

The Patio Pulpit for Wednesday, July 15
The Ten Commandments
Exodus 20:v.4-6

When Beverly and I went through Germany on three different river cruises, the tour guides would always take us to huge Roman Catholic Cathedrals, never once did they take us to a Protestant church building, just Roman Catholic Cathedrals, that were filled with very large statues of dozens of their saints, so called. It was pretty grotesque to us and very gawdy. The billions of dollars the Roman Catholics put into these centers of idolatry over the last 1800 years is staggering. The inside of these cathedrals contained enough pure gold to settle America's and ten other countries national debts.

We would watch the Roman Catholics in our tour group and the locals who would wander in touch the feet of some of the statues and say a very brief prayer. As those who know that Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father, I found the whole scene deeply offensive and dangerous and the kind of abomination God warned of in the commandment we will examine tonight.

The statues of Mary and Jesus and James and Thomas and some I had never heard of are called "Icons" by the faithful but they're the very idols God commanded His people not to make. So when we're examining the wording of this commandment, the second commandment, it's going to be important for us to remember that God was specifically addressing things man builds for himself specifically as objects of worship, things we build or carve or engrave with our hands called gods **or** the icons through which one can access their god and then bow down to or pray to or touch.

I want to caution you not to get caught up in the notion that something you might like and admire and love, such as your car or your big screen tv or your job or your family is an idol. And yes, I have heard each of these touted as idols. They are not. The love of money, now that's a whole different issue for some people as we're going to see tonight.

Exodus 20 and v.4

⁴ "You shall not **make for yourself an idol** (34:1, same Hebrew phrase, only this time it is Moses making for himself two new tablets), or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.

⁵ "You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,

⁶ but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

(Exod. 20:4-6 NAU)

I also want to caution you to remember that we are studying the ten commandments, the law of God or the law of Moses, a system that those who are in Christ do not live under. The law of Moses was given to the Jews, not we Gentiles. And **it wasn't given with the intention of saving anyone, but to point all to the One who can save everyone.**

We who are in Christ, both Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female, are under grace, not the law, and we are all children of Abraham and his heirs through faith since the New Covenant doctrine of grace teaches that no one will be justified by the law. We are justified by God's grace through faith in Jesus...period!

To be justified is to be declared by God to be right with Him on account of our faith in Jesus. It is an actual proclamation God speaks over those who come to faith in His Son. That's justification.

⁴ "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.

⁵ "You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,

⁶ but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

That's what God commanded Israel. That entire commandment and the specifics God lays out after the commandment and the consequences of worshiping an idol “ *visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me*, has to do with idols and doesn't introduce a nonsensical law of visiting just any or every iniquity of the fathers on the children. The iniquity of the fathers that is passed on to the children in its context is the worshiping of idols. Those who hate God are those who have chosen to worship idols rather than God. The reason I point this out is many preachers have taken the visiting-the-iniquity-of-the-fathers clause out of context and made it independent of the context. It's nothing more than a power grab to help them control their congregants. I know, I once considered joining such an assembly. God is specifically addressing the making and worshiping of idols made with the intent to worship and the price to be paid for doing so.

I would guess that most of you are familiar enough with our Constitution's First Amendment to know that even as we speak it is being taken out of context and abused by the violent protestors and anarchists in our cities and towns who are destroying historical monuments, killing our citizens, beating them, looting and burning all kinds of private businesses to the ground who ignorantly and absurdly say it's their First Amendment rights to do so. That is what happens when one takes any law or amendment or Scripture out of context. We make them say what we want them to say, we apply them as we wish to apply them.

Now, when God gave this commandment to Moses, and all of them in fact, the Israelites didn't know that God had commanded what He was commanding. They were clueless. And we're about to see why God would command this.

Well, when God was finished giving the ten commandments, He immediately began giving Moses all the ordinances the Israelites would have to follow, some 614 ordinances. And while the Israelites standing around the foot of the mountain got tired of waiting on Moses, they

commanded Aaron the high priest to build them an idol of gold for the specific purpose of worshiping it and declaring that this is the god who delivered us from slavery in Egypt (*Exod. 32:1-6 NAU.*) Coincidence? I don't think so. That was one of the reasons the law was added; that was one of many transgressions that was already in the hearts of the human race that God was exposing through the law. Gal. 3:19, 24; Rom. 5:20; 7. Their idol worship was already seething up inside them. The transgressions were in their hearts already.

I will close with this. Remember my referencing something about the love of money earlier? That can be a bona fide idol for millions of people who profess faith in Jesus and those whom these dupes follow. You know this. **2 Peter 2:1** *But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, you who? The church. who will secretly introduce (into the visible church) destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.*

² *Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;*

³ *and in their greed (which is idolatry. Check out Eph. 5:3 and Col. 3:5) they will exploit you with false words; (2 Pet. 2:1-3 NAU)*

Sound familiar? It should. These Word of Faith false teachers and false prophets of our day make up some of the most ridiculous stories possible to invent because they know the deceived and the perishing will believe them and send them their money.

This was written to pastor Timothy and pastor Johnny,

³ *If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness,*

⁴ *he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions,*

⁵ *and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.*

⁶ *But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment.*

⁷ *For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.*

⁸ *If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.*

⁹ *But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.*

¹⁰ *For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.*

¹¹ *But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.*

¹² *Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, (1 Tim. 6:3-12 NAU)*

Do you know why you and I are disciples of the Good Shepherd and not those who worship idols? It's solely because the Good Shepherd called us and His is the only voice we recognize. "My sheep hear My voice, and the voice of strangers they will not listen to or follow."