

Sermon: "Who is God? ... Part 2: The Ten Commandments/ Law  
and the Prophets" Lent 1 March 5th, 2017  
(Exodus 20: 1-21 ; Amos 5: 10-15, 21-27 )

Prayer: May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord,  
our strength and our redeemer. Amen .

1. Scan:

2. Two Engaging Questions:

a. H.M.Y. have ever heard of the Ten Commandments?

... (Put your hand up please.) **THANK YOU**

b. Where did you hear of them? .... (church, Sunday School, ... Anyone  
remember at school).... (Put your hand up please.) **THANK YOU**

3. Give name/ Name of Presentation: I am Allan Warren:

4. Acknowledgement:

5. W.Y.W.L & K.B.

What you will learn today:

- you will learn about the vertical and horizontal component to the Ten  
Commandments that talks about our love of God and our love of neighbour.

- you will learn about the division that happens in the nation of Israel because  
they forget about this Law that is routed in their own history.

- you will learn how the prophets try and bring people back on track to God's plan.

- You will learn about how our present Prime Minister was like the voice of a  
prophet during his tour of parts of Europe last month.

6. Earn the respect to teach ....

i. "Can I tell you a bit (story) about myself today?" **THANK YOU**

--- My dad ruled the roost with a fairly heavy hand. ... You did what you were told,  
and if you ever stepped out of line prepare for the consequences. .... That coupled  
with my dad's impatience and anger ... Left me with an image of God who was  
stern, unwavering, and if you ever stepped out of line, you were going to get

punished. ... And somehow, that image of God, was laid over the Ten Commandments. .. Those were the 'household rules' that you dare not break or you were in trouble and God was constantly watching, from above, for you to step out of line.

#### 7. State Change:

This morning, I want you to think of what kind of images or feelings, you associate with the Ten Commandments and the God who gave them. .... Do you understand the question? .... Try and find someone different to talk too today. ... Go. .... Please stop. ... **TY...**

#### 8. Message/ Info: (remember "suggestology")

When I think of the 10 Commandments, I think of them as "individual" in nature. ... A 'me and God thing', yet after looking into them this week, I realize they are much more community focused.

There is the vertical axis, having to do with our relationship to God -- no graven images, do not take the Lord God's name in vain, Sabbath rest. ... But we also need to recognize the horizontal axis having to do with our relationship with our neighbour. ... No killing or stealing. No false witness and family responsibilities. Honour your father and mother and do not commit adultery.

From the very beginning, God has laid out that you cannot separate a relationship to God from a relationship with your neighbours. ... It is as if God is reminding you, that the blessing God desires for you is connected to how you take care of those around you. .... Does that make sense to you? ... (Yea.)

The passage from Amos today is reminding people of that. In chapter 6 verse 4, Amos says, "How terrible it will be for you that stretch out on your luxurious couches, feasting on veal and lamb! ... You drink wine by the bowlful ... So you will be the first to go into exile." .... Why? ... Because of the indictments Amos mentioned in chapter 5. ... You have oppress the poor and rob them of their grain. ... You take bribes and prevent the poor from getting justice in the courts.

Micah mentions using lopsided scales in the market place, that again taking advantage of the poor. ... Price 'gouging'. Being unfair.

The 10 Commandments remind us that your relationship with God cannot be separated from how you treat your neighbour. .. Sibley Towner states that, "In function, the 10 Commandments can be compared to 10 post supporting the fence separating the viable community of Israel from the marauding beast of disorder, confusion, and howling bloodshed outside the pale."

Now interesting enough, these 10 Commandments, unlike case law, have no stipulations included for punishment if broken. What we haven't realized thought, is that maybe the punishment is the destruction of 'community life' which is a source of God's blessing. The commandments were given as a *gift of life* with God and one another, stretching out before them as they entered this new promised land God was going to give them.

Can I give you another brief Bible History lesson? ... In 1 Kings ch.12 an important water shed occurs. ... Remember how God rescued the Israelites while they were slaves in Egypt at the beginning of the book of Exodus? ... Well by the time 1 Kings rolls around, the elite, the business class, the king, had forgotten that lesson. King David's son, Solomon has just died. Solomon underwent an ambitious building program building a nice palace for himself and a beautiful Temple for God. Guess who did the work that made all that possible? ... **TY...** (Israelites) .... After he dies, his son goes to the 10 northern tribes to ask for their support. They ask, "How are you going to treat us. Life was hard for us under your father building your palace and the Temple. Are you going to take it easy on us or can we expect more of the same." ... In short his answer was, "You ain't seen nothing yet." .... So the ten northern tribes revolted and found a new king. .... (And hence an ongoing civil started in Israel, the 10 northern tribes against the 2 southern tribes and from 1Kings ch. 12 on, you will read of the Kingdom of Israel (10 northern tribes with a capital in Samaria) and the Kingdom of Judea (2 southern tribes with its capital in Jerusalem) who were often at war with one another.)

In the Exodus story, the oppressor was the King of Egypt. ... In 1 Kings ch. 12, the oppressor had become their own King. ... And hence the role of the prophet to remind the king, the elite, the entrepreneurs, that your relationship to God cannot be separated from how you treat people through the week. ... As Amos said in ch. 5 vs. 21 ... I hate your religious festivals. ... Why, because they are hollow sounds. .... If you want me to listen to your prayers, you must hear my words/ my commands and put them into action.

Do you remember what the 2nd commandment is? ... **TY**... (no graven images). ... One author commented, that God wishes that the faculty of faith be *not the eye, but the ear*. .... To listen to God's commands and put them into practice. .... Do you know what the only acceptable image of God is? ... **TY**... Human beings. .. So when we respect and care for one another, we are giving praise to God.

I was amazed at an article in the February 18 spectator about a speech that Justin Trudeau delivered to an audience of 400 politicians and business leaders in the opulent Hamburg City Hall in Germany last month. It was a black tie event. He said the politicians needed to do a better job of explaining the tangible benefits of agreements such as Canada's free trade deal with the European Union. ... No more brushing aside the concerns of our workers and our citizens. ... When companies post record profits on the backs of workers consistently refused full-time work--- and the job security that comes with it--- people get defeated. ... Increasingly, inequality has made citizens distrust their governments, distrust their employers ... And the anxiety of working people is turning into anger and politicians and business leaders need to take heed and take long term responsibility for workers, their families, and the communities in which they operate. For business leaders it's about thinking beyond your short term responsibility to your shareholders. ... It is time to pay a living wage, to pay your taxes. What do governments do with taxes? ... (Provide parks and libraries. Education and health care. ... The make good communities to live in.) .... And give your workers the benefits and peace of mind that comes with stable, full-time contracts.

After reading that article, I went "wow". ... In that instance, I think Mr. Trudeau was being a prophet. .... The Jewish Law, that is summed up in the 10 Commandments, is not about an angry God that can't wait to punish you when you step out of line, but is a 'gift of life'. ... The God who gave the commandments was one who heard the workers cries when they were oppressed, unjustly treated, slaves, building the cities of Pithom and Rameses for the King of Egypt. .... In a sense God was saying, if you don't want this to happen again, follow these guidelines to maintaining a sense of *community among you* through which you will be blessed. ... And the punishment for not obeying the "commandments", is the 'disintegration of community'. Or another name for that is 'exile' or chaos.

The commandments are laid out more fully in Exodus ch. 21 - 23 and Leviticus 25, -- treatment of slaves or workers, no interest loans to the poor, taking care of the foreigners in your midst, creating places of sanctuary. ... Does any of that sound familiar? .... Because when we don't, we get divided into different groups, with one group being angry, divided and fearful of another, which leads to violence, chaos and confusion, some of which was very evident in the last U.S. presidential election.

And again, remember the words of Amos. ... So you think keeping your head down, or keeping quiet in such evil times is the right thing to do. ... Don't make any waves. Maybe it will blow over. .... No. Make it your aim to do what is right, speak up, and see that justice prevails in the courts. ....

Wow! .... Who would have thought that such ancient stories could be so relevant to today. ..

The Ten Commandments. ... A vertical component that summarizes our relationship to or love of God. Then there is a vertical component that summarizes our relationship to or love of neighbour. .... Does any of this look or sound familiar? .... A vertical component and a horizontal component to summarize our love of God and our love of neighbour? ... **TY**... Yeah. It is the cross that stands behind me. ...

And in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus said he didn't come to do away with the Law of Moses and the teaching of the prophets but to fulfill them. .... To bring them to life. ... To internalize them. ... To write them on our hearts, so that the world that God desires might come into being around us, to bless us and the world God has made. .... Thanks be to God. Amen.

\*Hymn

**#528 VU**

"God of Life"