all our souls, and with all our minds, and with all our strength. The Second Commandment is to love our neighbor as ourselves. We are not left in the dark as to what this means, and this love is not to be reduced to sentimentality, inwardness, or emotion. The Scriptures leads us to understand what true love is, and only those who are taught by the Scriptures can know the meaning of love in the true sense.

There are a couple of things that need to be said before we look at Deuteronomy 6:4,5.

First. The requirement to love God proceeds from the very nature of God. The fundamental reality which lies at the core of all things is that God is worthy to be loved. It is a great offense not to love Him. There is no great evidence of man's sinfulness than this: men do not devote themselves to the worship and love and praise of God. They worship that which is not God. They worship despicable and corrupt things and despise

that which is most lovely and beautiful.

Second. There is only one man who in his life on this earth fully kept this commandment. That is Jesus Christ, the Last Adam. He fully loved the Lord His God with all His heart, soul, mind, and strength. He was without sin. The Bible says of our Lord Jesus in Psalm 112:

1 Praise ye the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments. 2 His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed. 3 Wealth and riches shall be in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever. 4 Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous. 5 A good man showeth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion. 6 Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. 7 He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD.

Because Jesus Christ did what the first Adam did not do, He received for His people the inheritance. We received the inheritance in Christ's name, not in our own name. Therefore we are called Christians, for all things come to us from Jesus Christ, who perfectly loved God.

Third. Because we are in Christ by faith, the Holy Spirit forms the beginning of His image in us. Through the Gospel "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us," according to Romans 5. We know nothing of the love of God naturally, for this is not a work of the flesh. It is only through the Holy Spirit that we are taught to love God, and the Holy Spirit is not given to us through the law, but only through the Gospel, according to Galatians. No one can or will keep the First Commandment by the flesh, or by natural ability. It is the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul of a man through the Gospel. It is only when I come to Christ in faith, believing that He has taken all my sins away, that He has kept the law perfectly for me, that He suffered on the cross for all my sins, and that God loves me through Jesus Christ; it is only then that I begin to perceive the nature of God's love toward me. My own soul is quickened to begin to love Him, and the first sparks of the divine love are kindled in my heart.

Having said these things, let us now look at Deuteronomy 6:4,5.

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

There are only two points to make today.

One. Singleness of heart is required to worship the true God, who is One. Because God is not divided, He cannot be worshipped with a divided heart. Insincerity is deadly and fatal in the worship of God. So many of us have divided hearts. We must pray when we come to Christ, "I believe, help thou my unbelief."

A. Consider: Jeremiah 29:11-13: For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken

unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

B. Consider: 2 Peter 2: But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

C. Consider: Luke 9:61-62 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

D. Consider: James 1:5-8 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

E. Consider: James 4:4-8 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

F. Consider: Luke 16:13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

G. Consider: Hosea 10:1-4. Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars; according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images. Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty: he shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images. For now they shall say, We have no king, because we feared not the LORD; what then should a king do to us? They have spoken words, swearing falsely in making a covenant: thus judgment springeth up as hemlock in the furrows of the field.

H. Consider: Psalm 86:11 Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.

I. Consider: Luke 11:34 The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.

Two. The worship of the One God requires that we be united in our hearts toward one another. God will not accept the worship of Him, if we be divided in our hearts toward one another.

A. Consider: Ephesians 4:1-6 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

B. Consider again at the end of this chapter: 29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

One final note: "before me" does not mean "ahead of me" as if it would be all right to worship some other god as long as the true God was first. No, "before me" means "before my face." It is offensive to God to have any other God at all. It is an affront before his face. This commandment means that we are to have no other gods at all. All are to be renounced and put away from us if we are to be like Christ, the purpose for which we have been predestinated and called.

God bless you.