

THE QUESTION OF THE WEEK

["The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments."]

Matthew 22: 40

The Ten Commandments focus on the bare minimum of living a Godlike life in this world. Put God first, revere, respect and adore God always. Keep his day holy. Love your parents. Don't lie, steal, kill, covet or use your sexuality only for your own pleasure and satisfaction. These are the bare minimum to have any real chance of living with others in harmony. But those Ten Commandments are anything but foregone conclusions that people are living in accordance with them or that people are actually keeping them in our culture today. But Jesus presupposes an awareness of the reality of the Ten Commandments even though most people do not live all of them completely.

The two great commandments, on the other hand, are far less limited. They are expansive. The sky's the limit. Actually there is no limit. Everything I am and everything I have are not limited but rather unlimited. The more I love God the more I can love God and then the more I do love God. But there is nothing in the two great Commandments that contradicts what was revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai. The two great commandments call us to a loving interaction with God and with each other. Always.

But here's the thing. We cannot keep any of the Commandments on our own. We can want to. We can try to. We can drive ourselves to live them. We just can't. We fail. We always fail. Because we have something missing inside of us. We have not the requisite power. We need to be empowered. We need to discover the empowering spirit that will enable us to live the commandments—all of them. That empowering Spirit is precisely what Jesus came to bring. That easter Sunday night in the Upper Room, the same Upper Room where he celebrated the Last Supper with his apostles, he breathes on them and bestows the Holy Spirit. Later the Spirit will be poured out from the Father and the Son once the Son has returned to heaven at the Ascension. He and the Father send the Holy Spirit upon us. Now we can keep the commandments. All of them. The Ten and the Two. The Holy Spirit is the missing piece in our human life. Otherwise we can think and we can try but we will always find out that on our own, we can't. Jesus gives precisely what we need. The question is: Do we really believe that? That is the question of the week.

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