

## 1st Commandment Fear & Trust the LORD

So, let us turn to Psalm 115.11. Psalm 115.11. I'm stopping here in Hosea to go through the Ten Commandments, and I'll explain a little bit about that. Psalm 115.11, let us listen attentively to the word of God. You who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord.

He is their help and their shield. Let us pray. In this verse, God, may we see the importance of fearing God and trusting in Him, and how the two are called into our life and existence by the power of the Holy Spirit we heard this morning in regeneration.

God, we are called to cultivate these things, and it's part of the First Commandment. Guide my preaching, Lord, so that we can see a new, perhaps, things we've not thought about before when it comes to the Ten Commandments. And here, the relationship of faith, of fear, and of you, and our call to follow you all the days of our life.

Grant us, we pray, more understanding, more strength to apply it to our lives, more grace in our time of need, we pray. Amen. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

We read that in the Proverbs as well. I want to go through the Ten Commandments here to highlight matters perhaps we have not thought much about. There's a lot to be said with respect to the Ten Commandments.

But also to show how the Old Testament's teaching about the Commandments are indeed deep and wide, including the very heart of what it means to be a follower, which is to trust and rely upon Jesus Christ, but also the fear of the Lord. That the Old Testament is a spiritual religion, not merely an external religion, as much as there is externality in the Old Testament with the prophets and the killing of animals and a beautiful temple and the days of Sabbaths. It was never given to obscure the reality that God wanted their hearts.

And so the series which I call the Old Testament and the Ten Commandments highlights and emphasizes that with respect to the Old Testament itself, even without the New Testament, you have much to learn to grow thereby. The Old Testament is not just for the old saints, but for us today as well, brothers and sisters. That's how God has designed it.

So the same was true in Hosea's time, that God wanted their hearts. And yes, he denounced their false external worship over and over again, but he never lost sight of the heart of the matter. Those Old Testament saints were taught what we know as well, that the Lord wants both the heart and the hands.

They were never to rely upon the outward motions, but to offer the whole soul to the Lord God Almighty. And we see that especially in the Psalms. As well as the Proverbs.

Talk about the heart, the fear of the Lord and trusting and relying upon him. There are many passages of importance of the mind, of the will, of the emotions, of our conscience, even the imagination, to be engaged in our duties in the Ten Commandments. And so my series will include many Old Testament passages, again, a number of Proverbs and Psalms, to approach the Lord's will from the inward dimension for today's Christians.

## Preface of the First Commandment

So the first part here, I want to go over the preface to the Commandments. I say the preface to the First Commandment, but it's the preface to all the Commandments, in fact. Although it's immediately there, before that First Commandment, it is for all Ten Commandments.

Exodus 20, verse 2. I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. From that stance, that context, overarching context of the Ten Commandments, he proceeds to enumerate the Ten. Shall have no other gods before me.

And the like. It's not just that First Commandment, it is all the Commandments are supposed to be followed in that mindset, in the understanding that God has, indeed, a relationship with us. It's a relationship that, in fact, predates the law with respect to grace, that we are saved by grace, not by the law.

Although, in point of fact of time, we had lots of law before we were saved. We had to obey our parents. We had the law of God written on our conscience, although effaced, and we try to rub it off because of our sinfulness.

And then grace comes upon us. But with respect to the Christian life, it begins in grace, right? Regeneration, in particular. And then, because of that, God gives us his Ten Commandments.

And that's the context of the Old Testament. They were saved and redeemed out of Egypt, and because of that fact, God gives them the Ten Commandments. Grace came first.

Question 44, the Shorter Catechism. What does the preface to the Ten Commandments teach us? What's the point of it? The preface to the Ten Commandments teaches us that because God is the Lord, and our God and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments. In other words, obeying the law should be out of love and gratitude.

The Dutch catechism, the Heidelberg, is organized around guilt, grace, and gratitude. Guilt, as in your first stance, subjectively speaking, of course. You're awakened to your sin.

The commandments come upon you. You realize it's more than just externality. It's also your heart, and that you have wandering thoughts and sinful things and lusts.

And grace comes along and relieves the guilt, relieves us from the consequences of sin and damnation, and the result of that should be gratitude. As we have here, therefore, because he is our God and what? Redeemer, we are bound to keep his commandments. Not just the first, but all ten.

Not because of pride or self-sufficiency. Not for self-salvation, that somehow we'll pay God back, and then a little more, so we're no longer in debt to him. We're always in debt to him in the sense that we can never obey enough.

The law was given again after they were delivered. The great redemptive act of the Old Testament that's repeated over and over again through the life of Moses, of course, but through the prophets as well. You notice they keep coming back to this theme.

Look what I did to you. Remember what I called you out of Egypt? I protected you. I provided for you in the desert, and I brought you into the land of promise.

That's all highlighting what? Grace, grace, and more grace abounding, super abounding for his people. And from that, we are then redirected by the power of God because we have what? The Holy Spirit within our hearts written, as I went over this morning, Deuteronomy, Jeremiah 31, Ezekiel, written on our hearts the law of God. That's our desire now.

I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. This is a great act of redemption, of protection, of deliverance, of buying them out, as it were. And the symbolism, of course, is the blood above the doors.

The blood of Christ, ultimately. We're bought with the price, the price of his death for us. And so this, although it's a, clearly a socio-political act, they are brought from a foreign power into their own nationhood.

That's true. They're their own people, sociologically. That's true.

Those are good things in their own way. But all of that was to point to the great work of Jesus Christ. Who brought us out of the kingdom of darkness.

Satan himself. And he does it for them of old. Those who were saved, like David and Moses and many others.

We don't even have their names. In Israel. To be brought, or excuse me, yeah, to be brought out of Egypt, that language there in Exodus, is not just a, well, this is kind of interesting.

God just took me along here. It's all in the context of what happened before. You remember the ten trials and tribulations and the plagues upon Egypt.

And how God purposely showed his might and power to explain it is because of me that you are delivered and protected. Not because of you. Sure, you can outnumber the Egyptians.

They were like the sand in the sea, remember? What are we gonna do with all these Egyptians? They keep multiplying. He said, beat him down. Make him work harder.

And they can perhaps brag, look it, we could have overthrown them. We could have rebelled against them and been organized behind Moses. And God's like, no.

I will evidence my power and my grace and my long-suffering for you by delivering you. When he says, I brought you out of Egypt, that is a verb with lots of grace behind it, lots of power of God and his compassion for his people. It is God who did this, in other words, and not ourselves.

Luke 1, 74 and following, in the New Testament prophecy of Zechariah, you may recall, it's relatively long. In verse 74, we read, to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life. And so here, he, Zechariah, recognizes in this prayer that God delivered us, and because of that, we might serve him and follow him and obey him, is the idea there of serving.

That's the purpose of being delivered. We're not saved out of Satan's kingdom so you can go off and do your own thing. That's where the Ten Commandments comes in.

Peter uses the same idea in language of redemption in 1 Peter 1, in his epistle, in 1 Peter 1, 14 and following, excuse me, verse 18, I'll go down to verse 18. You can start at verse 14 in your own devotions if you wish to read through that. Knowing that you are not redeemed with corruptible things like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

There's the idea of brought, more explicitly, delivered, redeemed, bought by the blood of Christ Jesus, what he has done for us. This is the idea of being redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. And it's tied here, in the prior verse, knowing that you are not redeemed by corruptible things, the pagan things of your own works, perhaps, or gold, more crassly, you buy off the gods.

Some of the pagans did that. Silver and gold, he says even here, in your aimless conduct, but with the precious blood of our Lord and Savior. Verse 15, kind of like he starts backwards, back up a little bit, so he ends with saying you've been redeemed, not with the paganism, not with money, but by the blood, the precious blood and the work of Christ.

But he starts out the whole conversation in verse 14 and 15, but as he who has called you is what? Holy. You also shall be holy in all your conduct because it is written be holy, for I am holy. And from there he goes on to explain this is tied, this holiness is tied to the work of Christ.

Being redeemed, being brought out of Egypt, in the Old Testament language, out of the kingdom of darkness, the New Testament language. Same idea. In other words, our salvation is not a reset.

We're not back to Adam 2.0 for ourselves. So we can try our way back to heaven again. That's kind of like the Roman Catholic approach where baptism purifies you, regenerates you, and now God has given you a bag of grace.

What are you going to do with it? See. We have a new direction to submit to King Jesus and a new kingdom with kingdom laws. And we're precisely the same law in a different relationship now, different context.

No longer as a judge who's condemning you by the law, but as a father who loves you and protects you with the law because you know the law of God, and the law of your parents, especially for kids they know, as they get older they're thankful in their hearts that their parents protected them from their own foolishness and from the dangers around them by giving them commandments and laws. That's what we have here. The context, the relationship is different.

It's supposed to be. That's the preface to the Ten Commandments. It's the preface of grace.

And it's not just preface before the Ten Commandments in terms of time, which you have here, of course. They were brought out of Egypt time-wise first, and then secondly, as time went on, they finally made it to Mount Sinai and God gives them the commandment. That's true, but it's the truth theologically.

It comes before, during, after, and through our following, our striving of course, our endeavoring because we will fail in obedience to God's law because it's grace, grace, and only grace that sustains us. This preface, this great historical event, redemptive event is the greatest short of Christ Jesus coming and actually fulfilling what it is a type of, of course. It's the background of the Old Testament I mentioned before.

From Moses' time onwards, the prophets assumed it, they mentioned it explicitly a number of times. Hosea alludes to it. The psalmist sings about it in different and sundry ways by their collective deliverance from Egypt and the guidance that God has given them through the desert into the promised land itself.

It's all of a package and the point is of the grace, the mercy, the love of God who is the source of all this for his people. Of their individual as well as their collective existence as the people of God in the Old Testament. They should not take this for granted.

We should not take this for granted. Of course, God saved me. I'm a Jew.

Pretty much have that mindset in the New Testament time by the time of Christ as you recall, the Pharisees. We have Abraham as our father. Of course, we're special.

Of course, we are separated and delivered from the pagans. Instead, it should be, why me Lord? Why have you saved me? Or Psalm 6, 2. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak, O Lord. Heal me, for my bones are troubled.

The Psalms, the vast majority of the Psalms are written before their captivity. Before the time of Hosea. The Proverbs, too.

The Proverbs, as you recall, are only, what, about one-third, I think it was, of all the Proverbs that Solomon wrote. I think it was another 3,000 as I recall in 1 Kings. He put them down for the people to know about.

They heard a lot of this stuff, the older generation, at least. It wasn't like they just had the Ten Commandments and that was it. There was a lot more instruction going on than we realize during that time period, although we don't know exactly how much.

Enough, however, that God finds them morally culpable and warns them that you should not be stuck with a wrong understanding of my law. I've taught you better than that. And so the Ten Commandments therefore do not stand alone and their moral imposition upon us begins with grace and grace upon the heart.

And so here we have the second point. The first commandment, the fear of God. The first commandment, the fear of God.

## **First Commandment: Fear God**

You shall have no other gods before me. Now if you remember that all the commandments are a summary of deeper truths, that they are dense and implying many things, of course they are simple, therefore easy to remember. It's why he gave it to us in that form because he knows how weak we are and that all the commandments of the Lord God can be somewhere put into the Ten Commandments, at least one place if not more.

We realize the power of the Ten Commandments and how God gave it to us as his moral will for us. And so the first commandment in other words is not just concerned with external obedience. You shall have no other gods before me.

Don't make another idol. Put it over here next to the idol about me or something like that. But rather it begins with the heart.

One can pledge allegiance with their mouth, raised arm, as some of us grew up. I remember doing some of that I think maybe in elementary school in Germany when my parents were stationed there. They still did the pledge of allegiance and the like in school.

The older generation may remember that as kids as well. You can do all that and still have your heart far from the Lord and have other gods before you. The Jews in Hosea's time did that with every sacrifice and God condemned them for it over and over again.

Which is to say the first commandment begins with the heart as indeed all the commandments do. Here I want to emphasize the fear of God or reverential awe. That's perhaps one way you can describe it.

Reverential awe. The fear of God naturally fits into the first commandment because it's about God. He's the object of the motion of our soul.

Whether that's trust, joy, fruit of the spirit, fear. Because he's the object or should be of these matters before us. It's a requirement of the soul following the Lord God.

Fear here is a deep honor, a respect accompanied with childlike fear I would argue. Emphasizing honor that seeks obedience and submission. We call this godly or holy fear.

It is not the fear of losing salvation. It is not the fear of losing justification. It is not the fear of losing our adoption.

Children in loving homes do not fear being kicked out. Rather, they love their parents enough as well as fear them enough they don't wish to disobey them and disappoint them. That's the kind of fear we speak of.

That kind of honor and reverential awe. Of course, sometimes we just simply don't want to be punished. It's better to have a stronger motive but that's a bare minimal.

They don't want to be punished. The sense there of a child is he still thinks of the parents as a parent not a judge and doesn't want to be spanked but that's still fear and that's still good as far as it goes. It's a helpful fear.

1 Timothy 5.20 So there you go. I already broke my word to you although it wasn't a promise but here I'm going to remind us in the New Testament. Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all that the rest may also fear.

The New Testament talks about the fear of God as well and assumes it because it is built into the first commandment because of course the first commandment and the ten commandments all of them are built into creation built into our hearts. We know we are called to not only trust and follow him but to fear our Lord God as a child fears his parents in a great and a good sense. That awe and honor and not wanting to displease them.

I fear looking bad in the eyes of my parents and that has its place in the Christian walk. Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all that the rest may fear. The rest of the church may have this godly fear.

The necessity of fear. For moral knowledge Proverbs 1.7 one of the classic passages of course The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. The fools despise wisdom and instruction.

That word beginning there is the idea of root or fountainhead. It is necessary fear is necessary in the Christian walk not only for moral knowledge the fear of God is the beginning of knowledge that is moral knowledge as such is clearly the context the Proverbs is about God and his law and applying it into our lives and they are pithy sayings short and to the point but say lots of things built into it. The Proverbs as we have Proverbs today ways of speaking to get the point across to somebody.

For fighting sin Proverbs 8.13 The fear of the Lord is to hate evil. Pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate. The fear of the Lord brings about rejection of sin.

I sin God will punish me more precisely I fear the Lord enough that I want to reject wickedness or I hate evil the opposite of good specifically here pride and arrogance and the evil way and those with the perverse mouth I want nothing to do with them I'm going to reject them I'm going to stay away from them. Again, hate here as often the case in the

Bible isn't this often in terms of moral commandment just as pettiness I just want to blow up at somebody it means rejection a clear sighted I want nothing to do with that. I'm in the opposite direction from you.

I'm not going to hang out with you you're not my best buddy. We're not getting along here in this regard. It's a source of life it's described as a source of life both in a positive way and from a negative perspective as well.

Proverbs 14.27 we read The fear of the Lord is the fountain of life. So it's not only the fountain or the beginning of knowledge moral knowledge because that's what the Proverbs is mostly about moral knowledge not how to drive a car. Here is the fountain of life.

To turn one away from the snares of death. So there you have that parallelism right in Hebrew in which it says the A but then also the not A the negative or the opposite here the A here is fear God and this protects you or extends the idea even you can look at as an extended proverb turn one away from the snares of death that's how it protects you you don't die because walking in the path of death gross violation of God's law of course your whole life and hating his law and him will lead to death. Negatively we read in Proverbs 1.29 for example Proverbs 1.29 Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord so they would have none of my counsel and despise my every rebuke.

Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way and be filled to the full with their own fancies. Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord so there you have knowledge and fear of the Lord together they go together they would have none of my counsel they don't want the counsel of the Ten Commandments and so therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way. They're going to have the results the consequences the natural effects of doing their own thing and violating God's law every which way but loose to be filled with their own fancies and that's not a good thing that's a curse.

And of course unfortunately we see that it seems growing more and more around us. The fruit of fear fear of God brings about good things. We see it in general of knowledge of course protecting us from the snares of death for example in Proverbs 14 but here I have some specifics.

Proverbs 22.4 By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches and honor and life. And I would add behind that because it is a proverb it's not trying to say all the little nuance and exceptions and caveats in one way any more than you do when you say an apple a day keeps the doctor away but I also mean you got to eat good fruit not just apples etc. etc.

It's all built into this and so when it says here are riches and honor and life the fear of the Lord are riches and honor and life that is twofold both in this life and the life to come. Right? And the life to come it will come to full fruition. We will have everything beyond our imagination in terms of protection and health and prosperity for body and soul and heaven for eternity.

Come quickly Lord Jesus. But even in this life we know these blessings come upon those who fear the Lord. That God has indeed blessed us in our lives with riches and honor and long life long physical life and that's tied specifically to the fifth commandment isn't it? And

picked up again in Ephesians in Ephesians it tells us you parents you kids obey your parents so you can have long life.

Some have longer than others but it's still long life because they have proper fear not only of their parents but of God and wanting to obey Him. Inheritance for the children Proverbs 14.26 In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence Amen and his children will have a place of refuge. The children the children of the man who fears the Lord or perhaps he means the children of God but certainly children as children need the fear of the Lord to have a place of refuge themselves and therefore parents and grandparents can help the children and the grandchildren to start learning these things when they are young to speak about the fear of the Lord and to exercise it in our life by walking and speaking and living this way.

But of course fear of the Lord is only half the story. We have the last point the trust the trust and obey.

## **First Commandment: Trust and Obey**

Fear and trust both are acts of the soul even mentioned together that's why I use Psalm 115-11 you see that? You who fear the Lord fear trust in the Lord.

They go together. They are supposed to go together. We have Psalm 31-19 Oh how great is your goodness which you have laid up for those who fear you which you have prepared for those who trust in you in the presence of the sons of men.

It's there in the Old Testament they both went together the faith and the call of trust upon God Almighty as well as fear was always called and urged upon the Old Testament saints. Psalm 56-4 In God I will praise his word in God I have put my trust I will not fear what can flesh do to me. There of course the fear is fear of other men fear of death and the like.

Or servile fear towards God. Somehow I got to obey enough to get to heaven. That's what I mean by servile fear.

So trust here. Pretty straight forward. We as human beings must have trust somewhere some way we have to trust somebody about what they say about what they are going to do.

Because you can't do everything for yourself. You can't know everything for yourself. It's just a human condition.

We don't always I think think of it that way. It's another way of talking about faith. We rely upon somebody.

Upon their word. Upon their experience. The classic passage here is Proverbs 3-5 Trust in the Lord with your heart all your heart and lean not unto your own understanding.

They were called in the Old Testament and given all that externality all the glories and the fancy dress up and the clothing they had and the animals and what not to not lose sight of

the heart. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not upon your own moral understanding of course is the idea of doing your own thing and following your own ways. They were called to trust just as much as we are called to trust.

So we can embrace these psalms and these calls of the Proverbs of the Old Testament just as much as the Old Testament saints because they too were the people of God and not to rely upon anyone else but God in Christ. Psalm 7-1 in Psalm 7-1 we read Oh Lord my God in you I put my trust save me from those who persecute me and deliver me. So here David's trust upon the Lord God is a trust of deliverance of what's another word for deliverance? Salvation.

Redemption. All that. They had to trust rely upon Jesus or the Messiah to come the promised anointed one that he would protect them of course in the physical in the physicality of his life as you know the Psalms a lot of them David's talking about the context behind them his actual warfare and fighting but he also means of his soul often.

The trust is the call of everyone. Psalm 2-12 This trust expressed and explained in the Old Testament is not just for the Jews. Kiss the son lest he be angry and you perish in the way when his wrath is kindled but a little.

Blessed are all those who put their trust in him. That very same king who can slay when he wills and raise up when he wills. Anyone who turns away from their sins and trusts in the living God and the Messiah to come in the Old Testament and the Messiah who has already come for us in the New Testament to trust, to rest, to rely upon his work and his person for our redemption from first to last can be blessed with salvation.

They understood that and I've highlighted this a few times I believe in the Psalms and even in Hosea the promise and the prophecies were not just for the Jews for anybody who could believe the Gentiles are going to be brought in from the four corners of the world to Jerusalem which is of course a picture into the church the church age. Trust trust and obey so there's the connection of course to the Ten Commandments. Fear and trust that obedience is always our call.

Proverbs 16 6 But the fear of the Lord one departs from evil by the fear of the Lord one departs from evil. Deuteronomy 31 12 Gather the people together men and women and little ones even the kids and the strangers within your gates even the non-Jew they get a blessing. Think about that.

There's a picture of the Gentiles us in the future. Who is within your gates that they may hear that they may learn to fear the Lord your God and carefully observe all the words of his law. Yes brothers and sisters we want our little ones to be born again.

We want the stranger who is within our orb of influence within your gates within probably your servants but maybe not in this case often the stranger is those who are coming through the land. Having the fear of God and fearful laws patterned after the Lord God is a good thing. It's better than not having it in many ways.

Obedience here Psalm 111 10 Psalm 111 verse 10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom a good understanding of all those who do his commandments his praise endures forever. There we have the praise of a psalm tied to the beginning of wisdom and understanding of those who do his commandments his laws. The wisdom and the understanding and the knowledge often means like it does here the commandments of God his moral will for our lives.

In obedience this trusting and obeying of course should be from the heart my son do not forget my law but let your heart keep my commandments. Proverbs 3 1 heart heart heart which is the center of your being which is to say the sum total of your mind your will and your emotions. And of course the question you may ask yourself after hearing this connection between fear and trust and obey is can we obey God even from the heart? Yes because the law of God has been etched upon your hearts.

Hebrews 8 10 Hebrews 8 10 picks up Jeremiah and explains that this is going on in the New Testament era. For this is the covenant that I made with the house of Israel after those days says the Lord I will put my laws in their mind and write them on their hearts and I will be their God and they shall be my people. That is the language of the covenant.

Old Testament covenant because the Old Testament covenant is still the covenant of grace. Administered differently that is applied in different ways but there's a lot of overlap that's why I went through these verses to remind us that the riches of God's law are there to be learned and to be a guidance for us and direction in our lives. So this should be an encouragement for us Hebrews 8 10 picking up Jeremiah Ezekiel Deuteronomy as I pointed out this morning in Regeneration that you desire to do the right thing because God has worked in your hearts to endeavor to fear the Lord and to trust Him every day and to walk in His law as a work of the Spirit in you.

And another way of looking at that is this you can't stop it. The Spirit of God is working in you you can't stop Him. He's omnipotent and all sovereign you will not give up on God and God will never give up on you.

You may feel like you're giving up on God I know the emotional and the internal struggles that go with that that's true. Once you stop looking to yourself and look to Jesus you will see the Spirit of God working in you. You will fall you will fail.

Our obedience and trust is indeed from the heart although mixed with sin and weakness and we need daily repentance and trust in God. We can never outgrow that. As we review the Ten Commandments brothers and sisters never lose sight of Christ our Redeemer who bought us and brought us out of the Kingdom of Satan and gave us His Spirit in our hearts and granted us fear and trust in His law so that our fear and trust would have feet in this day and age in which we live.

Let us pray. Our Lord and Savior God Almighty Redeemer our Lord who delivered us with the blood of Jesus Christ and bought us from this Kingdom of Darkness be with us strengthen us and guide us we pray on our Christian walk and as we go over the Ten Commandments going over perhaps different ways of understanding its application in our lives God may this be an encouragement for us for you have indeed written the law upon

our hearts you've given us your Spirit so that we have the desire to follow your will and your will is summarized in the Ten Commandments. Our Lord and Savior be with us this week we pray by your grace and grace alone.

Amen.