

House Rules

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[0 : 00] Well, if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling this morning, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read. The book of Exodus.

Exodus chapter 20. Exodus chapter 20.

And we're just reading the first two verses. Exodus chapter 20.

Everyone needs house rules. Everyone needs house rules. We certainly need house rules living in the manse. Because with three or I should probably say four, with four boys living in the manse, it can sometimes get a little crazy and a bit chaotic for Alison.

So there needs to be some house rules. Shoes off at the door. Hang up your jacket. Put away your school bag. No running. No fighting.

[1 : 25] No shouting. If you take it out, put it away. If you make a mess, tidy it up. Respect people's property. Respect people's privacy. And the list goes on and on and on.

And I would hope that the house rules in the manse are pretty much the same as every home in Barvis. Because the thing is, we need house rules. Without rules, there would be recklessness. Without laws, there would be lawlessness. And without commandments, there would be chaos. And that's true not only in our homes. It's also true in school.

It's true in the workplace. It's true in shops. It's true when you're driving on the road. It's true living within a community. It's true within our government. It's true even in the sphere of sport.

And it's true even when you're playing board games with your family at Christmas. Every area and aspect of life needs rules. We all need rules because without rules, there would be recklessness.

[2 : 29] Without laws, there would be lawlessness. Without commandments, there would be chaos. And that's why I want us to begin a study this morning on the Ten Commandments. Well, technically, we're not actually beginning a new study because, as you know, over the past year or so, we've been walking through the book of Exodus.

And in our study, we've now reached Exodus chapter 20. But I want to linger here for a few weeks. And see that the Ten Commandments are house rules.

The Ten Commandments are house rules. And so, as we introduce this study, I want us to think about these house rules under two headings this morning. There's the family relationship and the family rules.

The family relationship and the family rules. So, first of all, the family relationship. The family relationship. Exodus chapter 20, verse 1 reads, 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.

As you know, our gospel writers, they record for us the occasion when a young man ran up to Jesus and knelt down before Jesus and asked him a question.

[3 : 49] And the question was, Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

But instead of answering the man's question, Jesus asked him a question. Jesus said, Why do you call me good? There is none good but God.

Why do you call me good? There is none good but God. And then Jesus proceeded to say, You know the commandments. Do not murder. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal.

Do not bear false witness. Do not lie. Honor your father and mother. To which the young man responded and said, Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.

I have kept them all. And then we are told in the gospels that Jesus lovingly looked at him. Jesus lovingly looked at him.

[4 : 47] And Jesus lovingly looked at the young man because the young man wrongly thought that he was good enough to inherit eternal life.

He wrongly thought that he was a good person with good morals and good values. He wrongly thought that he was good enough to inherit eternal life and go to heaven.

And Jesus lovingly looked at him. Because the thing is, the gospel never asks you, Are you good enough? The gospel always asks you, Are you bad enough?

The gospel never asks you, Are you good enough? The gospel always asks you, Are you bad enough? The gospel will always ask you, Are you guilty enough? The gospel will ask you, Do you see yourself as a hell-deserving sinner?

Do you see yourself as someone who needs Jesus as their savior? And so, my friend, I want to ask you, Are you a good person?

[5 : 55] Are you a good person? Do you see yourself as a good person? You know, that's the question the American evangelist, Ray Comfort, As you look up Ray Comfort, He asks almost everyone he passes in the street that question, Are you a good person?

Are you a good person? And most, if not all, people, They will reply and say, Yes, I think I'm a good person. Ray Comfort then has a follow-up question, Have you ever told a lie? Just even a little one? And the person has to say, Well, yes. Well, that makes you a liar. Have you ever stolen anything? Even something small?

Yes. That makes you a thief. Have you ever looked at someone lustfully? Yes. The Bible says that you've committed adultery.

Have you ever taken God's name in vain? Yes. That makes you a blasphemer. The evangelist, Ray Comfort, he then says, By your own admission, You are a lying, thieving, blaspheming adulterer.

[7 : 18] And that's only four out of the ten commandments. On the day of judgment, When you stand before God and give an account of your life, Do you think you will be found guilty or not guilty?

Guilty. Saved or lost? Lost. Heaven or hell? Hell.

Then he follows up, Do you still think you're a good person? To which everyone has to swallow hard and say, No.

I'm not a good person. But he never leaves it there. And we should never leave it there. Because the glory of the gospel is that the gospel never asks you, Are you a good person?

The gospel always asks you, Are you a bad person? Do you see yourself as bad enough? And the truth is, We are all bad enough.

[8 : 24] We are all bad enough. We're all sinners, As we were saying to the children. Therefore the gospel says to us, You must come. And you must come all the way to Jesus Christ for salvation.

You must come to Jesus Christ for salvation. Because our Bible tells us, Our Bible tells us that the wages of sin is death. Not only physical death, But eternal death in hell.

But the free gift of God, This is the glory of the gospel. The free gift of God is eternal life Through Jesus Christ our Lord. And you know, that's what these house rules, That's what these ten commandments are all about.

The ten commandments are not about telling you How to be a good person, With good values, And good morals for life. No, Jesus said, There are none good, No, not one.

Therefore the purpose of the ten commandments is to assert and to affirm to each and every one of us That we're all sinners. We're all sinners in need of a saviour.

[9 : 29] My friend, the purpose of the ten commandments is to assert and to affirm to each and every one of us That we're all sinners in need of a saviour. That's why it's important for us To study the ten commandments.

Because our Bible tells us, It says, By the law is the knowledge of sin. By the law is the knowledge of sin. So by studying the ten commandments, By studying these house rules, We will realise That we break all of them.

Now I'm not pointing fingers at you. Because as I was taught from another preacher, When you point the finger at someone, You need to remember, There's always three pointing back at you. So I'm not pointing the finger at you. These house rules are reminding each and every one of us That we're all sinners. We're all sinners in need of a saviour.

Because the truth is, It's impossible for us To achieve or attain the holy standard Which God has set. In fact, the reason there are ten commandments Instead of seven or eight or nine is because the number ten is the number of holiness.

[10:45] The number ten is the number of holiness. Therefore the ten commandments, They emphasise the holiness of God. They emphasise the holy standard Which God has set For his creation to live by.

But of course, We know it in our own heart. None of us are holy. None of us achieve or attain The holy standard Which God has set.

We've all sinned. We've all come short Of the glory of God. We're all bad enough. And so if we go back to the initial question Of the young man, What must I do To inherit eternal life?

The truth is, He couldn't do anything To inherit eternal life. He couldn't do anything To save himself. Because he would never be good enough. He would never be upright enough.

He would never know enough. He would never be moral enough To inherit eternal life. Because like you and I, my friend, He was a sinner in need Of the Saviour, Jesus Christ.

[11:51] He was a sinner in need Of Jesus Christ as his Saviour. Because it's only Jesus Christ. It's only Jesus, The Son of God, Who lived that sinless life We cannot live.

And he died the substitutionary death That we all deserve to die. My friend, These house rules, These Ten Commandments, They ought to remind us And reaffirm to us The simple fact We need Jesus Christ.

We need Jesus Christ. Because it's only through faith In Jesus Christ That we can experience And enjoy A right relationship With God.

And these house rules, They seek to show us That we need a right relationship With God. We need a family relationship With God. We need a family relationship With God.

And you know, That's the family relationship We see here In the opening words Of Exodus chapter 20. Where the Lord, He reminds and reaffirms To the children of Israel Who he is And what he has done for them.

[13:05] He says in verse 2, I am the Lord, Your God, Who brought you Out of the land of Egypt, Out of the house Of slavery. He reminds them Who he is And what he has done for them.

And verse 2 there, It's often described As the preface To the Ten Commandments. It's what introduces us To the Ten Commandments. It sets the scene For these house rules.

And as our catechism Teaches us, That because the Lord Is our creator And our redeemer, We are bound To keep all His commandments.

In other words, These house rules, They seek to show us That we need to have A right relationship With God. We need a family Relationship With God. We need to be part Of God's family.

Because that was Certainly true Of the Israelites. They were in a family Relationship with God.

Because in their Relationship with God, They were regarded, We all know them As the children Of Israel.

[14:09] They were the children Of Israel. And of course, They were the children Of Israel because They were, First of all, Descendants of Jacob. Jacob. The Lord had renamed Jacob Israel.

And Israel, As you know, Had twelve sons. And those twelve sons Came to dwell In the land of Egypt. And over a period Of four hundred years, Those twelve sons Of Israel, They formed the twelve Tribes of Israel.

And by the time The Exodus took place, Which we were looking at Over the past year, By the time the Exodus Took place, These twelve tribes Consisted of nearly Three million people.

They were the size Of a small nation. The nation Of Israel. They were the children Of Israel. And as the children Of Israel, They were not only All related to one another, They were all rescued And redeemed From slavery And bondage In Egypt.

I am the Lord Your God Who brought you Out of the land Of Egypt, Out of the house Of slavery.

And you know, It was in that act Of rescuing And redeeming The children of Israel That they were Symbolically And spiritually Brought into The family of God.

[15:24] They were brought Into the family of God. They became part Of God's family Because that's what The Lord does. He redeems us And He rescues us From slavery and bondage To sin.

He brings us Out of a state of sin Into a state of salvation. He brings us Out of darkness, The darkness of sin Into the light Of salvation.

He brings us From death and sin To life and salvation. He brings us From the dungeon of sin To the freedom And liberty That there is In Christ.

He brings us Into a right relationship With God Through faith In Jesus Christ. He brings us Into this Family relationship Where we acknowledge And we appreciate God as our Father.

You know, that's what we do Every time we say The Lord's Prayer. It's a family prayer. Because as a church family We all bow our heads And we all say together Our Father Which art In heaven.
[16:29] But more than that Within this family relationship We are to have Jesus Not only as our Savior We have Jesus As our elder brother.

He's a friend That sticks closer Than a brother. And, but more than that The church is our family. You know, we're brought When we're brought Into the family of God Through faith In Jesus Christ We're made to see That God is our Father Jesus is our Savior And elder brother And the church Is our family.

The church is our family. It's a family relationship. And we'll see that In our study Of the Ten Commandments. That it's within The family relationship We need family rules. It's within the family relationship That we need family rules. Which is what I'd like us To think about secondly. The family rules. So the family relationship And then the family rules. The family rules. The Lord says Verse 2 I am the Lord your God Who brought you Out of the land of Egypt Out of the house Of slavery.

[17:44] I don't know if many of you Have heard of The Reverend John McSween. The Reverend John McSween He latterly served As minister In Point Free Church Until his retirement In 1976.

There's a book Of his sermons That came out About a year ago. It's called An Inestimable Privilege. An Inestimable Privilege. It's a very interesting read Of all his sermons. But before relocating To his native community In Point Reverend John McSween Spent many years Serving the Lord In some of the Free Church congregations In Canada. And the USA. We have congregations In Canada And the USA. He served in Toronto In Winnipeg And also in Detroit During the 1950s And the 1960s.

And I've been listening To some of The sermon recordings From his time In Canada. I noticed that Many of the Free Church congregations Where Reverend John McSween Served They always recited They always recited Either the Lord's Prayer The Apostles' Creed Or the Ten Commandments Each Lord's Day.

[18:55] And of course The purpose of reciting Either the Lord's Prayer The Apostles' Creed Or the Ten Commandments Each Lord's Day It was to set before The hearts and minds Of the congregation Who we are What we believe And what we are to do Who we are What we believe What we are to do And you know Well I haven't mentioned it To the elders But you know personally I think it would be great For us To verbally And vocally Recite these things Each Lord's Day Because I believe That it's important for us As a church family To know And also to confess To believe in our heart And to confess with our mouth Who we are What we believe And what we are to do Because the Lord's Prayer The Lord's Prayer The Lord's Prayer teaches us Who we are As a church family It's our family prayer That we say With the children Each Lord's Day The Apostles' Creed

We studied the Apostles' Creed before It teaches us What we believe As a church family You could say It's our family statement I believe in God The Father Almighty Maker of heaven and earth And then the Ten Commandments They teach us What we are to do As a church family These are our family rules They are our rules They are our family rules And we need these family rules Because as we said Without rules There will be recklessness Without laws There will be lawlessness Without commandments There will be chaos And as you know The God we worship Is not a God of chaos And confusion No, He's a God of order And organization And that's why He's given us These house rules They're family rules They're family rules For those in the family relationship They're family rules For our church family They're family rules For everyone And you know These family rules Are important to remember They're important to remember

Because As I said before The church is not a museum Of good people It's a hospital for the broken The church is not a museum Of good people It's a hospital for the broken But the beautiful thing About the church of Jesus Christ Is that despite Its differences Its diversity Its sometimes dysfunctional aspects The church is a family The church is a family It needs to function Like a family And this is our church family And these ten commandments Are our family rules This is our church family Here in Barvis And these God has given to us These ten commandments And they are our family rules And you know We can't revise Or even rewrite These family rules Because these house rules Have been written In stone In fact They were written With the finger of God On tablets Of stone

More than that They've been written On our heart All these rules Are written On our heart That's why you have A conscience That's why you know Right from wrong Because these rules Have been written On our heart The Lord said I will put my law In their hearts And minds Because I will be Their God And they shall be My people And as the people Of God As the family of God These are our family rules And you know I want to emphasize And explain That they're family rules They're family rules Because you know When the Lord speaks To the children of Israel He not only Addresses them He not only speaks To them As our holy God Addressing sinful Mankind He's also speaking He's speaking to us As our heavenly father

Advising his children And I say that Because What's the first word That children Often learn From their parents What's the first word That children Often learn From their parents And they learn this word Because as children They hear this word Probably more than Ten times a day But when this word Is used It's said Not in a harsh Or hurtful way It's always said Out of care And compassion It's said Out of love It's said To look after The child What's the first word That children Often learn From their parents Well in my experience It's the word No No You say to the child No No don't touch that No No No Because when a child Is learning

[24 : 00] How often Is that child Told no And the child Is told No Not to spoil Their fun The child Is told no Not to Hurt Or harm them No The child Is told no Out of love For them The child Is told no To look out For them And to look After them The child Is told no To protect them And to parent them With care And compassion Therefore when a parent Uses the word No They use the word No To protect their children Therefore it's not negative It's positive It's not negative It's positive And that's what I want us to see As we come to the Ten Commandments Because As we said The Ten Commandments They're house rules They're family rules They're given by our Heavenly Father Who loves us Wants to look after us He wants to protect us From hurt And harm He wants To watch over us And take care of us And this is important To remember

As we go through our study Because as you can see And as we said With the children As we read For ourselves Eight out of the Ten Commandments They begin with that Familiar phrase Thou shalt not Thou shalt not Thou shalt not Eight out of the Ten House rules Are no No No No No No But I want us to see Like a parent Speaking to their children I want us to see That these house rules Are not negative They're positive They're not there To steal our fun They're not there To hurt us Or to harm us No They're for our good They're graciously given Out of care And compassion To parent us To protect us They're given Out of love To look after us This is the wonder of it

The Lord wants to Look after us And so the first commandment Thou shalt have No other gods before me That's the negative But the positive of that is Love God Make him number one In your life The second commandment Do not make for yourself Any graven image God is not number two Third commandment As we said to the children Watch your words Do not take the name Of the Lord your God In vain Because what you say With your mouth Is important We were created To use our mouths For praising God And not cursing men Fourth commandment Remember the Sabbath day Keep it holy Why?

It's a family day It's a day For the church family It's a day When the church family Come together To worship Their heavenly father Fifth commandment Honor your father And your mother Which means Love your family Love your earthly family Love your church family Sixth commandment Thou shalt not kill Which means Be kind Don't kill With your head Your heart Or your hands Seventh commandment Do not commit adultery So we're saying To the children Be committed Be committed To one another Be committed In your head Your heart And with your hands The eighth commandment Do not steal Do not steal Be honest Be honest in your life Be honest in your head Your heart And your hands Ninth commandment Do not lie Thou shalt not lie Be truthful Be someone Who always speaks

The truth And when you speak The truth Speak it in love Do not lie Tenth commandment Do not covet Do not covet Be content Be content With such as you have Because it's all Given to us From the Lord anyway Be content My friend They are our house rules These are our family rules For our church family Our family relationship These are our house rules And as we conclude This morning I hope that we can see That the Ten Commandments These house rules They're family rules They're written By our Heavenly Father Who loves us And wants to look after us He wants to parent us He wants to protect us From hurt And from harm They're for our good They might be no's But every no in there Is for our good Graciously given Out of care And compassion

[28 : 51] And concern for us These house rules They're not there To tell us How to be a good person With good values And good morals for life No These house rules Are written Because without rules There would be recklessness Without laws There would be lawlessness Without commandments There will be chaos More than that These house rules Are written To show us That we need To experience And enjoy A family relationship With God Through faith In Jesus Christ My friend These house rules Are written To show us To show us Very simply We are all sinners And we are in need Of a saviour We are all sinners In need Of this wonderful saviour Jesus Christ So to ask The young man's question again What must I do

To inherit eternal life My friend All you need to do Is come to this saviour Confessing Lord I am a sinner God Be merciful To me A sinner God Be merciful To me A sinner Well may the Lord Bless These thoughts To us Let us pray O Lord Our gracious God We All we give Thanks to thee For For loving us So much That thou Wouldest give to us Thy word Thy word That would be The only rule To direct us To guide us And to lead us And Lord As we come To thy word That we would hear Not the voice of man But the voice of God Reminding us And reassuring us That every commandment Is given out of care

And compassion And concern And Lord We pray Oh that we would See Jesus In each and every One of them We would see That we fail And we faint So much But that he is A great saviour Who saves To the uttermost That his arm Is not shortened That he cannot save That he is able To pluck Each and every One of us As brands From the burning Watch over us Then we pray Bless us Together we ask That thou Wouldest be Our teacher That the spirit Would guide us And direct us Day by day And Lord That thy word Would be That lamp Unto our feet And a light Unto our path To lead us Ever to the rock That is higher than us Bless us Then we pray Go before us Take away our iniquity Receive us graciously For Jesus' sake Amen We're going to bring Our service To a conclusion This morning We're going to sing Again in Psalm 119

Psalm 119 Page 402 In the blue psalm book We're singing From verse 33 Down to the verse Marked 37 So we said this Psalm emphasizes The importance Of God's word In our life And verse 33 Gives to us A prayer Teach me O Lord The perfect way Of thy precepts Divine And to observe it To the end I shall my heart Incline Give understanding Unto me So keep thy law Shall I Yea e'en With my whole heart I shall Observe it Carefully And we'll sing down To the verse Mark 37 Of Psalm 119 We'll stand to sing If you're able To God's praise Teach me Teach me O Lord

The perfect way Of thy precepts Is divine And to observe it And to observe it To the end I shall I shall In earth My heart Thou So keep thy law Keep thy law shall I Ye'er with my whole heart I shall observe it carefully

[34 : 00] In thy lost path make me to gold Lord, I feel I dead My heart of two lightest woe is And not to clean and find Guard thou away my sight and eyes From you in reality And in thy good and holy way

Be pleased to quaken me The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ The love of God the Father The fellowship of the Holy Spirit Be with you all, never and forevermore Amen