

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS TODAY

“And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.” —EZEKIEL 36:27

Christians live in two different worlds; one in the 21st century where we are often caught up in the currents and crosswinds of modern day culture. We also live in union with Christ, and how these two worlds interconnect is the challenge for us, especially in the area of morality and behaviour. During the last half century, there has probably never been such a phenomenal revolution of ideas as to what is right and what is wrong.

To many people, the Ten Commandments seem old-fashioned and irrelevant to our world today. They are, however, an autobiographical statement by God about God, and were given to Moses in order to reveal to us what God is like. Wonder what God is like? He never steals; He is never greedy, never lies, does not cheat, does not murder, does not covet and does not give false witness. When God said, for instance, “you shall not steal”, the reason is not because stealing isn’t nice, though it isn’t, but because God Himself is not a thief. And God created us to be in His moral image.

The nature of the Gospel is about restoring the moral image of God into human experience, but apart from God, we are incapable. Paul says, “What the law was powerless to do, in that it was weakened by

the sinful nature, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful men to be a sin offering” (Romans 8:3). The law is powerless to change anyone. It can demand what is right, but cannot produce what is right. What the law cannot do, God did by sending His Son; first as our substitute to pay the penalty for our sin, and then to give the gift of the resurrected life of Jesus to indwell us.

When the law says you shall not steal, you do not steal. When the law says you shall not covet, you do not covet, not because we are more disciplined than we were before, but because the righteous requirements of the law are fully met in us by the indwelling Spirit of Christ. The Spirit begins to produce in us something of the character of God that was displayed in Jesus as a man on earth. Instead of a burden imposed on us, the Ten Commandments today become liberating promises as we allow the Holy Spirit to produce in us the righteousness of Christ.

PRAYER: Dear God, thank You for revealing Yourself in the Ten Commandments. I pray for a deeper work of Your Spirit in conforming me to Your likeness.

TO REFLECT UPON: Do I see how the Ten Commandments are as relevant today as they were when given to Moses?