

The Book of Deuteronomy

Lesson 4: The Ten Commandments Restated -- Deuteronomy 5:1-33

Picture a whole nation pressed up against the base of a mountain that is on fire to its heart, smoke boiling into the sky, the ground trembling, and out of the darkness a voice. Not thunder that sounds like a voice, but a voice. Forty years have passed since that day, and now Moses gathers a new generation, most of them children or unborn back then, and says to them, "The Lord made this covenant with us". With us. He pulls them inside the story. He will not let them treat Sinai as ancient history that happened to somebody else.

We do the same thing with God, do we not? We let the great moments belong to other people. The flood was for Noah, the calling was for Abraham, the law was for those old Israelites long ago. Moses refuses to let his hearers off that easily, and the Spirit refuses to let us off either. The God who spoke on the mountain is the God who speaks to you this morning, and the question He pressed on them is the question He presses on you: will you hear, and learn, and do?

What He gives them is ten words, the Ten Commandments, the moral spine of the covenant. No other gods. No idols. Do not empty His name. Honor the rest He gives. Honor father and mother. Do not murder, commit adultery, steal, lie, or covet. Even now, reading them, something in you straightens up. You know these are not arbitrary rules. They are the grain of reality, the way a good world is meant to run, the shape of a heart that loves God and loves its neighbor.

And then comes the moment that should sober every one of us. The people, hearing that voice, are terrified. They beg Moses, "You go near and hear all that the Lord our God says", because they cannot bear God speaking to them directly. Their fear was right, and God honored it. But it also exposes a gap between God and people that the law could expose but never close. Keep that gap in mind as we walk through this chapter, because the whole Bible is the story of how God Himself, in Christ, steps into that gap and closes it forever.

Group Discussion: Why do you think Moses insisted that the covenant at Horeb was made "with us" and not merely with their parents, and how should that same sense of personal ownership shape the way we read God's Word today?

Personal Reflection: Which one of these ten words has God been quietly pressing on your conscience lately, and what would it look like this week to actually hear, learn, and do it rather than admire it from a distance?

Read Deuteronomy 5:1-33

Study Questions

1. What does Moses emphasize in Deuteronomy 5:1-5 about the covenant, the generation he is addressing, and the way God spoke to Israel at Horeb?
2. Moses says God made this covenant “with us, who are all of us here alive today”. Where do you tend to keep God’s claims at arm’s length, as if they belonged to other people or other times?
3. What do the first four commandments (5:6-15) reveal about who God is and what He rightly requires concerning worship, idolatry, His name, and rest?
4. Take the command against idolatry honestly: what functions as a rival to God in your own affections, time, or trust right now?
5. What do the last six commandments (5:16-21) reveal about how God designed human life together, and what does it say that He grounds them in a covenant relationship rather than mere social usefulness?
6. The command against coveting reaches past actions into the desires of the heart. Where does discontent or craving for what is not yours quietly shape your inner life?

7. What happened when the people heard God's voice (5:22-27), and what does their terror and request for a mediator reveal about the holiness of God and the distance between Him and sinful people?
8. The people said, "Speak to us... and we will hear and do it". Where is the gap in your own life between hearing God's Word and actually doing it, and what feeds that gap?
9. These Ten Commandments belong to the covenant God made with Israel at Horeb. Which of them express abiding moral truth restated in the New Covenant, how does the Sabbath command differ, and what does the New Testament teach about the Old Law being fulfilled in Christ?
10. Looking back across Deuteronomy 5, name one specific way the living God who spoke on the mountain is forming you through this chapter, and what is your next obedient step?

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: Exodus 20:1-17, the first giving of the Ten Commandments at Sinai; Matthew 22:37-40, where Jesus gathers the law into love of God and neighbor; Colossians 2:14-17, the handwriting of ordinances nailed to the cross and feasts and Sabbaths as a shadow; Hebrews 12:18-24, the terror of Sinai contrasted with our coming to Mount Zion through Christ; Acts 20:7, the disciples gathering on the first day of the week

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