

## INTRODUCTION

We know that water is inherently good; essentially, intrinsically good. God made it when He made the world. Having made it, along with the rest of the world, God pronounced that it was very good. Water itself is good, and nothing we do can change that about water.

But in order for water to be good for us, to be beneficial, we have to use it according to the laws of nature.

In our homes, if we keep water contained within pipes, it is beneficial for us. It is good for us, for drinking, cooking, washing, and taking away waste. But if we don't keep it contained within its pipes, and let it spray around or pour out on the floor, it is not beneficial, but destructive. So we don't want someone installing plumbing or septic systems who doesn't know what he's doing.

On a larger scale, if we keep water contained behind a dam, it can be beneficial for us, providing drinking water and producing electricity. But if we let water break through its dam, it can be destructive to us, flooding people's homes and even threatening their lives. So we don't want someone designing water reservoirs who doesn't know what he's doing.

I use these things you already understand about water to illustrate something about The Ten Commandments.

## TEXT

Romans 7:12 Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

1 Timothy 1:7-12 desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm. 8 But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, 9 knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, 10 for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, 11 according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust. 12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,

## FURTHER INTRODUCTION

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord for putting me into the ministry (verse 12)

In all my preaching, I mean to maintain sound doctrine according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust (verse 11)

- and to instill this in anyone who listens to me

- and to have other pastors like this in the congregation in the future

I do not want to be like the people described there in verse 7!

- I was in the past. (It's been a long time ago, but I remember it bitterly.)

I know the law is good, in the sense of being inherently holy and just

I know the law also is good in the sense of being good for us, of being beneficial

- I want the benefits for this congregation; that's why we're studying The Ten Commandments

I do not want to use the law illegally! (verse 8)

- for example, I do not mean to preach the threatenings of the law to the righteous

- that is part of why I stressed, last week, that I am not preaching salvation through keeping the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ

So, in preaching The Ten Commandments, I am intent on using them lawfully. That is, I am using the correct principles for interpreting them as I learn them myself and teach them to you. But I don't want the right interpretation of God's law to be something I have learned, but you have not. So I am setting before you today what I understand about the right interpretation of The Ten Commandments.

## BODY

As you hear these sermons on The Ten Commandments, understand the principles of interpretation by which we can use God's law lawfully.

### I. The Sources We Are Using for Interpreting The Ten Commandments

#### A. Our interpretation of The Ten Commandments is from the scriptures, the Bible

1. the Holy Spirit of God carried human authors along, causing them to write down the Word of God
2. He also preserved the scriptures, the Bible, through the centuries
3. now we read in our Bibles the word of God as spoken by God directly, or through the prophets, or through our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, or through His apostles
4. all that the Bible teaches us helps us rightly interpret The Ten Commandments
  - a) the best interpreter of scripture is scripture
  - b) places where the Bible speaks briefly on a subject, we interpret according to other places in the Bible where it says more
5. the Bible's record of men's disobedience to The Ten Commandments helps us interpret them rightly
6. the perfect obedience of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to The Ten Commandments shows us how to interpret them rightly
  - a) whatever He did is right keeping of The Ten Commandments
  - b) He obeyed them perfectly
  - c) He obeyed them on behalf of sinners who did not obey them
  - d) hear in this good news for the sinner!

#### B. Our interpretation of The Ten Commandments is from the scriptures, the Bible, as taught to us by the best teachers of the past and present - The sermons I am planning to deliver are being prepared specifically for you, this congregation, by me, your own pastor. But what I say is intended to be materially the same as what all the English-speaking reformed pastors have been saying for the past 400 years.

1. I have been learning from 17-century Puritan pastors
  - a) The Westminster Larger Catechism
  - b) Thomas Watson, English non-conformist pastor *The Ten Commandments*
  - c) Ezekiel Hopkins, Irish conformist bishop *Expositions of the Ten Commandments*
  - d) James Durham, Scottish covenanter pastor *The Law Unsealed, a Practical Exposition of the Ten Commandments*
2. I have been learning from 21st Century Reformed Baptist pastors
  - a) Jarrett Downs in Mansfield, TX
  - b) Mark Chanski in Harbor, MI

Now that you know the sources we are using for interpreting them, consider

## II. The Principles We Are Using for Interpreting The Ten Commandments

### A. The Ten Commandments are organized into two tables

1. Deuteronomy 4:12-13 And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; you only heard a voice. 13 So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone.
2. Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus said to him, 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."
3. the first table - commandments 1-4
4. the second table - commandments 5-10

### B. The Ten Commandments are comprehensive

1. All sin and all righteousness is comprehended in The Ten Commandments
2. Whether the commandment is in the affirmative or the negative, the whole scope of righteousness in that category is commanded
  - a) e.g. Eph 4:28
3. Each commandment is the head of a category
  - a) in the negative commandments, the most harmful example of that kind of sin is mentioned to represent all sins in that category
  - b) in the affirmative commandments, the most basic, the most obvious duty is mentioned to represent all requirements in that category
4. The Ten Commandments are spiritual; therefore,
  - a) not outward sin only, but inward sin is prohibited;
  - b) not outward obedience only, but inward obedience also is required
5. both sin and duty are addressed in each commandment - Larger Catechism:
  - a) where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden; and, where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded:
  - b) so, where a promise is annexed, the contrary threatening is included; and, where a threatening is annexed, the contrary promise is included.

## CONCLUSION

Because God is good, His Ten Commandments are essentially, inherently, intrinsically good. They always have been and always will be, and nothing we ever think or say or do has any power to change that.

But that we find The Ten Commandments beneficial, they must be interpreted correctly. To be good for us, God's law must be used lawfully.

So, we interpret The Ten Commandments according to what our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has taught us.

For help in doing that, we consult works from the Puritan era, and we consult the work of long-time faithful pastors we know in our own sister congregations.

Alex - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer - Lamentations 3:21-25

Thad - Scripture Reading - Psalm 119:41-48

Roel - Congregational Prayer

Benediction - 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

Cecily - Prelude 506 "Why Should Cross and Trial Grieve Me?"

Allison - Trinity 27 "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" - Andrew lead

Allison - Trinity 262 "God, In the Gospel of His Son"

Angie - Trinity 133 "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing" - Alvin lead

Audrey - 408 "In Thy Wrath and Hot Displeasure"