

“Why We Believe We Should Worship God Alone”  
(Exodus 20:3)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation: We’ve seen that we’re called

1. To a life completely set apart to the Lord.
  - a. We’ve also seen that He has given us a standard –
    - (i) The Ten Commandments –
    - (ii) Which haven’t been set aside
    - (iii) Now that Christ has fulfilled them.
  
  - b. Rather, He fulfilled them
    - (i) That He might write them
    - (ii) On our hearts by His Spirit,
    - (iii) So that we would become like Him.
  
2. The New Covenant isn’t the absence
  - a. Of a standard of righteousness,
  - b. It’s the power to keep that standard of righteousness
  - c. Through a changed heart (Heb. 8:10).

B. Preview.

1. Since this is true the commandments actually serve two purposes for us:
  - a. They teach us how to live a life devoted to God.
  - b. And they show us whether we are saved.
    - (i) We’re going to focus mainly on the first purpose.
    - (ii) But let me just note regarding the second,
      - (a) If the main difference between the Old and New Covenant
      - (b) Is that the Spirit writes the Law on our hearts,
      - (c) We can know that we are part of the New Covenant –
      - (d) *I.e.*, that we’re saved –
      - (e) When we see the evidence that it is:
        - (1) When we, like Jesus, delight in His Law,
        - (2) And keep it from the heart.
  
    - (iii) So as we go through
      - (a) What the different commandments teach us,
        - (1) Examine your heart
        - (2) To see if *the desire* to do these things is there.
  
      - (b) If it is, you’re saved.
      - (c) If it isn’t, you still need
        - (1) The saving work of the Spirit in your heart
        - (2) So that you can trust Jesus Christ,

(3) And bow the knee willingly to Him.

2. This evening,

- a. We're going to look at the first commandment
  - (i) Which is really the foundation of all that follow.
  - (ii) If you don't want to keep this one,
  - (iii) You'll certainly not want to keep the rest:
    - (a) The Lord says to you, "You shall have no other gods before Me" (Ex. 20:3),
    - (b) Or, which is the same thing, "You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only" (Matt. 4:10).
  
- b. We'll consider three things:
  - (i) That you must believe that God is.
  - (ii) That you must devote your life to Him.
  - (iii) And how this is to work itself out in your life.

II. Sermon.

A. First, you must believe that He is. The author to the Hebrews writes, "And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him" (11:6).

- 1. If you're going to take the true God as your God,
  - a. You have to believe He exists.
  - b. The sad thing is
    - (i) The evidence that He exists
      - (a) Is all around you.
      - (b) It's overwhelming.
      - (c) There's no possibility that He doesn't exist.
      - (d) And yet sometimes we find ourselves wondering
      - (e) Whether or not He really does.
      - (f) Why?
  
    - (ii) It's not a lack of evidence,
      - (a) It's because of sin,
      - (b) Because of our flesh.
  
  - c. Your flesh doesn't want you to see God
    - (i) Or to admit that He is.
    - (ii) Remember sin –
      - (a) At its root, in its essence –
      - (b) Is hatred against God.
      - (c) It instinctively knows that
      - (d) If you seek after God,
      - (e) That it will be destroyed.
  
    - (iii) The old man has a life of its own.

- (a) If it had its way, it would hide God completely from you.
  - (b) If it had its way, it would destroy you.
2. If you are to worship God alone,
- a. You must believe that He is.
  - b. If you are to believe
    - (i) With the kind of certainty
    - (ii) You need to honor Him,
    - (iii) You must fight against your flesh/the old man.
    - (iv) You must put it/him to death (Rom. 8:13),
    - (v) And you must be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18).
  - c. If you do, the evidence that He's given you –
    - (i) In the Creation,
    - (ii) In His Word,
    - (iii) In your own heart –
    - (iv) Will become so powerfully overwhelming
    - (v) That you won't doubt for a moment
    - (vi) That God is.
  - d. Our problem is mainly all the compromises we make
    - (i) With God's holy standards –
      - (a) Our love of the world –
      - (b) Continually weakens the Spirit's work in our hearts.
    - (ii) We need to repent of all our sins,
      - (a) Submit to all His commandments,
      - (b) Diligently use the means of grace,
      - (c) And then everywhere you look,
      - (d) You will see God!
- B. Second, you must devote your life to Him.
- 1. Knowing that He is isn't enough.
    - a. Even studying about God
    - b. And believing all you learn about Him isn't enough.
    - c. You must also take Him to be your God.
    - d. He must be the One
    - e. You commit your life to.
  - 2. Everyone has something they're devoted to.
    - a. The Lord has made us creatures of purpose.
      - (i) We need to have one.
      - (ii) Something to motivate us.
      - (iii) A reason to live.
      - (iv) Those who lack the necessary motivation  
End up doing nothing.

- (v) Those who lose purpose altogether
  - (a) Either die or commit suicide.
  - (b) How many have you heard of
  - (c) Or maybe even know
  - (d) Who when they lost their reason for living
  - (e) Ended their lives,
  - (f) Or when they lost that person or thing
  - (g) They loved the most and lived for
  - (h) Simply let themselves die
  - (i) Because they no longer want to live?

b. God needs to be *that* for you –

- (i) *Your reason* for living.
- (ii) *Your purpose*.
- (iii) It can't be anything else.
  - (a) It can't be your husband or wife.
  - (b) It can't be your children,
  - (c) Your house, your car,
  - (d) Your job, position, reputation, your bank account.
  - (e) It can't be personal fame and glory.
  - (f) It must be God.

(iv) You must devote your life to loving and serving Him.

(v) Whatever you have put before God in your life is an idol that has to go.

c. So ask yourself,

- (i) What are you living for?
  - (a) What moves you, drives you to do what you do?
  - (b) Where do you spend most of your time?
  - (c) What are you really seeking after?
- (ii) If the answer isn't God,
  - (a) If love for Him isn't what drives you,
  - (b) If He's not the One you're devoting your life to,
  - (c) Then you're guilty of idolatry:
    - (1) Whatever those idols are
    - (2) They need to go.
    - (3) God must be first.
    - (4) The Lord says, "You shall have no other gods before Me."
    - (5) You need to turn from that idolatry,
    - (6) Trust the Lord Jesus Christ,
    - (7) And follow Him!

C. Finally, how is this to work itself out in your life?

1. As we saw in our meditation,
  - a. You must love God most of all

- b. And put Him first in your life.
  - (i) You must honestly be able to say with the psalmist, “Whom have I in heaven *but You?* And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever” (Ps. 73:25-26).
  - (ii) Nothing can even be a close second.
  - (iii) Jesus said to those who followed Him, “If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:26-27).
  
- c. If you love Him, you will seek Him
  - (i) To know who He is,
    - (a) And what pleases Him.
    - (b) David writes, “O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; my soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, in a dry and weary land where there is no water” (Ps. 63:1).
  
  - (ii) You will want to know
    - (a) Everything that can be known about Him.
    - (b) Everything He has revealed,
    - (c) And you will love and embrace everything you learn.
  
  - (iii) You will prayerfully read the Bible,
    - (a) And you’ll learn from it.
    - (b) You’ll let it correct anything you might believe
    - (c) That isn’t true about Him.
    - (d) And what you do learn that is true
    - (e) You’ll think about throughout the day –
    - (f) As much as you’re able,
    - (g) And you’ll try to reflect
    - (h) As much as possible
    - (i) That same character in your own life.
  
  - (iv) When someone says something
    - (a) That isn’t true about Him,
    - (b) You will be jealous for His honor
    - (c) And be concerned enough
    - (d) To do what you can to correct
    - (e) Those false ideas –
      - (1) Of course, you’ll do it in the way
      - (2) That’s pleasing to God:
      - (3) In a spirit of gentleness (Gal. 6:1).
  
- d. More than anything else, you’ll want to know what pleases Him.

- (i) How He wants to be worshiped, so you can worship Him that way.
- (ii) How to honor His name
  - (a) In the keeping of your promises
  - (b) So that you can be careful in keeping them.
- (iii) How to keep His Sabbath holy, so you can keep it holy to Him.
- (iv) How to love your brothers and sisters in Christ,
  - (a) How to love your neighbor as yourself,
  - (b) So that you can love them that way.
- (v) Again, you'll read the Bible
  - (a) Listen to the sermons
  - (b) And let the Spirit teach you.
- (vi) When you are convinced of something He wants you to do,
  - (a) You will immediately embrace it
  - (b) And do your best to apply it to your life.
    - (1) So many Christians today are content just knowing what God wants
    - (2) So very few are willing to do it.
    - (3) You will do it.
- (vii) You'll also be suspicious of your own heart,
  - (a) Knowing it's always trying to deceive you
    - (1) Into thinking that what you want to do
    - (2) Is what God wants,
    - (3) Rather than the other way around.
  - (b) One of the reasons – not the only reason –
    - (1) There are so many differences
    - (2) Between what churches believe is this:
    - (3) We really don't want to do
    - (4) What the Lord tells us to do
    - (5) Because it's going to cost us
    - (6) More than what we want to pay.
    - (7) So we convince ourselves
    - (8) That He's really telling us to do
    - (9) What we want to do.
  - (c) The point of this commandment is
    - (1) You must be willing to pay
    - (2) Whatever God requires
    - (3) If you are to have the true God as your God.
  - (d) You can't do things your own way:
    - (1) You must do them His.

- (2) His ways are good,
- (3) They're the best.
- (4) They might not be the safest,
- (5) Humanly speaking, in this world,
- (6) But they are the safest
- (7) In the light of eternity.

(e) Don't forget that you must walk on His path

- (1) If you are to enter heaven at last.
- (2) Jesus says, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it" (Matt. 16:24-25).
- (3) "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*" (Matt. 7:21).

(f) If God is to be your God

- (1) You must follow Him.
- (2) If you are to enter heaven,
- (3) You must do the Father's will.

2. So first, judge your heart by this commandment:

a. Do you believe God exists?

- (i) Have you taken Him to be your God?
- (ii) Have you devoted your life to Him?
- (iii) Do you love Him?
- (iv) Are you trying to learn about Him?
- (v) And what pleases Him?
- (vi) Are you thinking about Him throughout the day,
  - (a) What He wants you to do,
  - (b) What honors Him,
  - (c) And are you doing those things?

(vii) Are you watching over your heart

- (a) And only allowing yourself
- (b) To do the things you know are consistent
- (c) With God's revealed will?

(viii) If these things are true of you,

- (a) They're fairly compelling evidence
- (b) That His Law is written on your heart,
- (c) That you're saved.

(ix) They won't be there perfectly.

- (a) We're all going to fail

- (b) To know and obey Him as we should.
  - (c) But they can only be there at all
  - (d) If His Spirit is present in your heart –
  - (e) If you have savingly believed.
- (x) The Lord says to you this evening:
- (a) Nurture that love.
  - (b) Guard it carefully.
  - (c) Stop doing the things that quench it,
  - (d) And you will be strengthened by the Spirit
  - (e) To live a life totally consecrated to Him.
- b. But He says to the rest of you
- (i) Who are really living for yourselves:
  - (ii) Come to Jesus,
    - (a) Trust in Him,
    - (b) Take His yoke on yourself,
    - (c) And learn from Him.
  - (iii) This is the only way
  - (iv) Your soul will be safe. Amen.

<http://www.graceopcmodesto.org>