

### Part 3: Obeying with our Hearts

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There are few words more challenging to our hearts than the words, "Do you know why I pulled you over?"

It has been asked to me on several occasions, and I imagine that the same might be true for you or for someone you've been with. The question brings up a number of responses.

For some of us we know exactly why, but we'd rather not admit such condemning details. For others we begin to meticulously think through and maybe confess all the things that we could see ourselves doing wrong, even if we aren't sure we did them. Then there is the final category of those who are absolutely positive that there was nothing worthy of being pulled over for, and will stand on their own laurels to prove it.

I can imagine that many of us have had similar emotions when faced with the question of God's law, or obedience to God in general. As we have been working through the book of Deuteronomy, Moses has been preparing God's people to hear God's law, and in our text today he is going to begin to share those laws, those rules and those statutes with them. Here is just a sampling of our text today: **Deuteronomy 4:44-45, 5:1, 5:31, 6:1.**

When we are confronted with laws, of any kind, we can easily hide in conscious shame, feel dubious about potential wrongs that we have committed, or we can arrogantly boast innocence. But if we ever want to have some sort of rest when it comes to God and his law we must first understand why God commands us, why would God give rules, statutes and commandments.

Our text this morning spans three chapters of Deuteronomy and I just want to give us a quick survey of Moses words so that we might be able to answer the question: Do you know why I'm giving you my law?

**Deuteronomy 5:16, 5:29, 5:33, 6:2-3, 6:18, 6:24.**

As Moses is beginning to share God's rules with his people he wants them, and us, to know that it is because God wants to do good to them; for them to live long in the land that God provides them. All God's commands are for our good. Which means there are two reasons why the people of Israel wouldn't want to obey the law.

The first is that they don't think God is actually able to make good on his promises. It is to doubt that God can actually deliver on life and goodness. But at this point in the sermon, Moses has already reminded God's people of his miraculous, covenant-keeping, power throughout history. God is always good on his word.

Which means that as good and as wonderful as God's rules are, those rules highlight the problem in Israel's heart. Which is why Moses is after our hearts today. Moses wants all of us to see that grace changes our hearts, and a heart struck by grace sees beauty in God's commands. This is something the

apostle John picks up on in the New Testament when he says: “For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments and his commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3).

Our passage, as you probably heard read already, includes some famous texts when it comes to both Christian tradition and the New Testament authors. So what we are going to do today is look at Deuteronomy 5 and 6 to try and understand clearly why this law that Moses is about to give is so important both for the Jews thousands of years ago, and for us today.

What we are going to see today as it relates to God's law are three points: **The Shape of the Law, The Heart of the Law, and the Fulfillment of the Law.**

Moses starts off this portion of teaching the law by reminding people of the scene back at Mount Horeb where God gave the people the ten words, or what we often call today the Ten Commandments.

And look at what he says as he begins this: **Deuteronomy 5:1-3.** Now there is a problem here isn't there? The problem is two-fold. God did make a covenant with their fathers. In fact he just got done reminding people of this in chapter 3:27. The other problem is that most of the people to whom Moses is talking to were not even born when God spoke the covenant at Horeb.

Remember, between Egypt and Mount Horeb where God delivered Israel and gave the law, and now where Moses is speaking was a 40 year wandering in the desert where all the adults who came out of Egypt died for their disobedience.

So why is Moses saying what he's saying here? He is stressing this distinction because he knows that even though God graciously brought Israel out of Egypt, and God graciously gave his law, each generation is responsible for their own response to it.

Just as the failure of their fathers wouldn't automatically mean these people will fail, so too will the obedience of their fathers not automatically mean these people will obey. The responsibility is always on the individual to respond to God's grace on their own.

The same is true for us today. Just because your parents were Christian does not mean you are Christian. Just because you grew up in America does not mean you are Christian. Just because Jesus existed and died does not mean that you are Christian. To be a Christian means that you must respond to God's grace on your own.

What does it mean to respond to God's grace for both Israel and for believers? Well we've seen two things which Moses has been hammering on in Deuteronomy: faith and a changed life of obedience. The changed life isn't what saved Israel [more next week] but those who by grace have faith exhibit signs of a grace transformation.

This is what Moses is after as he now recites to the people the 10 Commandments. And it is here that we see **The Shape of the Law.**

Read with me **Deuteronomy 5:4-22.**

You've all probably at least heard of the 10 Commandments. But outside of the ethics included in them, what do they teach us?

First it teaches us when God brings a people to himself, when God rescued Israel out of slavery he also expected that the grace he provided would not only change their circumstances, but change them. You see we often think that the greatest problems in our life are our external circumstances. The people of Israel probably thought that as soon as they got out of Egypt, then they would be able to live rightly in God's blessing, or if they got into the Promised Land, or if they built the temple, or if they returned from exile.

But what the 10 Commandments show us is that the larger problem that God has come to deal with is the problem inside of our own heart. God knows that unless the inner person is also changed, you will soon find yourself in more pain, sorrow and death. But God's grace makes a way for change.

Part of our salvation includes a call to live out our salvation. We saw this when we went through Ephesians where Paul says this: **Ephesians 4:17**. When we put on grace we put on the distinctions of grace.

Secondly the 10 Commandments teach us the two primary ways our heart exhibits this kind of change: we treat God uniquely and others lovingly.

Grace changes how we view the God of the Bible. That's how the 10 Commandments started: "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt out of the house of slavery."

Which means this that any law God gives is not chiefly about morality, it is about redemption. But redemption defines morality. It means that we now treat God and others in a new way.

You'll notice that the 10 Commandments reflect that. Commandments 1-3 deal with how we properly respond to the God who saved us, but commandment number four pulls that story of redemption into our interaction with others. Because God delivered us out of slavery and brought us rest, you too must keep the Sabbath not only for yourself, but for everyone else so that they too might feel the blessing of this redemption.

The fourth commandment begins to pull your view of salvation into the weekly and daily interactions you have with people around you. What does the law of God look like? People worshipping God and protecting others. Or as we say here, glorifying God and loving others.

Now as big as the 10 Commandments are culturally, Moses quickly moves beyond them. They are almost an intro into what God really wants us to know. Look at what he reminds them of in looking back at Horeb: **Deuteronomy 5:22-33**

You see the people knew, Moses knew, and God knew that the words audibly spoken on Horeb were not all the words the people needed to hear. There were more words to be spoken, many words, weightier words.

The 10 Commandments were not a separate and chief law, they were a summary of the greater law which would come. Everything which follows applies the principles of worshipping God and protecting others in greater detail.

One commentator said that the 10 Commandments are just the obligations of the law in embryo. As Moses continues to give the law, they grow out of these, the mature in clarity and application.

Jesus knew this too. Look at the encounter Jesus had with a rich young man in **Mark 10:17-22**. Jesus here is proving that a response to grace goes far deeper than merely obeying summary commandments. It requires a unique devotion to him.

And what God showed Moses, and Moses alone, on the mountain was the very heart of the law itself, the ways in which God's people would not only show conformity to God, but communion with him.

In 5:27 Moses reminds the people that they said they would obey all the laws God was about to give Moses, and now in chapter 6 Moses is reminding them: Here are those laws. It is here we see our second point today **The Heart of the Law**.

When it comes to rules we generally encounter them as impersonal and cold. But as Moses now begins to unfold the heart of the law, I want to see if you notice the language of affection which Moses uses in this text and see if it helps you pick up what the heart of the law is: **Deuteronomy 6:1-6**.

God is after our hearts. A proper response to God's grace is to obey. But a proper response to God's grace is that obedience is motivated by love.

You see there is a lie which Israel needed to be made aware of, a lie which the young man in Mark 10 needed to be made aware of, and a lie which you today need to be aware of. That lie is this: That obeying God and loving God are two different things.

But this can't be the case. If you are obeying God you must love God, and if you love God you must obey God. There are many of us who hide behind an outward "obedience" of God but have no affection for God. Others claim to have "love" for God but don't feel an obligation to obey certain aspects of God's commands.

Both of these miss the point of God's law. And what an odd law this is? Moses here is giving the chief statement of the law, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart soul mind and strength." Jesus himself echoes this sentiment in **Mark 12:28-31**.

If you have been in church long enough, both Moses' words in Deuteronomy 4:5 and Jesus' words in Mark 12 are kind of white noise to us. But do you understand the audacity of what they are saying?

They start by confirming the exclusivity of one true God: Hear O' Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. There is no other God, just the one. And what does he command of us? That we love the Lord that God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind.

When I worked primarily in student ministry, I would always get people coming to me asking me advice on relationships. Often time's one party would feel affection towards another party, but it wouldn't be mutual. In moments like that it never crossed my mind to recommend that they go to their crush and command them to love them.

But that's what God did here isn't it? It is a command. Love and obedience are tied together in God's eyes. Which means this, to not obey is to disobey. But if we do obey, and if we do love God does that mean that our love is no more emotional than obedience to traffic laws?

No. God's command to love can be joyfully and freely obeyed only when we realize that he has commanded us with grace. When we see the grace that God gives, we can't help respond with love. Grace changes our hearts. Just as we can't separate obedience from love, God cannot separate his love from his offer of grace.

In the remaining passages we see Moses show us this. In Deuteronomy 6:7-19, Moses is going to remind the people of how their heart should always remember God's grace as a motivator for exclusive love: **Deuteronomy 6:7-19.**

I love this passage because it shows the two places in life where we often forget God's grace the most. Those places are seasons of excess and seasons of emptiness. Moses says when you go into the land of promise and you get all those nice things, don't forget the God who brought you there. He alone is God.

Sometimes we treat God like a one-time use life raft, and once we get to where we feel safe, we think that God and his redemption has served its purpose. Once the sin seems to have quieted down, we begin to glance more confidently at idols. Once we get the spouse we want, we set the cruise control. But here Moses says, don't be deceived in seasons of plenty.

Then he brings up the test at Massah, where in the wilderness the people were wandering and had no water. It was there that in their thirst they doubted God's goodness, but it was there that God also provided for them.

Do you find yourself in one of those seasons? And what is the posture of your heart towards the grace of God? In seasons of plenty are you constantly reminding yourself that what you have is only by God's grace and is it leading you to worship and humility? And for those in seasons of trial are you reminding yourself that God's grace will always provide for us what we need? Doesn't that lead you to hope?

Doesn't that lead you to love? And don't you want to share that with your roommates? Don't you want that to be shown in your home? Shouldn't that permeate the discussion and prayers at dinner time? So that we might not forget how our hearts should love this God?

There are all sorts ways in which our love for God should make our homes, our stories, our houses and discussions unique. And as others, our children, our neighbors or co-workers begin to ask us why we live our lives differently, we are actually afforded an opportunity to remind them of this grace and the wonder of our God.

Look at how Moses wants people to answer questions like this: **Deuteronomy 6:20-25.**

Our love for God makes our lives distinct and in those moments of distinction, which are sometimes awkward, and sometimes hostile, we have the ability to express God's wonderful love for us in that through God's rules he has sought our good always and that in his wonderful way he has given us righteousness.

You see at the end of the law is not merely life in the land, but righteousness.

Meaning he has overcome the problem of our hearts and made us righteous. Righteous hearts finally and safely rest in a right relationship with God. This is the reward of the law, the hope of it that in obeying it we might receive righteousness.

That's what it means when it says that he brought them out that he might bring them in. What is he bringing them into? A right relationship with God. An exclusive relationship with God wherein whatever happens would therefore be only an always for their good.

This was so wonderfully true and gracious and loving for the Israelites as Moses preached it to them. But as we continue to read Deuteronomy and the OT as a whole we see that despite how good and perfect and gracious the law was, the people couldn't keep it. The law couldn't provide that righteousness because people failed to obey. Looking at this the Old Testament we want the wonderful righteous end of the law, but we don't want the people's experience of failure with it.

Look at how Paul speaks of this: **Romans 7:10-12**. The law wasn't flawed, we were. We couldn't keep it, and therefore we scarcely can reap the wonderful benefits from it.

This is where we get into our final point today: **The Fulfillment of the Law**.

We are going to see lots of laws in Deuteronomy and the question is: Are we as believers required to obey this law if we want the rest of righteousness?

We'll look at how Paul puts it in **Romans 8:1-4**.

Do we keep the law? Yes, through Jesus. Jesus did for us what we could never do because of our brokenness of heart. He lived righteously in our stead. But then he did what the law could never do, which was apply that righteousness to all who are found in him by faith.

So there is always this seeming tension Christians have when looking at the law in the Old Testament, do we keep it, do we disregard it? We do neither. We see that Christ has fulfilled it on our behalf: **Matthew 5:17-18**.

As we continue to roll on in Deuteronomy we are going to see detailed commands which if obeyed bring blessing, and detailed warnings which if ignored bring punishment. When Jesus fulfilled the law he did everything right to receive the blessing, but staggeringly so he willingly took all the punishment which our disobedience deserved.

And in doing that, we get peace and righteousness. The fear, the uncertainty, the arrogance which can plague our hearts before God is dealt with in Jesus. Look at how Paul puts it in **Philippians 3:8-9**.

Christ gives us righteousness. He is now the greater grace which calls us to obedience. Obedience which is no longer bound to the letter of the law, but by the size of grace.

Greater grace warrants a greater sense of love which stirs a greater offering of obedience. Look back at **Mark 12:29-31**. The call to glorify God and love others is still there, but we have an authority more effective than the law, the Jesus who gives us righteousness so that our hearts can truly be changed.

I once heard it said that understanding the rules of the law and grace is like understanding the English law in the context of the American constitution. When the pilgrims came over from England, there were many laws they didn't keep because they were no longer under English rule. But also if you look at the

American constitution, much of it reflects English law on moral issues because they were good laws. But the English law no longer is the American authority, our own law is.

So is the law of Christ. Looking back we see how Christ-centered all of this is, and looking to Jesus we see how astounding his grace is to fulfill this and call us to a similar obedience by grace.

So wouldn't we, who have a greater authority, and a mightier view of grace want not only to live our lives under the rule of Jesus, but wouldn't we have greater evangelistic answers to our watching world than the Israelites did?

To see the grace given in Jesus and to respond to it with faith and obedience will lead to the world questioning your actions. Your children, your roommates and your co-workers might say:  
What is the meaning of the way you're living?

And we will say: "We were captive to sin, living under the burden of slavery. And the Lord brought us out with a mighty hand. God showed his wonder of his grace and the grievousness of sin by sending Jesus his son to die in our place. He brought us out of sin so that he might bring us back to him. So we know that this God and his rules are for our good always because of his Son. And being found in him, we have righteousness not from our works, but from the work of Jesus just as he has promised us."