

Series: 1 John
Title: God's Commandment
Text: 1 John 3: 23
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“Commandments”—what do you think of when you hear that word?

Sadly, we are prone to immediately think of the ten commandments when we hear the word. But God's commandments to those who know themselves to be truly needy sinners are not the ten commandments nor the 613 commandments given at Mt Sinai. “God's Commandment” is one commandment which God's Prophet effectually brings each one he has redeemed to obey.

1 John 3: 23: And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

Subject: God's Commandment

Proposition: The commandment of God which every believer is under is faith in Christ and love for brethren, given by God's Son, Jesus Christ.

NOT THE LAW AT SINAI

1 John 3: 23: And this is his commandment...

Notice this is one commandment. God does not give the believer the ten commandments nor the full 613 commandments given at Sinai.

In other places John refers to it as “*commandments*”—*plural*. But here it is one “commandment”—*singular*. John Gill said, “*They are inseparable; where the one is, the other is.*” We cannot love one another without faith in Christ, nor can we truly believe in him without love. They each are performed in union with, and through, the other.

But the ten commandments were given to declare us guilty. God showed us at Mt Sinai that he gave that law to reveal our sin and drive us to Christ. God had the children of Israel sanctify themselves. Then God showed himself to be unapproachably holy to a sinner that attempts to justify or sanctify himself by the works of the law

Exodus 20: 18: all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw *it*, they removed, and stood afar off.

The Holy scriptures tell us what that meant.

Hebrews 12: 19:...they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: 20: (For they could not endure that which was commanded,...

They *could not endure*, could not *bear*, *could not keep* the commandments. When lawmongers came insisting the Gentile believers *must be circumcised and keep the law or they could not be saved*, Peter said—

Acts 15: 7:...God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. 8: And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy

Ghost, even as *he did* unto us; 9: And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. 10: Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, [listen] which neither our fathers nor we were able to BEAR? 11: But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

Why did he say “*our fathers nor we?*” Why not include the Gentiles? Most are never taught that the ten commandments and the law of Mt Sinai, was only given to Moses and the children of Israel. Gentiles—you and I—who live outside Israel, were never under the law given at Mt Sinai to begin with.

Deuteronomy 5: 2: The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. 3: The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day.

Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob were not under the law at Sinai. The law came 430 years after Abraham. Likewise, after Christ put an end to the law, none of God’s elect were under the law at Mt Sinai because the veil in the temple rent in two. Then what curse are we redeemed from? The curse of the law from which Christ redeemed his elect who lived *before Sinai and after Christ’s earthly ministry* is the curse of the law we broke in the garden in Adam. It was God’s elect Jews, and a few elect Gentiles among the children of Israel, that Christ redeemed from the law at Sinai, as well as from the law in the garden.

Another reason that God commandment is not the law at Sinai is because all had already broken it when he gave it. Obedience to the ten commandments requires perfect righteousness in heart and deed, with no sin. An unregenerate sinner cannot do this nor a regenerated believer. A believer still has a sin nature that mixes sin with all we do.

Romans 10: 5: For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

James 2:10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

Therefore, Paul told believers.

Galatians 3: 10:...Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

The law cannot justify or sanctify a sinner (Rom 3:20; Gal 3: 2-3) The law cannot give believers assurance or comfort or motivation (Rom 7: 18-23; 2 Cor 5:14)

THE PROPHET

1 John 3: 23: And this is [God’s] commandment...as he [his Son Jesus Christ] gave us commandment

The law at Sinai is not God’s commandment to believers because God gives his commandment through his Son, Christ Jesus, the Prophet. God said to the children of Israel through Moses,

Deuteronomy 18: 16: According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. 17: And the LORD said unto me, They have well *spoken that* which they have spoken.

God said we do well when we confess that we cannot obey the commandments given at Sinai. God agrees that no sinner should attempt to meet him by the works of the law, without a Mediator. Else we shall die under God's just justice.

Deuteronomy 18: 18: I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall COMMAND him. 19: And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever will not hearken unto MY WORDS which HE SHALL SPEAK IN MY NAME, I will require *it* of him.

Christ Jesus is that Prophet—*"Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."* (Jn 1:45)

Once, I preached a message from John 10 on *"I am the good Shepherd."* I titled it "The Pastor who is God." The word Shepherd means pastor. Christ our God is the Prophet of his church: *"the Shepherd [pastor] and Bishop of our souls."* (1 Pet 2:25)—*"The Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house."* (Heb 3: 1-2)

Christ is a Prophet like Moses, how? Moses said to the children of Israel—*Deuteronomy 5:5: (I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to shew you the word of the LORD: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount;)* Christ stands between God and his people to give us God's commandment. Christ said,

John 12: 49: For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me A COMMANDMENT, what I should say, and what I should speak. 50: And I know that HIS COMMANDMENT is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

Notice, Christ said God gave him a commandment to give to his elect. Not multiple commandments, a commandment. Christ says *"God's commandment is life everlasting!"* Paul said the ten commandments *"written and engraven in stones"* is *"the ministration of death"* (2 Cor 3:7). God said we do well to confess that we cannot obey the commandments given at Sinai. God said Christ his Prophet gives *his one commandment!* Christ says *his commandment is life everlasting* because Christ gives his people the ability to keep this commandment—*John 1: 17: For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*

GOD'S COMMANDMENT

1 John 3: 23:...That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another.

This is God's commandment given through Christ our Prophet. Christ our Prophet commands his disciples to believe on him.

John 6:29:...This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

John 7: 37: In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38: He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water....40: Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet.

Christ our Prophet commands his disciples to love one another as he loved us.

John 13: 34: A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35: By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Is that Christ's command or God the Father's? They are one! After giving it, Christ said,

John 15:15: Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

Faith and love is the light and easy yoke Christ gives the believer. It would not be called a light and easy yoke if it were the ten commandments. They were never light and easy to anyone due to our sin.

Also, remember, faith and love are not of us but they are the gift of God. Christ gives those he redeemed the Holy Spirit and he gives us a new heart to hear Christ's command effectually.

“Reach forth thy withered hand!” “Lazarus come forth!”

By Christ's command, we love Christ and obey his commandment—*believing on him and loving our brethren*. Christ said that...

John 14:23: Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

We do the first part by the second part—by Christ and the Father making their abode in us. That is what John declares in our text:

1 John 3: 24: And he that keepeth his commandments [here is how he does] dwelleth in [Christ], and [Christ] in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

BELIEVING ON CHRIST

What is believing on Christ? Believing is relying entirely upon Christ himself for eternal life. It is not believing a system of doctrine, not facts about him, not walking the “Roman Road”, nor trusting in religious acts. **FAITH IS CASTING ALL OUR CARE ON THE SON OF GOD, JESUS CHRIST FOR ALL!**

Faith is *“That we should believe on the name of his Son”* (Isaiah 9:6; Romans 9:5; 1 Timothy 3:16). We do not believe until we rely upon him as our sovereign God; none can worship a god or a savior that is not sovereign God. Jesus is our sovereign God!

Faith is *“That we should believe on the name of his Son, Jesus [Savior]”*—a savior does *all* the saving; we only believe he is our Savior when we rely on him to do *all* the saving beginning to end, to be *all* our acceptance with God, our successful Savior—*“his name shall be called Jesus for he shall save his people from our sins.”*

Faith is *“That we should believe on the name of his Son, Jesus Christ...he is God's ordained, anointed, sent One. Of God Christ is made unto us Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption.*

Nothing must be put between the sinner and Christ before the sinner can believe on him. Sinner, stop looking at whether you *know enough doctrine or have enough conviction of sin*. Whatever you add to Christ entirely takes the place of Christ. Believing is *knowing him and being persuaded that he is able to keep that which you have committed unto him until that day he brings you home.*

LOVING ONE ANOTHER

“Loving one another”—is what all who are born of God do because God who is love abides in us so that we abide in love. Therefore, we love God our Father, Christ his Son, and all who are born of him.

The law of faith and love—is the holy commandment God writes on our hearts in the new birth so that we *walk by faith which works by love*.

1 Timothy 1: 5: Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned. 6: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; 7: Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

Notice what Paul told Timothy. The moment a preacher turns believers back to law, he swerves from THE COMMANDMENT back to law and no longer walks in truth. When Paul saw someone do that he said, *Galatians 2: 14: when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, ...*

This love is not natural but supernatural. It is given of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 13: 1: Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2: And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3: And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. 4: Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5: Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; 6: Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; 7: Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. 8: Charity never faileth:...

THE BELIEVER'S RULE OF LIFE

What about the ten commandments? God says through faith in Christ, we have established the whole law of God. (Rom 3:31) Jesus Christ frees us from the law in every way, from the curse of the law covenant of the law, constraint of the law and commitment to the law

When we trust Christ, we fulfill the purpose for which God gave the law (Galatians 3:24-25; Romans 3:31; 8:4; John 6:29)--“*For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*” (Ro 10:4)

What is our rule of life? Believers live by the faithfulness of Christ who lives in us “*For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*” (Php 2:13) *Walk by faith which works by love constrained by the love of Christ!*

After Christ fulfilled the law, the apostles no longer lived as did the Jews. When Peter erred, Paul said, “*If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?*” The true apostles and elders wrote concerning the law-mongers that came telling Gentile believers they must be circumcised and keep the law,

Acts 15: 24:...certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, *Ye must* be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no *such* commandment:...

They walked by faith, loving their brethren by Christ's love for them. But to turn back to law is to *frustrate the grace of God and to frustrate God's grace is to count the blood of Christ vanity.*

When lawmongers hear this they make drastic leaps, "*So then you are free to live however you want?*" If I could live however I want then I would not sin; but I do. Therefore, being *under grace—under Christ's rule of faith which worketh by love--having Christ lead me by his faithfulness, is how I want to live.*

They cry "Antinomian!" But those who teach believers are still under the law of Sinai are antinomians—unruly—against the rule of Christ our Prophet.

Titus 1: 10: For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: 11: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

But believer, avoid striving with lawmongers about our freedom from the law.

Titus 3:9: But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. 10: A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; 11: Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

Believing on Christ, uniting with our brethren under the gospel of Christ, doing whatever is necessary to help our brethren continue under the gospel, that is loving our brethren.

Galatians 6: 14: But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. 15: For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. 16: And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

Now hear God. He said if any man will not hearken to his Prophet speaking his commandment, he said, "I will require it of him!" "*This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as [His Propeht] gave us commandment.*" May Christ command us effectually making us believe on him and love one another.

Amen!