Dear Reader,

I am new to producing reading sermons. So, if you have any suggestions as to how I might improve my format or what I include – please email me at cdanielwilson@gmail.com. **I will warn you, that I do not use short sentences**. I will endeavor to work on this over time, but I don’t naturally write that way. However, you can easily break most of my longer sentences into 2 or 3 smaller ones where I have “…” or “–“ or commas. If you do the work on making it into smaller sentences – feel free to email it to me, and I am happy to share your work with others. I do have some of these available which people have sent me. I will eventually make them available as part of the normal manuscripts.

I have left my sermon manuscript formatted the way I normally write and read my sermons. They are colourful and written in conversational English. If you are a grammar nazi – then you will be frustrated with my punctuation and phrasing. However, once you read it out loud, you will normally be able to tell what I meant to say. SERIOUSLY, READ IT OUTLOUD. You will also see that I use a good bit of bold, italics, underlining and different colours to signal what are the most important things to say, and also to make it easier for my eye to pick up my place in the middle of paragraphs. I would recommend that you keep as many of those things as possible to help you keep your place. However, you will probably want to increase the spacing between lines. I highly encourage you to commit as much of the introduction or children’s illustrations to memory as you can, so that these can be delivered to the congregation with maximum eye contact.

**Where possible, I highly recommend that you listen to the sermon as I preached it at either the Nelson website or the website of North Shore.** I recommend that because that will also help hear the places where I added or skipped over material in the manuscript, and the places where I clarified my meaning. I have edited bits and pieces which I thought most important, but I have not sought to include all the additional material that comes to me while in the pulpit. I would practically have to use a transcription service for that. However, I hope and pray that this sermon will be a blessing to you and to your congregation. To God be the Glory!

Blessings in our Lord, Pastor Daniel Wilson

**My Suggestions for the Order of Service**

Song before the service: #2 **Heidelberg #43 *LAW#4***

Brothers and Sisters**, We are not here because of our own righteousness/goodness, but because our help is in …**And Receive God’s Greeting: Grace, Mercy and Peace from God the Father, Son & Holy Spirit. ***Amen***

*Let us now joyfully sing to Our God,* **a Song of Praise: #152“Come thou Almighty King”**

**For our Call to Confession:** Over the last month, we have begun looking at God’s Law in the AM/PM evening services. We have seen that Idolatry is any wrong priority which takes God’s place in your life: Your Work, fun, money, pleasure – if they are more important to you than God is… that is idolatry! Perhaps you excuse sin by saying: “God is love, He won’t care if I lie or do my own thing… He would want me to be me!” Um, No! THAT is a false image of God! If you live like a Christian on Sunday and live like a pagan at work – then you are living the blasphemous life – profaning the NAME of Christ with your actions!

The Law of the Lord is intimately connected, and we regularly fail to live as God requires. **But when I tell you that – it shouldn’t cause you to despair or groan! If you are right with your Lord, when I remind you of your sin, it should drive you to repent with hope and joy!** Your Response to Conviction is 3-fold: RECOGNIZE, REPENT, and REJOICE! Then you can say, “Thank you LORD, that my salvation doesn’t rest on my actions, but on the perfection of Jesus!!” Seeing your sin, leads you to repent and turn away from it, so that you might rejoice in God’s salvation in Christ! *And so, let us rejoice in God’s salvation now, as we sing a song confession:*

**Sing: #32 – How Blest is He whose Trespass has freely been forgiven!**

**Congregational Prayer**

**As surely as you have confessed your sin by faith in Christ, so surely you are forgiven!**

**Scripture Reading: Hebrews 12:12-29**

**As *an act of worship, let us now, joyfully and obediently return to the Lord a portion of that which He has given to us!*** Let us worship with God’s tithes/freewill offerings ***(as Deacons come)***

**\* Song of Preparation: #452“On the Good and Faithful,** *God has set His love***”**

**Sermon Text: Exodus 20:1-6 Sermon Title: *Reason to Obey***

***Let us respond to the sermon,* \* Song of Response: PSALM #475 “When we walk with the Lord”**

***May the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ , & the Love of God the Father, & the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.***  ***Doxology*: Psalm #146 Vs.4**

# **Morning Sermon: “The Reasons to Obey the 2nd Commandment ”**

Text: Exodus 20:4-6

Reading: Hebrews 12:12-29 *(NT pass. Shows Law is not irrelevant, we come to God only thru Christ, Greater warning God consuming fire)*

 **Introduction:** I would like to begin this evening with a bit of a Television lesson – Do you know what it means when your TV says “contrast ratio”? The contrast ratio is the difference between the brightest white and the darkest black colors your TV or Computer monitor can display. A television with no contrast would be a single color screen with no detail at all... The lower the contrast the more similar the colors will be (blurry images) – a high contrast TV gives a SHARP image, there are distinct lines between different shades/colors! ***Higher contrast, more realistic/accurate the image***

This is a useful illustration for what we see in God’s Law… for in the Law we see the contrast between God’s character and sin, ***between His justice and His mercy*** – The more stark the contrast, the better – for we see God more clearly when we see not just a blurry grey image of grace/justice, but a full sharp 10million color high contrast image showing His justice fulfilled in Christ that He might show His WHITE covenant love to Black Sinners!

(**Review**) Thus far in our series we have seen that God forbids worshipping/serving/trusting anyone or anything in His place – in the First commandment we are called to Worship only the True God of the Bible. Last week, we saw that God restricts HOW we worship Him… He forbids us from worshipping Him as we see fit, and commands us to follow only His instructions in His Word. God’s Word alone defines who He is and how we should think of Him!

***This morning, we continue the sermon we started last week, and so we’ll summarize the 2nd com. in the same way: You shall not use idols/images of God in worship at all, because God is Jealous, Just & Merciful.***

Last week we looked at the ***Regulation of God’s Worship,*** *but this evening we will look at the second heading under this commandment:*

1. **Three Reasons to Obey** (*which means that those three reasons are our main headings for this message*)
	1. **God’s Jealousy**
	2. **God’s Justice**
	3. **God’s Mercy**

*If you are taking notes in a book, you can note this as the second major heading under the 2nd Commandment:*

**THREE REASONS TO OBEY:** *The first reason to obey is:*

# **God’s Jealousy (REPEAT)**

*We see in verse 5:* **I the LORD your God, am a Jealous God!**

***Later in Deuteronomy 4:24 God explains:* For the LORD your God is a Consuming fire, a Jealous God.**

 How are we to understand this? We normally only take the word Jealous in a negative sense, don’t we? If you were in an argument and someone said, “Oh Yeah, Well you’re just Jealous…” That is an insult! But the Hebrew word used here has a lot more depth to it than ours… This idea of God’s Jealousy is not bad thing. God is not wrong or evil for being jealous. You see, we use this word nearly exclusively as envy or coveting (you are jealous because I have something that you want…). The Hebrew word has that meaning half the time it is used, but it also has the meaning **of zealous:** ***both keen & active re: rights.*** Therefore, GOD’S Jealousy can be seen both positively and negatively.

* 1. **Positively – God is Jealous FOR His people**

He is jealous **For them** in the sense of being zealous to see them cared for! He wants His people to get their rights (whatever is owed them…). For example: in Zechariah God Says that: *He is jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a Great Jealousy.* In the context of that passage, God is telling His people that He is angry at the nations who have abused them, and He is going to avenge them. God had compassion on Judah & Jerusalem and protected/blessed them.

In this type of Jealousy, God is delighting in us as His people: His children, and like a good Father He is zealous to provide for us. The other analogy God uses often is He calls us: His bride/wife, and He is the husband who would fight to protect His wife from danger! We want God to be Jealous on our behalf in this way!

***In the 2nd Commandment, God is Jealous to protect HOW we view and Think of Him because that is the way that He protects us!*** God’s rules are not given to keep you from fun, but to bless you and protect you from the death of Sin. If you think of God in any way that isn’t true or Biblical, those false ideas of God will lead you to sin or pain. For example, if you think that God doesn’t keep His Promises or that He doesn’t answer your prayers – then you will feel unhinged or distant from God! If you believe that you must earn your way with God, then you will feel the stress and burden of performance which will crush you! God wants to protect you not only from false Gods, or false worship, He is also Jealous to protect you from false ideas or views of Himself – which might tempt you to sin or cause you pain!

* 1. *But:* **Negatively – God is Jealous OF His People**

This is the Jealousy we are more familiar with… God is the Jealous husband who refuses to have His bride cheat on Him by idolatry. God doesn’t want his people to pray to a false God, to worship Him wrongly, or to even imagine Him as something other than who He is! For to do any of these things is to betray Him! *If a wife is cheating on her husband, or if she is flirting with other men (inappropriate touch/words) – a true HUSBAND Has Every Right to be Jealous because his wife’s affection belongs only to him!* ***Our culture thinks such jealousy is wrong (***and sometimes it gets out of hand***) but the basic concept is NOT wrong! (*Jealous husband is good*) God is righteous in His jealousy because we belong to Him by covenant!***

Now, you may be wondering – wait, aren’t we talking about reasons to obey the 2nd commandment?

 **The First reason we obey God’s worship regulations is because He is rightly a Jealous God.** We belong to him (as children or as His bride) *either analogy* proves that we must remain true & submissive to Him as our God.

 **Application:** **BUT** How does God’s Jealousy affect your Christian walk? It is better to cut off friendships, worship practices or hobbies that you enjoy/desire rather than to test God’s Jealousy… A wife shouldn’t flirt with other men just enough not to make her husband jealous… ***And so, you shouldn’t approach worship or idolatry asking, “how far can I go? … How much can we get away with before it is sinful?!”***

Rather, *we need to ask*, What is pleasing to the Lord? What does He require? ***Don’t look for the edge, look for the center!***

**Now, This concept of God’s Jealousy is more than just a reason to obey, it explains both His Justice and His Mercy!**

*Which brings us to the Second reason to obey, which is:*

# **God’s Justice (*1st reason was God’s Jealousy, and the second reason is…* REPEAT)**

*This Justice or punishing of the wicked is an example of God’s being Jealous OF His people – Jealous that they have prostituted themselves by false worship, idolatry or even demeaning Him by thinking of Him in a way not revealed in His Word!*

* 1. **Punishing the Children…**

This is where it gets really hard, **God says**: ***I am a Jealous God,*****visiting the iniquity of the Fathers on the children on the third and fourth generation of those who hate me!**

 **Ok**, so is God saying that we are to obey His regulations concerning worship or our children are going to get it?

Well, not exactly… but in a way: YES! Maybe…

God punishes sin not only on us, but on our families and specifically on our children. Even to the third and fourth generation there are consequences for the sins of idolatry and false-worship and viewing God wrongly!

 But Wait, Doesn’t God say, He punishes the children of those who hate me?! ***YES! He does… but those words are a double edged sword.*** They bring comfort and warning… **There is a warning because God is telling us the depth of idolatry and false-worship: If you do these sins, then you HATE God! *If Summary is Love the Lord… and you break the first 2 commandments than you aren’t loving Him, you are hating HIM*! Disobedience IS Hate! *Jesus said it best:*** You cannot serve two masters, for you will love the one, but HATE the other! And ***that*** hatred of God **will** have an effect on your children…

**Now practically**, you may think you are fine. You may think you worship /love the Lord because you go to church regularly or you pray before you eat… But TRUE Worship is done in SPIRIT and in TRUTH - if your functional God is your spouse or your job; pleasure, science/medicine, sport or WHATEVER!! **THEN your children** will learn from your example more than your words!

***THINK OF THIS PATTERN WITH EVERYDAY ISSUES:* I can’t tell you how many times have I told my boys,** Say Yes, not yeah/yup … & then Raewyn says something to me and I say yup… What do you think my boys say? Yup/unhuh!

Children learn to speak ANY Language simply by observing their parents, and do you really think that they won’t learn to sin like you by observing you? ***You’re kidding yourself… If YOU HATE God by refusing to worship and think of Him as He commands you to in His Word … that hatred will spread to your children very naturally and quietly!*** If you don’t think that worship is that important in your heart – that would explain why your children rarely or ever want to worship! If you don’t believe that God answers prayer – that would explain why your children rarely if ever pray, or trust God! The doctrine of your heart concerning God can have a damning effect on your children!

**BUT THERE IS ALSO HOPE in those words!!** The key here is that God doesn’t pass on the punishment of our sins to the children of those who love Him and keep His commands! ***THEREFORE, Shouldn’t you and I be zealous to love/obey!***

You see, God’s Just punishment of us will spread to our children if we disobey! If you profess faith and yet practice hatred toward God, your children might pay the consequences. **S*ometimes whole generations of covenant children leave the church because they learned more from their parent’s actions than from their parent’s words!* WHAT A REASON and incentive TO REPENT & OBEY the Lord in humility as Parents!** *What a powerful incentive to search the Scriptures for how we ought to think of God and how we should love and obey Him!* **BUT THIS ISN’T ALL Negative!**

*THE JOY OF THIS COMMANDMENT IS THE THIRD AND FINAL REASON to obey:*

# **God’s Mercy (*1st reason was God’s Jealousy, and the 2nd was God’s Justice, but God kept the best for last…* REPEAT)**

*Here we see God’s:*

* 1. **Overwhelming Covenant Love**

He says: **but showing lovingkindness to thousands to those who love me and keep my commandments!** ***Most translations interpret “Thousands” to a thousand generations, because God does explicitly say that exact thing in Deut. 7:9!***

 NOTE the Overwhelming expression of love and mercy compared to God’s Justice! The consequences of sin only spread to the 3rd and 4th generation, but God shows His love to a Thousand Generations of those who love Him and keep His commandments… WOW! What a contrast! What a HIGH Definition Image 3 or 4 generations to 1,000!!

 **MY Favorite part is what God doesn’t say!**  God DOESN’T say that those who love and obey Him will EARN His covenant love… God’s language here is so much more expressive. This text contains my favorite Hebrew word *Chesed.* This is my favorite because it is the word for **God’s covenant love – covenant faithfulness!** *That love isn’t earned,* it is shown because of the covenant… and that is the word God uses here. God is saying that He will show His covenant love to a thousand generations of His people! **HERE IS THE COOL PART:** We probably haven’t even had a thousand generations yet on earth! That would be more than 20,000 yrs and we believe the earth to be younger than 10,000 years old! These words display God’s infinite covenant love… *generation after generation, God will maintain His people – there will never be a time when God’s people don’t exist on the earth!*

* 1. **But wait a moment…How does that work?** *Weren’t we talking about reasons to obey…?*

If God’s Mercy is a Reason to obey, Don’t we EARN His Mercy by obeying? Isn’t this one of the proof-texts which show that OT Israel had a works salvation? ***NO! not at all…***

 **Because this covenant love is GIVEN/Shown to those who LOVE GOD and keep His commandments.**

Don’t misunderstand me… these are not two actions which you do to earn God’s love/mercy: 1) Love 2)Obey. **Rather,** this is the same description that we have in the New Testament: *If we love God we will do what He commands, and He commands all men everywhere to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation!* … **In I John 5,** John tells us this: *Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves His child as well. This is how we know that we love the children of God: by Loving God and carrying out His commands.* **SAME LANGUAGE AS 2nd Com!** *This is love for God: to obey His commands. And His commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world,* **even OUR FAITH!** *Who is it that overcomes the World? ONLY HE WHO BELIEVES That Jesus is the Son of God!*

**Here we have the infallible explanation of WHO receives God’s Covenant Love – it is those who turn to Christ in Faith!**

 **WHAT A COMFORT, and yet what an impetus to obey and worship God as He has commanded!**

**Conclusion:**

Now… I have given you three reasons to obey God’s instructions regarding worship:

**1) God’s Jealousy** – Obey because you rightly owe God your obedience.

**2) God’s Justice** – Obey, lest your hateful sin causes your children to suffer consequences to the 3rd and 4th generation! ***and***

**3) God’s Mercy** – You OBEY because you Love God and desire His covenant Love and Mercy for yourself and your descendants. ***And yet, that third reason, reveals that this isn’t a works based salvation…*** We have an emphasis on obeying God’s commandments, because He repeatedly tells us in the Old and NEW Testaments that if we profess faith without works, that kind of “faith” can’t save us… but ultimately, you ALWAYS MUST REMEMBER, that your salvation comes not from what you did or will do… **but from what Christ Has Done!** He fulfilled the Law, and He paid the price for your sin. The good news is that by faith in Christ, we become God’s children, dressed in the righteousness of Christ!

 **Some of you have been** *and maybe still are* **guilty of false worship (even idolatry)…** you have made pleasure, or work, or some other interest the main focus of your thoughts, time and energy – and you have provoked God to Jealousy… perhaps even your children have followed in your footsteps – right out of the church... SO WHAT HOPE IS THERE?! ***We find hope in God’s Covenant Love! For even though you have been faithless at times, God remains Faithful to His covenant love!*** If you have been convicted by our time here in the 2nd commandment, repent and return to your Covenant Lord who is faithful and true – He will forgive you, and will again make you to see His love in your life! ***WE KNOW THIS, Because His Covenant Love/Mercy extends to a thousand generations…*** Which means God is showing covenant love today because of His love for our fathers in the faith, Adam, Noah, Abraham! *And that love will continue to a thousand generations from you and me who believe in Christ today!*   ***PRAISE GOD! For His Mercy Endures FOREVER… Amen.***