

Introduction: We take a break from the lives of the great prophets Elijah and Elisha to consider the great freedom which is ours through Christ's "ransoming work" in Matthew 20:28, by which He redeems us from our former bondage to sin and Satan, and sets us free to enjoy our inheritance in Christ. We see God's redeeming power to bring us into the liberty of the sons of God as we look at what the Ten Commandments reveal about our God and His plan for our lives.

Monday: read Exodus 20:1 and Matthew 20:28. We begin with the Prologue to the Ten Commandments, where God declares: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery." This is our God: A God who "ransoms us from evil," and sets us free to inherit all the blessings which Christ has purchased for us by His sufferings and death. This is also the way to understand the Ten Commandments in our lives as God's redeemed. Yes, the Law drives us to see that we cannot save ourselves by our own efforts, and drives us to Christ as our only source of righteousness! But the Law also shows us the *scale of our inheritance and the freedom we have to be satisfied in God as our inheritance*. Let us trust God to be our all in all!

Meditate and Pray: *Lord, please remove the prejudices of our hearts against you, and our fundamental distrust of your generous nature. What a mystery it is to discover in our own hearts such a warped refusal to surrender our lives to your absolute authority and care! Forgive us that we so easily go back to our old ways, and think that we had it better in Egypt, before we knew you! Amen.*

Tuesday: read Exodus 20:1-3 and Matthew 20:28. We now consider the responsive reading we use each Communion Sunday, to see how the Ten commandments and their New Testament application remind us of our freedom in Christ. Let's take the first command and read Exodus 20:1-3 for today:

I. You shall have no other gods before me. (Exodus 20:1-3)

Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only. Matt 4:10

The lesson? We have been ransomed from the futility of chasing after other gods. The reason we must not have any other gods, is because we have an inheritance in the Lord which satisfies us. The Lord makes Himself to be all that we need. Why then would we run after other gods in their false claims to provide what we lack? As *Fisher's Commentary on the Westminster Shorter Catechism* says in describing the blessing of having God as our God:

Q. "What does God grant to us when He promises to be our God?"

A. "All his glorious excellencies to be ours, Ex. 34:6; His infinity, to be the extent of our inheritance, Rev. 21:7; His eternity, to be the date of our happiness, John 14:19; His unchangeableness, to be the rock of our rest, Mal. 3:6; His wisdom, to direct us, Psalm 73:24; His power, to protect us, 2 Chron. 16:9; His holiness, to sanctify us, Ezek. 16:14; His justice, to justify and preserve us, Rom. 3:26; His goodness, to reward us in the way of grace, not of debt, 1 John 2:25; and His truth, to secure us in the accomplishment of all his promises, Heb. 10:23."

Wednesday: read Exodus 20:4-6 and Matthew 20:28. Here is the Second Commandment:

II. You shall not make for yourself an idol....You shall not bow down to them or worship them.
God is Spirit, and his worshipers must worship in Spirit and in truth. John 4:24

The lesson? The reason we must not make for ourselves any idols is because we have been ransomed from making our own images of God in order that we might inherit Christ as the true Image of God! We are now set free to enjoy the “glory of God in the face of Christ” by faith! We now can behold Him in Heaven as our physical representative, and by His Spirit can enjoy all the communion with God which idols could never provide!

Thursday: read Exodus 20:7 and Matthew 20:28. Here is the Third Commandment as we are to understand it as those who have been “ransomed” from sin:

III. You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God....
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.... Matt 6:9

Comment: The reason we are to treasure God’s Name, and not profane it, is that by that Name we have access into God’s presence, and the protection which that Name promises us. Because we have been ransomed, we have inherited a Name that is our refuge from all harm! How could we then drag that Name through the mud instead of treasuring it by faith? As Proverbs 18:10 puts it: “The Name of the Lord is a strong tower. The righteous run to it and are safe.”

Fri/Sat/Sun: read Exodus 20:8-11. We end this week’s notes with the Fourth Commandment:

IV. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God.
...Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith....Let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Heb 10:22-25

Comment: The reason we can rest on the Sabbath day is because Christ has opened a safe way into God’s presence once again. The way into God’s presence which was lost in the Fall, as it was blocked by the flaming sword of God’s Justice (Genesis 3:24), is now open again. Jesus now has given us *access without fear* into full communion with God as we trust in Jesus’ body and blood as offered for us. This acceptance into God’s presence is the root of our rest, and it is what Hebrews 10:22-25 celebrates as there we are exhorted to take full advantage of all the encouragement which that access provides. How does Isaac Watts’ hymn put it, describing the peace and rest which we now have through Jesus’ blood?

*Not all the blood of beasts
 On Jewish altars slain
 Could give the guilty conscience peace
 Or wash away the stain.*

*But Christ, the heav’nly Lamb,
 Takes all our sins away;
 A sacrifice of nobler name
 And richer blood than they.*

*My faith would lay her hand
 On that dear head of Thine,
 While, like a penitent, I stand,
 And there confess my sin.*

*My soul looks back to see
 The burdens Thou didst bear
 When hanging on the cursèd tree,
 And hopes her guilt was there.*

*Believing, we rejoice
To see the curse remove;
We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice,
And sing His bleeding love.*

A second reason for our rest by faith on the Sabbath day is because we now are commanded in the Fourth Commandment to “rest from our works,” even as God “rested from His works” on the first Sabbath day in Genesis 2:2. What this means, in terms of Hebrews 4:10, is that there is a rest *from the works by which sinners seek to justify themselves!* Christ’s work for us on the Cross is complete, and we can enter that rest which Christ’s work has regained! Such a rest is like a new paradise for us to enjoy, taking the place of the first paradise lost in Adam’s sin. No wonder we now celebrate that rest on the Lord’s Day, and not the seventh day! Just as God the Father had the seventh day to honor His first creation, so the Lord Jesus has His own day, the first day of the week, to honor His resurrection and completion of the greater work of our redemption from sin! Let us strive, therefore, to enter that rest (Hebrews 4:11)!

Prayer of Thankfulness: *In this harvest season, we again thank you for the richness of our inheritance, and confess how needless all our efforts to preserve our own glory are. Just as the Twelve Apostles grew to be ashamed at their brazen conflict about greatness, so we are to disown all our personal efforts to build ourselves up in our own glory. Please help us to believe that our greatest privilege is to behold the glory of God in the face of Christ, and to be changed into that glorious image of Christ as we behold Him by faith. Amen.*