

“O How Love I Thy Law!”
The Second Commandment
“The Goodness And Severity Of God”
Exodus 20:4-6

Introduction:

1. From Romans 11:22 - We Hear:
 - These Sobering Words:
 - “Behold Therefore The Goodness And Severity Of God!”
 - It Is **So** True:
 - That There Is An Infinite Abundance:
 - Of Goodness:
 - In God!
 - But - It Is **Also** True:
 - That There Is A:
 - Severe Side:
 - To The Nature Of God As Well!
2. And - I Believe:
 - This Is What The Lord Wanted His People To Know:
 - When He Gave Them:
 - The Second Commandment:
 - Back In Exodus 20!
 - So - Let’s Turn Back In Our Bibles Tonight:
 - To Exodus 20!
3. Now - Last Sunday:
 - We Spent A Little Bit Of Time:
 - Looking At How The Numbering:
 - Of The Ten Commandments May Be Different:
 - Depending On The Tradition You Follow!
 - According To The Jewish, Catholic & Lutheran Traditions:
 - Verses 4-6 - Are Still Part Of:
 - The **First** Commandment:
 - Because The Last Commandment - Which Is Against Covetousness:
 - They Divide Up Into Two!
 - But - Ever Since John Calvin:
 - The Reformed Tradition:
 - Has Kept Verse 3 & Verses 4-6:
 - As Two Distinct Commandments, Even Though The Second Commandment *Also* Has Two Parts!
4. Well - The Second Commandment:
 - Is All About:
 - The Right Way To Worship God!
 - And The First Part:
 - 20:4 - Deals With:
 - The **“Form”** Of Our Worship!
 - And Especially - The **Making** Of Images:
 - In The Worship Of God!
 - “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth!”
 - The Second Part:
 - 20:5-6 - Deals With:
 - The **“Function”** Of Our Worship!
 - And Especially - The **Use** Of Images:
 - In The Worship Of God!
 - “Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; / And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments!”

5. And Since:
- "All Scripture" - Including This Commandment:
 - "Is Profitable For Doctrine!"
 - There Are Several Truths / Doctrines:
 - That We Can Learn About God:
 - And His Nature:
 - From This Commandment!
 - Last Sunday:
 - We Explored Two Of Those Truths:
 - From Verse 4!
 - The Truth About:
 - God's Spiritual Nature! And:
 - The Truth About:
 - God's Sovereign Nature!
 - And To Worship Him:
 - As Any Other Kind God:
 - Is To Dishonor Him And:
 - To Disobey This Commandment!

6. Well - Tonight:
- We Are Going To Explore Together:
 - Three More Truths:
 - About God & His Nature:
 - From Verses 5-6!

* First - We Can See:

1. ***The Superior Nature Of God:***

- When The Lord Says:
 - "Thou Shalt Not Bow Down Thyself To Them, Nor Serve Them!"
 - With These Words - The Lord Deals With:
 - The ***Function*** Of Our Worship!
 - Because Both "Bowing Down" And "Serving" - Are Words Used In Old Testament Religious Worship!
 - And So - God Is Telling Us To:
 - ***Not Worship:***
 - ***Any Other God*** - In Either:
 - A Limited Way - Or In:
 - A Life-Long Way!
 - Because:
- Limited Worship:
 - Is Seen In The Act Of:
 - Bowing Down:
 - To Show Your Respect Or Reverence:
 - To Someone Or Something!
 - Now - At Times - In The Old Testament:
 - Bowing Down Was The ***Right*** Way:
 - To Show Respect:
 - To The Authority Figures God Placed In Your Life!
 - It Was What You Would Do:
 - Before A King Or An Emperor!
 - And - As Long As It Was Seen This Way - It Was OK!
 - But - At Other Times - In The Old Testament:
 - Bowing Down Was The Way:
 - To Show Reverence & Allegiance:
 - In An Act Of Religious Worship!
 - And This Was Wrong!
 - Even Though - To Bow:
 - Is Something That Can Be Done Very Quickly & Without Thinking!
 - But - Even A Mere:

- Bow - To Worship Anyone Or Anything Else:
 - Than The One True God:
 - Is An Offense To His Superior Nature As God!
- In Fact - It Wasn't Long After The Children Of Israel:
 - Received This Law - What Did They Do?
 - As God Told Moses - In Exodus 32:8 - "They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped / bowed down to it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt!"
- The Lord Is **Above** All:
 - And Deserves To Be Worshipped As Superior:
 - **To** All! Even With A Bow!
 - But Then He Adds:
- Life-Long Worship:
 - Which Is Seen In:
 - "Serving!"
 - 20:5 - "Thou Shalt Not Bow Down Thyself To Them, Nor **Serve** Them!"
 - To Serve Can Take:
 - Many Different Forms - But It Essentially Means:
 - That You Are Living Your Life:
 - **For** The One You Are Serving!
 - Your Goal In Life:
 - Is To Promote The Interests:
 - Of Someone Else!
 - And - Isn't This What:
 - God Redeemed His People From Egypt:
 - **For?** To **Serve** Him?
 - In Exodus 10:3 - When "Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh" - What Did They Say To Him? "Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? let my people go, that they may **serve** me!"
 - Then - Later - In Deuteronomy 13:4:
 - God's People Are Told:
 - "Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him!"
 - And So - If You Serve Or Live For:
 - Anyone Or Anything Else:
 - Than The One True God:
 - Is An Offense To His Superior Nature As God!
- Do You Acknowledge:
 - The Superior Nature Of God:
 - In Your Heart & In Your Life Tonight?
 - Who Or What:
 - Do You "Bow" Your Heart To?
 - Even If It Is Just A Momentary Nod?
 - To Your Own Lusts? To Your Own Will? To The Pleasures Of This World?
 - And - Who Or What:
 - Are You Living For & "Serving" Today?
 - Don't You Know - That God Is Superior To - And More Satisfying Than:
 - Anything & Anyone Else That May Draw Your Attention Away From Him?
 - Bow Your Heart To:
 - And Live Your Life For:
 - The Lord!

* Another Truth About God We Find In The Second Commandment Is:

2. **The Severe Nature Of God!**

- Because - In The Rest Of 20:5 - He Gives A Reason:
 - **Why** We Should Heed His Command! It Is Because:

- "I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me!"
- This Is - I Think - A Verse:
 - That A Lot Of Christians Just Want To Skip Over:
 - And Get To The Next Verse:
 - Where It Talks About God And His Mercy!
- But - You Overlook:
 - The Severe Nature Of God:
 - At Your Own Peril:
 - And Even The Peril Of Your Own Family! Because It Speaks Of:
- The Watchfulness Of God!
 - Here - God Describes Himself:
 - As "A Jealous God!"
 - That Is - He Is Zealously Protective And Watchful!
 - Even As A Loving Husband Or A Loving Wife Would Be Rightfully Jealous For Their Spouse, If Someone Would Come & Try To Woo And Draw Them Away!
 - In A Similar Way:
- God Is Rightfully Jealous:
 - Of His People!
 - In Deuteronomy 6:14-15 - Moses Tells His People - "Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you; / For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you!"
 - After **All** God Did:
 - To Bring The Israelites:
 - Out Of The Land Of Egypt:
 - To Make Them His Own:
 - To Turn Their Backs On Him:
 - Would Be An Act Of Spiritual Adultery!
 - And Would Provoke Him To Jealousy! But Also:
 - God Is Rightfully Jealous:
 - Of His Preeminence!
 - Even As He Said In Isaiah 42:8 - "I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images!"
 - God Will Not Allow:
 - **Anything** To Try To Rival:
 - His Might And His Majesty!
- And This Is Why We Then Read About:
- The Warning Of God!
 - In The Rest Of 20:5 - Where God Says That He:
 - Will Visit - "The iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me!"
 - To "Visit" Here Means:
 - That God **Will Deal With:**
 - And **Will Attend To** Any Iniquity And Breach Of His Law!
 - But - To Get His People:
 - **Not** To Sin & **Not** To Disobey His Voice:
 - He Lets Them Know That:
 - There May Be Consequences To Their Sin That May Even Affect:
 - Their Family!
 - Now - This Does **Not** Mean:
 - That God Judges The Children:
 - For The Sins Of Their Fathers!
 - But **Does** Mean - That:
 - The "All-Seeing" & The "All-Knowing" God Is Giving Us A Gracious Warning:
 - About What Can Happen To Our Families When We Sin!
 - **IE:** You See - Sin - Like The False Worship God Is Warning Us About In The Second Commandment - Is Like A Virus! It Can Spread Quickly & Get Out Of Control! Have You Heard About A Virus Like That

Lately? Well - Sin Is Worse! It Is Far More Contagious, Far More Infectious, And Far More Serious - Because The **Effects** Of Sin Can Last Far Longer!

- And This Truth Should Break:

- The Heart Of Even The Hardest Of Sinners!

- Especially When They Think How Their Sin *Today* Can **Affect** & Even **Infect** Their Children *Tomorrow*!

- Even Like The Old Testament Proverb:

- That We Find In Jeremiah 31:29 - "The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge!"

- If You Won't Obey The Lord:

- For Your Own Sake:

- Won't You Live For Him:

- For The Sake Of Your Family? Even For Your Children & Grand-Children?

- But - Even The Fact That God Is **Warning** Us:

- About Sin & Iniquity:

- Reveals His **Grace**, Doesn't It?

- Even In "Wrath" God Remembers "Mercy!"

- Even The Natural Consequences Of Sin:

- Don't Have To Last Forever!

- Because - The Opportunity To "Break The Cycle" Of Sin:

- And Its Consequences Is Open To **Anyone**, At **Anytime**!

- How? Through The Gospel!

- To Turn From Yourself:

- And Your Sin:

- And Your Idols! And:

- To Turn To Jesus:

- As Your Savior & As Your Lord!

- And What Will You Find?

- Not Just The **Severe** Nature Of The Lord! But:

3. **The Sufficient Nature Of God!**

- **And His Mercy** - Which He Tells Us About:

- In 20:6 - "And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments!"

- We See Here:

- The Expression:

- Of God's Mercy!

- He Is "**Shewing** Mercy" - We Are Told!

- To "Show" Is The Same Word Translated "Work" Back In 20:4!

- And The Contrast Couldn't Be More Stark!

- *Your* "Work" May Be Idolatry!

- But *God's* "Work" Is - What?

- *Mercy*!

- Mercy According To His Own Sufficient Nature & Character!

- *Mercy* Is:

- God's *Customary* Work!

- Whereas - *Judgment* Is Described In Isaiah 28:21 As:

- God's *Strange* Work & God's *Strange* Act!

- And Shouldn't The Mercy & The Love Of God:

- Motivate You To:

- Worship & Serve The Lord Alone?

- Especially The Mercy & Love He Displayed:

- And Expressed To Us - Through Jesus:

- As We Are Told In Romans 5:8 - "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us!"

- So Now - **You** Can Love **Him**:

- Because **He** First Loved **You!** (1 John 4:19)

- The Expression Of God's Mercy Is Great!

- But - If It Were Even Possible:
- The Extent:
 - Of God's Mercy - Is Even Greater!
 - Because - 20:6 - He Shows His Mercy - "Unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments!"
 - Since This Statement Is Parallel To 20:5 - God Is Not Just Talking About Thousands *Of People* - Though That Would Be Great In And Of Itself!
 - But He Is Clearly Talking About Thousands *Of Generations* Of People! Which Extends To A Period Of Time This Old World Has Even Yet To See!
 - The Mercy Of God:
 - Is Extensive!
 - It Runs Deep & It Runs Wide!
 - Because God Is A Benevolent God & A Sufficient God!
 - Who ***Reveals*** His Mercy & ***Rewards*** With Mercy In This Life & Into Eternity Itself!
 - And Who Does God Reserve His Mercy For?
 - "Them That Love Me, And Keep My Commandments!"
 - Be Sure To Note Where "Love" Comes In!
 - It Comes In First!
 - When You Trust In Christ:
 - Your Love For God Will Be The Natural Response *To* And The Natural Result *From* His Mercy!
 - And Then - You Will Strive:
 - To "Keep His Commandments!"
 - Even As Jesus Said:
 - John 14:15 - "If ye love me, keep my commandments!"

Conclusion:

1. There Are So Many Reasons:
 - In The Nature Of God:
 - To Worship Him & Him Alone:
 - In Your Heart & With Your Life!
 - If You Won't Respond:
 - To His Superior Nature:
 - Won't You Respond To:
 - His Severe Nature? And:
 - If You Don't Respond:
 - To His Severe Nature:
 - Will You Respond To:
 - His Sufficient Nature:
 - Which Is Full Of Mercy & Grace?
 2. Remember Tonight - God Alone Is Worthy Of Your Worship:
 - Because Of The Great Truths:
 - He Teaches Us - About Himself:
 - In This Second Commandment!
 - He Alone Is Worthy!
- * Is There Anything In A Higher Position Than The Lord In Your Heart?
 * Do The Consequences Of Your Sin Break Your Heart?
 * How Are You Responding To The Love & Mercy Of God?

Grace Baptist Church
Stephen Elmer, Pastor
 4245 North 200 West
 Greenfield, Indiana 46140
 317-326-2362
www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace
www.growatgrace.org
pastor-elmer@hotmail.com