

(Through the Bible) Exodus 19-20

by Chuck Smith

God desires a special people to represent Him before the world, and He gives us commandments to guide us in living a daily relationship with Him.

Duration: 51:29

Scripture: Exodus 19:9, Exodus 20:3, Exodus 20:7, Joel 2:13, Matthew 19:21, Matthew 22:37

Topics: "Righteous Living", "Holy Obedience"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of having a right relationship with God in order to have a right relationship with others. He explains that the first law is to have no other gods before God, and uses the example of a rich young ruler who claimed to have kept all the commandments. Jesus challenged him to sell all his possessions and follow Him, revealing that the man's possessions were his god. The preacher highlights the need to serve God in a way that draws attention to Him, rather than ourselves. He concludes by encouraging the listeners to desire and fulfill God's law, and to seek transformation by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

Now the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, in the same day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. For they were departed from Rephidim, and they were come to the desert of Sinai, and they had pitched in the wilderness, and there Israel encamped before the mount. And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel, You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bear you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

First of all, God said to Moses, Now you tell them, and point out to them what I have already done for them. I have delivered them from the Egyptians. I carried them on eagles' wings to bring them to myself.

Now therefore, that's the past, now the present. Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then, as far as the future, ye shall be a special treasure unto me above all of the people, for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.

Now a priest was a man who stood before God, representing the people. But, he also stood before the people representing God. And so being a kingdom of priests, they were to be a special people who would represent God before the world.

God is looking for people to represent Him. And so in a priestly kind of a ministry, in representing God before the world, Israel was to be God's representative to the world. That was God's desire and intention for these people, that they might represent Him to the world.

A kingdom of priests. A holy nation. Now, these are the words God said that you shall speak to the children of Israel.

So Moses came and he called for the elders of the people, and he laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. And the people answered together and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. What a rash promise.

And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord. Now at this point, Moses was a priest. That is, he was going before God, speaking for the people, and then he was coming to the people and speaking for God.

Christ has become our great high priest. He represents us to the Father, and He represents the Father to us. He is our great high priest.

So there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, our great high priest. But Moses was the priest, and in the Old Testament this was always the purpose of the priest, to represent the people to God, to go unto God, speak for the people, and then come to the people and speak for God. And so here is Moses operating in that whole concept of priesthood.

And so he goes back to God and he says, Hey, they said they'll buy it, everything you say they'll do. All that the Lord has spoken we will do. And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come to thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever.

And Moses told the words of the people unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes. Now the washing of their clothes was actually just a symbolic action.

The people were to really cleanse themselves before God. And the washing of their clothes being a symbolic action that spoke of just the setting of themselves or the washing of themselves of their hearts, their minds, their lives. The sanctify means to set apart for use.

And so here he calls the people to sanctify themselves and to wash their clothes. And be ready against the third day. For the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all of the people on Mount Sinai.

So let the people sanctify themselves, really, you know, wash themselves, get themselves pure and all. Because the third day is going to be a big day. I'm going to come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of the people.

It's going to be an awesome day. And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves that you go not up into the mount or touch the border of it, for whosoever touches the mount shall surely be put to death. And there shall not a hand touch it.

But he shall surely be stoned or shot through, whether it be beast or man, it shall not live. When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come up to the mount. And Moses went down from the mount to the people and he sanctified the people and they washed their clothes.

And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day and come not at your wives. In other words, they were to refrain from sexual relations. They were just to really set themselves aside for God for these three days.

And it came to pass on the third day in the morning that there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that were in the camp trembled. Can you imagine what that must have been when God began to demonstrate Himself to these people in this way? That there came down there on Mount Sinai this smoke, there was this blasting trumpet sound, and the fire rolling around and the lightnings and the thunders and the thick cloud. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God.

And they stood at the nether part of the mountain or away from the mountain. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire, and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, while the mount shook greatly. So the mountain was shaking violently, the smoke was ascending like a furnace, and there was this great blast like a trumpet.

And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai on the top of the mount, and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount, and Moses went up. And the Lord said unto Moses, Go down and charge the people, lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish.

And let the priests also which come near to the Lord sanctify themselves, lest the Lord break forth upon them. Now, verse 22 indicates that perhaps some of the priests thought, well, we don't have to sanctify ourselves, that's the common people. And some of the priests apparently didn't sanctify themselves.

And in the book of Hebrews, we read where some of the priests on this day died. And so, Moses is told to tell the priests that they're not excluded from this. A lot of times people think, well, I'm so holy, you know, and I'm above the general rules, and God makes some kind of a special concession for me.

But such is not the case. Verse 25 of Hebrews 12, See that ye refuse not him that speaks, for if they escape not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaks from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth. But now he has promised, saying yet once more, I'll shake not the earth only, but heaven.

So, in Hebrews, referring to this, speaks of some who perish. And so, evidently, some of the priests. And the priests also which come near to the Lord, let them sanctify themselves, lest the Lord break forth on them.

And Moses said unto the Lord, The people cannot come up to the Mount Sinai, for thou chargest us, saying, Set bounds about the mountain, sanctify it. And the Lord said unto him, Away, get down, and you shall come up, you and Aaron with you. But let not the priest or the people break through to come up to the Lord, lest he break forth upon them.

So Moses went down unto them, and the people, and he spake unto them. And God spake these words, saying, Now the people said, All that the Lord commands, we will do. All right, this is what the Lord has spoken.

Now, these are the commandments of God. I am the Lord thy God, which hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of Bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

First of all, I am Jehovah thy God. The word Jehovah is a beautiful word. It is a verb which means the becoming one.

A word by which God expresses himself in that which he desires to be to his people. God wishes to become to you whatever your need might be. The becoming one, Yahweh.

A verb, to be. And so God becoming to you. I am Yahweh thy God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of Bondage.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Now, as we said this morning, that doesn't mean that God is first in your life, and then you can have all other kinds of gods, as long as he's first God in your life. Before, in the sense of precedence, I've got to be the greatest God of your life, and then you can have all kinds of gods under me.

No. Before, that is in the presence of me. You're to worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

You're not to have any other gods. He is to be the exclusive God of your life. You shall have no other gods in the presence of me.

Before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. 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, to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto the thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. So, the prohibition of making graven images, and it goes actually of any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, which would include then the angelic beings, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth, whatever those creatures might look like. Thou shalt not make them, thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.

Now, men, as we pointed out this morning, have always been guilty of making their own gods. Man is conscious of God. The heavens declare the glory of God, the earth showeth forth its handiwork, and there is a universal consciousness of God in every culture of man.

Concepts, ideas of God exist. Now, many men have been guilty of making their own gods. And a man, when he makes his own God, usually starts out with this premise.

If I were God, this is what I would be. This is what I would do. This is how I would respond.

This is how I would react. And so, the Greeks made their own gods. And in your Greek mythology, you have their concepts of God, which are really an expression of what they would be if they were God.

Now, some fellow having been in love with a girl, and another suitor won her away from him. If I were God, you know, I could live up there, and I could bring magic potions, and I could use my powers, and then she would be mine instead of his. And so, you have your gods that are intertwining themselves in the love affairs of man, and all of these kind of things, because if I were God, I would use these powers for an advantage in my relationship with men.

And thus, you find that is sort of a basis of your Greek mythology. Men creating their own gods. When a man makes a god, he actually makes the god like himself.

A man's god is usually a projection of himself. A man is oftentimes worshipping himself, a projection of himself, and that is what he is worshipping. Most generally, when a man rejects the true and the living God, his god is just a projection of himself.

This is why I sort of cringe whenever anybody comes up to me and says, well, I don't know why God would do this. What they are saying is, if I were God, I wouldn't do that. I could sure figure out a better way of doing it than this way, and that person is close to creating his own god.

If I were God, this is what I would do. If I were God, this is how I would respond. And if God doesn't respond the way I would respond, then I get angry, and I say, well, you know, I can't understand why God did that, you know, or why God allowed that, as though God has made a real blunder.

He really goofed on this one. I don't know how God can be so stupid, you know, is really what you're saying. I can see so much better than that.

I could work it out in such a much better way. Oh, if I were only God, what I could do. If you were God, I'd hate to be in this universe very long.

When Job and his friends were talking about God, well, God is this, and if I were God, that, you know, and they were giving all their ideas about what God was and what God was doing and so forth, which were projections of their own selves, their own concepts, putting them in the mind of God, sort of. When God came on the scene, after these guys had all expressed their concepts of God and how God works, etc., when God came on the scene, they said, all right, Job, gird yourself like a man. You've been talking about things that you really don't know anything about.

I'm going to ask you a few questions. First of all, Job, where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me if you think you know so much. How would you like to guide Arcturus through the sky? How would you like to guide Arcturus through the sky? Arcturus is known as the runaway star.

Its speed is estimated at 115 miles a second. How would you like the job of guiding that big old thing through the sky, wheeling that thing around at that kind of a speed? Tell me, God said. Can you bind the sweet influence of the Pleiades? And he went on.

And hey, Job said, that's all right, God. You just keep running. I don't know anything about it, you know.

Yes, we have a difficult time running this universe, I'll tell you. We have enough problems just running our own lives. So man makes a God like himself, but then he often makes the God less than himself.

As David points out, the gods of the heathen are vain. They cut them out of the forest. They have eyes, but they cannot see.

Ears they have, but they cannot hear. Feet they have, but they cannot walk. Mouths they have, but they cannot speak.

So a man made a God like himself. He carved his God out of a piece of tree limb. Sat there day after day carving out his little God.

He carved ears on his little God. He carved eyes on his little God. He carved a nose on his little God.

He carved a mouth. He carved feet. But the thing is, the eyes that He carved on His little God can't see.

The ears that He carved on His little God can't hear. The mouth that He carved on His little God can't speak. So a man made a God.

He made Him like Himself. Because I have ears, I put ears on my God. Because I have a mouth, I put a mouth on my God.

Because I have feet, I put feet on my God. But though I made Him like Myself, I made Him less than Myself. Because the feet I put on my little God can't walk, thus He is less than I am.

His eyes can't see, thus He is less than I am. And then David said, They that have made them have become like the gods they have made. In other words, a man becomes like his God.

And if you make a God less than yourself, you are being degraded. You are on the road down. You are becoming less than what you were.

If your God can't see, you soon become blind to the things of God. If your God can't hear, you soon become deaf to the voice of God. You become insensate as your God is insensate.

That's the danger of making gods. You become like them, but yet they are less than yourself. So God strictly prohibited trying to make any likeness or representation of Himself.

Now in the light of that, why is it that in the church we have statues of Jesus Christ? Or even pictures, which constitutes a likeness. What is a man signifying when he makes an idol? He is signifying the loss of the consciousness of the presence of God in his life. Whenever I make an idol, a reminder, it is only indicating that I have lost something vital in my relationship with God and I need this little relic as a reminder of God.

Because I have lost the consciousness of His presence. If I am living in the consciousness of the presence of God, I don't need any little relic to remind me of God. But the making of the relic not only indicates the loss of the consciousness, but somehow there is a desire to regain that which I've lost.

And somehow I would like to be conscious of God again, so I make a reminder so that I can be conscious of God. But it is always an indication of a degraded spiritual state. Now people can make idols out of many different things.

The place in the church where I was sitting when I came into the consciousness of God. And you'd be amazed how many people come back and they sit in that same place trying to regain that which was lost. At that place where I was sitting here, right in the spot, when I really became conscious of the presence of God, oh, it was so glorious, I just, oh, you know, and so you'll return and try to duplicate a past experience of God's consciousness thinking that it relates to a place.

While I was wearing those shoes. So you dig around, find the old shoes again, you know. As I was wearing these shoes, when I became aware of the presence of God, hey, you've lost something, friend.

Paul the Apostle said, in Him we live, we move, we have our being. God is here. God is with you.

You've lost the consciousness. Not that He's not with you, you've just lost the consciousness of His presence with you. And thus you're looking for something that will somehow remind or bring back that experience of the past.

But God has new experiences for you. And He doesn't want you living in the past experiences. He wants you living in a fresh day-by-day relationship of fellowship in His love and in His grace, experiencing daily that overflowing grace of God in your life.

And so the prohibiting of making, first of all, the likenesses, why? Because once you've made them, then the next thing is so often the bowing down to them. And then, that leads to the serving of them. So the progression, you make a god, then you're worshipping your god, and finally, you're serving your god.

But no man can serve two masters. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that takes His name in vain. What does that mean? It means much more than just using the name of God in a profane way.

As you hear people in their conversations using the name of God in a profane way, it's much more than that. Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain. What does it mean? It means that if you take the name of Jehovah, it means that you have placed Him as the Lord, the guide, the director of your life.

Now, if you don't give Him the chance to guide and direct your life, you've taken His name in vain. So many times we say, Oh, Lord, Lord. Jesus said, why do you say Lord, Lord and you don't do the things I command you? If you're not obeying Him, you've taken His name in vain.

Thus, the greatest blasphemy is not that which you hear on Skid Row, but the greatest blasphemy is that of those who make an acknowledgement of God in their words and maybe even in their deeds by attending church and so forth, and yet God doesn't have a place in their daily life through the week. You never give God a place. You never give God a chance.

You never open up your life to God during the week. It's just a Sunday relationship with Him. That is taking the name of the Lord your God in vain.

That's the greatest blasphemy. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work.

Therefore, if you're on a five-day week, you're unscriptural. If you want to really be tight to the law. The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.

In it thou shalt not do any work. Thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, or maidservant, or thy cattle, or the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day.

Wherefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it, honored it. Now, there are a lot of people who today like to make a big issue over the Sabbath day and over worshiping on Sunday. And they say the Sabbath day is the day that you should worship God.

And they've even gone so far as to say that Sunday worship is the mark of the beast. And so you've all been guilty of taking the mark of the beast because you worship God on Sunday. Let me say that first of

all, I worship God every day of the week.

As far as I'm concerned, every day of the week is a great day to worship God. I do believe that for man's sake God established a pattern of six in one. Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

And that God has ordained for the body's sake one day of rest for the purpose of recuperation. And I think that you'd live healthier and longer if you would just spend one day in bed a week. Just really flaked out and sacked out and doing nothing.

Just a total change of pace. I would love to do it. But this particular law was a special law to the people of Israel as is declared in the 31st chapter of Exodus verses 16 and 17.

Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever for in six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth and in the seventh day rested. So God here plainly declares that it's a sign between Him and the children of Israel.

It is interesting that the one law that Jesus was constantly being accused of violating was the law of the Sabbath. And that's what really created the ire of the Pharisees against Jesus more than anything else is that He disregarded their Sabbath day law traditions. Walking through the cornfields He allowed His disciples, the wheat fields actually take the corn of wheat and rub it in their hands and eat the corn on the Sabbath day.

Why do you allow your disciples to do that? Which is unlawful to do on the Sabbath day. Now they had so interpreted the Sabbath the bearing of burdens and so forth that they had really made the Sabbath day extremely restricting with all of their rules and regulations that regard the Sabbath day what constitutes a keeping and a violating of the Sabbath day law. And instead of the day being a day of rest it was a day of bondage.

Man, everything they laid on you was so heavy. You were so worried about violating it that it was a bondage instead of a real rest and a day of relaxation and rest. You were so concerned about the violation of it they made it a bondage keeping that law.

In the early church when it was brought to the attention of the church in Jerusalem concerning the Gentile Christians that were not walking after the law of Moses it was determined by the early church that they would not try to put upon the church the Mosaic law but only certain parts of it and that which related to idolatry and eating of meats that were sacrificed to idols or blood, keep yourself from blood and things strangled and so forth. But nothing was mentioned as far as the Sabbath day and the church was concerned. Now, the law was not given to make men holy and this is our whole misconception of the law and that is the idea that the keeping of the law will make me holy.

If righteousness could come by the law then Christ died in vain. If you could keep these ten commandments and by keeping them be righteous then Jesus wouldn't need to die. If God could take and impute righteousness to you because you kept every one of these commandments in your heart, faithfully and completely then there is no necessity for Jesus Christ.

But righteousness could not come by the law even if you kept it. Righteousness comes through faith in Jesus Christ. Now, God related to these people the covenant of God was related to their obedience if they will obey and their obedience to the law of God was the condition upon which they could relate to God.

But this old covenant failed and it failed because of man's weakness and man's failure. Man was incapable of obeying. Therefore, God has established a new covenant that isn't predicated upon man's faithfulness, but the new covenant is predicated upon God's faithfulness.

The faithfulness of God to keep His Word. The first covenant? Man's faithfulness to keep God's Word. First covenant failed.

Man wasn't faithful. The second covenant that God has established through Jesus Christ is a covenant that God has now established which is predicated upon the faithfulness of God to keep His Word and His covenant shall always stand with us because God will keep His Word. And my believing that God will keep His Word.

So to him that worketh not but believeth, God imputes that faith for righteousness. Now does that mean then that I have no relationship to the Lord of all? I can live however I want? I can violate any of these commandments I want and still have fellowship with God? God forbid. How can we who are dead to sin live any longer therein? But it means that God now gives to me the new power of His Holy Spirit within my life whereby I am enabled to be what God wants me to be.

The fifth commandment, some people put with the first table. They say that it belongs in the first table. Honor thy father and thy mother because you are not to consider your father and mother unequal, but always on a superior basis even as God is always thought upon in a superior basis.

And thus, they say it belongs in the first five words of the law instead of the second six. And so they have divided the law into two categories of five and five. I don't argue with that.

It's foolish. What difference does it make? It's all part of the ten. Thou shalt not kill.

Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's. Now, covet is to desire earnestly.

Have a strong desire for those things. You're not to have it. Now, Paul the Apostle said this is the law that wiped him out.

I didn't know, he said, that coveting was sin. Except the law said thou shalt not covet. Man, when he saw that.

When the Spirit revealed that law to him, he said, man, I was dead. It killed me. It was the one that condemned Paul to death.

Here he had done all he could to be righteous by the law. And he could write to the Philippians concerning his past experience as a Pharisee. He said, and concerning the righteousness which is of the law, I was blameless.

But then when he saw the law was spiritual, then he said, man, I was wiped out. I was dead. The law destroyed me.

Now, that was the whole basis of the teaching of Christ, and that is that the law is spiritual. Thou shalt not kill. What does that really mean? It means you're not to have hatred for anybody.

Because hatred is the seedbed of murder. And thus you can violate the law thou shalt not kill and never club a fellow at all. But if you have a hatred for him, animosity against him, you've violated the law, thou shalt not kill.

Now, the law was intended as a schoolmaster to drive us to Jesus Christ, to make us realize that we were spiritually bankrupt. To make me realize that there's no way I can pay the debt. And thus drives me to Jesus Christ as my source and my resource.

Now all the people saw the thunderings, the lightnings, the noise of the trumpet, the mountains smoking, and when the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off and they said unto Moses, Hey, you speak with us and we'll listen to you. But don't let God speak with us or we'll die. And Moses said to the people, Fear not.

Now here they are, frightened, terrified by the manifestation of God's presence. The words of God's grace, Fear not, for God is come not to destroy you, He's come to prove you. You said you would obey Him, you'd be His people, you'd be His special people.

Now God has come to prove you that His fear may be before your faces, that you might really reverence God. That ye sin not. So God is just telling you what is and what constitutes sin.

This is a basic law of God which constitutes the right relationship with God and the right relationship with your fellow man. If you don't have the right relationship with God, there's no sense of going any further. You're not going to have a right relationship with your fellow man.

That is why when the young ruler came to Jesus and said, Good Master, what must I do to be saved? Jesus, first of all, tried to draw his attention to something. He said, Why did you call me good? There's only one good, that's God. What was Jesus saying to him? He was saying one of two things.

He was saying to this young man, Hey, I'm no good. Or he was saying to this young man, I am God. And he's trying to point out to the young man that he recognized in Jesus something that was truth.

Why did you call me good? Think about this now, young man. You've discovered a truth. When you came to me, you called me good.

Why did you do that? Because you see, you've recognized a truth. I am God. Why did you call me good? There's only one good, that's God.

That gives you a hint. Why you call me good. We misinterpret that.

Jesus is saying to the young man, Why did you call me good? I'm no good. There's only one good, that's God. No, that's not at all what he is saying.

Why did you call me good? I'll give you a hint. There's only one good, that's God. That's why you called me good, because I'm God.

What must I do to have age-abiding life? Keep the commandments. Which ones, Lord? And what did the Lord give to him? He gave to him the first table of the law. Your relationship with God.

Why? Because if you don't get past this, there's no sense going to the second table. If you don't pass the first four, there's no sense going on to the second six. If you don't have a right relationship with God, you're not going to have a right relationship with your fellow man.

So Jesus reiterates the first four. Lord, I've kept all these from my youth up. What do I lack yet? Oh, let's come back and take a look at that.

What is the first law? Thou shalt not have any other gods before me. You say you've kept them all. All right.

Go out and sell everything that you have. And take the money and give it to the poor and come and follow me. You'll have great treasures in heaven.

What was Jesus doing? He was pointing out the folly of what the man had said. The first law, thou shalt have no other gods before me, was a law that he was breaking because he had his possessions as a God in his life. They were his God.

And they were before. They were there in the presence of his worship of God. Lord, I've kept this law from my youth up.

What do I lack yet? Oh, wait a minute. You haven't kept it from your youth up. You only say you have.

But in reality, you have a God in your life that is possessing you and it is even stronger and has a greater hold than I have upon you. Your desire for it is greater than your desire for me. Be careful what you say to Jesus.

He's liable to put you on an examination. So much of what we say is flippant off of the top of our heads when we come to worship God. Oh, God, everything I have is yours.

Oh, that's wonderful. Now, if you'll just sell this and this. Oh, no, Lord, I really didn't mean that.

You know, that's just a figure of speech. Words. Empty words.

We're so guilty of offering to the Lord the empty words of our mouth. Rend your hearts, not your garments, unto God. So, God has laid out what sin is.

He's said this is the mark. And so, I've given you the law that you might know what sin is that you will sin not. The people stood afar off and Moses drew near into the thick darkness where God was.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel, You have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. You shall not make with Me gods of silver, neither shall you make unto you gods of gold. An altar of earth thou shalt make unto Me and shalt sacrifice thereon burnt offerings.

Notice, the Lord is not even wanting them to build ornate altars. And if you make an altar of earth to make your sacrifice, just pile up dirt for your altar. And if you use stone, don't bring a chisel on it.

Because if you put a chisel on it, you're going to defile it. God doesn't want anything to distract from Him. Not even a glorious, fancy altar.

He doesn't want man glorying in the works of his own hands. God, help us! In the church today, you go into so many churches where you've got the fancy work of man's hands, the ornate altars, the ornate

buildings and all, and God cannot be pleased with them. God said, hey, be simple.

Build an altar out of earth. That's good enough. And if you make it out of stones, then don't carve on the stones.

Don't chisel on them. If you put a chisel on it, you're going to defile it. Leave it natural.

The naturalness whereby man's work of his hands is not glorified. When we come to worship God, only God is glorified. We don't glorify the works of man's hands.

We don't say, oh my, this lovely sanctuary built by the hands of men. This glorious golden altar built by the hands of men. So many places where you go to worship God, your attention is so drawn to the architecture or to the ornateness or to the lavishness of it and to the works of man's hands that you fail to see God.

You're lost in the works of man's hands. God was forbidding that. He said, hey, when you make an altar, make it out of earth.

He doesn't want man to glory in his presence the work of his hands or anything else. God wants the glory when we come to worship Him. He wants all the glory.

God, help that man who seeks to bring glory and attention to himself while doing the service of God. The altar of earth thou shalt make unto me and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, thy oxen. In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee and I will bless thee.

And if you will make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone, for if you lift up your tool on it, you have polluted it. Neither shalt thou go up by the steps to my altar that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon. In other words, don't go up steps and high where people can look up and see your bare legs or something.

God just doesn't want attention drawn to anything but Him when we are worshiping God. He wants your heart and your mind to be centered upon Him, not to be distracted. That is why we seek to keep distractions here to a minimum.

We don't want anything that draws attention to man. We want our attention to be drawn to the Word of God and to God Himself when we gather together to worship Him. For God forbid that any flesh should glory in His sight.

In dealing with our Maranatha musicians, one of the most difficult things we have is that of keeping them from these little antics that draw attention to themselves. Even a special movement as you're playing the bass, you know. It draws attention to you and takes the attention of the people off of what you're saying, what you're singing.

Oh man, look at him, you know. Really swings, you know. Really grooving, isn't he? And that subtle little way that we have of drawing attention to ourselves.

But the minute I draw attention to me, then the person's attention is taken off of God. And I am robbing God of that which is His. And God will hold me accountable for it.

Thus, serving the Lord is always a very fine balance because I must do it in such a way that if possible, I be hid and Christ be seen. And if that comes to pass, then my service for God is accepted and it is blessed and it is successful. But if we're drawing attention to other things, then the people are going out robbed of the full blessing of God.

Tragically so. Next week, we'll take the next five chapters. Father, we thank you tonight for Thy Word.

A lamp unto our feet, a light unto our path. And Lord, we thank you for your law, the standards that you have given to us. And Lord, we delight after Thy law.

We consent to Thy law. We desire to fulfill Thy law. Give us the power, Lord, to be what you want us to be and to do what we ought to do as your children.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. May the Lord be with you and watch over you through the week.

And may you experience God's power working in your life as He would transform you by the power of His Spirit into the image of Jesus Christ. That you would open face, beholding the glory of the Lord, might be changed from glory to glory into that same image by His Spirit working in you. In Jesus' name.

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