

God Calls Us To Himself

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Deuteronomy 5:6-10 ⁶ ` I *am* the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. <sup>7</sup> ` You shall have no other gods before Me. ⁸ ` You shall not make for yourself a carved image-- 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; ⁹ you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me, ¹⁰ but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

A story is told of a tightrope walker attempting to cross between two high towers, pushing a wheelbarrow in front of him. Seeing he needed encouragement, his friend assured him of his ability.

"If you really think I can do it," the tightrope walker responded, "get in the wheelbarrow."

How many of us are ready to get into God's wheelbarrow?

Abraham got into God's wheelbarrow. God told Abraham to leave his family and everything he knew and follow Him. Abraham believed God and went.

Rebekah got into God's wheelbarrow. She left her family and agreed to marry a man she had never seen. Rebekah believed God and went.

Today's reading also shows us how Ruth got into God's wheelbarrow. There was no earthly reason for Ruth to follow Naomi. Naomi had no land, no means to earn money, and little hope for a future. Ruth had no reason to stay. Going back would have been easier, but she chose to get in the wheelbarrow.

Are you ready to get in the wheelbarrow? God invites us to trust Him, with the first commandment:

"You shall have no other gods before me."

What does this mean?

It means we should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

That requires us to get in the wheelbarrow.

God gives us this first commandment because He has a plan for us.

Why did God give us this commandment? Because He likes it when everyone praises Him and talks about how great He is? No. This commandment, like all the commandments, isn't about what God wants for Himself. It's about what God wants for us.

In life, we all face chasms we cannot cross on our own. Only God can bridge that gap. That's why He wants us to get in His wheelbarrow: to place our trust in Him alone.

In Deuteronomy 5:6, just before giving the first commandment, God says:

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

This shows what happens when we allow God to take our hand and lead us. When He leads, He brings us out of slavery into the promised land. When we lead ourselves, we remain in slavery. He has a plan for each of us—just as He had for Abraham, Rebekah, and Ruth—but His plan begins when we get in the wheelbarrow.

God gave us the first commandment also because there is such a thing as truth.

It teaches us from the beginning: not everything is relative. We don't get to decide what is good or evil, true or false. Those are determined by God and His Word.

Isaiah 42:8 says:

"I am the LORD; that is my name. I will not yield my glory to another or my praise to carved images."

In a world that wants to make everything relative—your gender, what's right or wrong, even the nature of reality itself—the first commandment stands as a rock. Truth isn't found in personal experiences or human understanding. It's found in God and His Word.

Psalms 119:160 affirms:

"The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever."

When we start with the first commandment, we build our lives on truth. Any other foundation leads us to chaos.

Finally, the first commandment is vital because only God can help us when we call to Him and save us from our sins.

Acts 4:12 reminds us:

"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

How are we guilty of breaking this commandment?

Most of us have never offered sacrifices to Zeus or Baal, but we still break this commandment. Sometimes, just reflecting on what we boast about reveals where our true god is.

In 2 Kings 20:8 and following, King Hezekiah boasts about his treasures and armies to envoys from Babylon. He shows off his wealth but fails to mention the house of the Lord or acknowledge God who healed him. His boasting reveals what he truly values.

You can see what has become the god of your heart by what you boast about. Is it your intelligence? Your possessions? Your appearance? Or is it Jesus? Do you talk openly about His death and resurrection? When we love and talk about Jesus, He is truly our God, not just in words but in our hearts.

Paul reminds us in Galatians 6:14:

"God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

We are all guilty of caring more about the gifts God gives than about God Himself. We're spiritually gold-diggers, valuing what we receive from God more than the One who gives.

Romans 1:25 describes this well:

"They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, worshiping and serving created things rather than the Creator."

This is reflected in our lives, as seen in the story of the ten lepers. Nine of them no longer cared about Jesus after receiving healing, only about what they gained. We too can fall into this pattern, valuing God's gifts more than God Himself.

Despite our sins, God's call remains the same: He beckons us to return to Him, to trust in the only one who can truly save us.

The God revealed in the first commandment is not an angry, selfish deity. He is like the father of the prodigal son, calling us back from our wandering and sins. He invites us to come back, because only He can help, save, and forgive us.

As in the story of the ten lepers, God's gifts are freely given. He does not withhold His grace, even when we stray, but He calls us to return so that He can give us even more.

Trusting Him may be frightening, but getting in His wheelbarrow—surrendering everything to Him—is the way to cross the gaps we cannot bridge on our own.

Jeremiah 29:11-12 assures us:

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans for a future and hope. Then you will call upon me and pray to me, and I will listen to you.”

So, are you ready to get into God's wheelbarrow? It's time to trust Him, to let Him carry you across the chasms in life, into the promises He has prepared for you. Amen