

Written on Stone. Written on the Heart—Character of God and Man Revealed.

Sermon Notes

June 5, 2022

I have heard it said that the codes of Law in the United States are the most elaborate and numerous in the entire world. A reactionary thought might be “So much for being a free country.” Having traveled the world, I have learned that well-structured and enforced laws do bring freedom for without it we would be a troubled society. William Penn once said that “With law there is liberty, without it there is chaos.”

Laws are written in response to a reality. Sometimes that reality is unique to certain regions or issues that have risen within a community. For example:

Alaska- Has a law against taking selfies with bears who are sleeping/hibernating. “Don’t poke the bear!” might need to be taught to this next generation.

California- You cannot cut down or move a Joshua Tree without facing a severe \$4k fine. It is an essential desert tree.

Florida- If you steal a horse, your action is punishable by hanging.

Pennsylvania- Has an entire manual for horse and buggy driving. BTW there is no legal age limit for driving a horse and buggy on PA roads.

Lititz Borough- Has a substantial code written about air guns. You cannot sell, purchase, or operate an air gun (BB Gun) in the Borough. The written ordinances concerning air guns is on par with codes concerning alcohol consumption.

We can raise our eyebrows about some of these laws, but there is always a reality that they are connected to, and the law reveals and addresses that reality.

What reality is revealed when God writes a set of laws known as the 10 Commandments?

1. You shall have no other God’s before me.
2. You shall not make any graven image that you worship as god.
3. You shall not misuse the name of God.
4. Keep the Sabbath Day Holy.
5. Honor you father and mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not give false testimony.
10. You shall not covet.

This decalogue reveals a holy God and a people who are not. It is in these laws that man falls short of being able to have a whole relationship with God, because he is holy and we are sinful. Holiness and sin are incompatible with each other. Therefore, these laws are essential to discover that we have a hindered and broken relationship with him, thus, we are in need of a rescue.

Does God truly hold all men responsible to his written laws when many people have never seen them?

God has revealed in Creation his intolerance of evil and his judgment to all people.

Romans 1:18-23

- God's punishment of evil is revealed to all. (18a)
- Men deflect or dismiss this reality by their indulgence in evil itself. (18)
- This suppression is reality as God has made it plain to all. (19)
- God has made his eternal power and divine nature accessible to all. (20)
 - Eternal power- that he is always existent and sovereign in power.
 - Divine nature- that he is a holy, righteous, and good God.
- Because this accessible to all there is **NO EXCUSE**.
 - There is enough evidence in creation to cause man to know who God and man's nature.

Mankind is held into account of the law even without the written law.

Romans 2:14-15

- Our conscience self-evaluates and convicts—"Law for themselves". (14b)
- It is written on our heart—our conscience. (15)

We know that we know that God is holy, and we are not.

We know that we know that we are at the mercy of God and cannot defend ourselves by our own merits.

The good news is that God knows this too and his love and justice worked together to reconcile that which was impossible for us to do.

God has provided the one way to have the conscience cleared and that is through faith in the life changing work of Christ!

Hebrews 9:14 " ¹⁴ *How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death,^[a] so that we may serve the living God!"*