

THE STORY

Chapter 5

New Commands and A New Covenant

Exodus 19:1–8 (NIV84)

¹ In the third month after the Israelites left Egypt—on the very day—they came to the Desert of Sinai. ² After they set out from Rephidim, they entered the Desert of Sinai, and Israel camped there in the desert in front of the mountain. ³ Then Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain and said, “This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: ⁴ ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. ⁵ Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, ⁶ you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.” ⁷ So Moses went back and summoned the elders of the people and set before them all the words the Lord had commanded him to speak. ⁸ The people all responded together, “We will do everything the Lord has said.” So Moses brought their answer back to the Lord.

1. God’s Desire

- 1. God’s desire is to have a community of love that reflects who He is, the triune God.**
- 2. God’s desire is to dwell with His people.**
- 3. God’s desire is that His people would be a living example of how to live and how to love as God would.**
- 4. God is covenantal.**

Exodus 34:1–10 (NIV84)

¹ The Lord said to Moses, “Chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones, and I will write on them the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. ² Be ready in the morning, and then come up on Mount Sinai. Present yourself to me there on top of the mountain. ³ No one is to come with you or be seen anywhere on the mountain; not even the flocks and herds may graze in front of the mountain.”

⁴ So Moses chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones and went up Mount Sinai early in the morning, as the Lord had commanded him; and he carried the two stone tablets in his hands. ⁵ Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the Lord. ⁶ And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.”

THE STORY

Chapter 5

New Commands and A New Covenant

⁸ Moses bowed to the ground at once and worshiped. ⁹ “O Lord, if I have found favor in your eyes,” he said, “then let the Lord go with us. Although this is a stiff-necked people, forgive our wickedness and our sin, and take us as your inheritance.” ¹⁰ Then the Lord said: “I am making a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do wonders never before done in any nation in all the world. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the Lord, will do for you.

2. God maps out the way we should live and love in the decalogue (the Ten Commandments)

1. Commandments 1-4 tell us what it means to love God.

Exodus 20:3–11 (NIV84)

³ “You shall have no other gods before me. ⁴ “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. ⁵ 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, ⁶ but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. ⁷ “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. ⁸ “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. ¹¹ For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

2. Commandments 5-10 tell us how to love each other.

Exodus 20:12–17 (NIV84)

¹² “Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. ¹³ “You shall not murder. ¹⁴ “You shall not commit adultery. ¹⁵ “You shall not steal. ¹⁶ “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. ¹⁷ “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

3. The Law can be summed up in these two commands: Love God & Love People.

THE STORY

Chapter 5

New Commands and A New Covenant

Matthew 22:34–40 (NIV84)

³⁴ Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. ³⁵ One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” ³⁷ Jesus replied: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

3. Although the Law is good, men and women rebel and the law is broken.

1. The Law is perfect.

Psalm 19:7–13 (NIV84)

⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. ⁸ The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. ⁹ The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the Lord are sure and altogether righteous. ¹⁰ They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. ¹¹ By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. ¹² Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. ¹³ Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression.

2. When people hear the law it sounds good and right, and the initial instinct is to vow to keep the law.

Exodus 24:3–4 (NIV84)

³ When Moses went and told the people all the Lord’s words and laws, they responded with one voice, “Everything the Lord has said we will do.” ⁴ Moses then wrote down everything the Lord had said. He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel.

3. When the law is revealed our sin nature is exposed.

Psalm 19:7–13 (NIV84)

⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. ⁸ The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. ⁹ The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the Lord are sure and altogether

THE STORY

Chapter 5

New Commands and A New Covenant

righteous. ¹⁰ *They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.* ¹¹ *By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.* ¹² ***Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.*** ¹³ ***Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression.***

Romans 7:7–13 (NLT)

⁷ Well then, am I suggesting that the law of God is sinful? Of course not! In fact, it was the law that showed me my sin. I would never have known that coveting is wrong if the law had not said, “You must not covet.” ⁸ But sin used this command to arouse all kinds of covetous desires within me! If there were no law, sin would not have that power. ⁹ At one time I lived without understanding the law. But when I learned the command not to covet, for instance, the power of sin came to life, ¹⁰ and I died. So I discovered that the law’s commands, which were supposed to bring life, brought spiritual death instead. ¹¹ Sin took advantage of those commands and deceived me; it used the commands to kill me. ¹² But still, the law itself is holy, and its commands are holy and right and good.

¹³ But how can that be? Did the law, which is good, cause my death? Of course not! Sin used what was good to bring about my condemnation to death. So we can see how terrible sin really is. It uses God’s good commands for its own evil purposes.

4. Where the law was powerless, God demonstrated His power. When I am weak He is strong!

1. Jesus fulfilled the law.

Romans 8:1–4 (NIV84)

¹ *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,* ² *because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.* ³ *For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man,* ⁴ *in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.*

Matthew 5:17–20 (NLT)

¹⁷ “Don’t misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God’s law will disappear until its purpose is achieved. ¹⁹ So if you ignore the least commandment and

THE STORY

Chapter 5

New Commands and A New Covenant

teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God's laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

²⁰ "But I warn you—unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!"

2. The law provided for forgiveness through the shedding of blood. Jesus shed His blood once for all.

Hebrews 10:1–18 (NLT)

¹ The old system under the law of Moses was only a shadow, a dim preview of the good things to come, not the good things themselves. The sacrifices under that system were repeated again and again, year after year, but they were never able to provide perfect cleansing for those who came to worship. ² If they could have provided perfect cleansing, the sacrifices would have stopped, for the worshipers would have been purified once for all time, and their feelings of guilt would have disappeared. ³ But instead, those sacrifices actually reminded them of their sins year after year. ⁴ For it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

⁵ That is why, when Christ came into the world, he said to God, "You did not want animal sacrifices or sin offerings. But you have given me a body to offer. ⁶ You were not pleased with burnt offerings or other offerings for sin. ⁷ Then I said, 'Look, I have come to do your will, O God— as is written about me in the Scriptures.' "

⁸ First, Christ said, "You did not want animal sacrifices or sin offerings or burnt offerings or other offerings for sin, nor were you pleased with them" (though they are required by the law of Moses). ⁹ Then he said, "Look, I have come to do your will." He cancels the first covenant in order to put the second into effect. ¹⁰ For God's will was for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all time.

¹¹ Under the old covenant, the priest stands and ministers before the altar day after day, offering the same sacrifices again and again, which can never take away sins. ¹² But our High Priest offered himself to God as a single sacrifice for sins, good for all time. Then he sat down in the place of honor at God's right hand. ¹³ There he waits until his enemies are humbled and made a footstool under his feet. ¹⁴ For by that one offering he forever made perfect those who are being made holy.

¹⁵ And the Holy Spirit also testifies that this is so. For he says,

THE STORY

Chapter 5

New Commands and A New Covenant

¹⁶ “This is the new covenant I will make with my people on that day, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.” ¹⁷ Then he says, “I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds.” ¹⁸ And when sins have been forgiven, there is no need to offer any more sacrifices.

I am just amazed when I think about The Big Story. God’s desire is to demonstrate His glory to the people He loves. He wants to make His people a reflection of His love. He wants to be with His people. He wants His people to learn to live and love. We (you and I) constantly fall short of this ideal. It sounds so good, but something in me starts to rebel. Even though I see that I should live like this I cannot. But God will not be thwarted. He provides a way for us to be forgiven. Where I could not fulfill the covenant He does. And he brings me into a new and better covenant. By His power, His Spirit changes my heart. He lives in me and through me.

So how should I respond?

- 1. Ask for and receive His forgiveness offered through the shed blood of Jesus.**
- 2. Believe that He is willing and able to forgive you and change you.**
- 3. Receive Him into your life. Build the relationship with Him that both you and He desires.**
- 4. Love God and Love People**