

Cravinton

12/6/60

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M.A.

"No Other God's"
Scripture Lesson: - Exodus 20:
Text: - Exodus 20:3 "Thou shalt have no other

gods before me."

Introduction: - This morning we are beginning a study of that ancient code, known as the Ten Commandments. I have called these old laws "Ten Rules for Living."

By calling them ten rules for living, I do not mean that they speak the final word on human conduct. I remember that Jesus Christ summed up these ten commandments into one law of love when he said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and the neighbor as thyself." But in this day, when so many of our people are confused, when so many of them have flung away their old convictions and let go their old moorings, I am wondering if these rules may not serve as guideposts to them, so that they may find finer and fuller ways to live the Christian life.

Philosophers and all thinkers are agreed that even the most primitive races of mankind reach out and beyond the world of matter to a superior being. It is a natural thing for man to reach out after God; when all of his physical needs are satisfied he still has a hunger and thirst of the soul that needs satisfying. Man does not need to be commanded to worship, as there is not a race so high or so low in the scale of civilization but has some kind

of god. What they need is to be directed in their worship.

Remember to whom this commandment was given, and we shall see how necessary it was. The forefathers of the Israelites had worshipped idols, not so many generations back. They had recently been delivered out of Egypt, a land of many gods. The Egyptians worshipped the sun, the moon, insects and animals. The children of Israel were going up to take possession of a land that was inhabited by heathen, who also worshipped idols. ^{There was} Therefore was a great need of such a commandment as this. There could be no right relationship between God and man in those days, until man understood that he must recognize God alone, and not offer him a divided heart.

Let us look now at this first commandment. Very appropriately it begins with God. That is always the best place to begin. The first commandment has a brief preface. "I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have no other gods before me." This code or commandment you see, begins with a great assumption. It assumes the reality of God. It begins by asserting that God is. He, the author makes no effort to prove God. He simply affirms him. In so doing, he is in harmony with all the other writers of the Bible. The psalmists do not argue about God. They realize him and rejoice in His mercies. The prophets never undertake to prove God; they proclaim him. This so true of Jesus. He lived in constant fellowship with the Father. He communed with him; he did his work through the might of his power. He revealed him, saying, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

the New Testament. What ever man may miss, he does not need to miss God.

II.

God is available, is the assertion of this first

law. "I am the Lord thy God..thou shalt have no

other gods before me." That means, that God is not

only a reality, but he is really accessible. He

is available for human need. I may fall at his

feet, and if I will, may say with Thomas, "My Lord

and my God." I may shout with the victorious certain

Victory

of Paul, "My God shall supply every need of

yours according to his riches in glory by Christ

Jesus." Every man, asserts this ancient law, may

have God for his very own.

Of course; the conception of God that was prev-

alent when this code was written is not our concep-

tion. Man's conception of God has changed vastly

since then. Since then, the Word has become flesh

and dwelt among us; and we have been privileged

to behold his glory. We have seen him, this god;

He gather little children into his arms. We have seen

him bend over outcasts in love and mercy. We have

seen him make every man's burden his own. We have

heard him say, "If God were here he would be doing

just what I am doing. He is here in me, for he

that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

But the fact that our conceptions of God change

with the passing of the years does not mean that

God changes. Though our conceptions of God change,

God abides, the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Now in saying that God is ours for the taking,

this ancient lawgiver speaks in harmony with the

whole Bible. This affirmation that sounds heart-

enigly in the O.T. rises to a shout of victory in

the New Testament. Whatever man may miss, he does not need to miss God.

III.

You do not have to go to the heathen lands today to find false gods. America is full of them. Whatever you make most of is your god. Whatever you love more than God is your idol. Rich and poor, learned and unlearned, all classes of men and women are guilty of this sin.

A man may make a god of himself, of a child, of a mother, of some precious gift that God has given.

He may forget the giver, and let his heart go out in adoration toward the gift.

Many make a god of pleasure; that is what so many hearts are set on. If some old Greek or Roman came to life again and saw man in a drunken debauch, would he believe that the worship of Bacchus had died out?

Others take fashion as their god. They give their time and thought to dress. They fear what others will think of them. Let us not flatter ourselves that all idolaters are in heathen countries.

With many others it is money. We have not yet gotten through worshipping the golden calf yet. If a man will sell his principles for gold, is he not making that fact his god? If he trusts his wealth to keep him from want and to supply his needs, are not his riches his god? Too many men say, Give me treasures here, and act perfectly satisfied. I don't care for heaven. But at the end of life, he will be dissatisfied. When he hears the words, "Depart from me, I never knew you!"

-The soul of man has never been satisfied with false gods. Can pleasure, riches fill the soul that is

empty with God? No they cannot. These shall be
be as nothing, when one faces the years of eter-
nity. Why is it that in a trying hour, when a man
who has been talking against God, why is it that
in the darkness of affliction, why is it that they
then call in the believers, they call in the min-
isters of the gospel, to administer comfort and
and solace and consolation in the last hour. They
then become aware that it is only through the pow-
er of the gospel, through faith, a man can be
saved.

IV.

But since God is available, how are we to come
into the richness of our inheritance. How may we
come to possess God and be possessed by him? In
order to possess God we must meet certain condi-
tions. That is just plain common sense. Some people
fail to meet these conditions because they are pre-
occupied. A minister once put this question to a
man, whom he thought was preoccupied. "How can you
ignore the fact of God as you do? He was an honest
man. He answered frankly, "I keep busy. I do not
allow myself to think about God." There are those
who, like the guests invited to the marriage feast,
are too interested in land and oxen, in the newly
married wife, to have any time for God. Naturally,
they fail to find Him, whom to know is life eternal.

Of course, to know God is the supremest of priv-
ileges. It is this knowledge that, above all else,
brings us inward strength. To have God in your life
is to have poise, to have serenity, it is to have
courage. It is to have an outgoing love. Possess-
ing God, we do possess all things. But in spite

there are those to whom God is no more than an
-embarrassment. *But he can be read*

Conclusion:- Friends, can you say that sincerely,
that all your hope is centered on God in Christ?

Are you trusting him alone? Are you ready to step
into the scales and be weighed against the first

commandment? God will not accept a divided heart.

He wants to be the absolute ruler. There is not
-room in your heart for two thrones. No man can

serve two masters. He cannot serve God and mammon.

You cannot mix the worship of the true God with
the worship of another god. There is no room in
your heart, if Christ is there. If worldliness should
come in, godliness would go out.

Which master will you choose to follow? Be an
-out-and-out Christian. "Him only shalt thou serve!"

Only thus can you be well pleasing to God. The Jews
were punished with seventy years of captivity be-
cause they worshipped false gods. They have suffer-

ed almost two thousand years because they rejected
the Messiah. Will you incur God's wrath by reject-

ing Christ too? He died to save you? Trust Him

with your whole heart, for with the heart man be-

lieveth unto righteousness, and with the mouth con-

fession is made unto salvation.

I believe that when Christ has the first place

in our hearts, we shall have power, when we shall

have put Him in his rightful place. If we let some

false god come in and steal our love away from

God, the God of heaven, then we shall have no

peace or power. To have serene

peace, it is to have an outgoing love.

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