



January 15, 2023

**Abounding Grace: The Grace of the Law
No Other Gods**

Exodus 20:1-3

For Discussion and Reflection (You will need a copy of the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF), which you can find on the internet.)

1. Spend a moment and leaf through the first nineteen chapters of Exodus. God has come to the aid of his people. Focus on Exodus 4:21,23 for a minute. Put yourself in that moment. Do you remember how long Israel had been in Egypt? The hardships they had endured. And now, God is coming to their aid. What would it have been like to hear that God was visiting his people?
2. Look back at the opening words of Exodus 20. Notice the words, "I am the LORD your God." This is like God's words to Abraham, Genesis 12:1-3, 15:1. In each case, God is declaring his commitment to Abraham. In our text, God is declaring his self-giving to Israel. In other words, God is saying, "I have made myself your God, and because of that, I have rescued you." What context does that put the first commandment? What is God looking for from his people?
3. The first commandment says, "You shall have no other gods before me." There is a footnote in the ESV which says, "besides." What do these verses communicate about the reality of other gods? Psalm 86:10; Jude 1:25; 2 Kings 19:15; 2 Samuel 22:32; Deuteronomy 4:35, 32:39; 1 Corinthians 8:4. The "gods" of this world are the imaginations of mankind. God communicates the foolish reality of idolatry in Isaiah 44:6-23. Summarize the foolishness of idolatry. What context does this give the commandment?
4. Kevin DeYoung, gives a helpful list of the temptations to idolatry: Idolatry is guaranteed results; selfish favors are invoked; it presents easy rituals to perform; it's more convenient than obedience; it's normal since everyone is doing it; it's logical that different gods manage different arenas (sea god, crop god, etc.); it's pleasing to the senses; it's indulgent; and it's erotic as sex is usually involved. How do the gods of our making serve our desires? (Kevin DeYoung, *The 10 Commandments*, pp.34-36)
5. The Westminster Larger Catechism gives a fuller list of what sins are forbidden in the first commandment (LC Q/A, 105). Read through the list. Of the sins forbidden are "carnal security...trusting in lawful means." Where do you find security? Do you find yourself praying when you have a job or when you lose your job? Do you find yourself praying when you lose your health or when you have good health? What are other sources of security?
6. Another sin forbidden is "ascribing praise" to anything other than God. It lists "fortune, idols, ourselves, or any other creature." Do you ever find your inner voice saying that you have health, success, or a good family because of "my good choices" or "my abilities"? Maybe the football player who points to heaven after a goal is on to something?
7. How can you respond to the grace of God provided through your faithful Savior, Jesus?