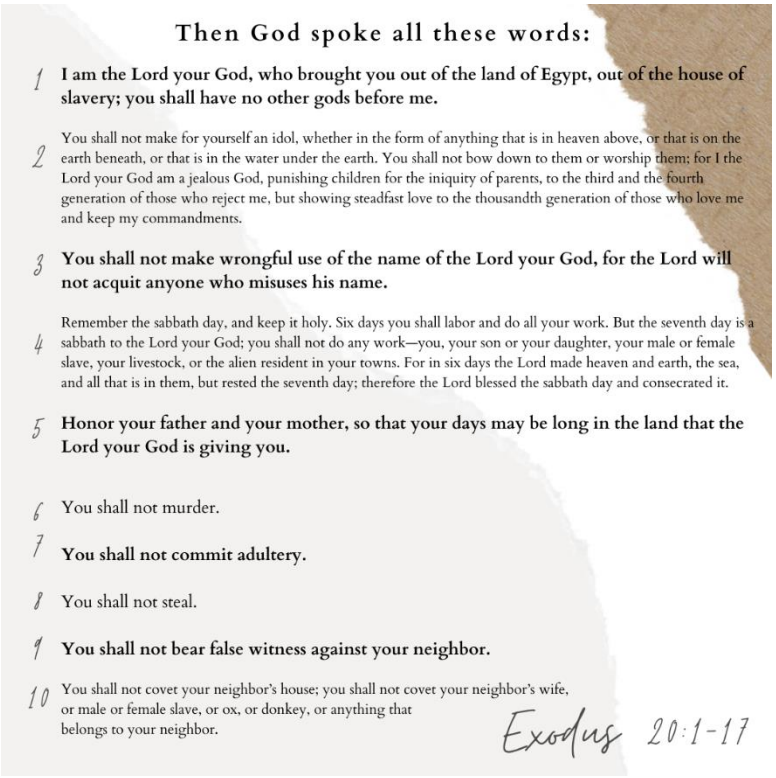
March 7, 2021 Lenten Devotional
Exodus 20:1-17 – “The Ten Commandments”
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Then God spoke all these words:

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. For six days you shall labour and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour. - Exodus 20:1-17

Reflection

I don't know about you, but I am exhausted from living through what seems like back-to-back "once in a generation" events. We have been recently living through a journey that has seen an ongoing global pandemic, historic weather events, callings for social justice, and so much more. Up until this point in the story of Exodus, the Israelites had gone through many of their own "once in a generation" events in a short period of time. And now in the middle of their journey, they arrived at Mount Sinai where God spoke the first foundations of their covenant, The Ten Commandments.

The mountain they were at the base of was engulfed in smoke. There were trumpets sounding. There was thunder and lightning. And through all of this God spoke the beginnings of the covenant they would need to enter to go into the promised land. I can only imagine what the Israelites were thinking. They were tired and exhausted. We know they were struck with fear. Fear that could have driven them back to their old ways of living. The ways they knew were harmful, but it would be something they knew. Fear is weird in this way. But they knew that at the end of their journey awaited a promised land. This promise triumphed over the fear.

I am sure many of us are struck with fears, worries, and doubts about the future. I am sure many of us just can't wait to "get back to normal" when everything is finally done. But I feel that in the midst of our fear, worries and doubts, maybe we should find a new normal, instead of going back to the normal that led us to this point today. Perhaps, just like the Israelites in this story, God is speaking to us, not in trumpets, thunder, or darkness, but with a small voice behind all of these "once in a generation" events. Maybe, through God and with God, we can lay the foundations of our new normal. Ways that we can make this world better than even before this journey started. What could possibly be better than a "promised land" of our own at the end of this journey?

Prayer

Almighty God,
We know that you led your people through the desert to the end of their journey and we know that you will lead us through our journey as well. Turn our hearts and ears to you, O God, and work through us, so that we can create a new normal where all of your people can live in peace and prosperity together with the amazing gifts of this world that you have given us.

Amen.