

Three!

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[0 : 00] Several months ago, Derek asked me to preach tonight and he said the theme is the 10 Commandments and the title that you can work with is the title 3. So it's not surprising that tonight is the third of the 10 Commandments.

And if you turn with me to Exodus chapter 20, we'll read the first couple verses of that chapter down to the third commandment. And God spoke all these words.

I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.

You shall not bow down to them or worship them. For I the Lord your God am a jealous God punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

[1 : 16] I remember hearing a sermon a long time ago and the preacher said that the object of every sermon should be to answer three questions and the object for every listener should be able to answer those three questions.

This is true of sermons that you hear preached, but it would also be true of any time you would turn to the Bible. The first question is the question, what? What does this particular passage say? What does it mean? Simple question about comprehension. The second question is a more challenging question, so what? If I understand what this passage means, what this chapter means, why is it important?

Why does this matter? How does this message, this scene, which is 3,500 years ago, how does this particular scene, how does this particular message connect with you and me in 2014 in the city of Edinburgh?

So the first question about comprehension, the second question about importance and relevance. And the third question, which is probably the most challenging, both for preacher and for listener, when you're reading the Bible, is the now what question.

[2 : 28] I understand what the Bible is saying, I understand it's important, but what am I expected to do with this information? What am I expected to do in terms of applying this particular truth or this particular promise or this particular warning, this particular invitation, etc.

So tonight I hope that we can cover these three bases, what, so what, and now what. And take my advice, when you're reading the Bible, whether you're reading a chapter or whatever you're reading, ask those questions.

What is it that I'm reading here? What is God saying here? Why is it important? And what does God want me to do with this information? Because that's the kind of Bible reading, Bible study that will generally result in effect change.

Because you can fill your head with knowledge. You can fill your head with knowledge, you can even fill your heart with joy. But if our lives don't reflect what we read and what we learn, then it's almost a pointless exercise, isn't it?

Especially tonight, because God is speaking. He's not just engaging with our head, but he wants to engage with our whole lives. He wants our lives to be conformed to this standard that he sets.

[3 : 45] So it's of infinite importance for us tonight to understand the speaker, God, to understand what he has done for us, and to understand what he is doing for us, and what he wants you to do when you leave this building.

It's one thing to add amen when the preacher says amen. It's one thing to sing when everyone else is singing, and to have the Bible open and reading the chapter as everyone else is reading it.

But what about tomorrow? What about this week? What is God asking you and me to learn and to do? The third commandment, you shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

Well, in any study like this, it's kind of like jumping in in the middle, isn't it? Because we're in the middle now of a clear message that just like if you watch a movie, if you watch a television show, and you miss the first part, you're kind of catching up a bit, trying to figure, okay, where am I here? Where does this fit in the rest of the story? And before we actually get to commandment number three, I'd like to spend just a moment on what is described as the introduction or the preamble to the Ten Commandments, because this is critical.

[5 : 00] Because we really need to understand the context of the passage before we actually look at the text itself. A preamble from the United States. I've been told that I don't need to say that, but I like to say it anyway.

That's where I'm from. And if you wanted to find out about my country, if you wanted to find out how our country works, I would encourage you to read two founding documents. 1776, the 4th of July, we cast off British tyranny and we declared ourselves independent.

But at the beginning of the Declaration of Independence are these words. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

So you can expect that the document that follows is a statement of adherence to these principles, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It kind of sets the scene.

And when we look at the Ten Commandments, God sets the scene for us. And God spoke all these words. This is not the word of Moses. This is not the word of man.

[6 : 13] But this is God who created the heavens and earth communicating with you. Think of this privilege. You have a personal audience with the God who created heaven and earth.

He is a God who speaks. He's a God who communicates. And He's a God who wants to be known and a God who wants to be in relationship. So just as he spoke to his people those 35 centuries ago, he's speaking to us tonight.

We must be important. We must be valuable. If he is addressing us, if he is teaching us, that means that you and I in his sight are important, valuable. It also tells us that we need instruction. We need to be taught. We need information.

That we don't naturally possess this understanding. We don't naturally have this body of information that we can simply draw upon. We need God to show us. And we need God to teach us.

So he is the author. And if there's anything in the Bible that you don't like, you have to come to terms with the author. You can't just reject them because you aren't the author.

[7 : 18] You aren't the final judge. He is. And we'll see that in the third commandment. So God is the author. But notice in verse 2, I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt out of the land of slavery.

Now, if you're not familiar with the Old Testament or if you find yourself reading the New Testament more than the Old Testament, that's not a bad thing. Because I think Christians should be primarily focusing upon Jesus, who he is, what he did, and therefore what he means to us.

But to understand who he is and to understand what he has done, he doesn't exist in a vacuum, but it was Jesus who so often referred back to the great events of the Old Testament, the great passages of the Old Testament.

So if we're interested and focused on Jesus, we need to read the Bible that Jesus read. We need to read the passages that Jesus quoted. But notice in verse 2 that God, the author and God the speaker, is taking the audience back to an event.

He has something to say to them now, like God has something to say to us now, but he wants to take us back to something that happened in history. Now, for the people, it would have been the recent history.

[8 : 31] The Exodus event, I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. For us, this is ancient history, 3,500 years ago, roughly speaking.

But God did something dramatic, miraculous, unprecedented. And if we want to understand what follows, we have to understand this preamble or this prelude, this context, to understand who is speaking and to understand his credentials.

I don't know if you've ever watched like, I love dramas, courtroom dramas. I think I always wanted to be a lawyer as a kid. Some kids want to be astronauts, others, firemen. I wanted to be a lawyer. Never did actually get to be a lawyer, but I would love to be in that courtroom and you'd have witnesses and all that. But when you have a witness, particularly somebody who is an expert, what the witness would first be asked to do is to give their credentials.

And by that, their qualifications, their degrees, their specific area of knowledge, their qualifications that they could stand in a courtroom and give information.

[9 : 41] God is giving his credentials. First, he's personal. I mean, we say, well, where do you get that from? Well, this word Lord, and you'll see this coming in the Third Commandment as well.

The Lord in capital letters, when you see in the Old Testament, big L, big O, big R, big D, that means that it's God's personal name. So not only does God take us back to the Exodus event, he takes us back before the Exodus event to the burning bush.

And he says, remember? Remember that Moses needed to know God's name? Remember Moses who was going to bring the Israelites out of Egypt? He said, look, I know what these people are like. And if I'm going to bring them out of Egypt, I've got to be able to tell them something about you, God. I've got to be able to tell them what your name is. And unless you tell me what your name is, I can't tell them. And that's when God revealed his personal name.

I am that I am, or I will be that I will be, or I was that I was. It's this unusual way of, this unusual form of speech that we summarize in the word Jehovah or Yahweh.

[10 : 48] But it's a word that means that God is. He always is. He always has been. He always will be. He has no start.

He has no finish. He's always present, past, present, and future. You and I have a starting point, don't we? We were born on a certain date, and we ultimately will have a finishing point.

We will come to the end of our earthly journey at a certain point, but not God. So God has a personal name, and he's invoking that personal name here.

Why? Because he has a personal relationship. He has a personal relationship with you and with me. And that is why we pay attention. Not only is he the creator of heaven and earth, if that wasn't enough, that's enough of a qualification.

But he wants you to know something about his personal character, his personal nature, and his personal interest in us. So we have a personal God who enters into a personal relationship with his creation.

[11 : 52] Not because he needs us, because he's completely self-sufficient, but because he's concerned about us, he's interested in us, and he wants us to know him and to follow him.

So we have the personal God, the Lord your God, and notice that little word, your, which speaks of a possession. You know, when you use words like my, your, our, their, his, these are pronouns that imply possession.

So you see, this isn't just any God, but this is the Lord your God. This is the God who you know, this is the God who you worship, and this is the God we're told who has done something dramatic for you.

I think many people who don't have a, a good understanding of the Old Testament will say, I prefer the new. God in the New Testament is gracious. God in the Old Testament is tough.

God is demanding. He requires a lot from people. He just tells them what to do. So you think in your mind, well, the Old Testament is law and the New Testament is grace.

[12 : 59] Well, in some sense, there, there's truth there, but there's a lot of law in the New Testament and there's a lot of grace in the Old Testament. God doesn't change.

People don't change. What becomes obvious in the New Testament is the spotlight is now shined on Jesus. Instead of this character that we're told that will come, we now see in clear daylight who he is and what he has done.

But the character and nature of God doesn't change. God's grace doesn't change. His love, His mercy doesn't change. His holiness, His righteousness, His demands don't change.

So notice he's personal. He's possessive. He takes hold of us and he demonstrates his character and he demonstrates his nature by what he does. Notice that he brought this people out of Egypt out of the land of slavery.

If there's one key event in the New Testament, it's the weekend that occurred on the Friday when Jesus was crucified, buried at the end of that day, lay in the tomb on the Saturday and was raised

from the dead on the Sunday.

[14:10] Death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the key event of the whole Bible, but it's particularly the key event of the New Testament. The key event of the Old Testament is that event whereby God rescued his people out of the land of Egypt and brought them on the way towards the promised land.

It was definitive. It was once. It was for all. It was powerful. It was gracious. It was a demonstration of who was in charge.

And it was also a definitive act in that when the waters of the Red Sea parted, all the Israelites got out and all the Egyptians who tried to chase them were eventually swamped by the water.

But there was no going back, was there? Because the water rushed back into place, so the Israelites had nowhere to go but forward. This key event and God is establishing the context for the commandments by saying, let me tell you who I am and let me remind you of what I have done and let me remind you as a people that you are the people of God and that God is your personal God. So this context is absolutely essential because what were the people? They were slaves in Egypt. A slave has no power. A slave has no authority. A slave has no resources.

[15:35] Somebody who is in slavery is unable to release themselves because quite simply if they were able, they would have. Pharaoh was the power.

The Egyptians were the powerful ones. The Israelites were the servants. They cried out to God and God miraculously rescued them. That is the picture of what we are.

We are weak. We can't solve our own problems. We can't fix our own circumstances. We cry out to God and God in his power and in his grace rescues us.

Not because of who we are, but because of who he is. So when we begin to look at the commandments, we understand that the context is in the context of God's grace.

God's gracious and miraculous intervention. That he came down to his people. He came down to their level. He heard them and he acted.

[16:34] That shows us something about God and it reminds us something about ourselves. We matter. You matter. Your life, your circumstance, your situation matters to God.

You are of interest to him. You are infinitely valuable to him. But the problem is, and as we look at the 10 commandments, we realize, that it's not just our situation that we find ourselves in that we need help.

The Israelites were enslaved. But we realize and we understand that there's something wrong within us. It's not just an external problem. It's not just the external situation which we find ourselves, but there's an internal problem.

And that internal problem is sin, that we do the things that we know we shouldn't do. We don't do the things that we ought to do and we need one who can fix the broken heart, the broken life, the one who can forgive us and the one who can restore us.

So we have the context, the powerful and the personal and the possessive God, who intervenes in the life of his people and then he speaks.

[17:43] So God's credentials are quite simply this. This is who he is and this is what he has done and this is how we relate to him. So he has already taken the people out of Egypt.

He has already taken them out of slavery. He has rescued them and he is bringing them on a journey that will one day culminate in them coming into the Promised Land, coming into their new home, where everything has been prepared for them.

But in the meantime, they and us, we need to know how to live. So we go from the context to the text itself.

We're told that God's name is special, that we are not to misuse his name. And this commandment primarily focuses upon speech, that what we say matters.

You might hear that there are certain expressions people say, well talk is cheap. It doesn't really matter what you say, it's what you do. Now there's some truth in that in the sense that you can make commitments, but if you don't keep those commitments, your words are of little value.

[18:49] You can say, I love you, but if you don't show it, the words are not all that important. But in God's sight, everything's important. What we say is important.

What we think is important. What we do is important. So when you come to the New Testament and Jesus is telling us the full scope of the law, remember he says that anger, anger in your mind against your brother, you say angry things with your mouth, or if you have angry actions, murder

with your hands, he says God sees these things on the same scale.

So God's commands affect the whole person, what you think, what you say, and what you do. And this particular command, command number three says, remember who God is and treat him accordingly.

Don't misuse his name, don't abuse his name, don't say something related to God that you do not mean. And this could involve promises, taking God's name as kind of like a guarantee, using God's name and saying, well, by the use of God's name, that means I really mean what I'm saying.

We don't play games with God. We don't play with him, with his character, with his nature. He's the creator. He's the sustainer. He's the redeemer.

[20 : 16] He has all power. He has all authority. So we hold him in reverence. We hold him in awe. We treat him as he deserves because of who he is and because of what he has done.

We don't neglect him and we don't misuse him. We don't abuse him. We don't show contempt for him. So God sets a standard. He wants us to worship him as he deserves.

He wants us to speak of him as his right. And he wants us then to relate to one another in light of all these commandments, all these standards. So the law is given for our benefit.

The law of God is given to show us the nature and character of God and to command us to live accordingly. This is not a meeting of equals.

This is not God drawing near to those who are on the same level. This is not a sense of discussion. You see, God is speaking definitively.

[21 : 21] He's speaking authoritatively. He who has taken the people out of Egypt, the rescuer, the redeemer, is exerting his authority to be a law giver, a legislator.

He has ultimate authority. So what he says goes. Because of who he is, because of what he has done, he now exerts his right to tell us, to tell us what to do.

And the commandments are structured in a way that they are not suggestions. God is not giving advice. He's not giving you tips for a happy life.

He's not giving you suggestions about what to do or how to live, but he's giving you definitive commands. They're structured in generally in a negative form, but the commands are all inclusive. So if he tells us not to misuse his name, that means that we should use his name properly. If he identifies the negative, if he condemns the negative, he also commands the positive.

[22 : 25] So when you get to commands like you shall not kill, he's not just condemning homicide, but he's saying life is so important that you need to do everything in your power to maintain it, to uphold it, and to sanctify life.

So the negative implies the positive. This is who God is. This is what God has done. And in light of that nature, in light of his character, in light of his gracious intervention, this is now what we are to do.

So the text, you shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God. Simple. You don't take O's. You don't bring God's name into dispute. You don't say something and connect the name of God with that statement, hoping that that makes the statement look better.

Because God is worthy of our respect. God is worthy of our awe, of our wonder, that we don't bring his name down. Now you see the name of God is special, and you'll see here again that it's the personal name, the Lord your God, for the Lord, big capitals.

His name is important because his name reflects his character. His name reflects his nature.

Robert, my first name. I don't know what my parents saw, but Robert means brilliant.

[23 : 41] So they thought, well, this name must reflect something about this kid, this child. Names mean something. If you misuse somebody's name, if you make fun of somebody, if you misuse that name or abuse that name, you're saying something about the person.

And when we misuse or abuse God's name, we're saying something about his character, something about his nature. We are treating him with disrespect, with disregard.

Instead of holding him in high awe and reverence, we are bringing his name down. So God commands, but God also threatens.

Now this is where people, I think, read the Old Testament and they say, I don't like that. For the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

So you see there's a context, and there's a content that there are things that we are to do and things that we're not to do. But then there's consequence. There's always consequence.

[24 : 44] You have a test at school, you don't study, there's a consequence. You have your driving test and you don't read the highway code, there's a consequence.

Likewise, if you are prepared, if you are ready, if you are, you know, your mind is engaged, you spend the appropriate time, you put in the appropriate effort, again, positive consequences. But God's law always brings consequence. This obedience brings a bad consequence. We honor God, we uphold his name, we dishonor God, or we misuse his name. Each of these situations will bring a consequence. Inevitable. So when you read the Bible, you don't just take it in, you don't just add, oh man, you don't just say, oh yeah, I agree with that. But what do you do? What do you do with these commands regarding worship? What do you do with these commands regarding his name? What do you do with his command regarding the Sabbath day?

[25 : 44] What do you do with his commands regarding your personal conduct and your relationships with other people? You keep them, you apply them, you ignore them, you disregard them, but there's a consequence.

You see, God is in charge, he's in complete control, and you and I are accountable to him. We are responsible. We are morally responsible. If he tells us to do something, he expects us to do it. If he tells us not to do something, he expects us not to do it. God is not interested in our excuses. He's not interested in our explanations. He's not interested in how our upbringing has shaped our character.

He's not interested in socioeconomic factors. Any number of excuses can be given. But God expects us simply to take his word, to do what he says, or to avoid what he prohibits, and he says there are consequences.

The Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. So you hold God's name in reverence, and if you don't, if you misuse his name, if you take his name in vain, you accompany his name with a promise by thinking that somehow that will make you sound better, or somehow that will make you more committed, or more holy, or whatever it might be, you bring his name down instead of lifting his name up, he says that will have consequence, that he will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

[27 : 16] And as we read his commands, we should realize that each one of these commands in turn convicts us. Convicts us in our heart, convicts us in our mind, convicts us with our words, convicts us with our actions.

That not one of us is guiltless at each one of these levels. I work in a prison. I've met people who have broken the Eighth Commandment literally.

It's very easy to stand in judgment, and it's very easy to think to myself, well, I might be bad, I'm not that bad. God's standard is an absolute standard.

Heart, head, word, thought, action, and if you don't conform to that standard, if you are even able to keep the whole standard and yet stumble at one point, James tells us, you're guilty of breaking all of it.

So if the Third Commandment tonight comes soon, you say, well, actually I have. I did. I have misused his name. I have taken his name in vain. Instead of using his name as a name for worship and praise, I've used it as a name of abuse or derogative way.

[28 : 29] You're guilty. God will not hold you guiltless. You have broken the law. You have shattered the commandment and in his sight, the lawgiver, in his sight, the holy and righteous God, you and I are equally guilty.

Your guilt may not be obvious. Your sin may not be visible to others. But the God who knows your head and the God who knows your voice and the God who knows your life will know who's guilty and who's innocent.

And you see, he's speaking to a people who are guilty then and he's speaking to a people who are guilty now. They were a people who grumbled and very soon after you'll read the way in which the people of God looked back and said, I wish we were in Egypt. We had a great time in Egypt. We had plenty of food in Egypt. We had plenty of water in Egypt. What great days we had in Egypt. They forgot the slavery. They forgot that they were told to make bricks without straw. They forgot the harsh conditions. They forgot Pharaoh trying to kill all of their male children. They forgot that and they grumbled. They complained against Moses and they complained against God who sent Moses.

[29 : 47] So you see, nothing changes. God doesn't change and we don't change. One of these commandments should prick our conscience, should say to ourselves, I haven't done that.

I should have. It makes sense. I understand who God is. I understand what he has done and it's a natural response. But I have not lived this way. I have not honored him as I should.

I have not honored my neighbor as I should and I'm guilty in God's sight. The law, the law of God which is before us has several functions.

If you're a Christian tonight, the law is there to guide you, to show you what life is meant to be like, to show you the boundaries that God sets and he sets boundaries for a reason.

If he says don't go there, if you go to a beach, there are certain beaches that have signs, don't swim. Now there's usually a reason why it says don't swim. There's something in our heart that when we see the sign that says don't swim, it looks even better to swim.

[30 : 48] There's a neat place to swim but there's a reason for the sign and there's a reason for the law. So if God says don't, he means it because he knows what's best for us. He is the manufacturer. We are the product.

The manufacturer knows how the product is meant to be used, how the product is meant to be cared for, how we as the creature are meant to be cared for. So if he says it, he says it for a reason. So if you're a Christian, the law is there to show you the good place to live, the good life to live, and to encourage you to live that way. But maybe you're not yet a Christian.

Maybe you're interested, maybe you're curious and you hear this message and you say well, you've just confirmed everything. You've confirmed everything I thought about God, God is harsh, God is judgmental.

All you are telling me is that I'm bad. And that's what religion does. Religion tells you you're bad. What we need to hear is that you're actually good. Well, the one thing that the Bible does is tells you the truth.

[31 : 51] If you went to the doctor and you were sick and the doctor told you you were well, you wouldn't thank him. You wouldn't thank her. You would say I need to know the truth. If I'm sick, maybe there's a cure, maybe there's something I can take, maybe there's some treatment I can take.

If you're telling me I'm fine, then I'm not going to take a treatment. If you're telling me I'm fine, I'm not going to take the tablets or I'm not going to go for the chemotherapy or whatever it might be. So you don't want your doctor to lie to you.

Do you want God to lie? Do you want God to say all is well when all isn't well? God has a standard that he sets. And by that standard, if you're not a Christian, you should see the problem.

You should see the gap. You should see the way in which you have fallen short of that mark. Because there is a solution. The Apostle John, when he was writing his gospel, he also had a preamble.

And in his preamble, he made an interesting contrast. He said the law was given through Moses. But grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

[32 : 55] Moses can show us the problem, but Jesus shows us the solution. Jesus shows us the answer to the questions that Moses raises. To the problems that Moses highlights.

So here, Moses, the author, Moses, the law giver, Moses shows you the problem. Maybe it's misusing God's name. Maybe it's stealing. Maybe it's adultery, whatever it might be.

But Moses will show you the problem. Grace and truth comes through Jesus. God's undeserved favor. What God did in Israel and Egypt, he does today through Jesus at the cross.

Because the guilty are set free. Because the guilt less was punished. That's the message of the gospel. In the third commandment, the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

So that suggests there are two categories of people. The guilty and the innocent. I'm going to suggest to you tonight that we are in the category of the guilty. The standard is set and we don't keep the standard.

[33 : 59] I'm not interested in your relative achievements that you might have kept the third commandment better than me. That I might have kept the fourth commandment better than you. That we all might have kept the sixth commandment better than the 900 or so people who live in Salkton prison.

I'm not interested in the relative success that we've had. But absolutely, there's absolute guilt and absolute innocence. This room is filled with those in God's sight who are absolutely guilty.

But there was one who was absolutely innocent. One who did all that was required of him. His life, his words, his actions, his motivations.

The whole picture was there. That Jesus Christ was guilty of no sin. And yet he took the place of the guilty. The guiltless in the place of the guilty.

Why? So that I don't need to face the consequence of my sin. I don't need to face the reality that when God says, Bob, this is what you were meant to do.

[35 : 01] And I have to put up my hand and say, but I didn't do that. Or Bob, this is what you have to avoid. And I say, well, to be honest with you, that's exactly what I've done. And that's exactly what we've done. God says, no, we say yes.

God says, yes, we say no. God says, now we say later. God says, here we say there. Whatever your circumstance, whatever your situation, you'll be unique. But there's that similarity.

That God comes to us clearly and powerfully and persuasively. He says, this is who I am. This is what I've done for you. And how do we repay him? We don't do what he tells us.

But he says, I tell you, I've got good news. I've got good news for those who failed. And I've got good news for those who have fallen short. I've got good news for the guilty. I've got a son called Jesus.

And God has sent that son, Jesus, into this world on a rescue mission. Not to take people out of slavery and bring them to the promised land, but to take people who are facing the anger and wrath of a righteous and holy God, and who was willing to take that anger and take that wrath to pay that price and to satisfy that debt.

[36 : 10] So there's consequences to every choice. God says, do, do this and live. And we don't do it. But God says, here is my son, Jesus, who has done this.

Trust in him and you will live. So the law comes with its consequence, and the gospel comes with its consequence. There's the context of the gospel.

There's the content, what the gospel message is, and there are consequences. So for those of us who have accepted God on his terms and conditions, because that's what we have here, terms and conditions.

He sets the terms. He sets the conditions. He sets the consequences. We are not in charge. He is. The gospel comes to you with terms and conditions.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life. Terms and conditions. Believe in the Son. No other choice, no other option.

[37 : 11] God is not saying mend your ways. He's not saying try to fix what's broken, because if you've ever misused God's name, if you've ever said Jesus when you didn't mean Jesus, if you've ever said God when you weren't saying that in a reverential or in a worshipful way, then you're guilty.

And the one thing that you can't do is take it back. You can't take back the word. You can't take back the action. And if you thought it, it's as bad as saying it. That's the problem. We can't undo, but he can.

He can undo. He can fix what's broken. He can mend the very source of all that is wrong. And that's your heart and my heart. So tonight, the context of the Ten Commandments, God's gracious dealings with his people.

This is what I've done for you and this is how you are to live. The content, the Ten Commandments are right before our eyes telling us about our relationship with God, our relationship with each other, and saying that there are consequences for obedience and consequences for disobedience.

And if we're honest with ourselves, we are in the category of the guilty and not the guiltless. So that pushes us to Jesus because we cannot live by this standard.

[38 : 26] We cannot satisfy these requirements. They're good requirements. It's a fair standard. It's a reasonable standard, but I can't and you can't, but Jesus can and Jesus has.

So the more you understand the law of God, the more you understand the character of God, the better you should appreciate Jesus. And in appreciating Jesus, you welcome him into your life and you now live this new life in relationship with him.

Out of gratitude, out of joy, out of celebration. When you stumble, you turn to him for forgiveness. When you wander off the path, you come back to him for strength. But you learn that God is a gracious and a loving God.

He wants what's best for us. He's done all that's required for us. And he wants us to walk in faith and walk in obedience. So if you're convicted tonight by the law, turn to the one who satisfied the law.

Turn to him in faith and trust him and know what it means to be made guiltless from the inside out, to be forgiven and to be restored and to be renewed.

[39 : 32] And for us who are Christians, let me be reminded that God is a holy God, a righteous God who deserves our wonder and awe and reverence.

We don't bring his name down, but we lift his name up. When you say it and when you live it. Because if you're a Christian, you bear the name of Jesus. So you might not misuse the name of Jesus by saying it inappropriately, but if your life doesn't fit with Jesus, we are equally guilty of lowering his name and causing his name to be in disrepute.

But thanks be to God that he works with people like us. He works in us and he works through us. He works with flawed and failed people to demonstrate his grace and his goodness.

So may God bless his word to each of our hearts. Amen.