

Sunday March 7, 2021 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church

Bible Study – Exodus 20:1-17
“All These Words”

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes) In pairs or groups of three, have participants discuss, “What rule or rules did you have in your home growing up that at the time seemed overly restrictive that now make more sense?”

Exodus 20:1-17 Context. As the Exodus story unfolds, it had been three months after leaving Egypt that the people reached God’s holy mountain. God promised Moses that if the people would keep the covenant that they were about to make, they would be God’s special nation. When Moses communicated this to the elders, they agreed to enter into the covenant with God. God then instructed Moses on how the people were to prepare themselves for the encounter. Moses set a boundary on the mountain beyond which the people were not to go, and then after three days of preparation, God descended upon the mountain in fire and smoke, with lightning and frightful noises. The people gathered at the foot of the mountain as Moses went up the mountain to meet God. At the heart of the covenant that God makes with Moses are the Ten Commandments that spell out the obligations of the people. Traditionally, the Ten Commandments are divided into two “tablets” the first describing how we relate to God and the second, how we relate to each other.

Read Exodus 20:1-17

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

Read Exodus 20:1-17 again

Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

- While these are often referred to as commandments, a more literal translation might be *instructions*. The Israelites did not view these instructions as restrictive but as a gift from God that marked them as God’s special people. How does it change if we think of these as instructions for living instead of commandments?
- Why are rules not only necessary, but helpful?
- These instructions for life enable the people of Israel to live in such a way that marks them as God’s special people. Instead of constraining, how are these instructions freeing? [By keeping

these commandments or instructions, they were freed to be God's people and not enslaved by idols.]

- How is a wedding covenant an appropriate analogy for the instructions given in this passage?
- How are the baptismal covenant and Communion liturgy invitations (and instructions) to live the life God would have for us? How might these invite us to love our neighborhood and creation more deeply?

Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

Prayer (10 minutes). Each person prays sharing their answer the following statements:

I ask God for....

I thank God for.....

Sending Forth (2 minutes). After all, have shared, pray the closing prayer. Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

Giver of life, we are reminded that Jesus invited us to live in abundance – abundance of grace, mercy, truth, justice, and love. Help us to see that to love your ways is to love you and that to extend love to our neighbors is another way that we love you. Give us the grace to extend forgiveness and grace to all we encounter this coming week. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord's Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven

hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,

on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power

and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.