

Sermon for March 7, 2021

Imperfect People with the Perfect Love

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Scripture Reading: **Exodus 20:1-17; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; John 2:13-22**

Exodus 20:1-17;

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. 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 on 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 a 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 within 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 belong in the land the Lord your God is giving 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 your neighbor's."

Exodus 20:1-17 ESV

1 Corinthians 1:18-25;

"For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

1 Corinthians 1:18-25 ESV

John 2:13-22

“The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple, he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, “Take these things away; do not make my Father’s house a house of trade.” His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.” So the Jews said to him, “What sign do you show us for doing these things?” Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews then said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?” But he was speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.”

John 2:13-22 ESV

An overview of the text of Exodus 20: 1-17

The Ten Commandments as the law that God gave, begin with a statement of God's act of love that saved the Israelites from the slavery of Egypt (verse 2). This expression of God's love became the basis for Israel to worship God. Keeping this in mind, the implementation of the law by the Israelites was seen not only as a response to obedience to the law, but also as a response to the grace of God which had liberated them.

The response to God's love as a liberator is manifested by the implementation of the law directed at God and others. Turning to God is contained in verses 3-11. And directed to others is written in verses 12-17. They carry out God's law, because they have first received God's love, and must obey the law. Therefore, obedience to God's law must be at the center of life, as a form of love for God and neighbor.

An Overview of 1 Corinthians 1: 18-25 JB

The contradiction between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of man, represents the conflict between groups in the church body at Corinth. For the Jewish class the cross was a stumbling block and for the Greeks a foolishness (v. 23).

The same is true for the Jewish class. Cross to Jesus

Paul has an excellent exposition in answering the questions of the Greeks and Jews about the meaning of the cross. The Greeks sought wisdom: they were famous for their philosophers and had advanced minds in their day developing reason and logical thoughts. Why did the Greeks see the cross as foolishness? The cross in their view is the curse or the end of the journey for a person who has severe punishment. So for them it makes no sense that the cross is God's way of salvation.

The thinking of the Jews and Greeks that doubted and rejected God's way through the cross was precisely what Paul used in his defense and explanation. Verses 20, 21, and 25 show how

Paul challenged the thinking of these two groups. The starting point used is the "weakness and imperfection" of humans in grasping the perfection of God. Isn't it true that humans will not be able to understand the essence of God's perfection? If God's deeds can be understood and explained perfectly, doesn't man mean that he is perfect like God?

An overview of the text of John 2: 13-22

Every adult Jew was required to attend several religious festivals that were centered on God's temple. At least they will follow three feasts (Ex 23: 14-17). One of them is Paschal (John 2:13, 23). The Temple of Jerusalem will be crowded with Jews from various places when religious holidays are celebrated, both those originating from the territory of Israel and other countries. Those who were going to fulfill their religious obligations needed an animal sacrifice and special money for payment to the temple of God. The problem is, of course, they will find it difficult to bring the sacrificial animals to travel with them. Another thing is, they have trouble getting the special money in their respective countries?

At that time, the priests had allowed the merchants to fulfill the worship needs of the pilgrims. They traded in the courtyard of the temple of God or in the court for proselytes or what is also called the Court of Gentiles. John 2: 14-15 only records the sellers of sheep, cattle, doves, and money changers.

The original purpose behind the practice of selling sacrificial animals and temple fees was good. Pilgrims would be very uncomfortable if they had to carry sacrificial animals far from their place of origin. They will also have a hard time getting the special currency they need. So, this trade made the Jewish practice of worship more comfortable. But why did Jesus have another attitude by driving away from the merchants with his livestock, also turning over the tables for the money changers and wasting them because of the actions of the traders to make as much profit as possible? This does not make it easier for people to come to God but on the contrary burdens them.

Reflection

God's love for the Israelites was proven by leading them out of the land of Egypt, the land of slavery. God's love continued by always providing unlimited provision for every need of the Israelites. God not only gave His law but God's actions that always drove the Israelites from enemy attacks provided all their needs and at the same time blessed them.

Receiving the love of God that is truly perfect when the human condition is imperfect makes people do not understand, misunderstand, often get angry and disappointed with God.

The starting point used is the "weakness and imperfection" of humans in grasping God's perfection. Isn't it that humans cannot understand the essence of God's perfection? If God's deeds can implement and manifest perfectly, doesn't it mean that humans are perfect as God? The house of God (Oikos) is a place where expressions of love for God and neighbor can be manifested through worship. True worship does not express self-love (inwardly), but will always express human love for God and neighbor (outward).

This is the Message to Be Delivered through these three Bible readings.

In the midst of the disruption and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the church is called to answer the needs of the people as an expression of God's love through His love for His house, fellowship with His people. Even though we feel like imperfect people who accept God's, perfect love.

The question is when you have the word "I am an imperfect person"
Why do we always feel that we are imperfect humans?

- Because we always feel less, unworthy before God
- Because we always sin before God we don't want to repent.
- Because we don't want to receive His perfect love
- Because we don't want God to perfect us
- Because we are too comfortable with our weaknesses

My brothers and sisters,

How would the world feel God's love if God's people would not become His instruments to bring the good news about God and His perfect love?

What is God's, perfect Love?

- This perfect love is self-sacrificing love by giving His only begotten Son to die for our sins
- This perfect love is unconditional.
- The perfect Love that always gives us opportunities and always accepts us.

My brothers and sisters we will end with this story:

It is a father who has an only child who is much loved. Cared for, raised with love until adulthood the parents expect this child to be their heir and continue all the property, their business venture.

Then one day they received news that their only child was being brutally tortured and murdered.

The father became very sad and kept thinking about his son. But he realized that it was impossible for his son to return, so slowly he did not dissolve into grief until the day of the trial. The father met the killer of his son. Before the trial his heart was very upset, angry, disappointed, hurt; but when he saw the young man who killed his son, compassion arose so that at the end of the trial the father begged the judge to withdraw his case because he had forgiven the killer and begged him not to punish to him.

The Father finally invited the murderer of his child to become his son and heir to everything he owned. The father called the forgiven murderer to live with him as his own son.

From this story we will understand how good the Father is to forgive and not only that, he allows the killer of his son to receive something he does not deserve: namely to be his heir. This story is a picture of our life. We are given forgiveness that is mercy and are given wealth and become the heirs who receive the inheritance of eternal life that is grace. You are not just receiving mercy but more than that my brothers and sisters you are receiving His grace. We have received God's perfect love. Let us prove God's perfect love in our lives in real form.