

### THE GIFT OF THE LAW (Exodus 19-24)

As our walk through the Book of Exodus continues, we arrive with the people of Israel at the foot of Mount Sinai, this historic place where God would bless his people with the gift of the law.

**Now, it might seem strange to think of law as a gift.**

In our culture, we value freedom so highly that we often take an antagonistic posture toward laws, regulations and restrictions, but the good law of God is precious

Imagine, if you can what life might have been like, leaving the bonds of slavery, **wandering** through the wilderness, **wondering** at what each day should bring, **newfound freedom unknown by generations... the law was a gift**

What we have in **Exodus 20 is the decalogue or the 10 Commandments**, these 10 laws that will prove foundational not just for Jewish life, but also for Western civilization. It's important to understand, however, what's going on as the gift of the Law is given to Moses and the people of Israel

The Ten Commandments have a distinctive shape:

**The first four** commandments address humanity's **relationship with God**

**The last six** speak to humanity's **relationships with others**

**Jesus** illustrates this reality as he answers a question regarding the greatest commandment: **Love God. Love others.** The law and the prophets hang on these two commands.

**God gathered his people at Mt. Sinai and blessed them with a knowledge intended to shape them as a distinct community and a perpetual blessing**

**But, it's important to recognize** the way these ten commandments and the sum total of 613 laws in the Torah (the first five books of the OT) are shared. **They're part of a narrative** intended to illustrate **God's benevolence and His people's struggle with obedience**

More than a story of Israel's deliverance from slavery and the escape from an oppressed way of life, **the Exodus story is about God's blessing and His invitation to find new life in community marked by His wisdom**

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What's the best birthday gift you ever received?  
What made it so great?

The people of God arrived at Mount Sinai ready to receive a gift from the Lord, and He blessed them with the law. How was the law a blessing?

Is it easy for you to appreciate the gift of laws and regulations? Why/why not?

Why do you think God didn't start the Exodus story with the gift of the law?  
How did God's demonstrated love and power prepare the Israelites to receive this special gift?

Do laws and regulations typically work better in the context of a loving relationship?  
Are you more or less eager to honor someone's request when you know they love you?

This is a historic moment, and it's difficult to overstate its importance in human history.  
God gave to Israel out of His great wisdom laws to live by in love.

How can we live as children who receive this gift of God joyfully?  
How can we embrace this invitation to live as a distinct people and a perpetual blessing?

Pray for God's help to honor His words of wisdom and live together as a blessing to the world around you.