

# The Lord Thy God

(Sermon Notes) By: Warren Zehrung 5/27/2017

Next weekend is Pentecost. Please mark your calendar: Pentecost is Sunday, June 4, 2017. Today, as the sun sets, we will complete week number **6 of seven**. Today is day number 42 in our counting to Pentecost.

It is fitting that we partake of **meat in due season** as we rapidly approach the **mid-season** of God's Feasts.

Psalms 145:15 The eyes of all wait upon thee [Lord]; and you give them their **meat in due season**.

We take this Scripture to heart and partake of God's spiritual food – meat in due season – at each **Feast of the Lord** (Leviticus 23:2).

Pentecost is the Feast of the Church—the Feast of the Firstfruits of God's harvest. A number of wonderful things occur on Pentecost.

The first of note is that Pentecost is the Day that God gave His Ten Commandments to Israel.

In the same way ancient Israel harvested their **three crops** corresponding to the **three festival seasons**, God's Holy Day Plan shows us how He will harvest the **saints** for eternal life in the Kingdom of God on the fulfillment of the Day of Pentecost.

Exodus 34:22 You shall observe the **Feast of Weeks**, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest [also known as the Day of Pentecost, Feast of Harvest, and Day of the Firstfruits].

This name, **Feast of Weeks**, derives from the seven weeks plus **one** day [50 days in all] that are counted to determine when to observe Pentecost.]

Exodus 23:14 **Three times** you shall keep a Feast unto me in the year.

Exodus 23:15 [season #1] Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:)

Exodus 23:16 [season #2] And the **Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits** of thy labors, which thou hast sown in the field: [season #3] and the feast of ingathering, [Feast of Tabernacles] which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labors out of the field.

The first season was the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and this second will be the **Feast of Weeks**, and the final season is the Feast of Tabernacles in the fall (2Chronicals 8:13).

There are **seven** distinct Holy Days – but God groups them into these **three** seasons.

Numbers 28:26 In the **day of the firstfruits** [Pentecost], when ye bring a new meat offering unto the Lord, after your weeks be out [seven complete weeks], ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work.

We need to be counting – and the **count** to Pentecost began back in Egypt. Remember that Israel kept Passover in Egypt on the 14<sup>th</sup> of the **first month**.

Then we find that it was in the **third month** that Israel received the two tablets of the covenant at Mount Sinai containing the **Ten Commandments** ... and that occurred on the Feast of Firstfruits or the **Day of Pentecost**.

God's Law was presented, in a very formal context, to Israel on Pentecost.

The Ten Commandments were not new – they were being reintroduced to a people who had forgotten them while in slavery.

Genesis 26:5 [God said] Abraham obeyed my voice, and **kept** my charge, my **commandments**, my statutes, and my laws.

That was some 400 years prior to the exodus.

Because of Mt Sinai, we are able to associate the Ten Commandments with Pentecost.

Exodus 19:1 In the **third month**, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai.

The giving of the Ten Commandments to Old Testament Israel on a Pentecost Day ties into the Church of the New Testament being given the power to live by the spiritual intent of **God's Law** through the power of the Holy Spirit—also on a Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1).

Today we are going to be looking at the first of the Ten Commandments and the impact that it must have on our lives.

Pentecost shows the saints how it became possible to have a **right relationship** with God the Father.

The Ten Commandments, given on this day, represent the mind and thinking of God.

Prior to that time it was impossible for anyone to have a personal connection to the Father unless they had a special calling – as the prophets of old did.

Since all have sinned (Romans 3:23), and sin is the breaking of the Ten Commandments, everyone was separated from God (1John 3:4).

Romans 8:7 The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

Thankfully, the **New Covenant** – ratified on Pentecost – is a better covenant which is established upon better promises (Hebrews 8:6).

As Christians we have become subject to the Law of God – we have been enabled to keep God's Law.

The **first four** Commandments are – toward God - and last six toward man!

They are spiritual and eternal in nature:

Romans 7:12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

Psalms 19:8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

Psalms 119:172 My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness.

1Timothy 1:5 Now the goal and purpose of the Ten Commandment is Godly Love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:

Exodus 20:1 And God spoke all these words, saying,

Today's **title** from this next verse:

Exodus 20:2-3 **I am the Lord thy God**, which have brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. **You shall have no other gods before me.**

**You shall have no other gods before me** – that is the **subject** of today's sermon.

The first Commandment is the benchmark, the point of reference upon which all the remaining Commandments are founded and rely: while it's important to not murder, steal, cheat or lie, it's far more important that we have our central faith and conviction that gives us the direction, basis, and courage to obey those other Commandments.

God wants us to **have Him alone** – the only True God, the unsurpassed God, the all powerful God, the all knowing God – with His myriad of perfect characteristics – as our only God.

**Idolatry** connotes the worship of something or someone other than God **as if** it were God.

Idolatry is the "worship of **false gods**" and it is forbidden by God.

Exodus 20:4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

Many people feel that idolatry is an ancient cult practice that has no relevance this day and age.

Church people think that Idolatry is something that the Catholics do with their statues of Jesus, Mary and the saints.

The Roman Papacy of the Catholic Church, wanting to attract pagans into Catholicism – voided the Commandments and introduced pagan images and idols into Catholic worship.

Exodus 20:5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

Exodus 20:6 And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Exodus 20:7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that takes his name in vain.

Exodus 20:8 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Exodus 20:9 Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work:

Exodus 20:10 But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

Exodus 20:11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

These first (4) four Commandments show us that God is the **Creator God** – to whom goes all our **praise and worship** – He alone!

Deuteronomy is the "second giving of the Law." This is after 40 years in the wilderness – Israel is ready to enter the Promised Land

Today's Title again:

Deuteronomy 5:6 I am **the Lord thy God**, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

Deuteronomy 5:7 **Thou shalt have none other gods before me.**

The word 'have' implies a personal relationship with God.

Deuteronomy 5:8 Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth:

Deuteronomy 5:9 Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me,

Deuteronomy 5:10 And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

Deuteronomy 5:11 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that takes his name in vain.

Deuteronomy 5:12 Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee.

Jesus said this is the first and great commandment. "You shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."

John 4:23-24 [Jesus said,] the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall **worship the Father** in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship him. **God is Spirit:** and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

When we say, "God is Spirit," we understand that God is not a part of the fundamental nature of the universe – but higher in essence, form and substance than the physical state in which we were created.

In fact, not only is God Spirit, God is set apart above all others. "Holy" means to be set apart. As Creator, God demands that He has the **very first place** in our lives for our own well being.

The first of the Ten Commandments requires a lifestyle guided by a right relationship with the one and only True God. We must correctly worship and acknowledge only the True God.

When we in God's Church examine ourselves before Passover – we, almost to a man, give ourselves high passing marks with regard to the First Commandment.

We need to take a **closer look** as we approach this Pentecost season of the giving of God's Law because we are **not as loyal** to the one true God as we think we are, but have simply lost the ability to **identify** the false gods in our lives. Hard words - but true.

God has called us to give Him our total loyalty. With regard to the **two great** commandments:

Luke 10:27 [Jesus] answering said, You shall love **the Lord thy God** with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.

This answer from Jesus calls for us to whole-heartedly, single mindedly, with all our might, with undivided loyalty, obedience, service, love, devotion – worship the one true God. It is almost a direct quote from:

Deuteronomy 6:5 You shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

In Egypt, the Israelites faced a veritable host of false gods for every last thing that was considered important to them.

Israel always struggled with idolatry.

It's not just heathens in foreign lands bowing down to obelisks and images who commit idolatry.

It is absolute depravity for a nationalistic leader to demand that the citizens of his country hold the state in supremacy - instead of God.

Men like Hitler and Mussolini demanded worship for themselves and the state. Heathen dictators routinely do this.

But what we do not often stop to consider is the similar fault of church leaders when they are teaching their members to hold their particular church organization in the highest esteem. They do not realize that they are placing God in a **secondary** standing because they work to make their corporate organization the central place in a person's life.

Whenever any church leader demands **exclusive** loyalty, that leadership has become the god of that congregation.

In Egypt, everything had a god attached to it whether it was Pharaoh, the sun, moon, the planets, (Mars, Venus, Mercury), thunder, climate, rivers, stars, family, fertility and sex, crops, animals, even flies and beetles etc. Study the plagues on Egypt to see some of God's retribution against the things Egypt worshipped – frogs, cattle... their own family dynasty of the pharaohs... etc. They probably had a different god for tooth-ache and kidney stones...

We are quick to say that we would never worship idols of wood and stone of every variety, shape, and size.

Those images were mere symbols and representations of what Israel desired – in God's stead. Those idols were outward symbols of what Israel inwardly worshiped. They did not **actually** expect the golden calf to rise up and fulfill their inordinate desires.

Those Israelites desired to fulfill their human lusts – rather than desiring God's way of truth and light.

What do we think about day and night? What do we constantly want all the time? Where do we focus our time and attention? What are we trying to accomplish? How much **time** do we devote to our smart phones – compared to seeking God's will? You might say, "That's not fair." I'm just asking, where are our hearts and minds focused?

I'm starting to believe that if the truth be known young people love their I-phones with all their heart, and with all their soul, and with all their strength, and with all their mind;

I must ask myself, "What do I love the most?" What occupies my thoughts and actions? To what do I pay attention the most? Is it God's will continuously – or do I often visit my idol?

You plug in the offending idol: What is your default setting – where do your thoughts always end up? What is the idol you have erected in your home?

Alcohol; Condemnation of others; Power; Hate; Politics; Security; Injurious Gossip; Drugs; Family pride; Ego; TV; Sports; Envy; Anger; Self-admiration; Investments; Pride; Wealth; Fornication; Vengeance; Popularity; Ambition; - and many others not mentioned here. We exist in a world of idolatry.

We all bow down to an idol set up **in the imagery** of our carnal hearts.

What do you love the most? What do you desire the most? What do you want the most? What do you strive for the most? What do you aim for the most? What do you think of the most?" The answer to those questions will tell you who your god is.

Brethren, let's seriously ask ourselves today; what is most important to us? As true Christians we do not add God into an already full life of competing ideologies and philosophies, somehow relegating God to a distant second place in our lives and motivations—that's idolatry. And it is breaking the First Commandment.

That which we love and serve and desire and long for, and aim for, and strive for, and think of the most -- is our god.

**Our idols** are **concealed** – even from our **view** as assuredly as Laban's teraphim were hidden under Rachel's saddle (Genesis 31:34), or the ephod, teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image were hidden in the House of Micah, (Judges 18:14)

That is why we must pray and always **rely on God**, alone:

Psalm 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

Psalm 51:11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.

Psalm 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

Psalm 51:3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

Psalm 51:7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Psalm 51:4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight:

Do we stop and realize that the Commandment against idolatry is very much in effect today? Idolatry is the **number one sin** – not only in America or Great Britain – but **in God's Church today**.

1John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, **is not of the Father**, but is of the world.

These things are as much idolized today as Baal and Moloch once were in the Promised Land. Just because Moses delayed coming down from the Mount, - all Israel fell down and worshipped a **golden calf**, - representing all the gods of Egypt, when Aaron said:

Exodus 32:8 These are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt.

Today, our thinking is in a constant state of being molded to be selfish in every aspect of our lives.

We strive our entire lives searching for fulfillment, happiness and contentment in the things of this age, - and we forget to put God's way first and foremost in our lives – and we become idolaters - we idolize the things we are obsessed with. This is extremely important for us to consider:

1Corinthians 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall **not** inherit the **kingdom of God**? Be not deceived: neither ... **idolaters**...

Revelation 21:8 But the fearful, and ... **idolaters**, shall have their part in the **lake** which burns with **fire** and brimstone: which is the second death.

In the Old Testament idolatry is associated with the worship of images. However, actual idolatry goes far beyond the practice of worshipping images and statues.

God shows us that wherever men place their full trust in such things as organizations, nations, alliances, treaties, precious metals, armies, or politics, their motivations are a form of idolatry because such a rationale demonstrates a lack of trust in God.

When David numbered Israel – it was the sin of Idolatry. He was measuring the strength of his army for military purposes.

1Chronicles 21:1 And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.

1Chronicles 21:7 And God was displeased with this thing; therefore he smote Israel.

1Chronicles 21:8 And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing: but now, I beseech thee, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.

All of us desire a deeper personal relationship with God.

Matthew 22:35 Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,

Matthew 22:36 Master, which is **the great commandment** in the law?

Matthew 22:37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

Matthew 22:38 This is the first and great commandment.

Matthew 22:39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Matthew 22:40 On these two commandments **hang all the Law and the prophets**.

In other words – that is the entire story of the Bible. If you truly love God the Father – you will love all the others.

1John 5:1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loves Him that begat [God the Father begat Jesus] loves Him [Jesus] also that is begotten of Him.

1John 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments.

1John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

God's way of thinking produces peace, happiness and concern for others.

1John 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves **from idols**.

Do we know God - or just think that we know God?

1John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loves is born of God, **and knows God**.

Mark 12:28 And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

Mark 12:29 And Jesus answered him, The **first of all the commandments** is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God **is one Lord**:

I would add, The Lord our God is the **only** one Lord to be honored and praised.

Mark 12:30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

Deuteronomy 20:16 But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth:

Deuteronomy 20:17 But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee:

Deuteronomy 20:18 That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 7:25 The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it is an abomination to the LORD thy God.

Deuteronomy 7:26 Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it: but thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing.

Deuteronomy 12:1 These are the statutes and judgments, which ye shall observe to do in the land, which the LORD God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth.

Deuteronomy 12:2 Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree:

Deuteronomy 12:3 And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place.

Joshua 7:4 So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai.

Joshua 7:5 And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.

Joshua 7:6 And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads.

Joshua 7:11 Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.

Joshua 7:12 Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.

Joshua 7:20 And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done:

Joshua 7:21 When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

Joshua 7:23 And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD.

Joshua 7:24 And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor.

Joshua 7:25 And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.

Joshua 7:26 And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day.

We are called to live in complete faith and loyalty in and love of the One True God.

People are quick to say, "I love Jesus - makes me tingle all over just to think about Him."

That kind of frivolous, syrupy sentiment probably gives God the chills because in all actuality they still have both feet in the world. "You cannot serve God and mammon."

How many people throughout the centuries, have really accepted and practiced **the way of life** Jesus taught?

Idolatry is a challenge to true religion in every age. We are to worship God and God alone.

Idols are only representations of gods because they have no life or real meaning in them.

1Corinthians 8:4 ...We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.

1Corinthians 8:5 For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,)

1Corinthians 8:6 But to us there is but **one God**, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

Gods like Isis from Egypt and Mithra from Persia, the Greek gods like Zeus and Hermes, Apollo, or the gods of Rome, like Jupiter and Mars, and Venus, give us no trouble today.

Hollywood and Mardi Gras teach us that the Greek sex goddess Aphrodite and the Greek parading and partying god Dionysus are still in vogue.

Does that make the commandment of none effect?

Our idols are any person place or thing that receives more of our attention, worship, zeal, commitment than the True Creator God.

Do we like other Americans worship their gods with the same zealous devotion as the Babylonian, Greeks and Romans did their gods?

For us, it is my job, my reputation, the god of success, the god of security, the god of pleasure, relaxation, food, the god of specific church leaders of church politics or church society.

Men who seek this god often sacrifice their spiritual integrity by becoming a **god unto themselves**.

This is what American schools teach today.

American culture is a culture of narcissism, that is a self-centeredness, and selfishness, with a grandiose view of one's own knowledge and abilities and a need for the admiration of others.

When we were in Worldwide, we were taught, "Just be true to your humanity." **Brethren, that is idolatry.**

2 Corinthians 11:13 Such are false apostles, deceitful workers.

Brethren, our problem in living in the world at this time is that issues of our physical existence demand so much of our attention that worldly things can overwhelm us.

Our minds can end up spending more time and energy on business, material and secular functions than on **vital spiritually** oriented matters.

That is hard to do when there are so many demands on our time and attention.

Jesus Christ "is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20).

He "firstborn from the dead" (Colossians 1:15, 18).

Romans 8:29 speaks of Jesus Christ as "the firstborn of many brethren."

That we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:18).

The members of the Church as those "who have the firstfruits of the Spirit" (Romans 8:23).

The third chapter of Genesis, when the serpent whispered, "You shall be as gods yourselves." Satan said,

Genesis 3:5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and **ye shall be as gods**, knowing good and evil.

1Thesalonians 1:1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1Thesalonians 1:2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;

1Thesalonians 1:3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;

1Thesalonians 1:9 For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye **turned to God from idols** to serve the living and true God;

Brethren, let's seriously ask ourselves today; **what is most important to us?**

As true Christians we do not add God into an already full life of competing ideologies and philosophies, somehow relegating God to a distant second place in our lives and motivations—that's idolatry.

And it is breaking the First Commandment.

End: The Lord Thy God