

RENEWING OUR IDENTITY AS GOD'S PEOPLE

Exodus 20:1-17, The Ten Commandments interpreted for today

Then God spoke all these words:

2 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; ³you must have no other gods before me. Promise me you won't do it. Don't break my heart.

4 You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a faithful God, committed to you for life and beyond... Don't break my heart by giving your heart to things unworthy of your love and loyalty... Don't make money or success or popularity or other people your god... Don't make fear or revenge or anxiety or bitterness or sadness your god. Don't you know relationship with me rooted in my love is better than any of that?

7 You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses God's name. Don't make promises you're not prepared to keep, please... Don't say you love me and you're one of my people in heart and soul, in bodily strength, in thoughts and values, and then throw all that under the bus when you get triggered or distracted. Come back to me always and see how I can renew and strengthen you from within... There's always room for your return in the vastness of my love. I will never forsake you...

8 Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. ⁹For six days you shall labour and do all your work. ¹⁰But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work... ¹¹For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

Whether you take Sabbath on a specific day or specific times and seasons, you must honour your need to refresh your soul and cultivate your spirit... And you must give space and value to the people around you for them to honour Sabbath time too... And you must give space and value to all living things to have time to refresh and renew - the soil beneath your feet, the air that you breathe, the trees, the animals...

Sabbath is a must for all living things because grounding life in me is the source of true life, wisdom and flourishing...

12 Honour your father and your mother... Those who have given you life as wonderful or imperfect, beautiful or flawed as they've been or are... and as grateful or as bitter as you are and in need of finding your peace in relation to them... Honour those who gave you life and the life they gave you...

13 You shall not murder, hate, mistreat, or neglect those in need around you.

14 You shall not commit adultery but be true to your word, your commitments, your faithfulness and your trustworthiness with the people around you.

15 You shall not steal, take or consume what needs to be shared... Run from greed and keep it far away, for it will destroy you and all that is truly sacred.

16 You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour. You will speak truth with kindness and you shall speak with care and compassion even toward those who are against you. Sure this is super difficult, but that's why you have me to come to in prayer for inner strength, courage and renewal when you fall... For if you lose my love in your heart you've lost your greatest treasure.

17 You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbour. If you desire something more and see how well your neighbour is doing, rejoice with them and find peace in what you are able to do for yourself. May the good fortune and welfare of your neighbour motivate you to rise higher and find gratitude and peace in your life rather than seek ways to bring your neighbour down.

These laws I give you are meant to help you live together in love, joy and peace, because as you need me, you also need each other and you need the animals, the trees, the water, the soil and all living things... Treat them with special care as I treat you and care for you and you will flourish in this world, making of it truly a garden... But as you fail and fall as you will, come back to me before things get so bad the chasm will feel insurmountable... Don't go back into exile or slavery, live life free and flourish through my love and my Spirit... Amen.