

LESSON 11 | THE BEGINNINGS

WEEK 11: DAY 1

THE THREAD

DISCOVERING THE THREAD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGH THE BIG-PICTURE STORY OF THE BIBLE

“...but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” – Romans 5:8

As we trace the big-picture story of the Bible, we see echoes of the Gospel woven throughout. Nowhere is this more apparent than when we see God giving His people the 10 Commandments (as well as the rest of the Law). We may be tempted to see this as just a bunch of rules. But it's more than that. And understanding this points to the need for a Savior.

God gave His people rules so that they would live out God's character. Following God's commands would separate His people from the surrounding nations that didn't follow God and who did all sorts of awful stuff. And yet, God's people couldn't follow His rules. The sin that had crept into people's hearts with Adam and Eve's fall kept the Israelites from fully obeying God. And because God is perfectly righteous, this failure to obey is sin. And sin deserves death.

Today, memorize Romans 5:8.

But God, in His mercy, sent Jesus to cover the sins of all who would believe in Him. Through faith, we can know forgiveness. Keep this in mind as you read the account of God giving His people His Law this week.

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WEEK 11: DAY 2

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“And God spoke all these words, saying, ‘I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.’” - Exodus 20:1-2

Rules, rules, rules. Everyone loves to hate them. When you see a “Caution: Wet Paint” sign, you want to touch the wall, don’t you? Touching the wall didn’t ever cross your mind until you saw the sign. So, you realize that the sign (or, the rule) showed you where you were messed up. It puts a spotlight on your heart’s desire to do what you want, despite what anyone else says.

Read Exodus 20:1-17.

In this passage, God gives the most famous list of rules ever: the 10 Commandments. When you look at this list, you realize that it serves to highlight our sin. When you know the rules, you realize you’ve broken countless of them. You realize just how much you are in need of help, someone who is better at rule-keeping than you could ever be.

The 10 Commandments show you your sinfulness, which leads to your great need for a Rescuer. In Jesus, you have the Rescuer your heart longs for. Jesus is the only one that has ever lived out the Law given to God’s people. He lived the perfect life that you could not live. He died on the Cross, and it was the death that you deserved to die. He rose again from the dead, defeating death and making a way for us to stand righteous (or blameless) before God.

Something To Think About . . .

- How does the hope that Jesus followed the Law perfectly for you change your life this week?
- Many people have missed the grace of God in rescuing people from trying to work their way to God by keeping rules to earn a relationship with God. Is there someone whom you can share the hope of Jesus with today?

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WEEK 11: DAY 3

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“Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all the rules. And all the people answered with one voice and said, ‘All the words that the Lord has spoken we will do.’” - Exodus 24:3

Weddings are great occasions that are filled with food, fun, and fellowship. And yet, amidst all the fanfare, the guests can lose sight of the importance of the marriage promise. Ultimately, a wedding is not about the festivities but the marriage promises before God and the people.

Read Genesis 24:1-8.

Here you’ll see God making a promise (also called a covenant) with His people. This is a defining moment for the people of Israel. They have heard and understood the rules surrounding this promise, and they have committed to obey God and keep their end of the covenant.

Like many of us, when we make promises, the people of Israel would fail many times in keeping the promises they made to God. That is why God planned from the very beginning to send His Son, Jesus, to be a sacrifice for the people’s failures to follow God. Jesus came as a sacrifice that would forever take away the guilt and penalty for our sins.

When we fail to follow God, like we so often do, we can rest on the fact that our standing before God is based on what Jesus did for us at the Cross, rather than our performance for Him. When we commit to following Jesus, we know that God’s grace is there for us when we fail. It’s the only way we can come into a relationship with God.

Something To Think About. . .

- What are some things that you will not be a part of since you are committed to following God?
- How can you help those around you to see that you have committed yourself to follow Jesus?

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WEEK 11: DAY 4

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They shall make an ark of acacia wood... – Exodus 25:10a

Where is your most special place to go? Where is that place where you have memories that have helped to shape your life? The place where you feel the safest? The place where you can hear from God? Think about this place. If this place is somewhere near you, go to that place now. No, seriously. Go now.

Now, open your Bible and read Exodus 25:10-22.

This is a passage that shows God's commands to His people to make a place where they can hear from God Himself. Since the Israelites moved around a lot awaiting God's promise of a land, God would meet with them, not in a physical location, but around a physical object called the Ark of the Covenant.

The Ark of the Covenant would one day be placed in a Tabernacle, and then the Temple (both locations that you will get to learn about later in Scripture). It was hidden from the eyes of the people and was only approached by the High Priest once a year. The people were also not allowed to touch the Ark of the Covenant because it was holy and set apart for God. This was a very special place. What made it so special is that it was where God would talk to His people (see verse 22).

What if you were to make your own special place where you could seek and hear from God? For many students, one of the challenges with seeking God in prayer is the noise around them. With all the many distractions of your world, there is rarely a time when it is quiet enough for you to hear from God. Finding your own special place is a good first step in blocking out the noise and making room to hear from God.

Something To Think About. . .

- Find a special place in or around your home. Go to that special place and pray that God will speak to you. Consider making this place where you seek God in prayer and devotion every day.
- Take some time today to be silent and pray to God. Turn off the TV, mute the music, and hide your phone in order to truly seek God in prayer.

LESSON 11 | THE BEGINNINGS

WEEK 11: DAY 5

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“But Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, ‘Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it.’” – Numbers 13:30

Is the glass half full or half empty? Have you ever had a friend that saw everything in a negative light? For them, nothing was ever good enough. Friends like this are draining. They can suck the very life out of you. They can take your passion, your excitement, and your energy and run it into the ground. These friends who can't see the good in anything have lost something very important: hope.

Read Numbers 13:1-2 and 26-33.

Notice the two groups of spies are divided into two groups: half-full and half-empty. One group only sees the problems: big people and large city walls. The other group sees the land flowing with milk and honey (v. 27). The half-full group hangs on to the hope that with God, they will be able to overcome all of the obstacles (v. 30).

The difference between these groups is their respective level of trust in God and His promises. Is God big enough to come through for His people? Is God's promise of a Promised Land really true? In this passage, you see that the power to believe and trust the promises of God is what allows you to truly follow God in His plans for you.

So, what about you? Is the glass half full or half empty? Do you trust God and His promises? Is there a path that God is calling you to take? Which group of spies will you be like?

Something To Think About. . .

- What are some promises of God that you need to trust more fully?
- What are the challenges that you see on the path that God may be calling you to take?
- What is the next step of faith you can take today in seeking to walk with God in His plans for your life?