



CHRISTIAN CRUSADERS

7401 UNIVERSITY AVE., CEDAR FALLS, IOWA 50613
(319) 277-0924

INFO@CHRISTIANCRUSADERS.ORG

WWW.CHRISTIANCRUSADERS.ORG

The Laws of Love, Part 1

Deuteronomy 5:1-7

And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the rules that I speak in your hearing today, and you shall learn them and be careful to do them. The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. Not with our fathers did the Lord make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive today. 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. He said:

"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me."

It's really good to have you here this morning and to be in fellowship with you.

Mike and I were looking forward to this.

We had a unique week ourselves.

Both lost several close friends through, uh, some natural causes, some not.

And, uh, you know, you go through a week like this and you start to long to be in the fellowship of believers and find encouragement from God's Word, from different things that happen, of course, in our world.

And we're just glad to have you here with us, as we have this opportunity to encourage each other in our faith journeys and stir each other up towards love and good deeds.

For those of you that are new with us this morning, we often stand for the reading of the gospel out of reverence for God and for His Word that he's inspired for us.

So if you are able, I invite you to stand as we look to Matthew 22, verses 33 through 40.

Threatened by the spiritual freedoms that Jesus was offering to the people around him, the religious leaders of the day often tried to stump Jesus or to shut him up to quiet him down.

Eventually they would kill him to do this, which also didn't work.

But one such incident is recorded for us in today's gospel reading of the pen of Matthew, inspired by the spirit.

Matthew records this when the Pharisees heard that he, Jesus, had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him or trick him.

Teacher, he said, which is the greatest commandment of the law?

And he said to him, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.

This is the greatest and first commandment, and the second is like it you shall love your neighbor as yourself and not being tricked at all.

Jesus said this on these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets.

The word of our Lord.

You may be seated.

We're beginning this morning our fall series, which we have entitled The Laws of Love, the Laws of Love.

The series is brought to us right out of the heart of Scripture, actually, right out of the very core of our creator, the very core of Almighty God, who is the source of all things.

When we entitle a series like this and talk about love in our day, it's important that we define what we mean by love.

Because love, the word is used so loosely in our culture.

We are not talking today about this kind of progressive idea of love, where people say something ridiculous like love is love.

That's like saying Tim is Tim.

Well, of course he's Tim, but it doesn't define anything about him.

It doesn't say anything descriptive about it.

We're not talking about some shallow idea of love being love.

We are talking about not a kind of love that is celebrating of everything and everyone in our world today.

We're not talking about a progressive idea of permissiveness and total acceptance.

We're not talking about the love someone refers to when they say, I love pizza.

I love pizza or ice cream or banana cream pie.

This kind of shallow kind of love, the love we're talking about here is far more powerful than all of these modern ideas of love.

We're talking about an ancient, eternal love.

From everlasting to everlasting.

This love that is patient, it's kind.

It's not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude.

It is not demanding of its own way.

It is not unforgiving or resentful.

This is a kind of love that also not celebrating all things.

It does not rejoice.

It does not rejoice in wrongdoing.

It does not arrogantly celebrate things that lead people to enslavement of their flesh or death of humanity.

It celebrates that which is true, that which is noble, that which is right, that which is holy and pure.

It celebrate that which leads to life, to the full freedom in our souls and our spirits.

And the Bible says, this kind of love never stops persevering in that direction.

It's a powerful love.

It's a healing love.

It's a purifying love that brings wholeness to individuals, true wholeness.

The Bible describes this as agape love in the Greek word agape.

It is the love of God.

Most of our modern ideas about love are shallow and simplistic, and quite frankly, most of them are selfish in their usage.

But the scriptures reveal to us a much deeper understanding of the nature of love a pulsating, powerful love from the center of the source of all things.

From the scriptures we learn about four different kinds of this love, three that stem from agape.

One of them is referenced in the scripture in the Greek word philia love, philia love.

This is the kind of love that I would have with my brothers, my pals, my friends in the world.

It's the kind of love that's described in the Bible as a brotherly or sisterly, unselfish camaraderie, union between pals, between friends.

This is the kind of love that the Bible uses to describe the love between Jonathan and David in the scripture, between Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James and Joanna and Salome.

This this brotherly sisterly camaraderie and friendship where we stand up for one another in life, and to have a good friend or two that you share brotherly or sisterly love with in this world is a treasure.

And sometimes, in addition to the bond that we make with people through friendships, we're born into familial settings, family settings where we experience a family type of love by God's sovereignty.

Born into a certain network or by adoption, or some way, we come to sense a sort of family feel with people.

And this love is referred to in the Bible as storge Storge love, a selfless family kind of partnership with a body of people oftentimes referred to biologically in the Bible, but sometimes through adoption or bond.

Now, these family bonds often begin with yet another aspect of the agape love of God, and that is a love that comes between a man and a woman.

Because originally God created a man and then pulled the woman out from man.

So woman came out from man.

So there is this natural attraction back together between men and women in the world.

And this kind of love is bounded by God in the context of marriage.

And this is known as eros or erotic love.

So we have these kinds of deeper understandings of love revealed from the eternal love of God, that comes from the agape love of God, who is the source of all things.

The scriptural revelation for this is extensive.

It's all over in the Bible.

John says it this way under the inspiration of the spirit, when he says, dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God.

Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

Whoever does not love does not know God because God is love.

This is how he showed his love among us.

And then he describes how he did notice.

John says that the very nature of God is love.

It's not a shallow love.

It's not a foolishly defined kind of love.

It's a powerful love.

And John goes on to say, this is how God showed his love among us.

He sent his one and only son into the world that we might live through him.

This is love not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

The Bible makes it clear that every good thing we have, everything in life itself, and even the very breath we breathe, comes from the core of the love of God.

He is the source of all of this, and the beauty in the world and the marvel in the world and the wonder in the world comes from our creator.

And I'm telling you all this before we get to our series, because the motivation behind God giving us instructions or laws or rules is his love.

Not only did he give us life and beauty and nature and wonder and marvel and all the glory of creation, but in love he gave us his law.

His law.

And if we don't understand the motivation behind the law, we will see it as legalistic or thwarting in our lives.

But his heart, in sharing with us what we know of as the Ten Commandments, is a heart of deep passion for human flourishing, a deep passion for us to know the fullness of life.

And so, before we dive into his first law, let's just look at the history of him coming to the point of giving us the Ten Commandments.

Again, mind you, this is human history and God's interaction with humanity down through the ages.

God gave us his law about 25 to 2800 years after he put us on the earth here, after he created the first human beings.

As a matter of fact, he did give one law to the first individuals who were here.

He said to them, they should not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when they ate of it they would surely die.

But they were tempted and moved away from God, and then they were deceived and violated that first law.

And then human beings fell into this curse of sin and death that oppresses us still today.

That was 25 to 2800 years before the time of Moses. 1700 years after the creation of Adam and Eve.

The curse of sin and death had become so permissive on the earth, so pervasive on the earth, that the only inclination of man's heart was only evil all the time.

The Bible says, And God was saddened that he put us here on the earth.

And so he decided to act in judgment and in mercy and in judgment.

He decided to wipe out every living thing on the earth.

And through a cataclysmic event described for us in Genesis chapter six, the Bible says, the surface of the deep burst forth, the continents divided, the earth became violent in nature, and every creature on the earth was covered with water and died.

Mind in mercy.

Noah, Noah and his family.

And one of every kind of every living creature that walked the earth.

And God started again in mercy through Noah and his three sons and their wives and the animals that they brought onto the ark.

Now, after this period, about 320 years after the time of Noah, God in human history called an individual named Abraham to himself to become the father of nations.

And he started a unique family for himself here on the earth known as the Israelite family.

And through Abraham and the seed of Abraham.

And he led him from the east to the west over near Israel in and the Promised Land.

But a famine had his people enslaved in Egypt for nearly 400 years, until God stirred up in the heart of a man named Moses, the passion to go help set his people free from the slavery and oppression of Egypt.

And Moses, under the power of God in the heart of God, brought the people out of slavery into freedom.

God is pro freedom, pro responsibility, pro dependence on him.

He brought them out into the desert.

And just after they got out of Egypt, through the Red sea, into the desert.

Moses was called up on Mount Horeb, and in grace and mercy God began to give us further instruction of how to flourish in life.

And as they were learning his ways in the desert before they went, some 40 years later into the Promised Land.

Moses took time to remind them of these instructions, and we read that in our lesson today, where Moses said, when I went up on the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant that the Lord had made with us, I stayed on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights.

I ate no bread and drank no water.

And the Lord gave me two stone tablets inscribed by his finger.

On them were all the commandments of the Lord proclaimed to us on the mountain of the fire on the day of assembly.

This is what we refer to as the Ten Commandments, the law of love.