We're continuing our journey through the Old Testament. So we've already spent time going through and hearing some of the covenants that God has made with us. The Covenant he made with Noah in every living thing, Covenant that he made with Joseph, Abraham, and Sarah. All of these covenants that God has told us if we adhere to, they will adhere to. Today, we're following up after Moses, after they parted the Red Sea after they had continued on, and the Israelites have left Egypt. And they're following solely on faith, a cloud in the sky and some light. And they get to the mountain and at the mountain, they hear God's voice finally. And God says to all of them, the Ten Commandments.

Now the Ten Commandments are something we learn early on. We learn it as kids and Sunday school. And I know when I was learning it, all of these great Commandments coming straight down. The first thing I thought is what is the difference between a commandment and a covenant? What if I accidentally break one of the Commandments? Is it just as bad as if I break one of the Covenants? Can I break one of the Covenants? Is it okay to break a commandment or a Covenant as long as I say I'm sorry. We all think that a teenagers right. We can yell at our parents, tell them all kinds of things, lie to them, swear, but as long as we feel bad, it's okay. Because the Commandment is just a rule, right? It's not, God doesn't tell us anywhere in the Bible that if we break one of the Commandments, break one of the rules, we're not going to heaven. Doesn't say that in there. So it's okay If we slip up a little.

Now, I know all of us in Sunday school nobody else thought that but me. Everybody else was learning the right way to do things, right? Now let's fast forward in time a little. We've taught the kids that they should adhere to these rules. They should live this life because God put it in stone. He used his finger, wrote it on the rock, gave it to Moses, Moses said, do this. So we know as adults, that's what we teach the kids right.

But then we teach them the opposite and everything that we do. I shouldn't say everything, in other things that we do. We teach them it's okay to bend the rules a little bit because we do it. And we justify it. We justify it as well we're older, we know better. Whenever we tell them they can't run with scissors, and then we do it later. We tell them that it's okay that we are speeding on a highway that we know the police are never on. Even though we're only going five miles over, we know the police won't pull us over for that. And I'm not saying I do that, but I've heard. I've heard it. Exactly, exactly. There are other things that we do as adults.

We found out this week that you can age out of doing certain things in the Catholic church. You get old enough, you don't have to worry about it anymore. We do that in a number of ways. So, we teach kids that it's okay to bend the rules, but we don't think of it like that. Do we?

I love talking with some of my friends about the Ten Commandments because it's been a very hot item lately. If you don't know, four states have made it into law that every classroom has to have Ten Commandments in it In public schools. And they're another 13 states they're trying to not just make it in schools, but make it in all government buildings. So this isn't a big topic, And it's a fun one for me because my super conservative friends are all excited about it because we need those In there, we need those in the school we need to get the kids who don't go to church to teach them what church means. And my very ultra liberal friends are also very excited about it because we need to reach kids that don't go to church in different ways, and this is a good way to do it. We reach people who are unchurched. So we have both ends of the spectrum agreeing that the Ten Commandments Aae good. We have both sides of the spectrum

teaching that we are going to force our rules upon you. That doesn't sound very Christian to me. I know I'm not perfect. I openly admit, I don't. I'm not perfect.

Last week I was talking about my addiction to cigarette smoking, and I'm sure that is not the worst thing I've done. I wake up every day, trying to make the world a better place. I try to make it a better place because of Wednesday, and because of Alyssa. This week I was really excited when Wednesday came home the other day, and she told me what the golden rule was. And then I realized she didn't hear it from me because she's not up here when I talk about it. I tell her about it in other ways at home and downstairs.I'm sure Adrian, Jenny, and Alyssa have all told them about the Golden Rule in one way or another. They didn't call it that. I've never heard them call it that. She learned it in school, not the first half of the Golden Rule, just the second.The treat one another as you want to be treated. I was happy as you learned that it isn't just us trying to reinforce respectable behavior because that's really what the Commandments are, sort of. teach us how to live together. We mold them to however we want them to be.

When you look at the actual Commandments, they really only apply to poor people during that time because they can't afford to have a wife. They can't afford to have a slave or horse or donkey. It's really protecting everything that the rich have. So, it's like our world. Today, we have a lot of things because we accumulate stuff. That's what we do. But the rich have much more accumulated than we do. I'm just a poor pastor. So, do the Commandments apply only to me and my family and all of us here in the church because we can't afford like the others? Shouldn't the rules apply to them as well?

There are 613 rules In the Bible, in the Old Testament. 613! We only worry ourselves about 10. A lot of those rules don't apply to us, right? May apply to Jews. They still follow the Old Testament. We use the Old Testament. That's how we justify it.

I have a friend. He only reads the Book of John. That's it. The gospel of John and says that none of those rules apply to us. But he's all for putting the Ten Commandments in schools. So, if the rules don't apply, why do we want to put the Ten Commandments in schools? Jesus tells us when he came not to focus on all of the other laws. The 613 laws he came to fulfill to remind us to be better people. When he was asked which of the Commandments he should follow most, he said. That's easy. Love your God, above all else, and love your neighbor as yourself. Summed up 613 rules in one sentence. Love God and your neighbor, And that's what the Ten Commandments tell us. They start with us learning how to treat people better. How to live in a society where we're all equal. To do God's will. It isn't about picking and choosing and bending the rules and making things right or wrong. Loving God and loving your neighbor. We do a fantastic job. How can we help our friends do a fantastic job at that too? Because they're not wrong. We need to reach people who are unchurched. We need to show them how much we care about them and how much God cares about them. It isn't about the four walls we're in. It's about the love; that's it. How do we help people feel that?

Let us pray.