

Have No Other gods



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Exodus 20:1-3

You know, we are actually in a brand-new sermon series this morning, even though we are in the 20th chapter of Exodus. We are going to take nine weeks and study the ten commandments. Typically, when we think about rules or commands we think about them not being fun things for us. They are harmful things for us; they are limiting things for us. I remember as a kid thinking that some rules were just foolish; some rules were just bad rules. For instance, I would go to a swimming pool to go swimming and I remember one rule that I couldn't understand as a little kid. It was the rule that you couldn't run at a swimming pool. I thought why can't you run at a swimming pool? I mean, it seems like if I fall down I will hit water, and I have hit water before and it doesn't hurt; it feels really good. So, it seems better to run at a pool than to run on dry land because at least the water catches your fall, right? But an adult would say no, it's because if you fall, bump your head, and knock yourself out, then you would drown in the water. To which, as a kid, I would say, "I have never fallen over and knocked myself out before. Have any of you ever just fallen down and been knocked out? That usually doesn't happen, right? If I were running, surely people would be watching me, and if I did knock myself out, aren't

there lifeguards?" I just couldn't understand the rule about not running or at least fast walk at a pool. So pool rules drove me crazy when I was a kid.

There are also these written rules. I remember seeing the tag on my mom's hair dryer. It was this little yellow tag and it said, "Do not remove." I would think... *what is going to happen if I remove the tag? Surely it can't be that bad if I pull a tag off of a chord, right?* But it was written in bold, "**Do not remove,**" so as a kid I understood that some rules are not really that helpful. Even this last summer, we went to Nicaragua. We went to church and the pastor got up and said, "I just want to remind you guys not to chew gum during service because God might be watching and he doesn't want you to chew gum in His house." I was thinking... *whoa! Where was that in the Bible? I missed that somewhere!* So, as people we tend to make rules that sometimes are a little bit foolish.

So when we think about rules, often we think yeah, rules, whatever...they are just limiting me so that I can't have fun. But, that is not the case for all rules. Some rules are very, very good. For instance, yesterday I took my two older boys, five and seven-years-old, outside for target practice. For Christmas they both got these little Cricket .22 rifles and they wanted to practice with them. So we got the rifles out of the safe and took them to the boys, and we began telling them the rules and commandments. "Remember the rules. This barrel is only pointed up. You can't point it at anybody. It stays unloaded at all times. Only when you have it ready to fire do you put the one bullet in it. Keep your finger off of the trigger until you are ready to shoot." Why did we go through these rules for the boys on how to handle their firearms properly? Because if I just gave it to them and said just have fun, then it's going to be very bad. There had to be rules and the rules were for their pleasure. The rules were so they could have fun, not limit them in some way. But for us, we usually think rules are bad and no rules are where real freedom is found. What we are going to find is the ten commandments are not ten rules to limit our fun, but they are ten rules to live under so that we can be the freest people on the planet. These rules are for our good. They are to maximize our enjoyment for how we were created to live.

Just last week we were at the lake. We were riding our bikes by the lake and there was this little rocky place where we get off and started walking by the rocks when we notice there was a smell. We began seeing all kinds of little dead fish on the rocks. My boys were like, "This is awesome!" They had sticks and so they started playing with the fish. We began thinking about how the fish got on the rocks. We thought what happened to at least some of them was that they probably jumped out of the water onto the rocks. I have seen it happen before. I have been to the beach where little fish had swum up and then got onto the sand. I could just imagine that little fish thinking... *Man, this water is so restricting. What is on the other side of this line above me, that says do not cross? There must be more freedom.* So I can imagine that little fish going just as fast as he can and breaking through to freedom. The wind is in its face and it's thinking... *Yes, I am finally free!* Then, it hits the rocks and it realized oh, this is not freedom. This is actually more limiting and more miserable because freedom was actually the water. That rule that it was supposed to stay under is where it was the freest, where it could swim and enjoy life. Breaking through that barrier, they find misery and death and little kids come and poke them with sticks. That is what happens when they break the rules of water. What I want us to see is the ten commandments are very much the same way. This was God's way to tell Israel here is how you swim under my grace. This is how you swim in the freedom that I have bought for you. It's by living under these good words that you will find the most freedom. And when you break them, when you go above them, you will be the little fish on the rock. It will not be to your freedom; it will be to your death and your misery.

For the context of Exodus chapter 20, if you remember last week these people were standing before Mount Sinai. God has come onto the mountain and there is this thick cloud around and there is thundering and lightening. There is a loud trumpet that is piercing their ear drums. Kids are probably crying; they are scared to death. They are trembling. God is meeting with His people in a terrific and terrifying way all at the same time, and He is going to begin to tell His people how He wants them to live. So just imagine you are on the foot of that mountain and you are hearing this

thunderous voice commanding you these ten good rules. We are going to read the first one of those rules.

Scripture

"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. You shall have no other gods before me.'"

Before we look at this first command, I want to talk about the law in general for just a few moments because the first thing that I want us to notice is the foundation of the law is God. So, we are going to walk back through this scripture. The first thing we notice when it comes to the law is God speaks. It says, "God spoke all these words," so these are His revelations to us. Moses and the people of Israel didn't come together and say...how about we make up some rules and laws so that we can be moral people and so that life goes better. What do you think God would want us to do? Let's all get together and talk about it and let's all agree upon a certain written code, and let's all abide by it. No...nobody got together and decided these things; God from Heaven REVEALED these ten commandments to us. It's not society getting together and determining what is right and wrong; it's God telling us from Heaven what is right and what is wrong. It's God telling us here is reality and here is how to live under Him.

The second thing that God says is, "I am the LORD." That is a statement of God declaring that He is the Lord. He is in control, He is the sovereign one; He is in authority and we are not. So it's not us telling God what to do or how He should be; it's God telling us what we should do and how we should be. That is the relationship between God and man. God tells us what to do; we don't tell God what we think we should do. God's lordship is being exercised here. He's basically saying I am the Lord; therefore, I have the right to speak into your life and tell you how you should interact and how you should behave.

The third thing we see is that God is personal. Not only is He Lord, but He says, "I am the LORD **your** God." He is not some distant, disconnected deity. No, He is the LORD, that personal name He has given to them, Yahweh...*I am YOUR God. I have a relationship with you. You have a relationship with me. You can call me God. You have the right to do that because I have redeemed you.* So it's a personal God speaking to His people. That is why we are going to find that these words are good. They are from a loving father to his children, not a distant, impersonal deity that doesn't want us to have fun. No, it's a father who is begging his children to live life correctly because that is where freedom is found.

The fourth thing is that God is redeemer. Not only is He Lord, not only is He personal, but He is also redeemer. Notice what He says, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." He is reminding them...*Remember what I did. I am a redeeming God. I am Lord, I am your God—I am personal, and I am also a redeeming God. I have rescued you. I have come for you. I have bought you. I have purchased you. I have brought you out on eagles' wings.* So God is a redeeming God. The foundation of these rules is based on who God is, He is the Lord, He is our God, He is personal, He is the authority, He is also good, but they are also based on what He has done. He has rescued them and because He has rescued them, now they should long to live under His good Word. So we find those things right off the bat in these first two verses.

But I want you to notice the order of grace and law because it's very important in the book of Exodus. It's very important that we know the order between rescue and then obedience, on grace and then our response to grace. And, here is what I want you to see, grace and redemption comes before law and obedience. That is a huge point for you to understand. Grace and redemption comes before law and obedience. We are not in chapter 1 we are in chapter 20, almost in the middle of the book here, and *now* God gives them the law. So we know what didn't happen, God didn't go to the people of Israel in their slavery and tell Moses I want you to round up all of the people and I have ten things that I want you to

do. If you will do these ten things for me then I will come and rescue you and I will be your God. Now, it's just up to you—if you will obey, I will come rescue you. If you don't then you are out of luck. God didn't do that, did He? No, what did God do? He went and rescued them. God set His covenant love upon them. He went and rescued them from slavery. He brought them out. He brought them to Himself. Then and only then, after all of that, after they have already been brought into a relationship with Him through blood, God says now that you are mine, now that you are my people, here is what obedience looks like. Here is how I want you to live because obeying these rules is going to be swimming in that freedom that I have set free for.

It's important that you understand that order because in the New Testament we find people getting all out of whack. When Jesus hit the scene, what the Pharisees were doing was taking the law and saying here is how we get justified. Here is how we make ourselves right before God. Here is how we get saved. We take the law, we obey it, and then God will save us. That is completely backwards! God never tells us to do that and that. Paul, in Romans chapter 3, is dealing with that. Righteousness is apart from the law. It's through Jesus Christ. It's by faith in Him. Put your faith and trust in Him and you are made righteous. It's putting your faith in Him that you are saved. It's apart from obeying the law. It's important for you to understand that you can never make yourself right with God through obeying the law. These ten commandments are not... do these ten things and God will love you. That is not how the law is used. No, it's God loves you and He has rescued you in Christ. Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.

But then what happens? At the very end of that chapter 3 of Romans, here is what Paul says in verse 31, "Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law." What is he saying? The law doesn't save you, but if you are saved then God changes your heart, He puts a new spirit in you and now you are a person that has been made right to do right. Now that you are in Christ, you see the law and it should sing to your heart because you now share the heart of the Father. You

should be a person who wants to tell the truth rather than lie. Not because telling the truth makes God love you, but because you are loved by God and God is a truth teller, and now you want to tell the truth because you are loved by God. That is the idea. He rescues them first and then He gives them the law- how they are to respond to his love. So salvation comes before obedience, and obedience can never earn salvation. That is a big, important picture that we see even in the Old Testament and even in the exodus.

So, why does God give the law to the people? Why does God even worry about this law? That is a good question. The reason is so Israel could know how to live as free people. They have been slaves; they don't know how to live as free people so God shows up, gives them the law, and says here is how to live in freedom. Here is how to swim in the sea of my grace. Here is what it looks like. Here is my good word to you. If you want to be free, it's by listening and responding to my good words to you.

Now, when you think about the ten commandments they can really be broken up into two categories. The first deals with our relationship with God; that is one through four. They are about the vertical relationship with God. Then the last six are about our relationship with others; it's that horizontal plane. That is why Jesus will summarize the law in the Old Testament as love the Lord with all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself. Love God and love people and you will have all of the commandments sorted out because that is what they are about. They are about proper relationship with God and proper relationship with everyone else.

When it comes to the ten commandments, I think they do at least four things for us. The first thing the commandments do is show us what is right. We see what is right, we see how things should be, we see how Adam and Eve would have lived without sin; we see how the world SHOULD operate and we need that because as cultures, we define for ourselves what is right and what is wrong, and it's always changing. If you go back 50 years ago, things are right today that were absolutely wrong

back then. Well, what is happening? Has right and wrong changed? No, culture's view on right and wrong has changed. So, why do we need the ten commandments? So we can have a true north to what is actually right because we are not good at defining it for ourselves. So we can look at the ten commandments and know how humans were supposed to live—here is life without sin, and here is what it would look like. This is the bar; this is the mark of how we were meant to live under our creator God.

The second thing is not only does it show us what is right, but it shows us that we are wrong. How does it do that? Well, if you just look at the ten commandments and say I am going to do these, I am going to write them all down, take them with me all day, and walk through life obeying the ten commandments. What you will see is you don't do it very well. You break the ten commandments all of the time, especially if you are not in Christ. Any time you function in your unredeemed flesh you are a commandment breaker. That is what you do. We covet, we lie, we steal, and we use the Lord's name in vain. We do all of these things, we break the law, and we don't put God first in every part of our life.

The third thing the ten commandments are designed to do is lead us to the cross of Christ. They aren't supposed to show you how good you are they are supposed to show you how much you need a Savior. Jesus uses the ten commandments in evangelism with the young rich ruler to try to lead him to see that he is not as good as he thinks he is but he needs a Savior. Paul would say in Galatians that the law is a tutor that leads us to Christ. It shows us we can't but Jesus did, and that is the good news of the gospel. We didn't, He did. So they lead us to the cross; they lead us to the gospel. If we put our faith and trust in Christ, then He gives us His righteousness, and then we have become people who have been obedient to the law because we are in Christ and we get His identity and we live in Him.

Fourthly, in Christ we are made right to do right. When it comes to the ten commandments, when you are in Christ, when you are put in Him, all of a sudden you are made right. You have a new heart, new spirit, and a new nature. The law is written on your heart and now you have been made

right to do right. Now, through the spirit and in Christ, you can now obey the commandments. Why? Because they reflect your new heart, which is like your Father's heart. When you are in Christ, when you are saved, now all of a sudden you have the ability to obey. Why? Because you are in Christ and your obedience is through the Spirit.

Those are the four things that the law does for us. It shows us what is right. It shows us we are wrong. It shows us our need for Christ. And then, it shows us that in Christ we are made right now to do right. In Christ, we get to swim under these good words that God has given us which leads to our freedom rather than our own misery.

Now, we are going to deal with the first command for the rest of our time. What is that first command? "You shall have no other gods before me." That is commandment number one. You shall have no other gods before me. What does that mean? What is God saying when He tells us that? Well, this idea of another god is a god substitute, a counterfeit god. It's something you go to as a god, something you treat like you treat the one true God. It's something that you put on the throne of your life and you go to it for ultimate joy, happiness, hope, and fears—all of those things, you run to it in place of running to the Lord. It's all of those other gods that we give more time, more value, more thoughts, and more affections towards than we do the LORD God who has redeemed us and saved us. God said you shall no counterfeit gods before me. You shall have NO other gods before me. Why? Because I am the LORD God who rescued you. All of those other gods are not gods. So, what is He getting at here? He is saying put nothing else in my place. There is only one place for God in your life and nothing else should be put in His place.

Now, what does it mean when it says have no other gods *before* me? I read a lot of commentaries and the language is a little ambiguous. It can either mean before God, behind God, beside God, under God, or above God. Your translation of the Bible probably has a footnote that says or besides God. So what is God getting at here? I think J.D. Greear gets it right when he says God is saying you can have no other gods in my

presence, period. That is the whole point. He is not saying out of all of the gods you run to, I want to be first. God is not saying that. He is not interested in being your number one God; He is interested in being your only God. For instance, when I go to my wife, I don't tell Katie, "Hey, Katie, of all of the men that you are romantically involved with I want to be number one. I want to be on the top of the list so just put me at the top and then I am cool." No, I am going to go to Katie and say I want to be the only guy that you are romantically involved with, period! It's not before or beside. It's in my presence. I don't want any other guy to have a romantic relationship with you. It's just me! That doesn't show her that I don't love her or that I am neglecting her; it shows how much I do love her because love demands this exclusive relationship—the covenant of marriage. It's the same with God. God says I don't want to be number one on your list of other things you run to as gods. I want to be the only person who occupies the throne of god in your life. God is not saying I want to be like Mercury. I want to be like the first planet that goes around your sun. You are the sun and I want to be that first planet of all of the planets. No, God is not saying that. He is saying I want to be the sun, I want to be the center of your universe; everything else revolves around me. I am not a part of your life, I am not number one in your life, I AM your life is what God is saying when He is declaring have no other gods before me.

Now, why would God say that? Is that not limiting? Why can He not just say...*Hey, worship whatever you want just put me somewhere in the top.* Why does He demand that He is our only God? The reason He demands it's because it's right and it's true and it's good. That is why He demands it, because it's right. When I say it's right, what I mean is when it comes to the universe it's only right for God to be God. If we put anything else as a god, it's a lie and it's wrong because only God is God. It's logical. So for Him to declare He is the only God it's a good thing because it's right and it's true. And not only is it right and true in a logical sense, in a universal sense, but it's also right, true, and good in your life. God is demanding this not to limit you, not to harm you, but to actually help you. He is demanding this for your own good because what God knows is, if you put

anything else as a god in your life it will not free you, it will not make you happy, but it will actually limit you, it will kill you, and it will crush the thing that you are trying to make your god. It's not going to work because only God can withstand all of your hopes, dreams, joys, and ambitions. Only He can hold the pressure of your life; nothing else can. So, if you have something else that is a god, if you replace Him with something else, you will kill that something else and that something else will kill you. It will lead you to slavery.

Let's just use the example of, let's say, a job. Jobs are good things. Jobs are good gifts. We need jobs to survive, right? Whether you work outside the home or inside the home, just think about your job. What if your job becomes a god? You realize your job brings you joy. It brings you security. It brings you happiness. It brings you identity. It gives you self-worth. What if I pursue my job to give me all of those things so that my job is going to give me ultimate significance, ultimate worth, ultimate security, and ultimate happiness? What will you have to do? You will have to work like crazy. You will work long hours. You will have to slave away all day long. At night, you don't get to sleep much because you are constantly worried about how you could make it better or if you are going to lose it. You will always have to be feeding that god. You have anxiety and you get health problems. So now, this god that you are propping up as a god, you are having to feed it and sustain it and it becomes slavery. It becomes misery because you are having to feed the god that is supposed to be feeding you. See, it doesn't work. What happens when you lose the job? What happens when your health fails and you can't work anymore? What happens when that is taken completely away from you? Your life goes away. See, when you hold onto something else as a god, you end up crushing it and you end up killing yourself in the process.

It's like Garnett with a frog. My little three-year-old loves frogs. He got his love for frogs from my seven-year-old and my five-year-old. They love catching frogs! Frogs are all around my house. I tell them to leave, but they just keep coming back. I have warned them! The frogs in my yard are meant to be caught by little boys. Crider catches them and Finley catches

them. They are good with them. They hold them with the proper pressure and everything is fine. But G, on the other hand, he doesn't get the proper way to hold a frog, so when he catches a little frog he LOVES it, and he loves it so much he squeezes it with all of his might just to show his love for that little froggy. As he is squeezing it, the eyeballs are bulging out and the tongue is falling out. After a few seconds, Garnett can't understand why the little frog doesn't hop around because he loves it SO MUCH! What has he done? He has actually killed the frog because the frog can't hold all of his love and affection that little Garnett wants to give it.

That is the same way with you with a god that you have created and put in place of God. See, you want it to give you ultimate whatever you are seeking—identity, joy, love, hope, fear, ambition, life, or liberty. So you are squeezing it and that little fake god's eyes are bulging out, the tongue is bulging out, you are enslaved to it, and you are killing it all at the same time. For some of you, you are not just married to a spouse, you are married to a god, and you are pursuing your spouse with this idea that you are getting all of your happiness, joy, and satisfaction from them and you are squeezing them so much that, guess what? They can't handle it. They can't handle the pressure you are putting on them to satisfy all of your joys, so you are squeezing them and you are killing yourself at the same time. See, when good things become god things they become bad things. It has been said many times and I think that is absolutely true. When you put something else as a god, you squeeze it to death and it doesn't work.

So, what God is saying is don't have them before me! Why? Because only He can hold the pressure of your whole life. You can squeeze Him as hard as you want, and He is fine because He sustain you, you don't sustain Him. That is how this relationship works. He is God, which means that He is infinite, He is all sufficient. He has no needs within Himself. He can only give to you; you can't give anything to Him. So, squeeze all you want and He will satisfy your hopes, your joys, your fears, your ambitions, your love, your life, everything. He will satisfy them fully because He can hold all of your pressure. That is what God is saying! Have Him only as ultimate and have nothing else in His presence. If you do, you will be enslaved to it and

you will end up killing it, and it will end up killing you. So, He is not telling us this to be mean; He is telling us this is how you swim in the ocean of His grace. It's by having Him as your only God.

Have you ever wondered why did Israel have to be commanded to have God as their only god? I mean, should this not be an easy one...*Ok, we were in Egypt. We worshipped all kinds of gods. They were everywhere! We got rescued. God executed judgment on all of the gods and now we see that He is the only God.* It should be natural for them to worship the one, true living God. God should not have to tell them this. So why does He have to? Because I think our default mode is to worship and put things before God. It's just the default mode of human beings. We worship things, stuff, and people before we worship the Lord God. We see it in the people of Israel. This is why they went into exile, because they couldn't get rid of the idols—they couldn't stop worshiping other gods so God sends them into exile after getting the land. God is having to remind them, and we look back and say, "Poor, primitive people. I can't believe you chase after Baal. I can't believe you went after Molech. I can't believe you had little idols. I can't believe you didn't know the one, true God!" What I would say is that we are no different because we do the same things. Our gods just don't look as foolish to us. Our gods look more normal to us. Many times, we just don't recognize what we run to as gods, but we run to gods as well. See, we make counterfeit gods. We put something in the place of God and we treat it as god. We take a gift and we put it as a god, we make it ultimate, and we go to it for all of the ultimate things in life and it ends up letting us down because it's not ultimate.

So, what does this look like practically? I think for us, what we do is we replace God. We replace God with either something or someone. That is how it usually goes; you replace God with something or someone. I will give you a cultural example. How do you replace God with something? How do you run to something else when you are supposed to be running to God for that thing?

A couple days ago, Katie and I went to Paducah. Now, if I get in my Jeep and there is ever music coming over the speakers, I know that my wife has driven my Jeep because I never listen to the radio. I never turn it on. I just don't listen to the radio; I am not a music guy. I listen to podcasts or silence. That's just how I roll! I know...I'm sorry! Some of you are like that is crazy, but that is just what I do. So if I get in the Jeep and music is playing (and the seat is moved forward), Katie drove my Jeep. So we are going to Paducah and she is riding with me, and so the music is playing. We are driving, listening to music, this song comes on the radio, and it starts out like every other good country song. It says, "I have cussed on a Sunday. I have cheated and I have lied." So I thought ok, this is like every country song EVER. You do this stuff and then you go to church on Sunday and wash it all always. But then the song took a twist—it said, "But I find holy redemption when I put my car in drive." Hold on. It was not...*I find redemption when I go to church and I wash my sins away*; it was "I find holy redemption when I put my car in drive." The singer keeps going, she says, "Can I get a hallelujah? Can I get an amen? Feels like the Holy Ghost running through ya when I play the highway FM. I find my soul revival singing every single verse. Yeah, I guess that's my church."

What is going on there? This is a god replacement. It's her idea of when I need that thing that people go to church to get, I don't go to their church, I don't go to the house of the Lord, I don't go to worship the one, true God; my church, the way I define it, is driving and listening to music because that is where "Hank brings the sermon and Cash leads the choir." It goes on to say, "When this wonderful world gets heavy and I need to find my escape, I just keep the wheels rolling, radio scrolling, 'til my sins wash away." What is she saying? Life is bad. Life is hard. Things go crazy. You can't sustain life without running to something. What is her something? It's not running to the Lord like the psalmist does and crying out to the Lord. No, her church is getting in her car, turning on the radio, and hearing music. That is her 'church.'

That is what we have done as a culture. We run to something ELSE instead of the one, true God. See, secularism is not getting rid of God; it's just

replacing God with something else. Every person that is secular runs to a god and they worship a God; it's just not the one, true God. They all have their own church, their own rituals, their own way of escaping reality, their own way of dealing with their sins, and their own way of finding their own holy redemption. It's this replacement, running to something else to give you what only God can. What is that thing that you are running to? What is that thing that you run to when life is going bad? When life is so hard that you can't stand it anymore, what do you run to? Is it some *thing*, or is it God? What is that thing that you run to when you just want to be happy, and have pleasure and joy? Is it God or is it something else? When you want something ultimate, when you want that feeling of purpose and meaning, what do you go do? Do you go to the Lord because only He can satisfy that, or do you go to something else and try to prop up your fake god that is not going to work?

See, we are god replacers. We run to counterfeit gods time and time again, but it's not always just something; sometimes it's someone. We go to relationships. We make our spouse our god. Our boyfriend or girlfriend, we make them a God, not just a good person that we enjoy, but the thing that gives us our identity and our whole life. We run to a team. It's playoffs—if my team wins then I am forever happy! If they lose then I am forever miserable. That is not just a team; that is a god. Everything revolves around it and it becomes something that it's not. Sometimes it's ourselves. In our culture, more and more we are becoming gods and goddesses. Think about it! We define our own right and wrong, that is our cultural mantra. I say what is right. I say what is wrong. Nobody tells me. There is not a god. I do what I want to do and nobody needs to tell me differently. And not only do we define what is right and wrong, but we define ourselves. I don't even care what my gender is at birth, if I want to change that I can do whatever I want. I am supreme, I am in control, and I am my own god or goddess. I can define my whole life and define my own reality. So, when it comes to having another god, you can be the god. You can be the one that is keeping you from worshiping the one, true God. We replace God. What does that mean to replace God? It means valuing something more than God, trusting something above God, and loving something more

than God. What do you value? What do you trust? What do you love? Do you do value, trust, and love that more than you do the Lord God? Then it's not a good thing, it's a god thing and it's not going to satisfy you. You are squeezing the frog and it's not going to work. The frog is not going to jump very much longer and your heart is not going to be forever happy.

So, here is the bad news. All of us have broken this command. I have broken this command over and over again. Every one of us has put other gods in place of the one, true God. All of us have, and if you think you have not, then you are a god or a goddess because you have. You have broken that commandment—that is the bad news, but here is the good news—Jesus Christ didn't! Jesus didn't ever break this command. He came to do the will of His heavenly Father. Even when He was in the garden facing death, He said, "Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." In other words...*I will give my life to satisfy your will because you alone are God in my life. I am going to live for you and you alone.* Every moment of His life, He lived with His father at the center of His universe like we're meant to live. So the bad news is we didn't; the good news is Jesus did, and when we put our faith and trust in Him, we are placed in Christ. In Christ, He fulfills the law for us, He became the curse for us, and He redeemed us from the law. In Him, we get His righteousness. We become men and women who have always put God first in Christ. Not because we have done it but because He did it, and in Him, what is true about Him is also true about us.

Here is the GREAT news. Remember, redemption proceeds obedience but what happens after redemption? Here is the good news of the cross. If you are in Christ you have been made right to do right, so every moment of your life, under the control of the Holy Spirit, denying your unredeemed flesh, you can always put God alone as God in your life. You can always flee the other gods and crown only God as God of your life. Why? Because in Christ, you have been made right to do right. You have been given a new heart and a new spirit. The law has been written on your heart so you reflect the nature and the character of God. I just want to ask, what are the gods that you are putting as gods in your life? What are the replacement gods that you have as a believer or as a nonbeliever? Some of

you need to repent and come to Christ. Some of you just need to repent and once again be fully devoted to the Lord.

I want to give you just a little test. Here is how to know if something is a god in your life. Number one, does it carry the potential of bringing the highest high and the lowest low? Does it have the potential of making you ultimately happy or ultimately sad? If a thing can do that for you, it's a god not a gift. Only God needs to have the place that He can make you ultimately sad, or without Him, can make you ultimately miserable. That is only a god position. The second is are you willing to sin against the real God to get it? That is a huge way to know if you have a god and not a gift. Do you sin against God to get pleasure from whatever it is? That is not just a good thing; that is a god thing in your life. Then lastly, if you lost it would you suffer total loss? If it were taken away from you, would your life be taken away? That is how you know good things or good gifts are god things. Some things, if they were taken away from you—yes, you would suffer gravely but you would still have your life. Why? Because your life is Christ and only He lives forever, only He can sustain you forever, and only He will you have forever. So He is the only one who can be your entire life.

There have been some things that have crowded our hearts and I just want you to think about what the potential little gods are in your life. Is it the notification button on social media? That notification button says people like me, they like what I think, and they comment on what I say. If the notification button is not blowing up, is your life over? That could be a god. What about a smartphone? Could you live without it or would it end your whole life? Then it's creeping into not just being a gift, but possibly a god. What about email? Scheduling? Shopping? Saving? Food—whether you indulge or deny? Pleasure? Sex? Long hours at the office? Short hours and lots of leisure? A Pinterest board? Family life? Single life? New cars? Old cars? Elections? What is it that defines you? If it's something other than God, then it's a god thin, not just a good thing to enjoy. Let's process in our hearts if there is anything in our lives that we have put as a God and let's repent of those things because only Yahweh deserves to be our one, true God.