

INSIGHT

Do you know the story about the frog who was in a pan of water above the stove? The temperature in the pan of water was increased ever so slightly that the poor frog was cooked without ever trying to escape! The frog was insensitive to the slight increase of temperature. As Christians, we are in a similar situation. The devil is continuously trying to cause you to stumble and fall. He knows you probably won't walk into an obvious trap so he always tries to trick you with subtleties. *"The incremental acceptance of obscenity and violence has elevated our tolerance for evil"*—Dr. Rubel Shelly. If we continue to ignore the warning signs of our conscience and guilt, we will quickly find ourselves deeply involved in moral impurity. The deeper you sink into the mud, the harder it will be for you to come out clean without any major battle-scars.

This series we will be getting into, *"The Heart of God"*, will take us through the core of what makes God the Holy Being that He is: **LOVE**.

I am the LORD who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.

(Lev 11:45 NIV)

Morality begins with the person and nature of God. In order to follow and obey Jesus, we must worship Him as the Creator and be aware of His presence and magnificence. Learning about Him through the Word should be an event fulfilled by your desire to know your husband, not a ritualistic exercise.

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

(Rom 15:4 NIV)

As we look into the moral code given by God at Mt. Sinai, we look into an eternal moral code that reveals the will of God for His people. This Law remain the basic moral framework for the church of God. We are expected to rise above it (Matthew 5, 6, 7). Rather than being people who *do* or *do not*, Jesus calls us to have the *be-attitudes*. He calls us to *be* like Him. To *be*

transformed. To *be* holy, as He is holy. Not just to *do* holy things.

The Heart of God

Deliverance Precedes Obedience

Key Text:

Romans 5:8-9

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

Theme:

Before God calls us to follow and obey Him, He paves our way to Him by delivering us from the slavery of our sins. Obedience to God is not the basis for our deliverance. Rather, it is always the reverse. Gospel before demand, grace before law, God's sacrifice before people's sacrifice. Nonetheless, in the freedom granted to us by God He calls us to be holy, obedient and righteous. Justification precludes obligation and commitment to God. As a matter of fact, justification demands it! Our obedience and commitment to God must be expressed out of the gratitude and thankfulness of our heart, accompanied by reverence.

Application:

Here are some practical suggestions:

1. **Pray daily to God!** Be open about the areas in your life that need to change. Ask for wisdom and willingness on your part to allow God to change you.
2. **Let God communicate with you!** Read the Word often, as if God is speaking directly with you because He is! Take what you read as His advice, personally applicable to your life!
3. **Seek and Take Advice!** When your brothers/sisters advise you take it as a godly thing. The Lord is answering your sincere prayers! Don't treat with contempt their advice!
4. **Develop a godly fear!** Be aware that God is really with you and that He has saved you!

May the Lord richly bless you!

SERMON OUTLINE

The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom

A CASE HISTORY OF ISRAEL'S DELIVERANCE

I. Before Knowledge there must be respect

1. Israel was in sin because they didn't recognize God.
2. Their lack of morality eventually enslaved them

II. Before Gratitude there must be Recognition

1. They had to recognize that God chose them
2. They had to see the might of God in action
3. They had to witness the love of God for them in the fact that they were exempt from His fury

III. Before Obedience there must be Deliverance

1. They were saved without anything asked of them in return.
2. They were given the choice to follow God
3. They were expected to obey in order to enter into a covenant relationship with their Savior
4. Those who were fearful were grateful in their obedience.

IV. The New Testament Analogy

1. We are the new Israel
2. We were enslaved by our passions and desires
3. We failed to recognize God
4. We have been delivered from our sins
5. If we want to continue in our covenant relationship we must obey out of gratitude in our heart.

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Warm-up:

How did the movie "The Ten Commandments" change your view of God? If you haven't seen the movie I suggest you rent it and watch it.

See To It

Matthew 5:17-48

1. What did Jesus come to do with the Law?
2. What does Jesus say about the permanence of the commands of God?
3. From verse 20, what is the focus or attitude Jesus wants us to have toward the Law or commands of God?
4. How are we to surpass the righteousness of the Pharisees?
5. Does Jesus quote all of the Ten Commandments? Why not?
6. Why is He expanding on each of the commands He quotes? What kind of change is He looking for? A change of action or a change of mind and heart?

Seeing It Closer:

1. How is expanding upon each of the commands help us learn more about God's heart and His will for us?
2. How does looking at each of the commands help us learn about our sin and our need for deliverance?
3. How does looking at each command make us aware of God's holiness and our need to be holy and revere Him?

Getting To It:

Reflect the commands and on the way Jesus used them to make us aware of God's holy nature and His expectations for us, His covenant people. Pray that we may, as a church, be holy and blameless before the Lord.