

Law of Love 3

by Vernon Higham

The sermon emphasizes the importance of revering God's name and understanding the transformative power of grace in fulfilling the law of love.

Duration: 37:40

Scripture: Exodus 20:7, John 4:23

Topics: "Love"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and being, as commanded in the Bible. He explains that although it may seem impossible, God gives us grace to fulfill this commandment. The preacher also discusses the commandment of not having any graven images and explains that it means worshiping God in spirit and truth, rather than relying on external forms. He highlights the need to discipline the flesh and avoid performing in the flesh rather than in the spirit. The sermon concludes by reminding believers of the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives and the role it plays in their salvation and understanding of God's love.

Transcript

We are looking at the Ten Commandments at the moment, and I felt that the Third Commandment was appropriate for this particular Sunday, and it fell on this Sunday as well, and that is because we are remembering the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Church, and where power for preaching and for witnessing was given to the men and women who believed upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Previously, they had been full of fear and apprehension, and really didn't know how to witness to his name, but they were given power. Now, power to proclaim his name, and the commandment that we are looking at today is about the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, but also we're thinking of the name of the Triune God.

So I'll read you, we'll read the commandment together, it's Exodus 20 and verse 7. Just read that one verse together, Exodus 20 verse 7. Thou shalt not. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Now, when we think of the law of God, we think of it in a condemning way, in the sense that the law is our schoolmaster, and teaches us that we have fallen short of the glory of God.

And the purpose of the Gospel, although it is a law of love, it is summarised by our blessed Saviour, if you remember, in the Gospels, that you should love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and love your

neighbour as yourself. It is a law of love. Then it is spelt out in ten commandments what it means to love God, what it means to love your neighbour.

But we cannot love God, and we cannot love our neighbour, because the love of self is in our hearts, and the love of self is a manifestation of sin. Then the Gospel comes in. Jesus Christ fulfils the law for us, and lives that fulfilment in our stead.

Then he takes what we have broken, we haven't loved God as we ought to, or our neighbour, and the penalty is death, the second death, eternal damnation. And he takes that penalty upon himself, and pays it on Calvary for us. So we are able to say, my sin, or the bliss of this glorious thought, my sin, not in part, but the whole, is nailed to his cross, and I bear it no more.

Praise the Lord, O my soul. That is the Gospel. Then people often think that they are then free from the law.

Now they're not. The terrors of law and of God with me can have nothing to do. My Saviour's obedience and blood hide all my transgressions from view.

We now enter into a new dimension. We now have the law of God written in our minds, we are told in scripture, and written in our hearts. The law takes on a new role.

To the unbeliever, it is an accusing finger. You have fallen short. Then, by the work of the Holy Spirit, our minds are enlightened to our condition, and the merit of Christ is applied to us, and positionally, it's as if we had fulfilled the law, and the broken law has been dealt with on Calvary.

And that is finished forever. And we are complete in Christ. In one sense, we can say that Christ is the end of the law in as far as that is concerned.

Now then, in this new dimension we are in now, we are given grace to walk in the way of the Lord. Now what does he want us to do? We're back to the law. But the law now on a very different footing.

We have now grace to love God. We are given grace to love our neighbour. So the Ten Commandments, which previously condemned us, and where we had to have the gospel to redeem us, those very Ten Commandments now become the rule of our life.

Now this is an important thing for us to remember, because this is a problem which arose very early on in the epistle to the Romans. We find people saying, well, if Jesus Christ has fulfilled the law for me, and if he's paid the penalty for my sin, I can behave as I like. And Paul there said, God forbid.

God forbid. This is God's law. Now this is the difference.

You are now given grace to walk in that way and to fulfill that law. Now then, this is a law of love. Now, when to the unbeliever, we are told to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and our neighbour as ourselves.

Although it's a law of love, it is almost cruel in a way, because we are incapable of fulfilling it. But now then, as children of grace, as the children of God, and as the redeemed, we are given grace to fulfill that law. Now it does not mean that we shall be perfect in our lives, but it means now this is a path that we shall follow.

What has amazed me in looking at these Ten Commandments is this. Do you know, really, it's a teaching of revival? I've never thought of it like that before. Now what God is saying, first of all, is this, I want you to love me.

Now as a Christian, you are able to love me. Now how would I want to love God? I would want to love God on my own terms, in my own way, in my own style, in the style of my own century, maybe. I would want to do things my way.

No, this is God. You will love me on my terms. Ah, but the Ten Commandments are beyond me.

Not now, because now I will give you grace to be able to perform those commandments. And so far, we have said these things. One thing I want, I want to be your only love.

I don't want any competition. There shall be no other gods beside me. You may have many things you're interested in, but I want you to love me.

It's like a marriage ceremony. And you know how the words go, that I take this vow and promise myself to keep myself to thee only as long as I shall live, till death us two part. But now here is something much greater than even that, because here is a marriage, you might say, where I say, if ever I love thee, Lord Jesus is now.

I am now able to love God, but he must be my only love. Now this doesn't mean to say I don't love anybody else, but he that loves God best will love his friends and his husband, wife, children, brothers, sisters better than those who don't love God. So they don't lose out.

But our first love is God. And he requires that. If you remember that I've read, I think, each Sabbath day, this lovely sentence that I quoted from some book, God will lose none of our love.

Love is a soul of religion and that which constitutes a real Christian. Love is the queen of graces. It shines and sparkles in God's eye.

So he says, I want you to love me with all your heart, your soul, your mind, your whole being. And I do not want any competition. That's the first commandment to the believer now.

And we can say, well, I can't do it. Yes, you can. Because now I will give you grace to do it.

And the second was this. I shall not have any graven image. And he talks about not serving them or worshipping them.

Now then, what does he really mean by this? Well, we read a verse, if you remember, but the hour cometh and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit.

And they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. Let me remind you of something which is very, very important here. God is a spirit.

Now then, Jesus Christ took on the form of a servant. But God is a spirit. God did not take on a human form.

Now then, we are created in the image of God. So you might say, oh well, if we're created in the image of God, immediately we start thinking in a carnal and a human way. He must have arms and legs and a head like me.

Not at all. God is a spirit. Now what happens when you're converted? The old man is crucified and the new man is there without loss of personality or identity.

The new man in Christ, the new creature, that new creature is spiritual. And his whole allegiance and attachment is towards God. Now, remember the verses in Ephesians and Colossians we read last week.

That is the image of God. That we have. The rest is our flesh.

And the flesh wars against the spirit. So now then, if you remember those verses, and they are important, aren't they? In this sense, what do I mean that I'm created in the image of God? Now then, the new creature in Christ, when that miracle, that radical change takes place, my arms and my legs and my head remain the same. And this corruptible body will go on with its corruption.

But one day we shall have our new body. What then is in the image of God? It is that new creature, my spirit. So what worships God? Not the body.

Not the body. Now listen to the verse again. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

For the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. Now then, we cannot express ourselves without using the body and the faculties that seem to be the body.

Now then, what does this mean in application? It means that we discipline the body in its expression to the furthest point that we are able to. So that in everything we do, and do you remember what I took it in this way last week? Preaching, there is a thin line between preaching in the spirit unto the glory of God and performing in the flesh. Even singing a hymn, there is a thin line between my heart worshipping God and my lips giving expression and just singing for singing's sake.

There is a thin line between this image of God within me worshipping in spirit and in truth and the flesh taking over. So in every century, in every age, we have to discipline the flesh. We have to watch our forms of service.

We have to watch our expression lest the flesh should take over, especially in times of revival because Satan will drive us and drive the flesh. I'm saying that because it's very important. Listen to it again.

God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. Now then, we come to this. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain for the Lord will not hold him guiltless to take his name in vain.

Now his name and his person. Now my message this morning is a brief one but it is nevertheless an important one. His name and his person.

In the Old Testament, the name of God was treated with great reverence. Now I'm saying the Old Testament. Now I'm not excluding the new of course but I'm using the name.

Now what you and I know in the ordinary authorized version of the Bible, the name Jehovah. Now there's nothing wrong with that. Now then, it's very difficult to know how to say that name.

Now a more modern way of saying it, Yahweh. Now many of you will be familiar of that way of saying it and others will not. And you might wonder, well why? Well Y and a J are similar.

This is what it means. That it was so holy that the name was only written in consonants and if there were any vowels, they varied a great deal but they were usually left out. And so you could fit in the vowels that you thought.

In the name of God, his actual name was never to be uttered. It was so holy Now can you see why blasphemy is a terrible thing? His name was so holy. So now we have Jehovah because we fit in vowels that we think.

Fit in these J or a Y and the H and the V and the H or Yahweh or put it that way. But really we're only thinking that's somewhere near the name of God, the name of the triune God. Now then what do they call him? Lord.

Call him Lord. Now his name was written carefully in the holy writings or the Bible but it was treated with great, great reverence. Now when you think of blasphemy, it's terrible isn't it? When you think of it.

The name of God. Now the negative part is this. Not to take his name.

Now blasphemy for the unbeliever, I would take it that a Christian would never blaspheme. Could happen I suppose. But that can happen in the experience of an unbeliever.

God will not hold him guiltless. How does this apply to the believer? Because now we are talking not as the law condemning us but as the law, as our rule in its new role. As our rule of life.

How can this be now? Because I am not likely to blaspheme the name of God. Now it means that I will not take the name of God loosely because God will not hold me guiltless. Now may I put it like this now.

Have you come across people that they are so free with darling and dear and lovely and there is nothing in their lives to show that there is great love there. Very often you find people that are more reserved in their expressions of love, that are more reserved, their hearts are often truer. I am not saying this is a, you know, you can't generalize all together.

I am being exact. It's a generalization. Now then, what am I saying here? You know as believers we can say the Lord told me to do this, the Lord told me, but all right.

But be sure about how you are using the name of the Lord. Treat him with great reverence. It is a name high over all.

Oh yes, name him. But not loosely, not angrily because he will not hold us guiltless the way we handle his name as believers. He will not hold us guiltless.

Now then, how can we, because we are able to say the terrors of law and of God with me can have nothing to do because I am safe in the day of judgment. Ah, but the day of Christ, remember 2 Corinthians 5.10, for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ and everyone may receive the things done in his body according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad. So we will have our rebukes and our

rewards which do not alter our redeemed state at all because that is completing Christ.

Nevertheless, there will be an assessment of our lives for good or bad, whatever it may be. So he will not hold us guiltless if we have handled his name loosely. So there must be reverence with the name of our God.

Now positively, what does this mean? Now let me take the Lord's Prayer. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. All right, are you familiar with it? Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Now what does that mean? There are three things it means, the word hallowed. Honor, adoration, obedience, those three. Honor, adoration, and obedience.

Now let us apply it just for a moment. That if I say hallowed be thy name, which now means the opposite. Now we've gone from the negative in saying that I shall not blaspheme or take the name of the Lord in vain.

And in vain can mean unnecessarily and loosely and just throwing his name about. You know the kind of thing I mean. You've heard people, we call it name slinging.

You know, talking, if you refer to the prime minister by his Christian name and so on. And unfamiliar, and when those people appear, they don't know you. But talk loosely and freely.

That we cannot talk loosely like that about the name of the Lord. Yes, we are familiar with him, but there is no familiarity. No kind of cheekiness.

He is our friend. He's our Lord and our master. But not this careless, you know, come here you.

Not that kind of attitude. He would not hold us guiltless for that kind of careless, loose behaviour with his name even. Now then, the positive part is this.

Hallowed be thy name. Honour to him and his name on our lips. That my lips will always speak of his name with the greatest respect.

We will do that with people we respect deeply. Won't we? Do it with God. The Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit.

That's all. Then adoration. Now, where shall I adore him? Well, with my lips, I honour him.

With my heart, I adore him. So if I sing Jesus' name high over all, my lips give the service that my lips are able. But may it be the fruit of my heart that there in my heart, there is adoration.

And by my heart, now my spirit, my innermost being, the image of God in me, there is adoration that controls the expression of my lips so that I am not careless in the way that my lips express the adoration. Hallowed be thy name. Adoration in the hearts.

What about my life? What are my legs and arms and my body? What's it going to do? It must be controlled by hallowed be thy name in this sense, by obedience so that in my body and in my living, that all I will do should be for his name's sake. All that is included in the word hallowed be thy name. But to the believer, that's not asking too much.

Now is it? You know this hymn. How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear. It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds, and dries away his fear.

I am not afraid of that commandment, are you? Hallowed be thy name. How sweet is thy name to me. And if we are in difficult circumstances, God give me grace to have that same attitude towards thee and thy name.

Secondly, his name and his presence. Now this is a difficult teaching, but an important one. Now this commandment is a remarkable one and the truth comes out in this.

Now it brings out why it is wrong for an unbeliever to blaspheme and why it is wrong for a believer to take his name loosely, unlikely, or angrily, or in any way, however you may feel about your circumstances. Always restrain yourself regarding any kind of abuse on the name of God. Now why? Now I'll tell you.

His person and his name are inseparable in a way that is strange to us because you know my name, you know your name. But I could have been given another name. I know in the choosing of the name of our own children, we came to a short list of names and everything and then we finally decided on one.

But it could have been any one of three or four names and eventually you come to one. But this is not so with God. He and his name are one, they're inseparable.

Now I do not want us to now take this in a magical way, put that away from your minds altogether, but keep it there in a very holy and sacred way and I'll show you the three principles that are here. Here's the first one. His name stands for God himself.

You can't say, well I didn't mean God, I meant somebody else. His name stands for God himself. Now you know this is true.

But if you happen to be listening to a harmless program or reading an article that seemed all right or listen to a conversation and they use the name of our Lord, now does it have an awful effect on you? I recall it just chills my innermost being. This is the name of my God and my saviour. They are blaspheming.

And you find that you are not able to bear it. So much does it hurt you that they are doing this. They can do all sorts of swearing, they can say dreadful name, but when it comes to blasphemy, when it comes to using his name, you might say actually some of the expressions that men use can be dirtier and more vile in actual meaning, but yet that does not offend us anywhere near the offence when they use his name.

And yet they're only using the name, but his name is inseparable to his person. That is why it's so important. Now his name.

One is this, in Acts 3.21, I'll read you the verse. Call on the name of the Lord and thou shalt be saved. Call on the name.

What are we talking about? Well, we're talking about the name, aren't we? Matthew 12.21, trust in his name. Then in Romans 13.6, blaspheme his name. Now what are we talking about? We are talking about a word.

We are talking about a name. Yes, but what we are saying, this name stands for God. So when I say I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, what am I saying? I believe in God as a person.

That's what I mean. So if I'm using his name now or blaspheme his name, I am abusing God as a person. It's not just another word.

It's inseparable with a person of God himself. The second is this. In Mark 9.38, to cast out devils in his name.

I command in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that whatever spirit it is to come out. What are we doing? Using a name. Yes, but more than that.

The power that is involved in the name of that person is not just a magic word like open sesame. It is the name that is high over all. And that name involves a person.

And that name involves a power that that person has. That's what we are saying. The third thing is this.

The relationship. John 1.12, to believe on his name. Means this, that I enter into communion and into a relationship with God himself.

My name is written on his hand. His name is written on my heart. Does this mean a relationship with a name? Yes, but this name is a relationship with a person.

His power, his authority, and to commune with him. So we cannot treat this name lightly. So we say as Christians, Hallowed be thy name.

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds. Or this way. In Isaiah 30, verse 27, it says, Behold, the name of the Lord cometh from afar.

What did they mean? Did they mean that a piece of paper was coming with just a name on it? Not at all. The Lord was coming. But it was sufficient to say, The name of the Lord cometh.

Matthew 18, verse 20. For where two or three are gathered in my name. What does it do? I'll be there.

Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them. We are talking about the presence of the Lord. So not only here do we have, you see, the name and his person, we have the now, the name and his presence.

So when we are talking about the name of the Lord, and when you and I are saying now, I love thee, O God, the Father, O God, the Son, O God, the Holy Spirit. What am I saying? I'm saying something wonderful. I am talking about God himself and the power of God.

And he has promised where we are honoring and hallowing his name in this way. I'll be there. And he is here.

And the image of God in me, the new creature in Christ, will worship him in spirit and in truth. For the Father seeketh such to worship him. Then lastly, his name and his power.

I wonder if we fully realize who dwells in our hearts. Do you remember this verse? If you're a Christian, how did you become a Christian? In 1 Corinthians 12, verse three, last letter half, and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Who convicted me of my sin? The Holy Spirit.

Who showed me the merits of Jesus Christ? The Holy Spirit. Who enlightened my understanding towards the meaning of salvation? The Holy Spirit. Who brought me close to my blessed Savior so that Christ took

away the veil of unbelief from my eyes? The Holy Spirit.

Who sanctifies me in my life and grants me an unction for power? It is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit. Who will help me to praise God? The Holy Spirit.

Notice in any hymn book, I know I've said this before, the section on the Holy Spirit is always small and it must always be so. Do you know why? Because the work of the Holy Spirit, we are told by our blessed Savior, says Jesus now is to glorify me, he says. And so why is a section on the Lord Jesus Christ so wide and, wide and thatch, you might say, and big in any hymn book? Because the Holy Spirit inspired that praise.

Praise him! He will always direct our attention there. So now then, what have we here? It is the Holy Spirit that has brought us to the place. And now, what have we come to? We have come into an arena, an arena of a relationship with him, so that we are able to say, this is the greatest and the dearest of all names.

And this is the, as far as I'm concerned and you're concerned, the greatest manifestation of his power on Calvary. The verse of my own conversion here, Acts 4, 12. Neither is there salvation in any other.

There is no other God. There is no other way. There is no other path.

No man cometh unto the Father but by him. Neither is there salvation in any other for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. What did it do to him? They wrote words on his cross, this is the King of the Jews.

They abused that lovely name. They blasphemed, but to us it is a name high over all. It is a name written on my heart.

It is a name that enables me before the triune God to be accepted. It is a name that you and I will do anything for, where men and women will go out to the furthest corners of the earth for his name's sake. Where men will die and be persecuted for his name's sake, because his name is so precious to them.

His name, we are talking about his person, but how low it be thy name. Now then, what does this mean to us then? It means that this is a very special thing and because we have come to salvation, we are able to say this name is everything, is on my heart, my name is his. Listen to this hymn, before the throne of God above, I have a strong, a perfect plea, a great high priest whose name is love, whoever lives and pleads for me, my name is graven on his hands, my name is written on his heart.

I know that while in heaven he stands, no tongue can bid me thence depart. Why? Because his name is written on my heart. When Satan tempts me to despair and tells me of the guilt within, upward I look and see him there who made an end of all my sin.

Why? Because there is salvation in no other name and that name is written on your heart, my heart. And that's why in us there is the image of God and we will worship him in spirit and in truth. Now, what is he saying? If you would love me, then you must love me on my terms.

Now, this is where we find it hard. Our pride will want to give us some carnal expression, either intellectual or physical. Our pride will want to do that.

Now, that is up to every individual here as well as a corporate body as well. So that as a corporate body, that you will always see to it that the flesh is controlled because we have to use our voices. We have to

stand or sit, whatever it may be.

But it is the minimum because we worship him in spirit and in truth. We worship him and we love him on his terms. Now, if there's any Christian here who says, I want to love God, listen to the conditions we come to so far, he will give you grace to put him first and have no other gods.

He will give you grace to worship him in your spirit. He will give you grace to do so. He will give you grace to honor his name.

Ah, the Christian would never dishonor his name. Ah, but listen to this. We can treat his name lightly and have a happy-go-lucky evangelical Christianity.

He will not hold you guiltless. Things may go against us. And in our hearts, we can be angry with him.

We must ask for grace that there may be no anger against his name, that we should not say, why should God do this to me? You use his name. He will not hold us guiltless. We will not be lost.

We must not use his name thoughtlessly, but with reverence and with love and with adoration and with service, hallow it be thy name so that with our lips, we will honor him. With our hearts, we will adore him. And with our bodies and our lives, anything we will do for his name's sake.

Are we beginning to understand? If you want a God-given revival, then this is the path. Love me, says God, on my terms, with a pure love, with a dignified love, with a love that I will honor because I will honor them that honor me. I can't.

Yes, you can. Because I will give you grace and grace and grace to do it. As dew upon the tender herb, diffusing fragrance round, as showers that usher in the spring and cheer the thirsty ground.

This is revival. So shall his presence bless our souls and shed a joyful light that hallowed morn. Now listen, we are living in terrible days.

Hallowed be thy name. Let coming to hallowing his name, as believers, whatever blasphemy the world may do, that hallowed morn shall chase away the sorrows of the night. What a day.

What a day. That hallowed morn, when believers will worship him in spirit and in truth. And the father seek as such.

He's finding difficulty in finding us. The father seek as such to worship him. Let us pray.

Oh Lord and our God, we come to thee in the name of Jesus Christ, our savior. We ask thy blessing upon us. Grant to a law that we might know that Christ has fulfilled the law for us.

That we are redeemed. We know a lot of the terrors of law and of God with us can have nothing to do. But grant us to see, oh Lord, that we are given grace to walk in that law and to honor that law, to love thee and to love our neighbor.

Oh Lord, give us grace to be an obedient people and hallow thy name. For the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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