

Title: The Ten Commandments vs. The Greatest Commandment
Purpose: A look into how the Greatest Commandment doesn't overwrite the ten commandments but that God wishes to write the Law upon our hearts.

Scripture References: Ex. 20:1-17, 34:1-4, Jer. 31:31-34, Matt. 5:17-20, 22:34-40,

Reformed Perspectives: Book of Confessions: Scots 3.15, HC 4.092-4.115, 2nd HC 5.080-5.085, WCF 6.001-6.010, 6.101-6.107, Larger 7.212, 7.232, Directory of Worship: W-3.3101

Visual Aids: 2 Poster-boards made up with the 10 Commandments, 1 Poster-board with the 2 Commandments given by Jesus, a piece of sheet rock that is breakable by a hammer but not by hand, a hammer, a cloth.

Gather the children together in front and ask:

Pastor: Have you heard of the Ten Commandments?

What are the Ten Commandments? *Show the Ten Commandments board.*

Who were the Ten Commandments given to and by whom were they given? To the Israelites and by God.

Was that before Jesus was born or after Jesus was born? The Ten Commandments date back perhaps as much as 1200 years before Jesus. That would be about 3100 years ago. So it was well before Jesus was born.

Do you know what God wrote the Ten Commandments on? In Exodus, which is a book in the Bible, it tells us that Moses chiseled two stone tablets and on those stone tablets God wrote the Ten Commandments. I brought a piece of stone for all of you to see what the Ten Commandments must have been like.

Pass around the sheet rock letting the kids feel how strong it is.

Why do you think that God wrote it on stone? It's pretty strong stuff. Isn't it? God probably wanted it to last a long time. It shows how important God thought these were for his people.

These Ten Commandments were pretty important rules even during the time of Jesus. One day Jesus was sitting and teaching and this person came up to Jesus and tried to test Jesus. He said to Jesus, "Jesus, you're a pretty smart guy. Tell us which one of the commandments is the greatest commandment." Which one do you think Jesus said was the most important?

Well, Jesus was very smart. He said to the other person, "The greatest commandment is to love God with all of your heart, mind, and soul. The second greatest commandment is that you should love your neighbor." So love God and love your neighbor.

Where did Jesus get these two commandments? I don't see them among the Ten Commandments. Jesus was very smart. He knew that if you did these two

commandments that you would be obeying all of the Ten Commandments. If you love God and love your neighbor then you will actually obey all ten.

Now we said that stone is very hard. Right? But can I break it? Sure.

Take the stone and wrap it in the cloth. Then take the hammer and break the stone.

The Ten Commandments are very important and stone is very hard. But stone isn't hard enough. By giving us these two commandments as a summary of the Ten Commandments God was putting the Ten Commandments in a place that they could never be broken. He was placing them in your heart. It's not that Jesus came to overwrite the Ten Commandments but to make sure that we keep them safe inside. That way they could never fall away.

End with prayer thanking God for the Ten Commandments and for Jesus writing them upon our hearts.

Notes

This children's sermon is pulled from many different Scripture verses, but each has reference to one another within the context of the Law of Moses and the Prophets. Our Reformed confessions emphasize covenant theology which sees God's action in Jesus Christ as the intended goal of the Old Testament. Jesus is not only the fulfillment of God's covenant with Abraham but Jesus was the purpose of the Abraham covenant.

Reformed tradition has always emphasized the importance of both the Old and New Testaments for a complete understanding of God's salvation. This is why there is often a reading from both the Old and New Testaments within our worship services.

In this same way, we hold the Ten Commandments as being just as important for us as Christians as they were for the Israelites. We do not believe that Jesus' great commandments override the Ten Commandments, but expand upon them. This is why Jesus is found in Matt. 5:17-20 saying, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."

It is this idea of the connection between the testaments that I am trying to convey to the children. I want them to know the importance of the Ten Commandments while understanding the importance of Jesus' summary in his two commandments. The imagery of the stone is used in order for the children to relate to the strength and importance of God's commandments while also emphasizing the importance of Jesus' summary as further protecting the commandments within our hearts. The writing upon our hearts is drawn from Jer. 31:31-34 which is often seen as a prophesy for the coming of Jesus.

Hopefully, this sermon will make the Ten Commandments more tangible for the children and allow them to understand our Reformed understanding of connecting the testaments through Jesus.