

Will Jesus Christ advocate for you before the Father?

November 5, 2017 Sermon by Pastor Diana J. Perkins

I have ministered to incarcerated individuals for many years. This past week Leroy and I went to a federal court to support and witness the sentencing of a young man facing time in prison. Everything about the room is intimidating; people speak in low tones and whispers. I would not want to be before the judge without a lawyer. There was a state prosecutor who had prepared all the facts available from the state who summarized all the evidence before the judge. A lawyer for the accused defended his client and the judge made the final decision on the case and gave the verdict at the end of the session.

We all have been given the gift of life and we carry the responsibility to follow through God's plan for our lives while we are here on earth. The Ten Commandments were given to God's prophet, Moses, so that people would be aware of things that offend our Creator. Our country was built on the principles that are written in the Bible and the laws of the land are based on those that God revealed to Moses so many years ago. They can never be improved on nor are they outdated. We will one day stand before God, the judge, to give account of our deeds done in this life. Every person who ever lived will receive justice on that day. We must be aware that Jesus came to earth to be our advocate before God.

In Exodus chapter 20, the LORD spoke these words:

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me." He specified that no graven image was to be made of things in heaven or in earth with the purpose of worshipping it or bowing down to it. God announced that people who disobeyed this law would be punished for he is a jealous God and the sins of the fathers would be passed down to up to the fourth generation of children to those who hate God and to those who love and keep his commandments, his love would be shown to a thousand generations.

The Commandments were written by the finger of God onto stone tablets and entrusted to Moses while he was up on a mountain. See Exodus 31:18. In Exodus 32:1-8, the story of the Israelites rebellion against the Holy God is recorded. Moses was gone for so long that the people decided that they had better take matters into their own hands. Thinking something must have happened to their leader, they approached Aaron and asked him to make a golden calf for them to worship so they could have protection on their journey. Aaron, Moses' brother, commanded the people to bring their golden jewelry which he melted and with tools he formed a golden calf. Then the people declared to the multitude of Israelites that these were their gods that brought them out of Egypt. When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced that the next day there would be a festival to the LORD. The following day they rose up early, sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry (merry making).

God spoke to Moses to go down quickly for the people had corrupted themselves in his sight. They had turned against what God had commanded them and they had made an idol giving credit to a false god for their deliverance and were worshipping it. God told Moses that he was angry and was going to destroy the people and make a nation from Moses descendants. Moses interceded for the people reminding the LORD of his promised to the children of Abraham and he pleaded with God to spare the lives of his people lest the Egyptians would believe that God brought them out into the wilderness just to destroy them. Moses reminded God of all the promises that he had made to Abraham and his descendants and asked that God refrain from destroying them. In verse 14, God turned away from the judgement that he had threatened to bring on the people due to their disobedience. Moses went down the mountain carrying the tablets that God had written on. Joshua was with him and he heard a noise and thought it was a sound of war in the camp. Moses recognized it as a sound of singing. When he approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, he got so angry that he threw the tablets out of his hands and they broke into pieces at the foot of the mountain. He took the calf and burned it in the fire and ground it to pieces and scattered the powder over the water. When Moses confronted Aaron about the ordeal, Aaron lied and said that the people demanded him to make a god for them and he threw the gold jewelry into the fire and it came out in the form of a calf. He wouldn't take any responsibility for the transgression.

3000 people died because of this transgression against the God of heaven. Moses then went to the LORD and pleaded for the people. Moses told the LORD, "Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, blot my name out of the book you have written." God replied, "Whoever has sinned will have their name blotted out of my book. Now go lead the people to the place I spoke of and my angel will go before you. However, when the time comes for me to punish, I will punish them for their sin."

As I read this account, I thought of the fact that God offered to destroy the rebellious people and raise up a people from Moses children and Moses begged the LORD not to do that. The Bible says that Moses was the meekest man on the earth. (Numbers 12:3).

He was not looking for greatness, he was not looking for power, and his love towards his people was genuine. If God was going to wipe out the names of all the Israelites from his book, Moses wanted his name to be removed also. Think about that. He was willing to give up his life for his friends. In Deuteronomy 18:14, Moses tells the people that the nations that worship false gods and those who use witchcraft would be overthrown by the Israelites. He promised that the LORD their God would raise up for them a prophet like himself from among their own brothers. They were told that they must listen to him. The people asked the LORD not to speak directly to them or show them his great fire anymore or they would die. They couldn't bear to be in the presence of the Almighty God. Moses would be the only one to talk directly to God on their behalf.

The LORD agreed that what the people asked was good. He would raise up for them a prophet like Moses from among their brothers; he would put his words into that man's mouth and he would tell them everything God commanded him. "If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him on account." God warned that a prophet who presumes to speak in his name anything he had not commanded him to say, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death. The people asked how they would know whether or not a person was a true prophet of God. God said that if the words of the prophet didn't come to pass then they would know that the person was speaking from his own heart and not from the Holy Spirit though the person attributed the words as coming in the LORD's name. They were not to listen to him. Jesus said that his sheep knew his voice and another they would reject. In Mark 9:2 Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were alone. There he was transfigured (changed) before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus. The disciples were extremely frightened and didn't know what to say. Peter suggested that three shelters be erected for Jesus, Elijah and Moses. Then a cloud appeared and a voice came from heaven saying, "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" Suddenly two figures left the scene and Jesus was standing alone before the disciples. As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus asked the disciples not to mention what they had experienced until after he had risen from the dead.

When John the Baptist was being held in prison, one day he needed confirmation that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God that would take away the sins of the world.

He sent his disciples to pose this question to Jesus. In verse 4 of Matthew 11, Jesus sent the men back to John with these words: "Go back and report to John what you hear and see. The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised and the gospel is preached to the poor. Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me." As the disciples of John took their leave, Jesus spoke to the people concerning John the Baptist. He told them that John fulfilled the Old Testament prophesy that God would send a messenger ahead of the Messiah who would prepare the way of the Lord. Jesus said that he told them the truth that there had never been a greater prophet than John, yet he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he was.

In Matthew 5:17, Jesus said this: "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. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappears not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen; will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished." Jesus went on to say that those who break the commandments and teach others to do the same will be

called the least in the kingdom of God but those who practice and teach these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

In Luke 10:27, an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. He asked, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus asked him, "What is written in the Law? How do you interpret it?" He answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind" and "Love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus told him that he had answered correctly and if he did this he would live. But because he wanted to justify himself, he asked "Who is my neighbor?"

Jesus told the parable of the " Good Samaritan". A Jew was jumped while traveling on the Jericho road by thieves who beat him and left him for dead. First a priest and then a Levite passed by and crossed over on the other side of the road. But a Samaritan stopped, cleaned and bandaged the wounds, then put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn where he paid to have the man cared for until he returned. Jesus then asked this question, "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbery?" The expert of the Law answered, "The one who had mercy on him." The Lord said, "Go and do likewise."

As Jesus served his disciples the last Passover meal before he was to be crucified, he gave a new commandment to them. It is found in John 13:34. "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." In John 15:12, Jesus said this, "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. You will not be called servants for a servant doesn't know his master's business. I call you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I have chosen you and appointed you to go and bear fruit; fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command; love one another."

In order to have your name in the Lamb's book of life, you must believe that God is and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. Hebrews 11:6.

There are those who believe they are ready for heaven but their hearts have not been changed by the Holy Spirit and they have not forsaken their sinful ways. Matthew 7:23 tells us that they will be rejected at the judgment because they are not one of Jesus' followers. In 1 Timothy 2, Paul wrote that it is God's will for us to live peaceful lives. It is God's will that all men be saved and come to a knowledge of truth. There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus who gave his life on the cross. 1 John 2;1 says that if we sin, we have an advocate to speak in our defense, Jesus Christ. In Revelation 20:11 it speaks of a great white throne and God is seated on it. All dead stood before him to be judged and books were opened. Only those whose names were written in the book of Life entered into the kingdom of God. Others went to hell.