

Sun., April 19

2020 Ten Commandments Series: Set Free to Live Free: The 10 Commandments

Second Series: Love Others

Second Series Memory Verse: "I will always obey your law, for ever and ever. I will walk about in freedom, for I have sought out your precepts." -Psalm 119:43-44

Second Series Text: "The second is like it: You must love your neighbor as you love yourself. All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands." -Matthew 22:39-40

Second Series Scripture: Exodus 20:1-21 and Psalm 16

Message: Live Free: Honor Your Parents

Scripture: Exodus 20:1-12

Blurb: The Fifth Commandments is to "Honor your father and mother." For some, the thought is uplifting. For others, it's devastating. Yet the Bible provides no qualification or exception based on what they've done. It's all about what you do! The path of abundant life includes honoring your parents. This Sunday we'll discover just what this means, and looks like for you!

Welcome: -Pastor David

Christ is risen! **He is risen indeed!**

Memory Verse: -Pastor David

"I will always obey your law, for ever and ever. I will walk about in freedom, for I have sought out your precepts." -Psalm 119:43-44

Worship Music Set: -Sanctify

He Lives

10,000 Reasons

I Love to Hear You Speak

Worship Prayer -Pastor Andrew

Apostles' Creed: "My Version of the Apostles' Creed, by Katelyn Bautch"

"I believe in the great father God, creator of everything.

"Whose son Jesus Christ was born from Mary and the Holy Spirit. He was beat up by Pontius Pilate, murdered and was buried in a tomb. He went into hell for three days. After those three days, He arose and was lifted into heaven. He now sits by God's right hand and will come back to judge all, the living and the dead.

"I believe in the Holy Ghost and the universal church, in talking with other Christians after we die, the forgiveness of all bad that we've done, that our new God-given bodies will be perfect, and that we will have spiritual life forever.

"Amen."

Prayers: “The Lord’s Prayer” -Pastor David

Ecumenical English Version, 1988, and offered for most English speaking Christians

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Offering -Pastor David

Generational Bridge: “Lemuel the Lion” -Pastor Andrew & Vicky

Call to Focus: “Psalm 16:1-2, 5-11” -Pastor David

L: Protect me, God, because I take refuge in you.

P: I say to the Lord, “You are my Lord. Apart from you, I have nothing good.”

L: You, Lord, are my portion, my cup; you control my destiny.

P: The property lines have fallen beautifully for me; yes, I have a lovely home.

L: I will bless the Lord who advises me; even at night I am instructed in the depths of my mind.

P: I always put the Lord in front of me; I will not stumble because He is on my right side.

L: That’s why my heart celebrates and my mood is joyous; yes, my whole body will rest in safety.

P: You won’t abandon my life to the grave; you won’t let your faithful follower see the pit.

L: You teach me the way of life. In your presence is total celebration.

P: Beautiful things are always in your right hand.

Message: 10 Commandments “Live Free: Honor Your Parents”

Set Free to Live Free: The Ten Commandments.

Live Free: Honor Your Parents. Exodus 20:12 “Honor your father and your mother so that your life will be long on the fertile land that the Lord your God is giving you.”

After Easter, we go back to the 10 Commandments. We started this year with a message series on the Ten Commandments. We learned that they’re not a list of rules, something we must obey in order to please God. They are a gift from God, showing us how we can live the path of abundant life that God has planned for His people. God first gave them to the Israelites, after He had freed them from slavery in Egypt. God redeemed them from slavery and death, offered them a covenant of love where He promised to be their God and they promised to be His people, gave them the path of abundant life outlined in the Commandments, and then led them into the Promised Land. The 10 Commandments are not how to please God, but how to please *ourselves*, in the deepest sense: how to have the abundant life that our loving God intends for us.

At Easter we saw how God again acts His mighty work of salvation. And we must keep Mount Sinai as the backdrop for the cross of Calvary. God again shows up, coming to free His people from the slavery of sin and death. He offers us the covenant of life by inviting us to take Jesus as our Passover Lamb, our Lord and Savior: He chooses to redeem us and we commit to be His disciples. Jesus provides the path of life—the way of Jesus—that is built on the very same Ten Commandments as before. And Jesus invites us on this path that leads us into the Promised land of life abundant now and in glory for eternity.

The Ten Commandments are the guideposts along God's path for the Israelites of old and for us today, and these guideposts are what keep us on the path of life.

The last series on the first tablet was challenging, but somewhat predictable. Love God: put God first. No other images. Honor His name and His day. Live only for Him. We understand this, and at least cognitively, we affirm this. But now, in the second tablet of the Ten Commandments—in how to love others—God drills them—meddlingly and intrusively—right into our personal lives.

And, by the way, it was good to stop the Ten Commandment series after the first tablet so that during Lent we could read the road signs that God places in our lives, signs steering us away from paths we prefer, and onto the path of life that God has for us.

You're not going to like me over the next few weeks as we honestly wrestle with God's plan for our lives. So before you throw up your defenses and self-rationalizations: remember, my job is to shove God's truth right in front of your faces! I hope that five weeks from now, we can still be friends, but, friends, I must tell you, it is my obligation not to tell you what you want to hear, but what God has laid out as truth. So, if you are willing to follow the risen Jesus as a disciple—and that means submitting to God's better path—I pray for the Holy Spirit to tenderize our hearts and to open them up, as our normal way of thinking and behaving will be challenged.

We stop and commit again: God's way is my best life! Right? Say that with me: "God's way is my best life!" So, church, are you ready for this? We now go to the second tablet of the Ten Commandments: Love others.

Turn to Exodus 20. We'll read through the Ten Commandments up to the sixth commandment. Verses 1-12, "1 Then God spoke all these words: 2 I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. [I've earned your trust. I have your best interest in mind. First tablet, love God:] 3 You must have no other gods before me. 4 Do not make an idol for yourself—no form whatsoever—of anything in the sky above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. 5 Do not bow down to them or worship them, because I, the Lord your God, am a passionate God. I punish children for their parents' sins even to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me. 6 But I am loyal and gracious to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments. 7 Do not use the Lord your God's name as if it were of no significance; the Lord won't forgive anyone who uses His name that way. 8 Remember the Sabbath day and treat it as holy. 9 Six days you may work and do all your tasks, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. Do not do any work on it—not you, your sons or daughters, your male or female servants, your animals, or the immigrant who is living with you. 11 Because the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and everything that is in them in six days, but rested on the seventh day. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."

Second tablet: Love others. Verse 12, "Honor your father and your mother so that your life will be long on the fertile land that the Lord your God is giving you."

All right. This sounds good on paper—or stone!—but each of us hearing this immediately has flags going up about how our parents are dishonorable. Yes, some of us have great parents. Usually there is someone nearby who has parents that we wish we had! Some of us have been robbed of our parents through death or separation or circumstances. Some of us have parents who are way too close. Some of us have downright miserable relationships with our parents. Some of our parents have been severely manipulative, selfish, abusive—emotionally...physically...sexually, or painfully absent.

You need to hear that this is not what God intended, or wants. And it is unfair and wrong to have to suffer with such parents. God calls parents to be selflessly loving and nurturing. In fact, God presents Himself as our heavenly Father, as the standard for human parents to model.

God also knows that by creating families with parents who are supposed to raise kids, that humans all fail as parents. All of us have parents who have failed. But that is also why God intervenes in our lives, and compensates for our parents' failings. God is our heavenly father, providing all the love and care and forming that our human parents don't provide. Repeatedly in the Psalms, God is called a Father to the fatherless. God also gives the Holy Spirit in us so that we can forgive and extend grace and honor to our parents. *It is not easy.* God knows this. He knows this so well, that He put it right up in the top ten commandments. We must honor our parents.

And, if you notice, the commandment is addressed specifically to children. That means it is for all of us, for all of us have parents. And this means that parents aren't to use this commandment against their children. It is God's direct address to kids; parents: hands off! No guilt trip, here.

Now, there are lots of passages in the Bible about being godly fathers and mothers, men and women of God. But this is not a commandment about parenting. This is specifically addressed to how you and I treat our parents. Remember, this is God telling us how you and I can live best. And the shocking reality is that how we treat our parents dramatically affects our lives. Absorb that. We live in a culture where we frame everything by what happens *to us*. We could spend volumes, shelves, book stacks, libraries!, talking about how the behaviors of our parents affect us. This we call Freudian psychology. But God's main path of life focuses not on what happens *to us*, but what we happen—do—to *others*. Here is the path of life. God shifts our focus off of us as victims and instead on to our agency.

Now, let me stop for a moment and clarify that this in no way validates or even in any way calls us to tolerate abuse by our parents. And many of us need to seek professional help in order for us to cope with the destructive experiences we've had with our parents. But even that coping, in God's way, must include finding ways of honoring our parents, even abusive ones.

So, we don't get out of this one. I told you that you wouldn't like me! No matter your experiences of your parents, you must figure out what it means to honor them. This is required in order for you to live abundantly. We simply can't ignore it, put it off, deal with it later.

Well, "Who are our parents?" seems like a basic question. But it might not be so obvious. Some have bio parents, others adoptive, others have guardians, others are raised by grandparents, siblings, or even non-family members. This command is overly simplistic and doesn't delineate. And so, I think the intention is for us to answer it in a simplistic way: those who parent us. Whomever is rightfully in your life parenting you, honor them.

And notice, very interestingly, that the commandment says "honor your father and your mother." You must honor both of them! The Bible here makes no separation or distinction. Both are to be equally honored. Quite practically, this means that children are not allowed to play favorites, or do more for the one you get along better with. Does this convict you in some way?

So, then, what does "honoring" mean? Honor is a word we normally associate with response to accomplishments. Think of the Honor Roll at school, or the honor board at work. And, I think the meaning here does include to honor your parents for what they have accomplished, what they do right and well. Even rotten parents, did one thing right: they got you here! But the calling here is for us to show honor, no matter what.

You see, it's not about their behavior, if they deserve it. Modern human psychology tries to help us by shifting our perspective off the other and onto the self. God was doing this back at Mt. Sinai. It's not about their behavior. It's about yours. They hold a position, an office. Regardless of how they fulfill it, they get the honor the office they hold deserves. Kids must always "solite the badge."

The Hebrew word here for "honor" is the same root as "heavy." To show honor, in God's understanding, is to treat them with the heaviness, gravity, their position deserves.

I think in our setting, the best word here for us is “respect.” We must always show respect to our parents. Notice that it doesn’t say “love.” Isn’t that interesting! Now, the Bible tells us to love everyone, and that includes our parents. But here, in this command, our abundant living comes when we show respect to our parents.

Let’s start with how we can respect–honor–dishonorable parents. Yes, amid all the hurt and pain. What still must you do to live well? Five things.

1. Give grace. Some of us are too idealistic. We have too high expectations for our lowly human parents. Are you expecting more from them than you are of yourself? The Bible says that it’s a glory to overlook an offense. Your parents are sinners. We need to acknowledge this reality.

2. Give forgiveness. This is to guard your heart from bitterness and resentment, and, just as importantly, it is to guard you from unconsciously adopting their sin into your life, and you behaving in these unhealthy ways, too. Forgiveness mercifully takes your focus off of their sin, because, as we’ve learned, we tend to head to wherever we are looking. Forgiveness lifts our eyes off of the offender and onto our graceful Lord. Commit your parents to God’s justice.

3. Give honor. Treat them the way that God wants you to treat them, and not the way they deserve. Maybe that means if you can’t say something nice, you don’t say anything at all. Yes, you can be honest within the privacy of your family, but in public, you don’t share the bad. But I think the best way to honor dishonorable parents is to be a better parent. Use what you’ve experienced and learned, for good. That’s a godly attribute. Do that.

4. Give an example to your dishonorable parents. You can help them become better—not by trying to fix them, but by honorably living a better example. Speak good to them about them. They will tend to attempt to live into it! Disciple them. Where can they see how Christians behave toward those who wrong others? Perhaps in you! You are a disciple who is making disciples, after all!

And 5. Give thanks. Thank God for whatever they do that is right. And if you can, thank them, too. Share what you do appreciate. Provision, opportunities, becoming who you are. Find something worth honoring. Start there.

Okay, now for all parents: how do we honor and respect our parents?

I think it may be helpful to look at this from the various stages of our lives. What does this look like at our different ages?

For younger children, respect, I think, is primarily about obedience. Little kids show honor through simply doing what you’re told. This is not simplistically true for adults. Parents don’t dictate day-to-day living for their adult children. My mother does not tell me when I go to bed. She still tells me when I *should* go to bed. But now I make my daily choices for myself. I’m still her child, but I’m not her little boy. I still obey her, but not the same way like I used to. Little kids must simply comply. Period. It’s hard, isn’t it, because parents must teach this obedience while at the same time demanding it. The Bible does say a lot about that. But this is not a sermon on parenting.

Now, for adolescents, respect is about keeping your parents as an authority over you. Part of the adolescent phase that you’re going is to have your own ideas. You are going to disagree with your parents, but you still need to respect them. And that still includes a healthy dose of obedience. And I’ll tell you, it means more obedience than you think you ought to give. You’re not a child, but you’re still not an adult. It includes the way you talk *about* your parents when they’re not present, and how you talk *to* your parents when they are present. Screaming in anger, slamming doors, hurling insults, these are older forms of childish temper tantrums, not honoring. Now, I’m not talking about how your parents fail in their response. I’m talking about how you honor them when they are emotional, too. You don’t get the market on emotions, just because you’re hormones are crazy. Remember, you are not to be a child any more. Show that in how you treat those over you in authority. Adulthood is hard, because you must control yourself, even when you don’t feel like it.

Keeping your parents in authority means seeking their council. It means drawing upon their wisdom. Run stuff by your folks and don't just go off and make your decisions like they're not there. Our culture today in significant ways is overly shaped by the teenage wish mind set. Peer groups are glorified, parents and authority figures are ignored. It is nearly impossible to find a show where teenagers receive wise counsel from their parents and follow it. Almost across the board, it's about teens—and young adults—being surrounded by their peers. They blunder through life like a pin ball, and their peers are “there for them,” through it all, supporting them. But I just shake my head wondering, why not ask someone who knows a bit more what they are doing? Why not seek out someone with a bit more life experience? Seek out a guide, someone with wisdom, experience, and with your best interest at heart. Hmm. Who would that be?

Consider God's plan: He wants you to thrive as you venture out in life. There are many heartaches and pitfalls you can avoid! And so, He has set it up to put in your life knowledgeable guides, wizened by experience, aged in maturity, who are smitten with you, who love you unconditionally, and who are willing to die for you. Why is seeking their counsel so dismissed in our culture? Because it's godly. Instead culture pushes our wants and feelings. Ratings are based on what I want to watch, not what I should watch. Beware of what is popular.

Now, how about honoring your parents when you are an adult? Honor primarily looks like caring for your parents. It doesn't mean that finally you are freed from them, can live your own life, that you can just leave them to government care and, as we justify our feelings by calling it “professional” care. I've connected with elderly people a lot. What they need most is not “professional care,” but family who give them attention. Most thrive with some personal and caring attention from their family. Yes, most need some level of professional care. But that must be subsidized heavily by your regular, personal touch.

The main intended audience of the Ten Commandments is not young children. It is adults. What does that mean for you when you realize this? Your parents don't cramp your style: they provide the opportunity for you to live abundantly. This is God's plan. Don't follow yours! Be careful of the world's plan: you know, just put grandma in some home with great care, and then let the government take care of it. Visit them only occasionally because you're just so busy, you know, living your autonomous lives, needing your “you time,” all your treatments for self medicating, going to the therapist, talking about how bad your parents were...and then wonder why it's not working.

Even when Jesus was dying on the cross to save the whole world, He stopped and took care of His mother. He placed her into John's charge, so John would provide for her. You, yes you, provide for your elderly parents. Get involved. Make it part of your routine.

And, if your parents are not around, then adopt some. Go make a relationship. Pass on the care and love your parents gave you. Extend that connection. Paul says in 1 Timothy 5:1–2 to treat older women like mothers and older men like fathers. Go ask them life questions. Join their grow group. Seek their counsel. Look at how they live their lives, love their spouse, and raise their kids.

And here is the why of honoring your parents. They are an incredible asset to you. Honoring them brings life...favor...wisdom...blessing. In Ephesians 6, Paul quotes this commandment and then he says, “it's the first commandment that comes with a promise.” That promise? “That your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.”

It's not a magic potion. It's not a cause and effect. It's a description of what usually happens when you travel this road. It's what life looks like when you do it. People who do it have a better success rate at living longer, fuller, happier, fulfilled lives.

So, now that I've plowed us through this, perhaps kicking and screaming, what is the Holy Spirit saying to you? That's the point of a sermon, you know, right? It's not just so you learn what you need

to know. It's not really about information. It's to create a conversation between you and the Holy Spirit, where you allow God's Spirit to point out what you need to do in your life, what you need to surrender, and how you need to act in obedience.

The Holy Spirit's been pulling on your heart. He's been bringing to mind something you need to do or work on. What is that? Listen to that. Reflect a bit more deeply. What do you need to do with or for your parents? How can you live this out better? What are the action steps you know you need to do? I know on a video it's easy to just click end and move on. If you were here in this room, I'd tell you to write down what you're hearing. Well, do it where you are. Send yourself a text or note: what is the Holy Spirit lifting to you about how you can honor your mother and father? Or, ask yourself this way: What do you think your father or mother share with their friends about how you honor them? Many people I visit tell me, "My kids are just so busy." That's code for "They don't visit much." Or, what do your parents most look forward to with you? Well, how can you do that today, before you go to bed? Do one thing, today. And then do one more thing, tomorrow. Simple steps.

God's path of life: "Honor your father and mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you."

Amen.

Closing Song: *Celebrate* -Sanctify

Announcements: -Pastor David

Memory Verse: -Pastor David

"I will always obey your law, for ever and ever. I will walk about in freedom, for I have sought out your precepts." -Psalm 119:43-44

Benediction: -Pastor David