



DEVOTIONS FOR LIFE

Aldersgate Church ~ St. Louis Park, MN

Week of October 9, 2022 (Exodus 19:3-7; 20:1-17)

Prayer for Groups & Personal Devotion:

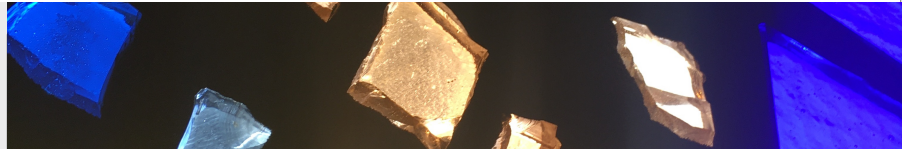
Liberator God, You set us free from the false gods of self-sufficiency, constant productivity, violence, and ego.

You bring us, again and again, into the good and broad land where we can trust you and live in harmony with each other, and we are grateful.

We pray this day for all who find themselves still constrained by those false gods who demand everything yet give nothing...

...Lord God we struggle to live fully in community, with you and with each other. Yet you desire genuine relationship, and you continually show up with grace and justice.

We are grateful for your steadfast love that extends beyond our imagination, and for your passion to set things right. You are the One to whom we turn, in joy and sorrow, in fear and frustration, in hope...



Devotions for Life

The Story: Exodus 19:3-7; 20:1-17

Context: We left with Israel having escaped Egypt and the oppressive hand of Pharaoh. They are now a free, independent people, which is wonderful; however, on the other side of the Red Sea, you certainly have cause for celebration as we see in Exodus 15, but after the songs have been sung, you can only ask, "now what?"

Well fast forward about 50 days and you have today's text: The giving of the 10 Commandments. It is not enough merely to declare and even win independence. A people must have something to guide them and ground them. And it must be more than raw rules and laws. There needs to be values and ideals embedded in those laws.

Too often we look at the 10 Commandments as a mere list of dos and don'ts. But they are much, much more than that. You need not look any further than one of my all time favorite movies, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. This movie centers around the lost Ark of the Covenant, and what is believed to occupy that ark are the very stone tablets on which the 10 Commandments exist. When opened (spoiler alert!), the face of God, upon which no one can gaze and survive, is revealed.

The 10 Commandments are, in a very real way, the sign and seal of God's Covenant with God's People. This is more fully fleshed out in the 613 laws in the Torah, but the heart of the Covenant is summed up here. There is a

... and anticipation. Carry us once again God-ward, that wherever we find ourselves, we may trust your presence and turn our eyes to your way.

Give us courage to keep your commandments, just as you keep us. We ask in your Holy name. Amen.

© 2022 Teri Peterson. Usage rights granted to BibleWorm subscribers at the LiturgyWorm Level and higher (<https://patreon.com/biblewormpodcast>)

Compassion & Justice:



Community Outreach Focus: Funds for UMCOR

Every October we raise funds for UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief). And this year we will target those funds toward a relatively new UMCOR initiative, Menstrual Hygiene Kits. This is an often overlooked need in relief efforts after a natural disaster, is likely a great need even now in the state of Florida. If you have the means, simply contribute funds to Aldersgate and designate it "UMCOR". We will collect the supplies, and then we will assemble these kits after worship on October 30th.

way in which all of this is what we call "The Word of God". As Christians we believe that Word, the expression of the covenant between God and God's People, is literally fleshed out (i.e.: incarnated, made flesh) in Jesus.

So, yes, read/listen to these words as an itemized list. There is merit in that. But also step back, let them wash over you, and read/listen to them as wedding vows, as grounding for a, lifelong, passionate, intimate relationship. How does that change our approach to them?

Questions for Reflection & Discussion:

1. Prior to giving the 10 commandments, God twice reminds the Israelites of God bringing them out of Egypt (19:4, 20:2). How do you think God's giving of the commandments is related to God's saving actions? In what ways has God acted in your life (or the life of your community) to save you?
2. The first 3 commandments demand that the Israelites worship God alone, not making idols of anything else nor using God's name lightly (20:3–7). In what ways do you think people make idols of earthly things today? In what ways do you think people take God's name lightly today? What practices might you (or your community) engage in to keep these commandments?
3. The 4th commandment instructs the people to keep the sabbath day because even God rested on the seventh day of creation (20:8–12). Why do you think sabbath rest matters so much to God? In what ways do you practice (or struggle to practice) sabbath?
4. The last six commandments concern proper relationships with one another, respecting others' lives, relationships, and possessions (20: 9–17). In what ways do you (or your community) practice these commandments toward family and neighbor? In what ways (if any) are these commandments difficult to keep?

