

Sunday AM

Exodus #54

“God’s Holiness Demands Our Holiness”

Exodus 22:16-31

June 16, 2019

Intro:

You’re working at your computer and you need to download an app in order to do something you are trying to do. You click the box and this thing pops up and ask you if you, “Agree to the terms of the license?” Have you *ever* read through that? If you’ve tried, you didn’t get far. There is this long, small-type, single spaced document filled with legalize. So, whenever it pops up you say, “Sure” and you click agree and move on. You don’t know what it says or what it means but it’s what they require so sure, why not? I’m afraid often that is our response to the law of God. Whenever it “pops up” in our reading we say, “Oh, sure, whatever” and we move on. “I’m not sure what it says and I don’t understand all that is behind it but it’s God’s law and you can’t change that, so okay - click - I agree.” How different that is from the psalmist, “I love your law O God. I run in the way of your law when you enlarge my heart.” The law of God is not arbitrary. It is not a technicality. It is good and holy and necessary. The law reveals the character of God and shows us the path of righteousness. The law causes us to confront our sin revealing our need of a Savior and teaches us how to live in a way that is pleasing in the sight of God. Too many of us have a truncated view of law and grace. Law is harsh, restrictive and condemning while grace is loving and life-giving. No, law and grace run together throughout the Scripture, two-sides of a single coin. Grace only makes sense in light of the law. Law reveals our need of grace. As God handed down his law he, at the same time, extended his grace. Law and grace are necessary if we are to live lives pleasing in his sight. Our text this morning is found in the 22nd chapter of Exodus.

Text: Exodus 22:16-31

Moses has entered the thick darkness where God was in order to receive the law on behalf of God’s people. Moses had been chosen by God to be Israel’s mediator, her representative. The people of God drew back in fear and pleaded, “Moses, you speak and we will listen but don’t let God speak to us anymore lest we die.” Moses is up on the mountain with God taking a crash course in divine law. We are looking at that section known as The Book of the Covenant - 21:3-23:3. Here we find a set of rules or guidelines for applying to the law of God to everyday life. The subjects covered are diverse and comprehensive. This particular section deals with sexual ethics, religious observance, financial dealings with the poor and oppressed and loving/serving God exclusively.

At first glance the subjects covered in this section seem to be disjointed and disorganized. It seems a laundry list of things with little or nothing in common. I remember a preaching professor at seminary suggesting that we stand at least 20 minutes a day reading the dictionary. I

turned to the person next to me and said, "I've tried that but I can't follow the story line." The law is about the holiness of God. The law is intended to reveal his character and to spur our drive for holiness. The law, having revealed our need of a Savior then becomes the guide for our striving for holiness.

This text serves to remind us that...

Thesis: *Because the law reveals the character of God and establishes the pattern that governs our behavior, every area of our lives and all of our relationships should reflect his holiness.*

The apostle Peter said, "...[because] he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, *You shall be holy, for I am holy* (1 Peter 1:15-16).

The law reveals God's character and teaches us how to reflect his character in all that we are and all that we do. This is how we are to see the law. This is how the law applies to the New Testament believer. The law has not been done away with. The law has not be set aside but rather fulfilled. As the law reflects God's holy character, so our obedience to the law's commands reflects God's holiness.

There are four things I want us to note in this text.

- I. ***Because God is holy, believers strive for lives of sexual purity. (22:16-17)***
- II. ***Because God alone is worthy of our worship, believers strive for purity in worship. (22:18-20)***
- III. ***Because God is compassionate, believers strive to be compassionate in our dealings with others. (22:21-27)***
- IV. ***Because God alone is sovereign, believers strive to honor him by respecting his authority and giving him his due. (22:28-31)***

Conclusion:

The law of God makes it clear, God requires of us a comprehensive holiness. We are to be set apart for his glory. We are to be like him. The whole of our lives reflecting his glory, his holiness, his character. This touches what we do with our bodies, how we worship, our treatment of the poor and the oppressed and how we handle our money. In all things, large and small we are called to be holy because our God is holy. The law of God demands it but only the grace of God can deliver it.