

My Rights - Exodus 20:13-15

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[0 : 00] Turn your Bibles to Exodus 20. We have been going through the Ten Commandments, going through the law. I want to read you something. It says, George Phillips was an elderly man living in a rural area.

And one evening when he was going to bed, his wife said to him, Hey, there's a light on in the garden shed. But she could see from the bedroom window. George opened the back door to go turn off the light, but saw that there were people in the shed stealing things.

He phoned the police and he asked, Hey, can someone come out and there's somebody in my shed? And the police said, Is there someone in your home, sir? He said, No, but there's people breaking into my garden shed and stealing from me.

And the police dispatcher said, Sir, all patrols are busy. You should lock your doors and an officer will be along when he's available. And George said, Okay. He hung up the phone and he counted to 30.

One, two, three, four. And he phoned the police back. He said, Hello, I just called a few seconds ago because there's people stealing from my shed. Well, you don't need to worry anymore. I shot and killed them both and the dogs are eating them now.

[1 : 05] And he hung up. Within minutes, six police cars, a SWAT team, and a helicopter, two fire trucks, and a paramedic and an ambulance showed up at his house and caught the burglars right-handed. And one of the policemen said to George, I thought you said you shot them.

And he said, I thought you said there's nobody available. You see, we all want the law on our side. We all want the law to be for us when we need it. We all want the law on our side, just like George when he wanted it and needed it.

Sure. But the guys breaking into his shed, they didn't want the law on their side. And we often take the law and use the law from our own perspective, from our own law to ourself.

So as we continue our look, this week we will cover three more of the Ten Commandments. Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, and thou shalt not steal. If you remember last week we said all three of these have something in common.

And I don't know if you looked ahead and found your own commonalities with them. And then next week we'll finish up the last two. So you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor, and you shall not covet that which is your neighbor's.

[2 : 13] So today we are going to look at a subject which I think is near and dear to all of us. What are my rights? My rights. Would you join me in prayer? Lord, thank you so much for your word.

Lord, thank you, Lord. Lord, how indescribable. Lord, is your word, is your love, is your grace, Lord. And Lord, how amazing, Lord, that you could give us something so accessible, but Lord, so easily ignorable, that we set aside your word, Lord.

That we want the law to be for us. We want God to be for us. We want his word before us. We want the commands to be for us on my side when it's convenient to me. But I don't want the law to convict me, to catch me red-handed.

I don't want the law to hold me accountable. We're at Mount Sinai. Over two million plus people at the base of this mountain.

And God has descended upon it in fire. The mountain smoked and burned. There's the sound of trumpets and voices. And so you can see in the distance there, the Bay of Aquaba, the Red Sea, where Israel had crossed and then meandered down.

[3 : 21] We're two to three months out of Egypt. And God has brought them here. And I suppose, I don't know, two to three million people on this plane.

And God has, in a sense, descended from the mountain, is speaking to them. Speaking these words. This is not Moses speaking the Ten Commandments. This is God's voice speaking directly to the people. Speaking this word.

If you remember, last week, as we looked at honoring your father and mother, we talked about how God, our love for God, is always expressed in obedience.

Love has to be expressed in action. It has to be. It can't just be passive. It can't just exist. It doesn't work that way. Our obedience to God stems from, not works, but what?

Faith. Our response in faith. Which then allows God's love to come into our lives, flow through our lives, and then be extended. It's birthed into our lives. It's something that we can't access otherwise. [4 : 23] I have no way to obtain this on my own. It has to be birth. It comes through a new birth. It's all as Jesus said in John chapter 3. So truly, truly, I say unto you, except a man be born of the water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

We talked about how we entered into this world through birth. There's no other way to get into this life. Well, in the life of the Spirit and the kingdom of God, there's no other way to get in either. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. You're born of this world.

That's who we are. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit. So don't marvel that I say unto you, you must be born again. It's perfectly logical. It makes perfect sense. We live it every day. We see it around us. Nobody you've met was not here by birth.

Well, I came by aliens. No, you didn't. We must be born into this. We must be born into God's goodness. The law is external. The law comes to us as something very, very good, but it seems so inaccessible to me until I'm born into it.

We talked about how honoring our mother and father, that our relationship, children, obey your parents and the Lord for this is right. That there is a time where obedience is the honorable thing, but honor is always appropriate, even when obedience is not.

[5 : 29] But that has to come from something that can't be external. It can't be enforced upon me. It has to come out of a heart of love. We move from obedience to honor to love.

Well, David writes in Psalm 119. He says, Oh, how I love thy law. This is my meditation all the day. David, how can you love God's law? All it does is bring conviction and accountability.

And don't you feel, no, I love God's law. Why would David love God's law or God's commands?

Because God's law allows us to discover a righteous God. And behind this righteous God, we find out he's a God of love.

He's a God of righteousness, a God of accountability, but he's a God of love. So David says, Oh, I love your law. Because by the knowledge of your law, well, has come the knowledge of this God of righteousness, this God of love.

Last week, my wife told me that I hit everybody with a fire hose. So I'm going to try not to do that this week. There's a lot of information, but there's so much here and it's so rich. But we need to understand God's law and God's commands and how we relate to it now in Christ.

[6 : 37] Or we can end up living a life that's meant to be a life of freedom. And we put upon ourselves a yoke of bondage again. And we can end up walking that way for years.

And the enemy's happy. Satan's happy to be right there and go, Yep, you need to do that. Satan's going to tell me to do something good. Well, yeah, he'll gladly tell you to stay in bondage. You didn't do that.

You should do this. You didn't do that. You should do this. And all the time, the God of righteousness is also of God of love and saying, If you just look to me, you'd see it's grace. You'd see that I love you in spite of all that. But if we can first accept there is a righteous God that we are accountable to.

If I can accept there's a righteous God I'm accountable to. We then have the opportunity to learn that behind that righteousness is also love, right? 1 John 4, 16.

And we know and believed the love that God has to us. I look around in here and I know most of you. I think you could all say, Yeah, I've known and believed the love that God has to me.

[7 : 35] God is love. And he that dwells in love dwells in God and God in him. So if God is love and I'm dwelling in God and God in me, then guess what's in me?

It's love. Love becomes a motivating factor in my life. As we look at these scriptures in Exodus, chapter 20, verse 13, it says, You shall not kill.

Verse 14, you shall not commit adultery. Verse 15, you shall not steal. Boom, boom, boom. The Lord just speaks these from the mountain, one after another. And the first number of commands we looked at were pretty, had a lot of information to go along with them.

This is just don't do, don't do, don't do. God is telling his people here not to do what is not loving. Don't do what's not loving.

It's in the negative. Why is it in the negative? Because our natural state is to do what feels right. Independent of whether it is right or not. My natural state is to do what feels right.

[8 : 40] And I'm not so worried about if it is right. Because it feels right to me. I must be right. When Israel finally comes into the land, Joshua brings them in. Moses is long dead. And then Joshua dies.

And they're being governed by people called the Judges. God would raise up a man who would be the representative of God to the nation, essentially, to give them spiritual direction.

But Israel rebelled against that. They rejected that. They said, you know what? I'm going to throw that off. And the very last book, or the verse of the book of Judges, says, in those days there was no king in Israel.

And every man did that which was right in his own eyes. What does that mean? Well, the king would be he who is enforcing the law. He who is enforcing a rule. But there was none. They were left to choose to do what was right on their own.

And every man did that which was right in his own eyes. In his own eyes. So where God brings these commands here and says, do not kill, do not commit adultery, do not steal. Why would he tell them to do something they would never do anyway, unless their natural inclination was to do it?

[9 : 43] Oh, Lord, I'll never kill. I'll never commit adultery. I'll never steal. Look around you. The world's filled with that. God links these three commandments in a very unique way.

When you look throughout scripture, it's very interesting studying it. Like, oh, I didn't know that was there. In Jeremiah, chapter 7, beginning in verse 8, he links these three. He says, behold, Israel, essentially, you trust in lying words that cannot profit.

Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery? Put them together. And swear falsely? And burn incense unto Baal? And walk after other gods whom you know not? And then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, we are delivered.

Delivered freedom. We're delivered to do all these abominations. I'm free. That's why God delivered me. In this house, which is called by my name. Or is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes?

Who quoted that scripture in the New Testament? Jesus, you've made my house a house of thieves. Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord. And then in Hosea, chapter 4, verse 2, he says, by swearing and lying and killing and stealing and committing adultery, they break out and blood touches blood.

[10 : 59] They're linked again. And the land is full of blood. It's full of this. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Thou shalt not steal. The word kill isn't just murder behind it, the idea. We see the same thing here in Job 24. That's the word there. Murderer is the same word that's used in the Hebrew in Exodus chapter 20.

Thou shalt not kill. The murderer rising with the light kills the poor and needy. And here it again is linked with this idea of thief. And in the night is a thief. Psalm 62, verse 3, says, How long will you imagine mischief against a man?

You shall be slain. That's the same word. You shall not kill. You shall not murder. You shall not slay. You shall be slain, all of you, as a bowing wall. You shall be in as a tottering fence. Murder, adultery, and thieving all take from a man that which is rightfully his.

That's what the thing they have in common. They all take from someone that which is rightfully theirs. Takes from a man what is rightfully his. Ultimately, his right to himself. The law declares, what we've already looked at previously, that man is an autonomous moral being.

[12 : 17] He's not AI. He's not artificial. He's AM. Autonomous morality. He's an autonomous moral being.

He has a right to himself. And not even God will violate that right. God will not say, you will keep my law. You will come into heaven. You will receive my love.

No, God's given us autonomy. He's given us a right to ourselves in creating us. We owe our allegiance to God. We do because of who he is. He's the creator.

He's the righteous God. He's our Lord, our Savior now in Jesus. Yet God is going to only accept what's willingly given. He will not accept anything else. You know, you say you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink.

You can lead a horse to water and you can drown him in that water. You can lead people to church. They may not come. You can lead them to Christ, but they have to receive it. You can't make them.

[13:14] Romans 12.1 says, I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, Paul says, you have all of God's mercy at your disposal. Do this thing. This thing which is holy and acceptable unto God.

This thing which is your reasonable service. This is reasonable. It's right. It's what you owe God. And you have all of God's mercies available for you to do it. You have to choose to do it. That you present your bodies a living sacrifice.

God will not twist your arm and make you do that. Man is gifted by God the right to himself. And if God will not violate that right, then man does not have that right either. Do not murder.

Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. No man has the right to take from another man that which is his by the will of God. I can't take from someone that which is his by the will of God.

And here God is speaking this to this nation. As we looked at, at this mountain, God is speaking to this people. He's establishing a nation, two plus million people that for over a century, they've been taught by their ancestors how to live in slavery.

[14:17] How to get along in Egypt. How to survive under bondage. You can do it. Here's how you do it. And all of a sudden they're in freedom. They've been given this freedom. They followed God. They have a new life.

Following the one true and living God. They're following his man, Moses. And God's like, yeah, okay. But now I need to teach you a new way. He's founding their society. This is not spoken to the individual.

It's spoken to the group who have to individually keep it. Right? This is spoken to Israel nationally. God's truth and heart is behind each one of these commands. But let's not lose the context that God is speaking this to Israel.

So society is founded upon man's intrinsic right to himself. God is founding this society upon the fact that man is intrinsically, intrinsically, has a right to himself. Not even God will violate that.

And any society that fails to acknowledge that ultimately undermines its right to exist. We hold these truths to be self-evident.

[15:18] That all men are created equal. And endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights. Which among them is life, liberty, pursuit, happiness. But that life, liberty, and pursuit, and happiness that those founders wrote in there.

And guys, you know me. I'm like, it's not political as they come. But the principles behind this. That they wrote in there. That wasn't for my life. My liberty.

And my happiness. It was recognizing that within each person is an intrinsic right to themselves.

That God has created each individual. You have a right to life. You have a right to liberty.

You have a right. Happiness, essentially, to determine your course of life. It's not, you give me my right. It's that you have a right. And I'm going to guard your right. And I'm going to create a nation that's going to guard the rights of its people.

To have that right. But any society that then fails to acknowledge that will ultimately undermine its right to exist. It doesn't have a right to exist outside of that. It's the way we see our nation going today.

[16:15] As it undermines that, the whole reason for its existence disappears. What was a society? A society is just a group of individuals that agree to live by universally accepted principles.

It's a group of individuals who agree to live by universally accepted principles. Or at least agree to be enforced by them.

Right? Every society has boundaries. They have laws. It gives definition to the society. Now, whether you choose to live by them or not, the society as a whole chooses, these are our laws and boundaries.

That each person will personally then have to live by. If they don't, they will be held accountable to them. And that is the law that enforces those boundaries. Each member may not choose to live by

it.

But each member of that society will be held accountable to it. God is putting forth the nation of Israel. I'm establishing a nation, he says. You don't have to live by that. You can go and steal from a man his life, his wife, or his donkey.

[17:17] But then you're going to be held accountable to that. Now, we recognize this as an intrinsic right that is written upon the heart of every man. You know, if you're off in the woods, right?

You're hiking or hunting or whatever. You come across a cabin. Like, wow. It's mine. No. You think, that must be somebody's. Somebody owns that.

Somebody has a right to that. I don't. I don't just go in and set up shop and like, oh, my word, there's food in here and everything. God, you're so good to give me this. No, I recognize instantly. That's what someone else is.

You walk through the parking lot. You know, you come out of the grocery store. You don't go, you know, which car am I going to take today? Am I going to take home? I just, I want that one. No. We recognize that. We talked about that as morality.

Morality is what? It is the commands of God, the law of God written upon our heart, which is the innate ability to know right from wrong. Every man has that. No man has the right in himself to take from another man his right to himself.

[18:19] I don't have the right in myself to take from you your right to yourself. When we do that, what do we set ourselves up as? God. I'm now God of your life.

I am now the one who has the right to do that. The law then, what does the law do? Well, the higher the law that a society has, the nobler the society.

The higher the law, the higher the man. It lifts a man up. The nobler the society. God's law will raise a society to the highest level of nobility.

We've seen that in this nation. The nation was founded upon men who wanted to see God's law raised as the standard, those truths. And that raises then that society to the highest level of nobility, the noble man.

But it also does something else we don't like. It also brings accountability. The higher the law, the higher their accountability. What fallen man, what we ultimately want, we want nobility without accountability.

[19:22] That's our world today. Paul writes in 2 Timothy, he says that in these last days, men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents.

We looked at that last week. Unthankful, unholy, without natural affection. Boy, is there a lack of natural affection in this world. Truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good.

Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God. Having a form of godliness, they want the nobility. Oh, I'm godly.

But denying the power thereof from such turn away. Fallen man wants nobility without accountability. They want to be known as, oh, we're good people. We're righteous. We're godly. Yes.

But don't pin the law on me. I want to be free to do whatever's right in my own eyes. Without accountability, fallen man plummets from nobility. We do not have accountability.

[20:24] Fallen man will plummet from nobility into that, into what we just read, into all of that. So the higher the law, the greater the accountability. The greater the accountability leads then to the greater the conviction.

Jesus would tell us that when he goes to the Father, he's going to send someone very special. The Holy Spirit, the Comforter. He says, if I don't go, do you realize that?

We're so glad Jesus came out of the grave. Yes, he brings new life. But we recognize that without his ascension, he couldn't have sent the Holy Spirit. He arose. He died to conquer sin.

He arose to give us life. But then he ascended to give us the Holy Spirit. For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. But if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he's come, he's going to do these three things with the world.

He's going to convict the world. He's going to reprove the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He's going to bring conviction regarding their sin, God's righteousness, and that they are judged by that.

[21 : 24] Paul would write in Romans 3, verse 20, he says, Now we know that whatsoever things the law says, we know it's to them that are under the law. It only applies if you're under the law.

The laws of India don't really apply to me. I'm not under that law. That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. So God's law applies to everybody.

Not just nationally, but everybody. That all the world may fall under this law. Therefore, by the deeds of the law, no flesh shall be justified in its sight. For by the law is the knowledge of sin.

The law brings conviction. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. It's a high law. It's a high accountability, but it also brings a whole heap of a lot of conviction.

Because then Paul tells us in Romans 3, 23, Well, the ultimate result is all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

So God's law puts in front of me the fact that I've sinned. It says I'm separated from God and that I'm on a course of judgment. If I could just bring God's law down, if I could bring the law around me down, if I could bring this law low, I'll come out from under the conviction.

[22 : 33] I won't feel so accountable. I'll feel better about myself, and I'll act a whole lot worse. And my nobility will drop with it. When I say nobility, I don't mean like we're noble, like lords and kings.

I just mean like the way we would act. Do we act in a noble way? The fallen man responds in two ways. To conviction, as Paul said, to the knowledge of sin.

The law brings the knowledge of sin. The law being declared to Israel, you shall not kill, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal. We will respond in one of two ways. The first is to believe.

To receive that conviction and believe.

Again, back in Romans 3, Paul says, But now, where he said the righteousness did not come by the law. He says, But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested. Being witnessed by the law and the prophets.

What does that mean? Manifest, to display, to show. God's righteousness came in the person of Jesus Christ. He did not come by law, but he was witnessed to by the law and the prophets. All the law and the prophets declared that Jesus is God's righteousness.

[23 : 34] And that he's been manifested and brought forth. Even the righteousness of God, which is by the faith of Jesus Christ. Unto all, I'm sorry, even the righteousness of God, which is by the faith of Jesus Christ.

Unto all, upon all them that believe. So we receive God's righteousness, not by law. The law just points to Jesus as the way to God's righteousness. And we go through faith, through believing in him.

For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And we quote that a lot. Man, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Being justified freely by his grace. All who've sinned and come short of his glory are also all justified freely by his grace.

Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. So we can receive. We can respond to conviction and accountability and go, Yes. Yes, Lord. I am falling short.

But remember, I'm freely justified by your grace. Remember that now I have a relationship with you in love, not law. Or we can resist. That's the option.

[24 : 44] When conviction comes, we either respond in belief or we resist. As Stephen, standing before the Sanhedrin, giving his defense before they would stone him.

He says, you, and this is why I think they stoned him. He's giving the whole account of like history, Israel's history. And then he just can't stand it. And he says, you stiff necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears. And I think they're like, that's it.

He's done for. You do always resist. Who? The Holy Spirit who judges the world of righteousness, sin, and of judgment to come. You always are resisting him.

And who are the ones resisting him? They're the ones who are keeping the law externally. The ones who look like they're doing what's good, but are resisting conviction. Outwardly, it may look great. You are resisting the Holy Spirit as your fathers did.

So do you who have received the law by the dispensation of angels. You have not kept it. You've not kept it. You looked at God's law as something to use for your own benefit.

[25 : 44] You want the law on our sides, just like our story in the beginning. Hey, I want the law to work for me so that I can feel good about myself. But man, ultimately, I don't want to be accountable to God. When man resists conviction, he lowers himself by lowering his view of the law that

convicted him.

That's what happens. You can't love God's word and resist it. You have to lower God's word in your eyes. Well, I don't want to do what it says. Well, now I've just taken it from a standard of a have to to an option in my life that maybe is a good influence.

You know, it's one among many things in my life. So as we get to verse 13, see, I was just getting to verse 13. Just give us spurts of the fire hose.

But as we get to verse 13, you shall not kill. Well, here we see. If man resists this command, it will not only bring him down, but it brings another's down with him, doesn't it?

Man, if I resist this conviction of thou shall not kill, but in a moment where I want my way, my feelings, my whatever, and I feel justified in that killing, well, I have brought myself down as I brought God's law down in my eyes, and it brought another person down with me too as I murdered him.

[27 : 00] Murder means to wrongfully take away the life of another. Wrongfully taking away his life. There is a time to take away of life, but it's in accountability. Leviticus 24, 17 says, He that kills or murders or wrongfully takes away a life, he shall surely be put to death.

He's going to be accountable for that because he took what was not his. You see, one who wrongfully takes away what rightfully belongs to another then becomes accountable for what he's taken away.

One who wrongfully takes away what rightfully belongs to another then becomes accountable for that which has been wrongfully taken away. That's the basis upon which all of law in relation to man is based.

All of law in relation to man to man is based upon that. That he who takes away wrongfully what rightfully belongs to another is then accountable for what he's wrongfully taken. Paul tells us that's the reason in Romans 13 for governors and rulers, that they're not a terror to good works, but those who do evil, who do wickedness.

For he is the minister of God to you for good. But if you do that which is evil, be afraid, for he bears not the sword in vain. He's there to hold us accountable. That is the point. The rulers and governors and leaders of our nation today and all nations around the world, man, they have a high, high responsibility to God.

[28 : 23] They will answer to God. We the people? Yeah, but who's your God? They're going to answer to him. They are accountable because they were put there for that purpose. To hold accountable those who would step outside the law, God's law.

Way back in Genesis, as Noah gets off the ark, Genesis chapter 9, the Lord, in giving him the Noahic covenant, he says, Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed. And in the image of God made he man.

Why? Because God has given man an autonomous, moral right to himself. I don't have that right to take it from you. God holds us accountable for that. Man is made in God's image, the image of God. God is an autonomous, moral being, right? With the ability to determine his moral choices. All of our decisions are moral, guys.

Every decision we make is a moral choice. It has behind it the idea of what is right and wrong. Every decision we make. Is this appropriate or is it not?

[29 : 28] Again, my cat doesn't make decisions like that. All of his decisions are inappropriate, but he doesn't care because he's not moral. One who rightfully takes away, I read that, what wrongfully belongs to another, or rightfully belongs to another, we're going to be held accountable.

In 1 Samuel, the Lord says this. Chapter 2, verse 6, The Lord kills, makes alive. He brings down to the grave and brings up.

Life and death belong to the Lord, and they are his alone to give and to take. We do not get to determine that. I shall not murder. Even Jesus in John chapter 10, as he's headed to the cross, he says, Jesus said, We don't have a right to take a life.

We don't. Now, in the context of wrongfully taking from you what is rightfully yours. Now, if you wrongfully take a life, then it is right to hold you accountable for that.

Will you? I'll use me. If I wrongly take a life, then it would be right for me to be held accountable for the life that I've taken. But we don't have a right to just take a life.

[30 : 48] Even our own. We don't have that right. But we do have this crazy thing. But we have a right to give life.

We cannot take a life from anyone, but I can freely give my life. And God looks at that and says, that is acceptable. That is right. That is love.

Greater love has no man than this, that a man keep his life, preserve his life, and protect his life. No, but gives it away. He lays down his life for his friends. Crazy.

I can't take life from any of my friends. I can't demand life from you. And I sure enough can't just take it from you because it's rightfully yours. But we also have the right then to give that. In Christ, we exchange through his death.

Right? Through his death, I exchange. I give up my right to myself. You can hold on to your right to yourself if you want to. But that ends where? Well, we've all been separated from God.

[31 : 45] You know, for all of sin comes short of the glory of God. If you hold on to your right to yourself, it ends in death. It ends in separation. But if I give up my right to myself and exchange it through his death, I obtain his right to life by faith.

I then have a right now to live by faith in Christ because I've given mine up. He didn't take it from me. He won't force it from me. He says, hey, if you want my life in exchange for yours, here it is. Paul would write in Romans 14, for whether we live, we live unto the Lord. Whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. That's a really good logical conclusion, Paul.

Therefore, if we live, we're the Lord's. If we die, we're the Lord's. Therefore, whether we live or die, we're the Lord's. We're his. We belong to him. My right to myself? Oh, I gave that up when I exchanged my right to myself in exchange for a right to his life.

Thou shalt not commit adultery. Verse 14. If murder robs a man from his right to his life, adultery robs a man from a part of himself that he has a right to.

[32 : 54] It robs someone a part of themselves. If marriage is a union of faithfulness committed to in love, if marriage is a union of faithfulness committed to in love, then adultery is an unfaithful union that's committed outside of marriage.

Marriage is a faithful union. It's committed to in love. This is a faithful union. Well, adultery is then unfaithfulness, where we unite outside of that commitment.

Simplest way to say adultery is just unity in a relationship with anyone outside of an already established relationship of unity. Right? Adultery, in simplest definition, is unifying in relationship outside of a relationship that I've already unified with.

God would condemn Israel the same, or accuse them of the same, likening them to an unfaithful bride. In Jeremiah chapter 3, verse 8, he says, And I saw when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery, and I had put her away and given her a bill of divorcement, just using these like terms, yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.

It's a time when the nation is split, and Israel is in the north, and being ruled by a king in Samaria, and Judah in the south is being ruled from Jerusalem. Judah generally more faithful. Israel gone after idolatry.

[34 : 23] And he says, And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom that she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and with sticks. What does that mean? It means that they had a relationship of unity with God, and then outside of that unity, they went and unified in unfaithfulness in another relationship following false gods.

He says, it's the same. It's like you've committed adultery. Jesus would say in Matthew 19, Have you not read that he which made them from the beginning made them male and female? And for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they too shall be one flesh.

It means God looks at marriage, marriage between a man and a woman, and he says that's something brand new. That's a whole new created thing. They are now one flesh. Cleave doesn't just mean like, oh, we hang out. Oh, no, we don't hang out.

Cleave means something joined together that cannot be separated again. It's two things that become unified in a way there's no way to create separation again. Yeah. 1 Corinthians 6, verse 18 says, Flee fornication.

Every sin that a man does is without the body, but he that commits fornication sins against his own body. Fornication covers the whole gambit of idolatry to any type of immorality in that way.

[35 : 39] As a society, how can we expect our children to honor their father and their mother? As we just read, honor your father and mother. We looked last week in Ephesians 6.

Children obey your parents and honor your father and mother. How can a society expect children to honor their father and mother if fathers and mothers don't honor each other within marriage?

How can we say to our kids, oh, honor your father and mother? But hey, I'm not gonna. Any society that cannot honor marriage cannot honor God.

There's no way around it. You cannot honor God and not honor marriage. From the beginning, he made it so. Right? We've looked at that before. We can't keep God's commands in one area and make up for another area we're not.

A society's commitments and covenants, they all find their foundation in marriage. Marriage is the first commitment, the first covenant.

[36 : 39] All of a society's commitments and covenants, they go back to that place of marriage. If marriage is not there at the foundation, then all the rest are gonna unravel and they're all gonna fall apart. We know the law is for the lawless.

Paul tells us that. Hey, the law, it's lawful if you, it's good if you use it lawfully, which it's for the ungodly. It's for the lawless. Well, a commitment made in love and kept in love should not be held together by law.

Marriages should not be held together. Well, yeah, I mean, I don't express love to that person anymore. I don't treat that person with love, but we're married. We're still together. It's a commitment made in love.

It's a commitment made in faithfulness. And it should not need to be held together by law. That's when Jesus says to the Pharisees, for the hardness of your heart, God gave you a bill of divorcement. For the sake of that poor spouse, because your heart's so stinking hard that you don't want to live with them in love anymore.

Yeah, for the hardness of your heart and for this mercy on that person, God allowed you to be divorced. But man, we shouldn't trust the law to hold together a commitment made in love. Thou shalt not kill.

[37 : 42] Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal, in verse 15. Steal means to carry away by stealth and deception.

That which clearly belongs to another. To carry away by stealth and deception. Something that clearly belongs to someone else, without their consent, right?

A lot of good movies have been made about that. Oh, you know, the thief who sneaks in and steals stuff. And it's like, but it's, God says you should not do that. Don't carry away something that clearly belongs to another, without their consent.

Why? Well, because to steal something from a person is to rob from a man his autonomy over his own moral decisions. I have, before God, his autonomous moral being, I have autonomy.

I have individual choice over my own moral decisions. It's my, if I want to take this and throw it out, I can do that. You can not say, stop. You're not allowed to do that. I know better.

[38 : 44] Because now what you've done, you've robbed from me. What even God allows me to have. God doesn't stop me from making the dumbest of choices. He's there with me.

He says, my grace is sufficient. I'm still with you. I love you. I'm calling you. Now there's many decisions and things as a loving father, right? That he will step in and stop us. We have a different relationship now.

Now that we've unified with him. Now that we've chosen by faith to follow him, we know that, hey, as a loving father, he's going to chasten or chastise those that he loves, those who are disobedient. So yeah, God will step in many times now.

Say, but he doesn't force me. Excuse me, force me to follow him by faith. All decisions we make regarding our possessions, they're immoral.

There's no amoral decisions. Every decision we make with our possessions, they're moral ones. They stem from what is appropriate, what ought to be, what is not. God created us as individuals who must each determine our own course.

[39 : 43] You have to determine your own course. I have to determine my own course. As God gives the law to Israel at the mountain, he's saying you have to determine your own course. You're not slaves. You're not my slave now that, well, you're Egypt's slaves, now you're Yahweh's slave.

No, we have the option under the New Testament to be bond slaves, to give ourselves. But God's not going to take. And I say, well, you're now my slaves. No, you have to determine your own course. It cannot be determined for us.

Even when I feel there's better use for what belongs to you. Right? Many times, a thief just feels that what's yours would be much better as mine.

I could use it so much better than you do. Right? Well, don't we do that in each other's lives? We overstep our bounds because, well, I feel you should live this way. It'd be much better.

And I'm robbing you of something. I'm robbing you from a decision that you need to make. Malachi 3, God is speaking of giving to Israel and the fact that they wouldn't bring what was essentially owed to God in a covenant relationship with him nationally.

[40 : 48] But he likens it to that thieving. He says, will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed me. But you say, well, how have we robbed you? In tithes and offerings, you are cursed with a curse for you've robbed me, even this whole nation.

Why didn't God just stop him? Why didn't God say, uh, no, you're not gonna take what's mine.

Sorry. Why didn't he stop him? Because not even God will step in and take from someone what is rightfully theirs.

Paul, in the New Testament parallel, speaking on giving, he says in 2 Corinthians 9, every man according as he's purposed in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly or of necessity.

This is, God loves a cheerful giver. He's saying, hey, guess what? God doesn't want it if you're giving it because you feel you have to, because the law. Oh, no, no, just, if it's from your heart, if it's purposed in your heart, if it's something you willingly choose, if you, as an autonomous moral being, make a moral choice to use yours in whatever way you choose to, great.

So these three commands, they tell us to honor life of the individual, honor the marriage of the individual, and to honor ownership of the individual as God establishes here for these people.

[42 : 10] And again, like we talked about when we looked at our Declaration of Independence, where we hold these truths to be self-evident.

We don't hold them selfishly. We don't hold them for ourselves. As God is saying, yes, you are to focus on the individual, but not your own individuality.

It's for the sake of another. Honor the life of the individual, honor the marriage of the individual, and honor the ownership of the individual. God is commanding Israel not to do what their sin natures would naturally be inclined to do.

Thou shalt not do what you are naturally inclined to do, which is what? To take from for myself.

Take from someone else. And we would be inclined to do these things if not for the boundaries and commands of God.

So God's boundaries and commands say, no, you're not going to do that. And they hold us accountable. Turn over to Matthew 5. We'll close there. You know, in going through the Old Testament, we say it all the time, we cannot look at the Old Testament without looking at it with the New Testament in view.

[43 : 20] Have to have the lens of the New Testament, shining light on the Old Testament. This would have been one of those times you wish you could have been there when Jesus was talking to watch all the mouths drop.

Matthew chapter 5, we're going to pick up in verse 17. Jesus says, do not think that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. Why would he say that?

Well, it probably looked like it because he seemed to be at odds all the time with those that represented the law and prophets, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the religious rulers. Well, this guy must be coming to destroy the law. He said, I didn't come to destroy the law of the prophets.

I am not come to destroy. That means to dissolve or overthrow. I'm not coming to do away with the law. I'm not coming to overthrow it, but to fulfill. And that word fulfill there means to render it complete. For truly I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle, which would be little marks used in the Hebraic language, that mark emphasis, one jot or one tittle shall no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.

That word fulfilled in the Greek means come into existence, to be done, to be finished. It is finished. I like that. Jesus said, I came to render the law complete and it's not going to be set aside until all be fulfilled.

[44 : 43] All, as we're reading Revelation, as he's wrapping things up, all come into existence, all be done, all be finished. For whosoever therefore shall break, literally to let loose, to untie it, to let it go, one of these least commandments and shall teach men so, hey, you can let that one go.

It's all right. We're not, that's so archaic. I mean, nobody gets married anymore. They just live together. Just be committed in love. It's okay. God doesn't mind. Let that one go. Well, Jesus says, hey, if you teach men so, you shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. But whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. And this is where I think all their mouths went, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, Jesus, we were hoping if we follow you, you'll make us really, really, really righteous, even better than the scribes and Pharisees. And then we can sit with you in your kingdom. And I mean, these are the guys who keep the law. These are the guys who, they don't break the Sabbath. I mean, they won't, they won't even go next door to take, you know, their sick neighbor some soup or something if it like breaks the law. [45 : 56] But all of their righteousness was what? External. It was all outward. Hey, your righteousness, it needs to be more than outward. Your righteousness to be great in the kingdom, it has to exceed that which is only outward.

External, it's gotta be something else. So members of the kingdom, Jesus says, man, they're equipped to do. In the kingdom, don't just hear it. Don't just say it. Do it. But they're expected then to teach that. If you're in the kingdom, man, teach it. And they have an exceeding righteousness.

They are exceeding righteous. Not just, like the scribes and Pharisees who don't do it, they don't teach it, but they want the look of it, right? That we have a form of godliness or they have a form of godliness and deny the power.

But how do we do that? How am I equipped to do? How am I expected to teach and how do I have exceeding righteous? Because as Jesus said, I came to fulfill the law.

[46 : 59] The law has been fulfilled. Because of that, this happens. Oh, no man anything but to love one another. For loves, for he that loves another has fulfilled the law.

Jesus fulfilled the law through what type of love? A sacrificial love. A love that looked on you and said, I'm going to establish you and your right and your righteousness and your right and your right. I'm not going to, I'm going to let mine go. The law was fulfilled by love and we are now equipped by love in Christ. That's the difference. Look at verse 21. This is the second time their mouth fell open. You have heard that it was said, that word means commanded. So you've been commanded of them in old times, from the beginning. From the beginning, you've all known this command as we're reading about it in Exodus 20. You shall not kill.

Don't murder. And whoever will kill shall be in danger of the judgment. They're all sitting there except maybe one guy who was just, you know, like, oh no, I did murder someone. But they're all sitting there going, yeah, yeah, we don't murder. We're good. Okay.

[47 : 56] Whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. Judgment there is a sentence of separation. It's that which is judged separate from righteousness. You will be in danger of being judged separate from righteousness.

That what you did is not righteous and it's been separated out. And I say, this is a different word for say, where he says, you've heard that it was said in verse 21, that's commanded.

Jesus just says, logos. I speak. But I just speak this unto you. Isn't that great? Jesus didn't say, but I command this unto you. He said, I'm just, I'm just speaking this unto you.

I'm just telling you guys this. That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause. That means a just and righteous cause. Not, oh, I got a just and righteous cause. You won't believe what he did to me.

No, that's not a just and righteous cause. Just and righteous. In other words, that has broken a law and needs to be held accountable to the law. He says, if you're angry without someone without a just and righteous cause, well, then he shall be in danger of the judgment.

[48 : 56] Separation. And whosoever shall say to his brother, raka. Raka, what does that mean? What is in the Greek like raka, paper, scissor, shoot? Raka, it means empty, senseless.

If I said to you, raka, you are raka, it'd be like saying you have no worth. You have no value. It's just like, almost like, I guess the equivalent would be like, spitting on the ground at someone, you know, and just like, that's what I think of you.

It's very slanderous. What does raka do? It robs from a man the worth or value that is intrinsic to himself is saying, you don't have value.

God has given you value? I don't think so. Whoever, whoever then says to his brother, raka, shall be in danger of the counsel. That means the, that to whom you're accountable, shall be in danger of the accountability.

But whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hellfire. Shall be in danger of eternal separation from God. Not just a separation, but an eternal separation from God.

[49 : 53] By saying, you fool. Yeah. Psalm 14, verse one says, the fool has said in his heart, there is no God. So by saying someone's a fool, you're saying you're godless. You're without God. You're essentially saying you're not even worth God's time.

You're not. You're not even worth God's time. Man, whoever says that would be in danger. Eternal separation. Verse 27, you've heard that it was said of them of old time, it was commanded of them from the beginning, that you shall not commit adultery.

I haven't done that. But I say unto you, whoever looks, the word looks means to see, to discern, to direct the thoughts or minds towards. Whoever looks on a woman, uh-oh, if I see, direct my mind or thoughts towards a woman, no, no, no.

There's plenty of women you'll see. To lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. Look with lust is to look with the purpose and intent to keep one's heart turned towards.

That's what he's saying. You are looking with the purpose and intent to keep your heart turned towards. Whoever does that, committed adultery. That indicates the deed is present. It's already been done.

[51 : 01] It's over. It's too late at that point. It is a present situation and circumstance has committed adultery. Jesus here declares the reality that a man will be judged on his condition, not his actions.

Proverbs 4, 23, says, keep your heart, guard your heart, encompass your heart with all diligence for out of it come the issues of life. You come out. Reality is that who we are is based on our condition, our actions.

Jesus would say in Luke 6, 45, a good man out of the good treasurer's heart, he brings forth that which is good and an evil man brings forth that which is evil. Well, that's kind of obvious, right? Well, then what does he say? Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.

Sin affects who we are. The condition of the inner man of the heart. It affects who we are and who we are affects what we do. The inner man of the heart is sin. That affects then what I do.

Sin on the inside will lead to sin on the outside. But even if it doesn't, even if the adultery, the murder, and the thieving on the inside doesn't lead to a condition on the outside, does not change who I am on the inside.

[52 : 14] That's what Jesus is pointing out. He says, well, I haven't done any of those things. Yeah, but who are you on the inside? Maybe the inside won't result in the external action, but it doesn't change who I am on the outside.

I mean, on the inside. It affects the inner man. A changed heart, put this one up there, can and will drastically affect our behavior, but our behavior can never affect a change to our heart, who we are. My external behavior never affect who I am in here. Jesus says, you have heard that it was said, it was commanded from the beginning, don't do these things.

Don't act in ways that are not loving. But that's not going to change whether I am loving or not. I still find what? The law brings conviction and accountability, but that's good because it brings me to a righteous God who loves me.

And then in verse 29, he says, and if you're right, I offend you. Pluck it out! And cast it from you, for it's profitable for you that one of your members should perish and not your whole body should be cast into hell.

[53 : 20] Profitability through subtraction? I thought profit always means add. No, it's more profit for you to subtract. And if your right hand offends you, cut it off and cast it from you, for it's profitable for you that one of your members should perish and not your whole body should be cast into hell.

Better to enter into life maimed than hell and destruction whole. Is Jesus now contradicting this and saying that, well, we can change our heart throughout our deeds? Oh, okay, if you're doing that, don't do it anymore so you can get into heaven.

Not at all. I think all he's saying is that whatever is pulling at the desires of our heart needs to be drastically determined and drastically dealt with. Right? What is it?

If I look at what's external in my life, what heart is it reflecting? I mean, I have a new heart in Christ. Is that the heart that's coming out? One that's in love? Or am I trying by law to look good, to feel good, to keep good things because inside there's nothing good?

Maybe that's coming out. Because instead of pursuing by love, the law of love, the one that looks to you and says, what can I do on your behalf?

[54 : 29] Oh, I'm catering to the flesh. And I need to cut that off. Because the flesh, all it's doing is allowing me to externalize the wickedness that's in here. Ezekiel 36.

Wonderful promise we have. Beginning of verse 26. A new heart also will I give you. Thank you, Jesus. And a new spirit will I put within you and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you a new heart of flesh.

Stony heart of flesh or stony heart just means a dead heart. Heart of flesh, one that's alive. And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and you shall keep my judgments and do them.

Phew. Thank you, Lord. He will put a spirit within me that I may do them, that I may keep them. But it all starts in here. I can't externalize before I internalize.

I have to first receive so that I have something to give. The heart, as we've said, must be led.

However, only a new heart of the spirit can then be led into the things of the spirit.

[55 : 36] Right? The heart must be led but I can't lead it into the things of the spirit because I don't have access to them unless God gives me a new heart. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal.

The law is spiritual. I recognize that. And the spiritual law simply allows me to judge whether my heart is also spiritual. How do we use the law today? We judge whether we have a spiritual heart based on the law.

Right? Oh, I'm robbing you of, I called, I said, no, I was really just rock paper. I called you fool.

Oh, I'm robbing you in my heart. Now, that may never externalize. Hi, brother. How you doing? You know, that may never come out but in my heart, I've robbed you. I need a new heart.

I need a new heart that allows me then to be able to look at God's law and say, yes, the law is spiritual. My heart is spiritual. I'm following that which is spiritual. So how do I know what is leading my heart? How do I know the direction it's going?

[56 : 40] Philippians 2, verse 5, let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. It can't be my mind. It can't be my actions. It can't be my, you know, I'm an autonomous moral being.

I will decide to do what's right but I'm not right. So every decision I make is going to come out of a heart that is not right even if externally it looks good as the Pharisees did. Jesus says, yeah, but what's in your heart? The problem is you need a transplant, a heart transplant, a mind transplant. If we continue reading in Philippians, it says, who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God. What does that mean? I mean, he wasn't looking at his position with God as something to take for himself.

He didn't think of robbery to be equal with God. I got my rights, Jesus said. I'm God. If God doesn't have rights. But he made himself of no reputation. Brought himself, said, no, I'm not going to use my reputation as God for myself.

And took upon him the form of a servant. Can you imagine God becoming a servant? Oh, and then he became made in the likeness of man. That's pretty low.

[57 : 46] Instead of owning his own rights, he said, no, I'm going to set aside my right as God, my reputation. I'm going to become a servant. I'm going to become a man. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death.

No man took his life. You don't get much lower than that. Being despised by humanity, but to death. And then the death of the cross. The lowest form, death. Let that mind be in me.

God, you want me to do that? Yeah. Sin seeks to consume. Love seeks to fulfill. Sin seeks to consume by taking what rightfully belongs to another so that I can feel fulfilled.

Where love seeks to take what is rightfully mine and give it in fulfillment to another. Remarkably, I can spend my whole life seeking to fulfill this life and it will cost everybody I know as I suck as much life out of them as I can.

And I'll never be fulfilled and I'll never have life. But I can take this one life God gave me and if I give it away, it can touch hundreds and thousands, who knows how many people.

[58 : 53] Jesus had one life and it touched everybody. Gave it away. He didn't hold on to his rights. Sin will take, but love adds.

Love seeks to take what is rightfully mine and give it to fulfill another. Jesus' heart was to use what he had to produce life in others. Our highest nobility, the highest nobility of man is when he seeks to take what is his right and give it on behalf of making another right.

I want to take what is rightfully mine and give it on behalf of making others righteous on behalf of making another right. So we have no right here to end life in Exodus 20, but I have a right to give life.

We have no right to unfaithfulness, but I have a right to be faithful. And we have no right to another's rights. I have no right to your rights, but I do have a right to give mine as Jesus did.

Father, thank you for your word, Lord, how it speaks to us so remarkably clear. Lord, Lord, I think we just took a lot of words and a long way around the barn, Lord, just to say that you're right.

[60 : 18] We're wrong, and yet you loved us so much you stepped into our wrongness to make us right. How wonderful to know, Lord, that I don't have to try to look right and to be right outwardly.

I can be right in my heart because you've given me a new heart. And Lord, you don't judge me based on my actions. You judge me based on who I am. And God, I want to be great in your kingdom, and I want to do what you tell me to do.

I want to teach how to do that, and I want to be faithful, to be exceedingly righteous, not in who I am in myself or my actions, but because of the one who gave all of his rights for me.

So, Lord, would you please work in our hearts? Lord, as we sit here now, Lord, we could do an altar call, say, if that's you, raise your hands if you need, between me, made right, if you've never been put right with God, if all of your righteousness is external, if you know in your heart there's adultery, there's murder, there's unfaithfulness, and there's robbing others of what is rightfully theirs, man, then you just come on down.

Or we could say, if you know Christ, but you find yourself in a place where what's coming out of your life isn't the life you want to come out, it's not love. Maybe you need to go back to God's word, to his commands, and let them shine in your life, bring conviction, bring accountability, he'll never bring condemnation.

[61 : 52] And then respond to that in faith and belief and say, yes, God, I believe all these good things that you want to work out in my life can be done as I focus on you, not as I focus upon my problems, my situation.

Lord, we could do all that. But you know what? We just spent all this time talking about how the work is inward. It doesn't matter what the outward looks like. I could come walking to the front and be just as bad off on the inside.

So the work needs to be on the inside. And as we sit here now and as we pray, Lord, as we respond to the conviction of your spirit, Lord, we want the work to be on the inside. We want the life to be on the inside.

We want the Holy Spirit to bring that new heart, that new birth to bear upon us on the inside so that we can truly then live out the goodness that's found in your commands.

Lord, you know where we're each at. And I pray that each heart, Lord, here, that we would make a choice inwardly and say, yes, yes, we will receive, Lord, what you have for us and then we will choose to give away what we have.

[63 : 04] Lord, you won't take it. You won't strong arm us. You won't force us. You're so gracious to wait for us. May this be the morning, Lord, where we look to you instead of looking to the law, where we look to you instead of looking to ourselves.

We pray that your perfect law of love would work out through our lives. In Jesus' name, amen.