

REMNANT CHURCH SERMON NOTES – ROMANS 3: 19-20
PREACHED ON DECEMBER 21, 2025 BY REV. B.B. ANUM-HIGHER

19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. 20 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.

➤ **INTRODUCTION**

- As we have learned throughout our study on the Book of Romans, the Jews boasted about having the Law of God, they boasted about God giving them the Ten Commandments, and they felt special because of their heritage.
- Paul, however, made a case that the greatest advantage the Jews had was the Word of God that God had given to them for safekeeping. God had entrusted His very words to them, but it didn't make them free to sin and still expect to be spared from God's judgment.
- Every Sunday, we read the Ten Commandments in this church as part of our worship service. The Ten Commandments serve as a guide for righteous living, given by God Himself to the Israelites and believers throughout all time.
- The Ten Commandments are the standard God will use to judge each person on the Day of Judgment. On the Day of Judgment, everybody will stand before God to be judged based on how they kept God's commandments.
- The Ten Commandments are divided into two sections, and we generally refer to them as the two tables of the Law. The first four commandments are the first table, and the last six are the second table. The first table refers to our attitude towards and our relationship with God. It revealed who God is as the all-powerful, eternal God. The second has reference to our attitude towards and our relationship with our fellow men and women.
- Matthew recorded for us an interaction Jesus had with a Pharisee who was a lawyer. He wanted to test Jesus, so he asked Jesus, "**What is the greatest commandment?**" Jesus answered by saying, "**Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important commandment. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commandments**" (**Matthew 22:37–40**). Jesus' answer was a summary of the Ten Commandments.
- For some time now in our study, Paul has been teaching about the Law, specifically the Moral Law of God, also known as the Ten Commandments. Both Father God and Jesus Christ placed the Ten Commandments in a specific order, and I desire to consider with you why they are presented in this particular order. We will briefly examine what each of the Ten Commandments means to us. We will also consider why God gave the Ten Commandments. Lastly, we will look at the role the Ten Commandments play in the life of the believer.

➤ WHY DO WE HAVE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS IN THIS ORDER?

- It is not an accident that God gave us the Ten Commandments in the order we have them. The first table must come before the second. We can only obey the second table if we first commit ourselves to the first table.
- You cannot truly love your neighbors properly without first being in the right relationship with God. The history of the world shows that when we try to solve human relationship problems without addressing our relationship with God, we will always fail. God first, man second.
- We have conflicts in this world among nations, among family members, among friends, and so on, because our society thinks we can ignore the first table and still maintain harmony among people. Counselors and therapists believe we can ignore our relationship with God and still solve human relationship problems. It has never worked, and it will never work because the supreme thing in life is to be in a right relationship with God.

➤ WHAT ARE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS?

❖ The First Table

- We will first consider the first table of the Law. The first table not only reveals who God is as the all-powerful, eternal God, but it also tells us about what God demands from His creatures. What does God demand from His creatures?
- He said, "**You shall have no other gods before Me.**" We are commanded not to regard anybody and anything as God for He alone is the source of all power and authority. This means, we must not consider our husbands, wives, children, parents, leaders, and any other human beings as gods. We must also not regard our job, career, country, favorite sport, political party, possessions, and any other things as God. Immediately, we make anybody or thing our priority and set God aside, we have committed a sin. He has commanded us saying, "**You shall have no other gods before Me.**"
- Secondly, God commanded us, saying, "**You shall make no idols". "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them,**" God commands us not to reduce Him to images because He is a Spirit. We cannot understand how God looks, so it is a grave sin and an insult to use images to represent God.
- Thirdly, God commanded, saying, "**You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.**" God has revealed His name to the Israelites as Yahweh, which means, "I Am Who I Am," and God is saying, "Do not take my name in vain." In the Bible, someone's name tells decisive things about the person. They are not mere labels that help you distinguish one person from another. They are expressions of a person's reality, and God is saying, "Don't take My name, or

anything that My name expresses about who I am, in vain." God is Jealous, Holy, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, Jesus, Word of God, King of kings, Lord of lords, "the Alpha and the Omega," so don't take any aspect of His being, His name, in vain.

- How can someone take God's name in vain? What does in vain mean? In vain means futile, empty, pointless, wasted, no results after you have carried out an activity. An example of taking God's name in vain is giving God empty worship, a worship service that does not involve the heart, but rather formalities and rituals. Jesus, in Matthew 15:8-9, quotes Isaiah 29:13, where God rejects the worship of the Israelites because it is not sincere. Jesus said, **"This people honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."**
- Taking God's name in vain includes words and statements about God, which have been emptied of God's truth and replaced with human opinions. We see preachers quote Scripture, but they often explain it with their own human opinions. We have prosperity preachers engaged in this sin.
- Saying words like "Goddamn!", "Jesus Christ!", "Oh my God!" etc. are all examples of taking God's name in vain. Joining the church, calling yourself a Christian, identifying as a messenger of God, but without a true saving faith, without conversion, without repentance, is another way we take God's name in vain.
- Finally, the fourth commandment, God said, **"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."** What a merciful God! He said I have given you six days to do all your work, but reserve one day for Me. Set aside one day for Me and focus on Me all day; do nothing on that day. Worship Me on that day, think about Me on that day, meditate on My word on that day. It is not a day for family gathering or any activities, but all for the Lord. He said **"Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."**

❖ The Second Table

- After we have established our relationship with God, He also commands us to fix our relationships with others who were created in His image. How do we do that? How do we love our neighbors as ourselves?
- By **"Honoring your father and your mother"**. Our parents are a reflection of our relationship with God. God identifies Himself to the believers as Father. By honoring our parents, we are reminded that God must be honored, glorified, and thanked because He is the Father of fathers.

- Next, God commanded us not to murder. We are not to take the laws into our hands and kill anyone or ourself because we are created in the image of God. This includes not making anyone feel like they are worthless, taking their dignity away from them, or telling them that they are good for nothing, because human beings are made in the image of God. God is commanding us to watch our thoughts and attitudes towards others.
- The seventh commandment is "You shall not commit adultery." God's design for marriage is that a man and a woman shall come together in marriage and become one flesh. God does not want anything to separate this flesh, except for specific reasons such as death. Any attempt to separate this union by lusting after another person is a sin.
- The next commandment is "You shall not steal." Don't take anything from another person that does not belong to you.
- Then the ninth commandment, God said, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." Don't say anything falsely against another person. We are to speak truth and live in honesty.
- Lastly, God wants us to be content with whatever He has given us. He commanded, saying, "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."

➤ **WHY DID GOD GIVE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS?**

- What do we say to these commandments? Who among us here can tell that they have kept all the Ten Commandments perfectly? I am convinced that none of us has kept all of the commandments perfectly. The Israelites who originally received them could not keep them, despite their initial promise to God through Moses that they would. No one had been able to keep them perfectly, no matter how hard they tried. That immediately raises the question: Why, then, did God give the Ten Commandments, the Law?
- God demands that we keep them; He commanded that we keep them, and anyone who fails to keep them is guilty before Him. He will hold anyone who hasn't kept His commandments accountable. For example, He told the Israelites that anyone who broke the third commandment would be held accountable, as He said, "for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain." God is not like men and women who do not take His words seriously. He commands human beings to keep His commandments, and He will hold anyone who takes His name in vain guilty. It is a grave sin to violate any of the Ten Commandments, including taking God's name in vain.
- This means everyone who was born after the Fall, you and me, all of us, is guilty before God. None of us has lived entirely to the glory of God, none of us has loved Him with all of our heart, all of our soul, all of our mind, and all of our strength, and because of that, none of us has been able to love our neighbor as

ourselves. None of us can keep God's commandments. This is the worst problem that every person who has ever lived has faced. We cannot keep God's Law; we are guilty before Him, we are doomed, and His wrath has already been revealed against us because of our sin. Why then did God give the Law when He knew that no one born of a woman could keep them? Let's go to the Scripture, our text for today, for the answer.

- Paul says God gave the Ten Commandments to silence us. He gave the Law so that the proud men and women, you and me, the religious and self-righteous people, will be silenced. They will be silenced because they will know how great their sins are, since they cannot keep God's commandments perfectly. When we realize that we cannot love God perfectly and our neighbors perfectly as God demands, we may become humble, we may become silenced before God because we know that we are guilty. Paul wrote: **"19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God."**
- When we read or hear God's Law and know that we cannot keep them perfectly, regardless of all the good things we do, all the religious activities we engage in, we humbly join the song writer in singing "Not what my hands have done; Can save my guilty soul; Not what my toiling flesh has borne; Can make my spirit whole. Not what I feel or do; Can give me peace with God; Not all my prayers and sighs and tears; Can bear my awful load."
- He gave the Law so that we would know that we are sinners and under the wrath of God, that we are all on our way to hell. What do you do when you know that you are on your way to hell and you hear about a way to heaven, won't you seek the way to heaven or the way of salvation? Well, a majority of people will not, according to Scripture, but a few will, the elect of God, the Seed of the woman, will seek the way of salvation. The only way to heaven, the only way to salvation from God's wrath, is by repenting of our sins and believing in Jesus Christ. So the Law was given to make us see our need for Jesus. The Law was given to lead us to Jesus, who is the only way to heaven. **"12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."** Acts 4:12.
- The Law was never meant to save anyone when it was given, but to show us how terrible we are in sin, to drive us to Jesus Christ for salvation. By God's design, salvation comes only from Jesus Christ, and He promised this in the Garden of Eden, even before the Law was given. After their disobedience, God said to the devil, the serpent, **"15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your Seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."** Paul wrote to the Galatians saying **"19 Why, then, was the law given at all? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was given through angels and entrusted to a mediator."** Galatians 3:19. So the Law was given to lead us to Jesus Christ, the only Savior.

- Also to the Galatians, Paul wrote, "**Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.**" **Galatians 3:24.** The law is a guardian to guide us and lead us to Jesus Christ. As you understand the Law and your inability to keep it, you flee to Jesus Christ for help, for the salvation He offers. You, in humility, join the songwriter in singing "Thy work alone, O Christ, can ease this weight of sin; Thy blood alone, O Lamb of God, Can give me peace within. Thy love to me, O God; Not mine, O Lord to Thee, Can rid me of this dark unrest; And set my spirit free."
- Why is Jesus the only one who can save guilty sinners, everyone after Adam? God has sent Jesus Christ, His only son, from heaven to earth. He took on the likeness of human flesh, and as a man, He kept it absolutely. Jesus is the only Man born of a woman who kept both the first and second tables of the Law perfectly. He was sinless, blameless before God. He did not make any other gods before God. He did not make any idols, any images to represent God. He did not take the name of the Lord in vain. He also did not dishonor His parents nor did He murder, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness, nor covet anything.
- As you repent of your sins and surrender to Jesus by believing in who Jesus Christ is, He credits His obedience to the Law to your account. He imputes His righteousness into your account. As you stand in the court of God, God no longer sees you as someone who violated His Law, but He sees Jesus' righteousness in your account, and He declares you justified. God won't hold your violations against you anymore. This is a one-time event. Justification occurs only once, and it is a declaration that you are not guilty because Christ has paid the penalty for your violations. He has credited His righteousness to your account.
- We are not made righteous, but declared righteous. That is why our nature is not immediately changed when we repent and believe in Jesus. Justification is about our standing before God. God, as the judge, pronounces the sinner as righteous because of the righteousness of His Son. God sees you as someone who has kept His Law perfectly because Christ has paid on your behalf. However, if you reject Jesus, if you reject the way of salvation He has provided, you must answer before God why you did not keep His commandments perfectly.
- Secondly, the Ten Commandments tell us that God can forgive sins, but only through Jesus Christ. God is a just God, that is His character, and He cannot let sin go unpunished. The sinner must receive the wages for their sins. If God does not punish sin, then He is not a just God; however, He is a just God, so He must punish sin, and He has indeed punished sin. Sin comes with a penalty, and either the sinner pays for it, or someone else must pay for it, for God is just. Either Jesus pays it for you, or you pay it yourself. My sins and your sins were punished in Christ, and God therefore can justly forgive me. The Ten Commandments drive you, and they drive me to Christ. You have forgiveness in Him; I have forgiveness in Him and in Him alone as we repent of our sins and believe in Him alone.

➤ THE BELIEVER AND TEN COMMANDMENTS.

- What happens after we have come to Christ? Does our justification and forgiveness give us the liberty to continue to violate God's Law?
- No, when the Law drives us to Jesus Christ for His salvation, the spirit of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, comes to live inside of us and gives us power over sin. The unconverted man and woman are under the power of sin; they are under the dominion and control of sin, and that is the reason why they cannot keep the Ten Commandments. The unbeliever can freely violate God's Law by simply following his or her heart. The heart is where the disobedience of God's Law comes from. The heart of the unbeliever is deceitful above all things and beyond cure, according to Jeremiah 17:9. Jesus also said this about the heart of the man and woman who is unconverted. **"For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander."** Matthew 15:19.
- It is different for the believer because the believer is no longer under the power of sin; the believer is dead to sin. Sin no longer controls them because the Holy Spirit lives inside of them. They have been given a new heart. Paul wrote in **Romans 6: 1-2 "What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?**
- Because we have a new master, Jesus Christ our Lord, because we have a new heart, and because we have the Holy Spirit giving us power, we can now obey God's Law. It works this way: the Law drives us to Jesus Christ for salvation. After we have been saved by Jesus, Jesus now drives us back to the Law because we have the new heart and the power to keep it. We are being sanctified, being changed, being made more like Jesus Christ so that we can keep the Law.
- Sanctification, unlike justification, is a process that takes place throughout our lives. Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit, and it occurs within us. The Holy Spirit continues to change us gradually and steadily, transforming us into more of Jesus Christ. Thus, the Law leads us to Jesus for our salvation, and Jesus now empowers us with the ability to keep the Law.
- The Holy Spirit guides us to become more conscious of our sins. How can you tell if someone is a mature Christian? Becoming a mature believer involves recognizing the severity and multitude of your sins. You will seriously understand the radical nature of sin, which will bring some restraints to you. You will continue to repent each day because the only thing that matters to you is your relationship with God. You will no longer live your life according to the culture of the day or other people's opinions, but according to God. You will war against sin because your fear of the Lord motivates you not to tolerate sin in your thoughts, words, and deeds. You will take delight in the means God has provided for your sanctification, which includes meditating on His words, regular prayer, listening to the truth from faithful preachers, and so on.

➤ APPLICATIONS

- We have heard God speak to us this morning. Where do you stand in light of God's word to us this morning? The word of God tells us that none is righteous, not even one. Paul has proved to us that the religious and nonreligious are equally unrighteous and guilty before God. The scary thing, and the reason I preach the gospel with urgency, is that God's wrath has already been poured out on the unrighteous, the sinner. The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, according to God's word.
- What are you boasting about in your life? Do you consider yourself to be basically a good person? The Bible says, no one is righteous. Your heart and society might tell you that you are a great person, but God's word says you are a terrible sinner. No matter how good people say you are or you think you are, God says none of the good works you do can save you from the wrath of God.
- Do you believe that because God is a loving and merciful God, He will still forgive your sins even if you didn't repent and believe in Jesus Christ, and that there may be a second chance after your death? The Bible says God is a just God. He will punish your sins, and the destiny of the sinner is to spend eternity in hell. There are no second chances for forgiveness after death. You only have the opportunity while you are still alive to fix your relationship with God, because it will be too late someday. Hell is described as a place of regret. The pagan in hell will wish they had responded positively to the gospel. The religious but unconverted people in hell will wish they had not taken God's name in vain by their insincere worship, profession of faith, and false Christianity.
- Why wait and regret later when you can make it right with God while you have life? God has provided a way for anyone to be saved and to attain His righteousness, which is a requirement for heaven. Without holiness, without righteousness, no one will see the Lord.
- The way to heaven is only through Jesus Christ. Every other way leads to destruction. Salvation is found only in Jesus Christ and in Him alone.
- If you are not yet a believer or you are in the church but still unconverted, then know that Scripture commands you to repent and believe, for it will be too late for you someday.
- When you conduct a self-examination, acknowledge your sins and are ready to surrender to Jesus Christ, you must do the same thing the disciples did long ago, and what every true believer has done. They heard the words of Jesus, repented of their sins, and believed in who Jesus is and has done for sinners. They took His words and obeyed them. They confessed their sins to Jesus as their Lord and God. They believed that He died to take the punishment of their sins and rose from the dead to give them new life. They followed His example by living a new life. They began to obey the Ten Commandments after their conversion.
- May the Lord grant us His grace to die well and be received in heaven as people who attained the righteousness of God because of Christ's work for us.