

# The Commandments of Grace

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 09 December 2018

Preacher: Alan Barts

[ 0 : 00 ] All right, good morning, One Harbor. Again, as Jesse just said, my name is Alan, and I am one of the pastors here. Thank you all so much for being here. You definitely all receive a great A for effort today with this beautiful weather we're having.

So again, horrific, I mean horrific, horrific weather, and thank you so much for being here. As Jesse said, we're continuing in the book of Exodus, our series. We work through books of the Bible, chapter by chapter, line by line kind of thing, and today we're actually finishing up the series. And some of you may be thinking, I thought there were 40 chapters in this book. We've only gone through about half, and you'd be absolutely correct in that thought. So yeah, we're going to work through 22 chapters of the Bible today.

So tighten your seatbelts. Let's get ready to roll, baby. Many of you, many of myself included, may have started this series with preconceived ideas about the book of Exodus from Hollywood. You know, movies we may have seen, the famous Ten Commandments, and Moses, and those kind of things. But the hope that we have had is that this is one part of the big picture presented through the whole Bible.

[ 1 : 08 ] That this book is relevant to us. It's not only relevant to the Israelites thousands of years ago, it's relevant to us. So this story is about our story of redemption. And how we are set free through Jesus.

But the story is almost done, honestly. The first half of the story is about the actual Exodus. Their deliverance from Egypt and how God provides for them in the wilderness.

And then the other half involves rules and laws. And precise instructions for the Israelites on how to build the tabernacle, the altar, the lampstands, what type of incense to use, how to sew the priestly garments, etc., etc., etc.

And God is essentially telling his people through these very precise instructions. Now that you are free, this is what and how I want your life to look like so that I may come and dwell among you. God's desire is to be with his people. To have this relationship with his people. His ultimate and prized creation. The most famous part of this second half of the book of Exodus is obviously the Ten Commandments.

[ 2 : 17 ] These could be considered like the U.S. Constitution, if you will. And the rules and regulations that follow would be like our federal laws that govern and elaborate on the Constitution in various and more specific instances.

Does that make sense? These commandments are one of the most popular and unpopular passages in all of Exodus. And I would say in all of the Bible. For example, we have and we see in the news all the time the war over the Ten Commandments in public places.

You know, courthouses, schoolhouses, other public places. You know, the ever popular separation of church and state kind of thing. This cultural tension we experience on almost a daily basis.

One thing is for certain. You're either one of two groups. You're either an A. Like this is your favorite part. Finally. Thank God we get to talk about laws.

I need more laws and boundaries in my life. I think that's going to be the vast minority. There might be one or two of you in here. Maybe we'll pray for you later on. Or B. It's the part that you dread.

[ 3 : 20 ] You actually lament about Christianity itself. Maybe you feel the problem with religions are all the rules. This feeling has probably originated or been inflamed by some annoying Christian family member or co-worker that loves to make you feel like you don't measure up.

Dot, dot, dot. Like they do. The holier-than-thou people. They say in no uncertain terms, if you dress like me, if you talk like me, if you act like I do, then maybe one day you'll be a successful Christian and accepted by God like me.

Maybe you grew up in a church, especially here in the South, the very popular Bible Belt, as we like to call it, that seemed to obsess over rules.

A church that you would call legalistic. And you picked this church. You picked one harbor church because you think, my God, finally a place that's all about grace.

Forget about the rules. We're going to talk about grace. Many of you have been hurt by churches that insisted you be perfect to be loved, which is impossible, which led to frustration, anger, and ultimately causing you to end up here, which I'm excited about, honestly.

[ 4 : 36 ] I'm excited about that. You're like, this is my kind of church. The pastor wears T-shirts and flip-flops in the summertime. And you may follow the ever-popular philosopher Kenny Chesney.

No shoes, no shirt, no problems. Right? That was for you, baby. The problem is, if we were a church that said God's laws were not relevant anymore, we would be something, but we'd not be a church.

We can't just abandon the laws of God, but we should talk about them because it's quite possible that many of us have got it wrong. I know I did.

You know, the truth is how you and I perceive many areas of our life will determine the outcome.

You're the glass half full, half empty kind of person. That perception is key.

We are also compelled to discuss the law because it does encompass almost half of the book of Exodus. We can't ignore the significance of them. Well, here's something.

[ 5 : 39 ] What if I told you this story is all about grace? That's my goal today, to help you really understand the correct perception of the law mentioned in this book.

So to do that, we have to look at what happened before. The preamble, if you will, to the Constitution. We're going to look at Exodus 19, verses 4 and 6.

It should come up on the screen. There you go. You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, past tense, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself, all past tense.

Now, therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine. And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel. That was God talking to Moses directly, giving him words to speak to the people of Israel. It's not until the next chapter, chapter 20, that we get the commandments.

[ 6 : 39 ] We start all these rules and regulations kind of thing. So, God's saying he loves them and he delivers them before their deliverance from Egypt and the Ten Commandments.

That's key right there. So what does that mean? It means something really, really amazing. This is the major thing. This is the thing I want you all to get, okay? I want you all to lean in and listen to what I'm getting ready to say here, okay?

This is the major point of the whole thing. We're not saved because we obey. We obey because we're saved. We're not saved because we obey.

We obey because we're saved. The story does not go, God's saying, if you keep these commandments, live a perfect life for the next six months, then I'll get you out of Egypt, part the Red Sea, and provide for you, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

It doesn't go like that, right? God didn't look down and go, look at all those rule keepers. Just look at them. You look at all them rule keepers. Aren't they perfect? No. The truth is we've learned through this series that many of the Israelites, they actually worshiped the Egyptian pagan gods.

[ 7 : 46 ] They longed to be back with Pharaoh after the Exodus in slavery and constantly accused God of failing. These people were not a bunch of rule keepers, i.e., you and I.

They were not a bunch of rule keepers. They were given the Ten Commandments and the remainder of the law only after they had been totally set free by God's power. Does this mess with your perception of the law at all?

Well, something happened to them. And then the law followed as a list of imperatives. Things they do.

The laws were what they were to do with their freedom. They didn't keep the law to earn God's love, salvation, and freedom. They were to keep God's law because he loved and saved him.

They were to obey out of gratitude, not out of striving. They couldn't do anything to earn love or salvation. All they could do is live differently in response to it. The importance of this cannot be

overstated.

[ 8 : 49 ] So in a nutshell, that's the difference. This is the main difference between Christianity and every other religion in the world. And I'll go as far as to say, you don't really understand Christianity until you see that something was first done for you, way before anything could be done by you.

Until then, you'll strive. You'll look and act like a good person. But in reality, you're going to ride this roller coaster of pride and despair.

You'll stop certain habits and you'll start new ones. You'll take part of the credit, but you will not understand Christianity. I hope that today, as we talk about the law, you'll finally understand grace for the first time.

Grace changes everything. We're going to get to that in a minute. Some of you might be thinking, hang on. So if all that happens before, then what's my motivation for actually keeping any of these laws?

You may be saying, I love this sermon. Some of you may be thinking, yes, party time. I live under grace, brother. Got my get-out-of-jail-free card, right? That's not where we're going with this.

[ 10 : 03 ] Just because the law wasn't a means to earn God's love doesn't mean it was pointless. So if you can't earn his love, then what is the purpose of it? God gave them laws to help them live out his love.

God gave them laws to help them live out his love. They couldn't repay him. They couldn't earn his love. But they could live differently as a result of his salvation and his love for them.

He reminds them of his love and salvation again in chapter 19 during the preamble because he knows they will want to flip reality and think somehow, some way, we can earn his love.

And then finally we get to the Constitution. We find that in Exodus 20, verses 1 through 17. These are the Ten Commandments. And God spoke all these words saying, I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth.

[ 11 : 08 ] You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers of the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath to the Lord your God.

On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male servant or your female servant or your livestock or the sojourner who is with you in your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day.

Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God has given you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that is in your neighbor's.

[ 12 : 23 ] These are the Ten Commandments and are followed by lots of laws. First off, let's run to this tension in the air. Commandments. Feels really harsh.

Who likes that idea? I don't. No one. And it starts out at such an early age. Shelly and I have a daughter, a two-year-old daughter named Ainsley, and she is a little innocent girl.

But I'm going to tell you what, she does not like to be commanded anything, much less act nicely to do something she does not want to. Her favorite term is no. Or her other tactic, which is my personal favorite.

I love this one right here. She just ignores you and keeps on going. I know she heard me. She'll kind of look out of the corner of her eye and then turn and she's gone. She will say, I got it.

I got it. By the way, isn't this America? Right? It's America. And God should have considered giving us ten ideas. Or even better, let's put them on a ballot and let us vote.

[ 13 : 29 ] Right? We don't like being told what to do. Advice is much better. God gave laws because, let's be real here, he's in charge.

Not us. Not I. Not us. So what's God doing here? Is he just being an old fuddy dud? There are things that we'd like to do, but he says, no.

Is it for no reason at all? That's just him. Big jerk in the sky. Nope. God made us. And he loves us. And he loves this world.

He made us. And he knows how this whole thing works best. Rules can be frustrating when you don't know the rationale behind them. My kids' favorite question when Shelly and I give them a boundary or rule is, why?

Why? I love that question. Because, because, son, daughter, we love you. We care for you. And we know more about life than you. God's saying the same thing to us.

[ 14 : 31 ] Some of the laws make sense and others don't. But the truth is they're all good.

Sometimes we don't like them because we only think about us. Sometimes they feel free.

Sometimes they feel restraining.

But if they come from God, they are always right and always good. If we are only going to obey when we understand or feel like it, well, then that makes us God.

Right? I'm not God. And neither are you. And we will end up in a world of hurt. While obeying God because he's God will be enough.

He is God. He's the creator of the universe. The creator of all. In kindness, God gives us the explanation. Instead of the ever popular phrase used by every parent during moments of frustration. Because I said so. Right? God gave laws so they could be in relationship with him. God was in a covenantal relationship with them.

[ 15 : 31 ] He loved them. And they were to love him back. Being his treasured possession. As he mentioned in chapter 19. They had been in a terrible relationship that was abusive.

And evil. And God needed to help them learn how to live in his perfect love. You got to think about that. Think about how you would respond to that.

If you had been in slavery for hundreds of years. Generations of your family had lived and died in this abuse. Where there was no love.

There was no value for life. That was their life. That was their normal. That's all they knew. They had no idea how to act or even respond to perfection.

Additionally, the imagery here is God actually marrying his people. And teaching them what pleases him and what displeases him. This is actually a healthy relationship. For those of us that are married, we know that's a good thing.

[ 16 : 34 ] Communication. I really don't like the way you put the toilet paper on there. You know? You need to roll the toothpaste up. Kind of thing. Squeeze it from the bottom. Those kind of things.

They may be picky. And miniature. But, yeah. They can lead to some interesting discussions.

Believe me. I'm speaking from experience. He just didn't want to set them free.

He wanted to live with them. We see in Exodus 25, 8. It says, And let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell in their midst. God is saying, I don't want to leave you even for a moment.

I want to be with you always. But for us to be in relationship with a holy God, we have to learn what he loves and what he hates. Not just about him.

God gave laws for their own good and the good of others. See in Matthew 22, Jesus sums up the law by saying, Love God and love others.

[ 17 : 33 ] Right? Look what happens when the rule of law is lost. Businesses are looted. Crime becomes rampant. The sanctity of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are thrown out with the garbage.

We are by nature cruel people towards those we don't like or understand. These laws help prevent the oppression of others. You don't get to have someone else's wife.

You don't get to steal their stuff. You don't get to bear false witness against them, lie against them.

You don't get to covet all their stuff. And by the way, you don't get to kill them either. But there was more to these laws than just keeping or making life better.

Now this may feel a bit natural to you, but it wasn't to them. Loving the one true God and loving others, including the weak, the outcast, the foreigner, etc., was anything but normal in Egypt.

The Egyptians, the Pharaoh and the inner circle, if you will, they rested. But the Israelites and the servants and those kind of things, they worked seven days a week, all day long.

[ 18 : 40 ] They didn't know what a Sabbath was. So God gave laws so that the world could see his character. In Exodus 19, 6, it says, You shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

So before God gives them the law, he tells them the purpose. He gives them the reason behind it. This is still what so many Christians seem to lack in life. You are who you are because God wants to use you in unique ways.

Right? They're priests. They're a holy nation. God wanted them to stand out. The world is broken. It's pursuing and worshiping stuff.

Sex, power, oppressing the weak, drowning in brokenness and sin. So God gives three laws regarding not worshiping other worthless stuff. One about resting, and six about how we treat people.

Honor your parents. Don't kill, commit adultery, steal, covet, or lie. Ensure rest for the weak. This is not the way of the world. God wanted them to live as a nation in contrast to Egypt.

[ 19 : 49 ] They weren't just free. They were radically different. They let everyone rest. Not just Pharaoh. Not just his royal leaders. Everyone rest. They cared about the weak and the marginalized of society.

Does that sound familiar? Exodus 21, 16 said, Whomever steals a man and sells him, and anyone found in possession of him shall be put to death.

That's no joke. Exodus 22, 21 and 22 says, You shall not wrong a sojourner or foreigner or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.

You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. Slavery, oppression, take advantage of the weak. No. We are called to help those in need, not stand on the sideline and watch.

They were, and we are, to live in opposition to these things. God wanted his people to love him and others, which meant that the rest of the world, full of cruelty and oppression, would see something in this community of faith that would be totally new.

[ 20 : 58 ] God was setting his people apart, calling them to be the example of how life was originally intended. Others would say to them, you give everyone a day of rest.

You stand up for the weak and oppressed. That was radically different. Well, you may be sitting here this morning thinking that is all well and good, but I'm not an Israelite, and this is 2018.

Well, in the New Testament, we find this idea all over again through the church. Us, through the church. 1 Peter 2.9 says, and think about these words because it sounds really familiar from what we just read.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

That's you and I. That's not the Israelites, Jews. That's not thousands of years ago. That's today.

This is one of the reasons why we say every week, at the end of every service, push back darkness.

[ 22 : 07 ] It's one of the phrases we use. Because we are called to be the light in a very dark and oppressed world. God wanted his people to stand out. In that culture back in the day, it was a sin punishable by death for a woman to commit adultery, while men were actually encouraged.

It was kind of an expected kind of thing. The command to not commit adultery was a radical change in mindset. By the way, does our culture experience this?

You bet. And it's having devastating results on families, children, and many other innocent victims. God knows that sin is not like a bullet that only has one victim.

It's like a bomb that affects many lives with no regard to innocence or guilt. God knows that sin is not like a bullet that only has one victim. If you are thankful for the Me Too movement, I'm going to tell you something.

God is too. God is saying, I'm going to hold all of those involved accountable. He wanted his people to resist injustice and care for everyone.

[ 23 : 13 ] Well, this sounds good and all. Good for me. Good for others. How do you think they responded? Probably like we would have. Exodus 24, 6 and 8.

And Moses, and this is going to be a little something right here, so I'll get to it in a minute, all right?

And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. Then he took the book of the covenant, the rules, and read it in the hearing of the people.

And they said, this is their response, all that the Lord has spoken, we will do, and we will be obedient. And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, behold the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.

Let's do this. We're all in to the end of time, right? Right? Right? Just delivered out of Egypt, just delivered out of hundreds of years of slavery, parting of the Red Sea, all these plagues, manna, quail, water from a rock, all these great miracles.

They're all in. In their day, just to explain this blood thing, in their day, covenantal agreements would be ratified by an animal sacrifice and both parties being covered.

[ 24 : 31 ] With Moses covering the altar and them with the blood, it was meant to symbolize what should happen to either party if they did not keep their end of the bargain.

That's how serious this was. They should die if they did not keep their end of the bargain. Now let's put this in today's terms. Could you imagine if we went to buy a car or a house, and after signing all 500 documents, what it feels like, the finance manager pulled out a bucket of blood and threw it on you?

I don't know about you. I'm not sure if I would ever finance a car. We could assume that with such a dramatic statement, this agreement would last at least for a while. You know?

Well, Exodus 32, just a few chapters later, they make a golden calf and worship it. They make an idol. They worship and bow down to something else.

They proclaim that this piece of metal is responsible for saving them. What happens next?

Honestly, it must not be read without hearing a motion from God Almighty.

[ 25 : 39 ] In Exodus 32, 7 through 10, And the Lord said to Moses, Go down, for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves.

They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them. They have made for themselves a golden calf and have worshipped it and sacrificed to it and said, These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.

And the Lord said to Moses, I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now, therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them, and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you.

God's rules aren't just broken. It sounds like his heart is, too. Just like when you cheat, you break someone's heart. Our sin causes deep and painful separation between us and God.

Before Moses can even make it down from the mountain, they've blown it. How often does that happen to you and me? Weekly, we sit here and hear fantastic music and halfway decent preaching and say to ourselves, I am going to change.

[ 26 : 57 ] I am never going to... You fill in the blank. God showed them his love. The way to live that would lead to flourishing. And gave them a mission to show the world what he was like.

Let's do it! And immediately they failed. I've been there many, many times. This is not a once-off thing in the history of the nation of Israel.

It's actually the history of God's people. We see this over and over and over again. You read the Old Testament, the stories of God's provision coming through. The Israelites rallying. We're going all the way, brother.

And a short time later, they fell. They turned. Their hearts constantly wondered. And so do ours. In fact, the Bible tells us that this is actually another purpose of the law.

To reveal our inability to keep it. The law works to expose our need for mercy and grace. We break these commandments over and over again.

[ 27 : 57 ] I heard one guy, a preacher say that the Ten Commandments are like ten huge canons that will blow every argument you have out of sanctification, self-righteousness, out of the water.

And it's very true. And then Jesus comes in, and he takes it to another level. 1 John 1.8 says, If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

God proclaims again and again that we are all very, very guilty. Romans 3.10-12 says, None is righteous. No, not one. No one understands.

No one seeks for God. All have turned aside. Together, they have become worthless. No one does good. Not even one. None of us, out of the billions and billions of people, will make it by keeping the law.

Romans 3, continuing on, 19-20. Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.

[ 29 : 01 ] For by works of the law, no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. Maybe this is news to you.

You learned the Ten Commandments, and to your knowledge, you're doing just fine. I haven't killed anybody. I've never committed adultery. I don't lie, cheat, steal, or date girls that do.

Maybe this is news to you. I think the biggest thing many miss is that God sees everything. I think many of us don't realize that he's able to see our thoughts, our desires, and he counts them.

He looks at the heart. Matthew 5, 27 and 28. This is Jesus coming in. He says, There went half of the room.

And then another one. To get angry is the same as committing murder. There went the other half. Yes, I was both.

[ 30 : 16 ] The law is perfect. But what it does best is expose how messed up we are and how incapable we are of being good. It's beautiful.

It's perfect. But the law is not sufficient to save. With just the law, we are left naked and exposed as guilty before a holy God who hates any ounce of sin and must destroy the sinner.

That's why the law is not the whole story. Thank God it's not the whole story. It's just the first act.

Galatians 3, 10. Paul is saying, For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse, for it is written, Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law and do them.

We stand cursed like they did with blood all over them. But Paul says, That's not the end because there's an act too.

This is the part of the story I bet a lot of you have missed. Galatians 3, 13 says, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

[ 31 : 25 ] For it is written, Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree. The law just doesn't expose us. It drives us to Jesus.

It doesn't just expose us. It drives us to Jesus. An interesting thing happens after Israel worships the golden calf. Moses tries to step in and atone for their sin.

He tries to take all their sin on himself. He tries to be the savior of Israel. Exodus 32, 30 through 33 says, The next day Moses said to the people, You have sinned a great sin, and now I will go up to the Lord.

Perhaps I can make atonement for your sin. So Moses returned to the Lord and said, Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold.

But now, if you will forgive their sin, but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written. But the Lord said to Moses, Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book.

[ 32 : 29 ] Moses wanted to do a noble thing, but he couldn't, because he has sinned. Matthew 5, 17 says, Do not think that I have come to abolish the law.

This is Jesus. Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. Jesus stepped in and took what we deserved in our place.

Jesus, the perfect one, could. He could. Intercept our punishment. Grace equals getting what you don't deserve. That is intended for another.

2 Corinthians 5, 21 says, For our sake he made him to be sin, Jesus, who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The great exchange. Jesus obeyed the law perfectly to save us who were cursed. That's why Jesus hung out with such morally wretched people. He said, The sick need a doctor, not the healthy.

[ 33 : 31 ] Not just because he was with them, but because he obeyed in their place. We don't just need the law. We need a friend. We need a savior. Moses came down in a rage, breaks the stone tablets, and grinds up the golden calf, making them drink their bitter rebellion.

Jesus, in love, drinks that bitter wrath of God in our place. Jesus tells his disciples to rejoice that their names are written. It should have been us drinking that bitter cup of wrath.

It should have been us blotted out from any future with God. But we have a God who did the unthinkable. A God who died in our place so that we could get what only he deserved. Continuing on in Romans 3, 21-24, it says, But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it.

The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified by his grace as a gift. through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

If you're here today and you're not yet a Christian, I'll give you some advice. Don't try to keep the law of God before you're a Christian. Don't try to earn God's love and affection by your obedience.

[ 34 : 56 ] Not just because it's impossible. It's also offensive if you think about it. Galatians 2, 21 says, I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

You're saying that the perfect creator of the universe came for no reason. You could do it yourself. You could earn it. Acknowledge you're a great sinner, but hear that Christ is a great savior. He has done what you could not do on your own. He's a friend to all of us sinners. He loves and obeyed for us. And he did it in your place.

He did it in my place, in love. All you need to do is respond. If you're here and you're already a Christian, John 14, 23 says, if anyone loves me, he will keep my word. Don't be foolish. Obedience is still important to Christians. But don't hope in the law. Hope in Jesus. Don't use your freedom as an excuse to sin.

[ 36 : 02 ] Keep being blown away by mercy and grace. Keep depending on the Holy Spirit to help you live in response. We do that through celebrating and remembering through communion.

It's a feast that we take on a weekly basis. Symbolizing the broken body of Christ and the bread and the shed blood through the juice. It's that Moses sprinkled God's people with blood and the sprinkled blood condemned them as a curse.

They broke the covenant. We have broken the covenant. The book of Hebrews says that Jesus sprinkles us with blood. That doesn't condemn us.

It redeems us. It's a new covenant based on him. He obeys in our place out of love so that we can live for him. So that we can actually go and show the world what he's like.

It's what this whole Exodus story has been about. It's our story of redemption in Jesus. It's a gracious sacrifice for you and I. He's the Lamb of God whose blood takes our place so death could pass over us and we could go free.

[ 37 : 14 ] He's our deliverer and he has fulfilled the law perfectly in our place. So we come to communion. It's a symbol of the new covenant. We don't pretend we're all law keepers.

We come confessing and are wondering and are worshiping of worthless junk. We come to the Savior and boast in our need of saving. Grace and peace multiply to us instead of law and condemnation.

Dear God, we're just so thankful that you did willingly choose to bridge that gap between our sinful lives and your perfect holiness. And we're thankful for this story of Exodus where we see you come in and prove how good you are, how steadfast you are to us and to the Israelites long before they did anything that even resembled being good.

God, I pray that that would strike home with us today and that we would take home the importance of grace and that you coming and freely bridging that gap gave us hope for not only today and tomorrow but for all of eternity that we can spend that with you.

God, may you be honored today. God, may lives be changed today. May we stop living this lie of trying to earn your grace.

[ 38 : 40 ] May we stop trying to be perfect. May we realize that we are sinners saved by grace. Run to you thankful that you give us laws that we can abide in being with you.

We know you want to dwell with us and we're thankful for that, God. We're thankful for who you are and what you've done with us today and what you're going to continue to do with us and through us. May we be on mission proclaiming the good news to all who come in contact with us, our neighbors, our family members, our co-workers, wherever because you are worthy to be praised and we're thankful for that, God.

In your name we pray. Amen. Amen.