

LEAD SHEET

EXODUS: AFTER THE SEA WAS PARTED - WK 9

THE LAW

SEPTEMBER 4, 2016

THIS MONTH'S FAITH SKILL:

SHARE YOUR GRACE STORY

If you want to know God better, tell other people about Him!

GETTING STARTED

General Discussion:

- Which rules govern your life that you wish were not rules? (*Curfew, bedtime, no electronics after school, etc.*)
- Is it harder to follow rules you understand or the ones you don't understand? (*It's hard to follow a rule that we don't understand or don't agree with.*)
- What are we demonstrating when we obey a rule, even if we don't agree with it? (*Trust, obedience, wisdom.*)

Obeying laws isn't always easy. Sometimes rules are confusing. Sometimes we don't like the rules. Other times we just feel like disobeying. The people of Israel felt the same way even though God was their lawmaker.

We're going to study the law today. While we don't have time to cover it all, we are going to land in an important place—the fact that Jesus has fulfilled the law and paved the way for us to salvation not through the keeping of rules but through a relationship with Him.

DIGGING IN

We often think of the Ten Commandments as stand-alone rules that God gave Israel to follow. The truth is that the 10 Commandments are only the most famous rules, but they're just a small fraction of all of God's commands.

General Discussion:

- How many laws do you think are in the Old Testament? *(Scholars commonly cite 613 rules as the total number of rules in the OT.)*
- What books contain the law? *(Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.)*

We don't have time to cover all 613. We don't even have time to cover the entire law as it's communicated in Exodus. What we can do is survey the law in Exodus and draw a line from them to Jesus.

(The best way to cover this much material is to assign each passage to an individual or pair of students. After giving them time to read and study, ask the following questions to each group as a way of surveying the entire passage.)

Exodus 21:2-11

Exodus 21:12-25

Exodus 21:26-36

Exodus 22:1-15

Exodus 23:1-9

Exodus 23:10-19

Discussion Questions:

1. What laws are prescribed in these verses? *(Have each group share 2-3.)*
2. What does that mean for Israel as its people travel from captivity to the Promised Land? *(Allow students to share.)*
3. Were there any punishments prescribed in these verses for breaking the rules? *(Allow students to share.)*
4. Are any of these laws hard for you to understand? Why or why not? *(Allow students to share.)*

5. Do you think those laws were difficult for the Israelis to follow? (*Allow students to share.*)

6. Do you think the people thought any of those rules were pointless just as we might think some of the rules that we have to follow are? (*Allow students to share.*)

Remember, this is just a small percentage of the 613 laws that the nation of Israel was commanded to follow. Their instructions were clear: they must follow all of the rules, not just the convenient ones.

MAKING IT REAL

Read Exodus 21:1

The words “set before them” communicates that these laws should not be forgotten. Their behaviors will dictate their society. In this case, the people readily agree.

Read Exodus 24:3

Discussion Questions:

1. What promise do the people make? (*They will obey all of God's laws.*)
2. Knowing what you know about the history of Israel, do they do this? (*No.*)
3. When the Israelites rebel, what is their punishment? (*Eventually they find themselves back in captivity.*)

God bestows His laws to Israel for the benefit of their society. But when the Israelites ignore some of His commands, they find themselves in trouble once again. They did not learn their lesson, and are once again enslaved in a foreign land praying to God for salvation.

General Discussion:

- Why do you think we trust God enough to save us when we're in trouble but not enough to obey Him when we're not? (*This is a difficult question, but it ultimately comes down to our selfish desires.*)
- Do you think this has changed? Are we more obedient to God's laws than the Israelis were? (*No.*)

The truth is that the law serves a purpose that we don't often think of. Paul talks about it in the New Testament.

Read Romans 3:19-24

Discussion Questions:

1. According to verse 20, does the law make us righteous? *(No.)*
2. What does it do? *(It makes us conscious of our sin.)*
3. If not through the law, then how can we know righteousness? *(Through faith in Jesus Christ.)*
4. Who sins and falls short of fulfilling the law? *(Everyone.)*

The law's purpose is not to heavily burden us, but rather its purpose is to lead us to the point of despair. There is no way to follow the law completely.

Once we face the kind of despair that comes from knowing we can't be perfect, we're led to trust in Jesus' righteousness instead of our own.

Read Matthew 5:17

Jesus has fulfilled the law. It's not that those rules don't apply to us any more—it is still a good idea to return your neighbor's cow if you see it wandering off—but we no longer need to live our lives by those rules. Instead, Jesus has unburdened us. As a result, we can focus on putting our faith in Christ, in God. Jesus has released us from the burden of trying to be perfect. We are not perfect, and we cannot be perfect. Now it is time to put our trust and faith in the Lord.

CLOSING PRAYER

Pray that your students embrace the righteousness of Christ and stop trying to be perfect on their own.