



The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: What Does God Ask of Us?
Part II: Follow His Commandments



Moses
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Introduction

[Greeting:] → Welcome to “The Armor of Faith,” a show where we hope to bring our listeners closer to the Word of God and the blessings we receive through living in the fullness of the Catholic faith. My name is Doug and I will be your host as we discuss the blessings of the Church Christ built upon Peter.

I am joined today by my panel: [names]

Helen is a lay-Dominican, which is also known as the Order of Preachers, and she, along with her husband Dan, have a love for music ministry. Sharon is our token cradle Catholic, and, as everyone knows by now, I am simply here to ask questions and mispronounce names, and boy do I have the opportunity today to pad my name mispronunciation world record. Anyway, to answer those questions and correct my mispronunciations is why we have our panelists, so welcome to our panelists as well as to our listeners.

Let us open with a prayer:

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Heavenly Father, we lift up our hearts in thanks and praise for this opportunity to open and share your Holy Word this day. We pray that You are with us and all our listeners as we share with one another the blessings of faith. We pray You will grant us wisdom and understanding as we seek to learn Your Holy Truth.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit we pray. Amen.

Discussion:

Last time, we discussed God's desire for our obedience. Especially when we live in what we call, “the land of the free,” this might seem foreign to some, that we are called to be obedient. The temptation placed before us is to reject this notion of obedience as counter to our freedom, but before we do, we should consider the purpose of our call to obedience to God.

The evil one would have us believe that by our obedience to God, we will miss out on something. The reality is, when we fall to the seductions of the evil one (and I say when, because of our concupiscence – meaning our strong personal desires), we separate ourselves from God. In other words, we trade fulfillment of worldly desires for what is possible for us through His eternal love. This choice should be simple for us, yet, because of our weaknesses, we struggle.

Today, we will discuss more about what God asks of us and the blessings of obedience to His commandments. If we examine them, we shall see a meaning and a purpose behind them – and it isn't just to keep us from having fun.

(Question 1: So, let's take a moment and look back in time as scripture reveals His commandments. Where do we first encounter a commandment of God and what was the nature of this commandment? What does this tell us about God?)

(Genesis 1:3)

Then God said: *Let there be light, and there was light.*

(Question 2: After creation of all which is visible and invisible, we encounter a different commandment of God. What was the nature of this commandment and what did it reveal?)

(Genesis 2:15-17)

15 *The LORD God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it.* 16 *The LORD God gave the man this order: You are free to eat from any of the trees of the garden 17 except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. From that tree you shall not eat; when you eat from it you shall die.*

- Free to _____
- Except what _____
- Consequence if _____

(Question 3: So, in Genesis 2:16-17, we observe that God gave Adam and Eve one simple instruction. As we go into Genesis 3, we see how things played out. What happened in this moment? What came into the world and what was lost?)

(Genesis 3:1-15)

1 *Now the snake was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He asked the woman, "Did God really say, 'You shall not eat from any of the trees in the garden?'"* 2 *The woman answered the snake: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; 3 it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, 'You shall not eat it or even touch it, or else you will die.'"* 4 *But the snake said to the woman: "You certainly will not die! 5 God knows well that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, who know good and evil."* 6 *The woman saw that the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eyes, and the tree was desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.* 7 *Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.*

8 When they heard the sound of the LORD God walking about in the garden at the breezy time of the day, the man and his wife hid themselves from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 The LORD God then called to the man and asked him: Where are you? 10 He answered, "I heard you in the garden; but I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid." 11 Then God asked: **Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat?** 12 The man replied, "The woman whom you put here with me—she gave me fruit from the tree, so I ate it." 13 The LORD God then asked the woman: What is this you have done? The woman answered, "**The snake tricked me**, so I ate it."

14 Then the LORD God said to the snake:

Because you have done this,
cursed are you
among all the animals, tame or wild;
On your belly you shall crawl,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.

15 **I will put enmity between you and the woman,**
and between your offspring and hers;
They will strike at your head,
while you strike at their heel.

- Free to _____
- Except what _____
- Temptation _____
- Disobedience _____
- Consequence _____

(Question 4: Of course we are all aware of the Ten Commandments, but that did not come about until the time of Moses. So, as we follow the lineage from Adam to Joseph, Son of Jacob, we see an escalating battle between good and evil. What did the decedents of Adam and Eve use to guide their path before God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses?)

(Genesis 25:1-5)

*I There was a famine in the land, distinct from the earlier one that had occurred in the days of Abraham, and Isaac went down to Abimelech, king of the Philistines in Gerar. 2 **The LORD appeared to him and said:** Do not go down to Egypt, but **camp in this land wherever I tell you.** 3 Sojourn in this land, and **I will be with you and bless you;** for to you and your descendants I will give all these lands, **in fulfillment of the oath that I swore to your father Abraham.** 4 I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky, and I will give them all these lands, and in your descendants all the nations of the earth will find blessing— 5 **this because Abraham obeyed me, keeping my mandate, my commandments, my ordinances, and my instructions.***

- Created in the image of God (as He is within us....written on our hearts)
- Appears to His chosen (often leaders who guide others)
- Speaks through His Angels and Prophets

(Genesis 16:7-10)

7 *The LORD's angel found her by a spring in the wilderness, the spring on the road to Shur, 8 and he asked, "Hagar, maid of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" She answered, "I am running away from my mistress, Sarai." 9 But the LORD's angel told her: "Go back to your mistress and submit to her authority. 10 I will make your descendants so numerous," added the LORD's angel, "that they will be too many to count."*

(Genesis 20:1-7)

1 From there Abraham journeyed on to the region of the Negeb, where he settled between Kadesh and Shur. While he resided in Gerar as an alien, 2 Abraham said of his wife Sarah, "She is my sister." So Abimelech, king of Gerar, sent and took Sarah. 3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream one night and said to him: "You are about to die because of the woman you have taken, for she has a husband. 4 Abimelech, who had not approached her, said: "O Lord, would you kill an innocent man? 5 Was he not the one who told me, 'She is my sister'? She herself also stated, 'He is my brother.' I acted with pure heart and with clean hands." 6 God answered him in the dream: Yes, I know you did it with a pure heart. In fact, it was I who kept you from sinning against me; that is why I did not let you touch her. 7 So now, return the man's wife so that he may intercede for you, since he is a prophet, that you may live. If you do not return her, you can be sure that you and all who are yours will die.

During the generations chronicled in Genesis until the moment in Exodus 20 where Moses receives the Ten Commandments, the people were not without guidance from God, but through the events chronicled, we observe both the righteous and the wicked, and while some are better than others, there are none who are perfect. The people apparently had difficulty with comprehension of what God asks of them, so God writes His commandments on stone for Moses to present to the people. Moses explains:

(Deuteronomy 30:15-20)

15 See, I have today set before you life and good, death and evil. 16 If you obey the commandments of the LORD, your God, which I am giving you today, loving the LORD, your God, and walking in his ways, and keeping his commandments, statutes and ordinances, you will live and grow numerous, and the LORD, your God, will bless you in the land you are entering to possess. 17 If, however, your heart turns away and you do not obey, but are led astray and bow down to other gods and serve them, 18 I tell you today that you will certainly perish; you will not have a long life on the land which you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. 19 I call heaven and earth today to witness against you: I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live, 20 by loving the LORD, your God, obeying his voice, and holding fast to him. For that will mean life for you, a long life for you to

live on the land which the LORD swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give to them.

(Question 5: I think Moses made it pretty clear for the people as to what will happen if they love and obey the Lord and what will happen if they turn away. **So how did it all work out?)**

As we continue our journey through the Bible, we see what seems to be the same story over and over. Things go well, then, the people forget their relationship with God, things go bad, God saves a faithful remnant, things go good, then the people forget their relationship with God...well, we should get the picture. Anyway, twenty-five books after the speech of Moses in Deuteronomy, we encounter this statement of God in the book of Jeremiah.

(Jeremiah 31:31-34)

*31 See, **days are coming**—oracle of the LORD—**when I will make a new covenant** with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. 32 It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors the day I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. They broke my covenant, though I was their master—oracle of the LORD. 33 But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days—oracle of the LORD. **I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people.** 34 They will no longer teach their friends and relatives, “Know the LORD!” Everyone, from least to greatest, shall know me—oracle of the LORD—**for I will forgive their iniquity and no longer remember their sin.***

(Question 6: Here, God reveals a new covenant to come. **What is the nature of this covenant and what does it foreshadow?)**

(Matthew 5:17-20)

*17 “**Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill.** 18 Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place. 19 **Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven.** 20 I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

(Question 7: After stating this, during the remainder of the chapter Jesus goes on to teach about anger, divorce, oaths, retaliation, and then, love of enemies. **As Jesus teaches us, what guide is He giving us?)**

(Matthew 22:34-40)

*34 When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, 35 and one of them [a scholar of the law] tested him by asking, 36 “**Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?**” 37 He said to him, “**You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.** 38 **This is the greatest and the first commandment.** 39 **The second is like it: You shall love your***

neighbor as yourself. 40 The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.”

(Question 8: So, Jesus was asked about which commandment was the greatest, but He responded with two. What did Jesus reveal when He said, “*The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments?*” What is the common theme by which we may evaluate our choices and actions?)

Love of God:

1. I am the Lord your God, you shall have no strange gods besides me
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord’s day

Love of Neighbor as Yourself:

4. Honor your father and your mother
5. You shall not kill
6. You shall not commit adultery
7. You shall not steal
8. You shall not bear false witness
9. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife
10. You shall not covet your neighbor’s goods

(Question 9: Earlier, we discussed the gift of freewill and consequences of our choices. What are some of the consequences we might expect from our disobedience?)

- Separation from God
 - ➔ His love
 - ➔ His wisdom
 - ➔ His kingdom
- Harm to others
- Harm to self

(Question 10: Obedience has consequences as well. What might we expect are the consequences of obedience to God?)

- Persecution
- Positive relationships with others
- A relationship with God
 - His love
 - His wisdom
 - His kingdom

Quotes:

– *Pope Benedict XVI (2006 Homily)*

The Ten Commandments “are not a pack of prohibitions, of ‘noes,’ but actually present a great vision of life. They are a ‘yes’ to a God who gives meaning to life (the first three

Commandments); a ‘yes’ to the family (Fourth Commandment); a ‘yes’ to life (Fifth Commandment); a ‘yes’ to responsible love (Sixth Commandment); a ‘yes’ to solidarity, to social responsibility, to justice (Seventh Commandment); a ‘yes’ to the truth (Eighth Commandment); a ‘yes’ to respect for others and for their belongings (Ninth and 10th Commandments).”

– Pope Francis (*Weekly Address, 28 Nov 2018*)

The Decalogue is [Christ’s] ‘x-ray,’ it is described as a photographic negative that lets his face appear - as in the Holy Shroud [of Turin]..... The Spirit lays down in our hearts his holy desires, which are the seed of new life.

Final Thoughts:

As we discussed today, God asks us to follow His commandments, not so we cannot enjoy life as the evil one would tempt us to believe, but so we may live free from the slavery and pain of selfishness and harmful behaviors. On the surface, it all sounds so simple, but as we continue the journey of our lives, we find some very complex situations, but if we understand what God asks of us, is it really that complex?

As we mentioned, if there is one guiding light which God gives us, it is love. To guide our decisions, then, we must ask ourselves what does it truly mean to love? The operative word here is, “truly,” for if we do not comprehend God’s truth, we will not comprehend His love. If we do not comprehend His love, then, how will we ever find a path to peace?

We are blessed God gave us the gift of freewill, but we must understand that such a gift also comes with responsibility. If we examine the meaning and purpose of His commandments, we shall find that we are better off through our obedience to them.

While we may face persecution in this world for our belief and our obedience to the Lord, we must remember two things. The first is that through our obedience, we become part of the tide which carries us to sharing the blessings of love. The second is, no matter the pain we receive in this world, through our efforts to live by His commandments, through the contriteness of our hearts should we fail, through the sacrifice of His only begotten Son, through His mercy and grace, we have the opportunity to be forgiven of our sins and cleansed of our iniquities so we may receive His embrace and walk with Him in His kingdom where love is shared by all, where there is no pain or affliction, and where evil is not allowed to follow.

Wrap Up: Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we Christian conduct.

Let us conclude with a prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to open and discuss Your Holy Word. We pray that as we go our separate ways, You will continue to walk with us and help us to see how we may put on the armor of **truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation**, and the **Word** of the gospel not only for the benefit of our lives, but also the lives of all who cross our path. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.

Thank you all and God bless.

Next Session: What Does God Ask of Us – Part III: Christian Conduct

References:

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