

Here Comes the Law

Exodus (Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Matthew, Mark, Romans)

Detailed outline from the Sermon on October 14, 2007

The Big Ten (Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 5)

My relationship with God

- Primary (no other Gods/gods)
- Loyal (don't replace me or forget me, no graven images; nothing that you construct can replace me).
- Respectful (my name matters; don't trivialize it, use it as a swear word; swear on it without meaning it).
- Attentive (I'm giving you a day for reflection and rest; think about me every day, but I know your life is full; spend one day really applied to these things).

My relationship with others

- Honor my parents (find a way...)
- Respect human life (Don't murder or kill without profound...).
- Respect the sacred nature of marriage (Don't commit adultery; don't dishonor the marriage bed...).
- Respect other's property (Don't steal. If it isn't yours don't take it or keep it).
- Uphold the truth (don't bear false witness. Don't lie).
- Learn to be content with what I have (Don't be in the habit of coveting what others have. This causes disintegration in relationships; and harm to your own soul).

These laws are also good for us...not just God, others and civilization.

Other laws and protections (Exodus 21-31, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)

(Some are quirky...we're separated by centuries, by culture, by geography...we think, "No pork? You gotta be kidding! It tastes so good," but it's a dangerous meat to handle...").

The treatment of servants; protection of property; treatment of aliens; treatment of wronged virgins or wives; widows and orphans; fair lending; treatment of leaders; presentation of first-fruits; returning lost possessions; justice for the poor; lawsuits

and bribes; Sabbath for the land; feasts and festivals; instructions for giving; cure of the clergy; clean and unclean foods; “unclean” days and seasons for women (protections); infectious diseases; sexual behavior; restitution for wrongs suffered; inheritance laws...(This is the beginnings of a legal code that protects us from ourselves and one-another, like any other legal code. But there’s more here than civil law).

The Big One (Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Matthew 22:34-40, Romans 13:10, Galatians 5:14)

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself.

- Jesus says that this is the law in a nutshell.
- Paul says, “Love does no harm. Love is the fulfillment of the law.” (Romans)
- The entire law is summed up in the command “love your neighbor as yourself.” (Galatians 5:14)
- The Golden Rule – Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. (Matthew 7:12)

A very important distinction (Mark 2:27)

(Context: picking grain...healing a man with a shriveled hand...)

“Not only am I the Lord of the Sabbath, (you’re telling me what to do on my day?). But I made this day for you, not you for it.”

Am I made for the law or is the law made for me? (This is hard for firstborn kids).
Law - keeping is vain religion (Luke 15:25-32, Matthew 5-7, 23)

What is the law for?

- It defines wrong. (Romans 5:20) It puts immorality into knowable terms.
- It brings wrath. (Romans 4:15) If there were no standard, consequences would be unfair and unnecessary.
- It is powerless. (Romans 8:3) Law can’t transform me. Maybe it can help contain me, but it can’t change me.
- It leads us to Christ. (Romans 13:10) Our inability to keep the law makes us cry out for a Savior. The need for consequences makes God cry out for his lamb.
- Christ is the end of the law. (Romans 13:10) Not as if it is no longer true, but there is a new overlay. The gospel...the blood of Jesus...the internalization of the Law (Matthew 5)

The law and bigger parenting strategies (Romans 5:13)

We must learn to see the story of scripture as the development of a family of faith; the law is only one part of an overall strategy to bring us to maturity and relationships marked by mutual respect.

God's ultimate hope is that we will see life through His eyes with an informed perspective, owning His values, enjoying what He enjoys, despising what He despises.

There might have been a day when laws were set up to remind us to love the alien, the widow, the orphan, the weak and disabled. There comes a day when God asks, "Can we get past the law to the point where they're on your heart the way they're on mine?"

If not...why?

If so...then you don't need a law. Follow the law of love...follow your heart.