



**“The First with a Promise”
Realities
Jacob Bender
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Let me start by saying that today’s message is important. It is very important. The subject

that we are talking about today has kind of become this “lost art” in our society. We hear the word “Honor” and we don’t even know what that means. We think we do, we think we have honor, because we maybe use polite words as a frame around harsh conversations that we have with people, but honor is more than a tone. Its more than words. Its more than love or even respect.

The first four commandments deal with the way that we relate to God, and the fifth begins this set of realities regarding how we relate to each other, and this is the commandment where we see that shift take place.

The fifth commandment is when everything changes.

but there is something unique to this commandment even moreso than the other nine.

So if you have your bibles, open them to Ephesians 6:1-3. This is Paul speaking.

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

Then he goes on to quote Exodus (20), and the Ten Commandments:

“Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”

This is the first commandment with a promise.

There is something attached to this one, there is something in it for you that is directly spoken of in Exodus 20 and Paul points that out here in Ephesians 6. He says “this is the first time that God tells you to do something and promises you something in return.”

Now think about the Israelites.

They wandered.

For 40 years they wandered in the desert, God constantly trying to teach them his ways, God constantly trying to teach them to trust him, to rely on him, to honor him and as we have learned over and over and over throughout this series, they didn't.

and only two of them entered the promised land. Joshua and Caleb.

Everyone else died in the wilderness.

What was different about Joshua and Caleb?

They were two of the twelve men who were sent in advance to scope out the promised land, but when the men returned, the other ten said that it was a land that could not be taken.

But God had already promised the Israelites the land.

Caleb was the first to speak up, the bible said that he quieted the naysayers and gave a completely different report. He said, “We are able to overcome them.” (Numbers 13:30) and in the very next chapter, Joshua joins in with Caleb, saying “That land is exceedingly good land. If God promised it to us, lets take it” (Numbers 14:6-9)

They honored the word of God. They honored the fact that God said, “I have given you this land...” they heard it, and they went for it. All the other men said it could not be done... All of the other men said “we will surely be killed if we go in there) All the other men even wanted to stone them because of what they reported (Numbers 14:10).

And do you know what God said to Moses after all of that? In response to the ten men petitioning that Israel NOT honor the word of the Lord? He said “I will disinherit them.” (Numbers 14:12)

And just like we learned about in our Fruit of the Spirit series, yet again, Moses petitioned on behalf of the people that their lives would be spared, and God spared them. But he said this: (Numbers 14:20-24)

Then the Lord said, “I have pardoned, according to your word. But truly, as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord, none of the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have put me to the test these ten times and have not obeyed my voice, shall see the land that I swore to give to their fathers. And none of those who despised me shall see it. But my servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit and has followed me fully, I will bring into the land into which he went, and his descendants shall possess it.

There was a land, a very specific land, that was PROMISED to the Israelites, and only two of them saw it. Because of honor.

And honor in our culture, it has fallen into near extinction. The things that we say about the people in authority, behind their backs, its awful... the things that we say to the people that we are supposed to love the most, sometimes right to their faces, it is anything but honoring. The way we address people, the way we address problems, typically have a selfish bend to them.

Now, here is a reality. We should live lives of openness and transparency because that is what builds strength in a community. I have seen nothing build community stronger than the plainly bared truth that none of us are perfect, and therefore none of us are alone. Dawn and I have been teaching and trying our best to live transparent lives both from the pulpit and in our personal conversations with many of you. We should share in each others struggles, we should carry each others burdens (Galatians 6:2) But transparency works both ways because it is such a display of emotions, and emotions are not always about yourself and what you are going through, but it is also about how you feel... and how others make you feel.

And a healthy culture will have confrontation, otherwise we will become embittered. But even confrontation must be done in an honoring way.

Proverbs 18:21 teaches us that death and life are in the power of the tongue... your words are very powerful. Your attitude is very powerful. And in fact, we emotionally tend to get most of our power by our words. So if someone does something that we don't like and we just let them have it with everything in us, we may leave that moment feeling powerful. We may feel like we have an authority, or that we stood up to authority...

and both verbal correction and standing up to authority when they are wrong certainly has a place, but it must be done with honor. And just about every time in my own life that I have tried it, I have found myself being very dishonoring to the person I am addressing.

And after moments like that, I tend to leave them feeling angry.

And it all comes down to **blessing and cursing**. Because I don't have to agree with someone to bless them. I don't have to agree with someone to honor them. And if I do honor them even when maybe they don't seem very worthy of that honor, then there is a blessing for me which we will talk about later.

But the natural instinct of man is not to bless. It is to curse. Now let me explain, because you probably would say "I would never curse someone!"

The Hebrew word for curse (*qa-lal*) means "to make light." It means to add no value to them. It means to say "the words you are saying, and the things that you are doing in this moment mean nothing."

All of us in this place have been cursed. We have been belittled. We have been made to feel like we have no value. And I don't know about you, but when someone makes me feel that way, I shut down. I have a very hard time pulling myself back together and refocusing. It hurts really bad.

On the contrary, the Hebrew word for blessing (*Ba-rak*) means something very interesting... you would think it would be the opposite of cursing, but it's not. Blessing, in Hebrew, means "to bend the knee."

Think about it. When a King walks into a room, what do people do? They get on their knees. Why? Because they want to show honor, because that person holds a position of great authority. Showing honor blesses people.

I heard it this way once (Dr. Frank Seekins) and I thought it was cool, when a man wants marry a woman, what does he do? He gets on his knee.

Because marriage is a blessing. And what a great honor it would be for him to have her hand. It would be a great honor for Him, if she allows him to be her defender. If she allows him the privilege of sharing a life together.

We need to set our social default mode to blessing.

Its the best way to honor one another no matter what the circumstance.

But what is honor?

The most simple way to put it is that it is how you treat people. When you are around them, when you are not. Thats the simple way to put it. But there is so much more to it than that.

Honor is the Hebrew word "*kavod*" (ka-vode) and it means "heavy or weighty."

It means to place weight on something. It is literally the opposite of cursing. Cursing is to make light, honor is to give weight.

Now, as you probably know, in the time of the Old Testament, value was based on weight. If you were measuring how much money you had, it would be determined by the weight of the gold in your possession, not the number of pieces, so what it is talking about is "giving something value."

That is why people bow before the King. Because his job carries weight.

We would have no problem honoring a King, or honoring someone who has already accomplished what we desire to accomplish.

If someone of high stature is willing to meet with us... if we somehow have a moment for them to hear us out for whatever it is we want to talk to them about, we would honor that time would we not? Because that is a person who we attribute great value too. When Pastor Kevin is willing to meet with me, I try my best to honor that time. He pastors an incredible church, and is responsible for thousands of people. So if he gives me a block of his valuable time, I want to show him that I honor it.

We tend to work harder for the approval of the people we think will add value to our lives. Its easy to honor the ones we know are worthy of it... the ones we want something from, but the truth is that God put EVERYONE in your life for a reason.

Because in all of us, there is value. That is obvious. But, God puts people in our lives for a reason. He puts specific people in our lives for a specific reason. And when you show someone honor you are showing them "There is something in you that I need. Maybe I don't know why I need it right now, but I know I need it."

And its easy to treat people with honor if we know what we can get out of them. But that is just selfishness. We need to create a culture that just honors. We don't take anyone lightly. Everyones words matter. Everyones life matters. Everyone is worth 100 million dollars.

Have you ever seen the movie the Sandlot?

Those boys play baseball every single day, and every single day someone hits a home run over the fence, and each time the ball goes over the fence, they say goodbye to it, because the beast was going to eat the ball, and if they went after the ball, he would eat them. So that was it, and they would go home for the day. They get another ball the next day, and they start again.

But when "Smalls" hit his first home run, and then told his friends that Babe Ruth had signed the ball that he just hit over the fence, everything changed.

It was the same type of ball. It probably cost the same amount of money to buy. It weighed the same. It looked the same from every angle except one.

The side that Babe Ruth signed.

and that name carries weight. It added value.

So suddenly everything in their lives became about getting that ball back. Because it had value that they didn't even realize it had when they smashed it over that fence.

Honor treats everyone like they carry that kind of weight.

You give people your attention when they are talking to you. You give them your best when they are with you because you can learn from them and they can learn from you and that is how the world keeps learning. Yet we engage half heartedly in our conversations while we look through our instagram feeds and give half hearted smiles to make them feel like we are listening. Technology in the last ten years has made us have to work ten times harder to have genuine relationships and so naturally we honor people less because we value our toys more. And I can say that because if you look at the time you spend on your phone compared to the time you spend genuinely engaging in meaningful, honoring relationships, the numbers as a whole are very out of balance.

You honor something.

You either honor people, or you honor stuff. You give weight to *something*.

You honor a prophet, or you honor a pastor, or you honor a word from the Lord, or you honor doubt by living in it, or you honor indifference by doing nothing in light of a problem, or you honor skepticism, and work-a-holic tendencies.

How many of you took a sabbath last week after hearing the teaching on it?

I did.

But I almost didn't.

I worked Monday on the house. I worked Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and I realized, I have to stop. This sermon will not come together right, and will not bare the fruit I believe it is meant to bare, if I don't honor the last message. If I don't honor the last word that God gave me. So I took Friday off. Knowing that my Father in law was coming on Saturday and I would be tied up working on the house for a good portion of the day.

Jesus says in Matthew 7:2 says "With the measure you use it will be measured to you."

That means that you will receive the fruit of that which you honor. If you honor the word of the Lord in your life you can rely on the word of the Lord in your life to come to pass because God is faithful. But his words are heavy. They are not light. What was the third commandment? You must not make the Lords name an unreality. If you do that, you will live a powerless life because you are relying on a God that YOU HAVE MADE POWERLESS.. If you don't have the third command, you will never be able to have the fifth.

Then He tells us in Matthew (16:19) "I have given you the keys to the kingdom." he says "whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Honor is one of those keys. It unlocks things in your life. It will unlock favor from God, it will unlock favor from man.

Honor is how things continue. Which is why it is so important to honor your Father and your Mother... because they are passing something into you that you need to pass into the next generation.

One great biblical example of this is Elisha. Elisha honored Elijah... he followed him around everywhere, he hung on his every word. Every word carried weight, every word mattered. He wouldn't leave the guy alone. And what happened?

In that moment when Elijah was taken up to heaven, the bible says that his mantle FELL on Elisha, and he went on to do twice as much as what Elijah did in his lifetime. That is where we get the phrase “passing the mantle” from, and it will only happen through honor.

Thats how honor works. If you honor, it opens you up to receive what they have.

And it works both ways. Maybe God has put you in someones life as a mentor... you honor them! You honor them because you have something you are supposed to pass into them, and honor opens you up for that. Let me show you something amazing.

We have been looking at the word picture for each number in the ten commandments, and we will get to that in a minute, but first... there is also a word picture for the word “honor” itself, you have possibly heard this phrase but this is where it comes from... for the Hebrew word “kavod” - If you take away the vowels (because there are no vowels in Hebrew, we add them so that we can say them in English) the letters are K-V-D

are the Hebrew letters:



kaf

bet

dalet



“Kaf” is a picture of a hand and it symbolizes what opens, you use your hands to open doors, cabinets, your refrigerator, most things... Now, “bet” is the picture of a house or what is inside... a home is a sacred place, its a place that you share with the people who are closest to you. You welcome your family, you host your friends there, but you are protective of who enters your house.

and the letter “dalet” like we learned last week (and we have talked about it before), is a door... so the word picture you get for the word “kavod” is it is the hand or the thing that “opens the inside door.” I have heard that phrase Think about it.

If you look at your life, and you look at the people you let in and the people you keep out, does it not always come back to the ones who honor you?

The ones who make you feel like you matter?
Like your words matter? Like your opinion matters?

That is a natural instinct in us, we are drawn to honor, and that is why.
It opens the inside door.
It opens our heart.

It really is amazing what it does.

Its like when you are a teenager and you are going on that first date. The young man comes to the house, and he picks up the girl that he is taking out, and then there is that awkward moment with her dad. That moment when her dad looks at this young man and he reminds him that he is merely a boy... and that he better honor his daughter because if he doesn't it will be the last thing that he ever does. If that boy ever wants that Father to see Him as a man worthy of his daughter, he better honor that young lady. And He better honor that dad by treating her the way that Father expects his daughter to be treated. He better place boundaries around their relationship that he would be confident sharing with that Father. That would be honoring him. Thats extremely rare.

Now, I didn't really date much at all growing up before Dawn, and by the time I met her she was in college... but when I wanted to marry her, you better believe I talked to her Father. Why? Because I wanted Him to know that I will honor his daughter, by first honoring him. By first getting his permission. By letting him know that I value his daughter and I value his role in our relationship.

Its a lifestyle that opens doors or lets them stay locked depending on which road you take.

Let me show you a couple of examples of this in scripture.

1 Peter 3:7 says something incredibly revealing about honor. It says:

husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so **that your prayers may not be hindered.**

Do you see this? Husbands... The way you show honor to your wife has a direct impact on the way that your prayers are received by God.

If you don't HONOR, your prayers will be hindered.

Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven.
Whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

But if you honor... and keep honoring... and build your whole life around honoring, not only will people be drawn to you and your leadership and your life, but God will give you access to the things that most people never get access too. Because this is a key to the kingdom.

Stop praying for miracles if you haven't learned honor. You won't get them. Honor unlocks those things. If you are praying for a breakthrough in your marriage and in your family but you aren't honoring your wife, that breakthrough will not come.

Your prayers are hindered. Until you can honor. Its a hard reality but its also a beautiful reality because if your prayers have been hindered, now you have a pretty good idea as to why.

Here is another example: Jesus. (Mark 6:1-6)

He shows up in his hometown on the sabbath day and begins to teach in the synagogue and everyone starts saying things like: "Where did this man get these things. Is this not the carpenters son?"

And so He says "a prophet is not without honor, EXCEPT in his hometown" (Mark 6:4)

Why?

I believe it is because he grew up there. And he went on to do great things, but to the people who watched him grow up, “he will always be that carpenter’s son... that boy helping make tables.” Because they saw him in his youth living among them and they had a hard time seeing him for what he had grown into. They were used to Jesus. He was a local.

and the bible says that Jesus could do no mighty works there, he healed a few sick people and that was it.

The lack of honor cut them off from miracles that everyone else had access to when they were around Jesus.

Why is it harder to honor the people that we are used to? The ones we get comfortable with?

I have seen it in the work place a million times. People are paid to do a job but they feel time and time again like they don’t actually have a voice in it... An employee will over and over again give ideas that would make a huge difference but nobody responds with any sort of action... But the moment they hire a specialist or bring someone in from the outside for a few weeks to evaluate, and that specialist says the same exact thing that the employee has been saying for years, suddenly everyone does whatever it takes to make it happen. Why is that?

Its honor.

and you may not be able to change your boss, but you can change yourself.

This is something in your life that you can change! You have to honor people! All people, not just authority. Not just your family.

You see a homeless person on the street, and its easy to rule them out in 100 different ways before they even say a word to you... but how many of those men out there on the cold streets are veterans? People who years ago made an enormous sacrifice for you and your family to be able to have what you have. And no matter where you stand politically or your feelings about war, that is a person who you should honor.

You don't know his story. You don't know where he came from. And you would be amazed at how much you could learn from him, and what honoring that man could open up for you. If God put you in his path, then there is something in him, that you need.

We have been looking at the word picture for each number in the ten commandments... so the word picture for the number 5 is the letter "hey" and it means "to behold." - Now remember, this is the first command with a promise. There is something in it for you.

Its almost like God is shouting to you... HONOR. BEHOLD. Get this. This will change everything in your entire life! It will rewrite every one of those crummy days that are ahead of you if you can't learn it.

This is the door to the promised land. Its a key to the kingdom of God.

You can spend your whole life wondering why things aren't going the way that you want them too... the way that you feel like God told you they would, and it will all come back to this. God made the Israelites a promise, and only two of them entered that promise. Because two of them honored what God told them to do. And it unlocked something amazing in their lives and in the whole next generation of Israel.

What is your promised land?

What are you believing for? What are you working every day toward? And are you finding yourself turning your wheels but still sitting idle? Is the car in neutral and you are just wasting your gas by flooring it?

If your life has not turned out the way that you thought that it would so far, you have to ask yourself, "What is keeping me from my promised land?"

Its honor. Honor is how blessing is transferred. Its how mantles are transferred. Its how Elisha had a ministry twice as fruitful as Elijah, but you know what?

Nobody honored Elisha the way that he honored Elijah, and so the power of his ministry died with Him. Nobody opened the inside door of Elisha, and imagine what could have been had they.

Parents

Now, we have talked plenty about honor. I think we have a good idea of what it means to honor, what it leads to in your life... but the big question is, why does it say "Honor your Father and Mother?"

Why them?

For some of us in this room, it would be easy to say "I honor my parents." We have had great parents. Parents who were always there for us when we needed them, who would drop whatever it is they were doing to come alongside of us.

But for others, maybe the thought of your parents takes you to a very dark place. A place you would never revisit if given the option.

But the 5th commandment does not command that you like your parents, or even necessarily that you obey them though Ephesians 6 does say to obey them in the Lord... It does not even command that you RESPECT your parents.

My Pastor in New York, Pastor Brad says it this way, "Respect is earned. Honor is appointed."

He is a spiritual Father to me. He has taught me so much of what I know today, more than just about anybody, and there were still times when I failed to show honor to even him. One of my spiritual Fathers. Because we are so quick to react to our feelings in a moment. It is human nature, and I have given into it far too many times.

But over time and a lot of growth and a lot of learning I have built a relationship there where I could speak my mind even when it was sometimes in opposition to what he thought we should do, and my voice

would be weighed into the conversation as we worked to find the best and most strategic ways to build a great church in New York.

Because I had earned the right to be heard, by the honor that I had shown him.

And a person who has honor toward someone else, they could lose the respect that they may have had for you in moments like that, but they will still honor you.

Respect can be earned and it can be broken. You have probably said it yourself “I have lost all respect for that person.”

Just the other day I was reading some comments on a friend of mine's post on Facebook and one of the comments said “I have lost a little bit of respect for you.” Over a Facebook post... a few words that could have been taken completely out of context or misunderstood.

We are so flimsy.

We are so quick to rule people out.

It is like trust. You can earn it, and in a moment you can lose it.

Respect is always on trial.

Respect is certainly fleeting, but you must continue to live in honor.

You may have the greatest amount of respect for our president, or you may have no respect for him at all, and may disagree with him... and you are entitled to that.

but you still honor him.

Honor comes with the chair.

It is the acknowledgment that “what you do holds weight.”

The president carries a lot of weight. There is a lot of stress that I will never know or understand that goes along with that job. The mayer carries a lot of weight.

Your parents carry a lot of weight. Their job is very hard.

Your family matters. Family is more important than your other human relationships. It just is. Taking care of what God directly gave you... honoring that which God placed in you the center of, that is of the utmost importance.

The devil knows, if he can get God's people to stop honoring their family, and stop honoring their parents... he will have them. Culture can not stand without honor. If you stop honoring your father and mother then you will start despising where you came from. And that means you are despising where God placed you. You will despise where God placed you in history, in the family He put you in, and the role in his plan that he has for you.

Jacob & Esau (Edom)

There is a time in the beginning of the book of Malachi when it talks about how Jacob God loved, but Esau he hated. (Malachi 1:2-3)

Malachi 1:4 says that if Edom says (Now, the "Edomites" were the people in Esau's family line. So this is talking about Esau and his descendants) "We are shattered but we rebuild our ruins" God will respond to them saying "you can rebuild all you want, but I will tear it down." Then it says one of those things that you wish you could white out of the bible. He says "The Lord is angry with them, forever."

Malachi gives the reason that God "hated Esau." Now remember, love and hate in Hebrew are not emotions, they are choices. When you choose to get married, you are choosing to reject all other woman. The Hebrew people would say "when you choose to love a woman, you are choosing the hate all other women."

And the reason that Malachi gives for God choosing to reject Esau, points us back to Genesis.

In Genesis 25 when Esau sells his birthright to his brother for a bowl a red stew. Esau comes in from a hard day of labor and he is so hungry that he thinks that he is going to die, so he asks his brother for some stew and instead of just sharing with his brother, Jacob says “sure, you can have some stew, all it will cost is your birthright.” So Esau sells him the birthright for a bowl of red stew.

and the bible says after that, that from that day forward, Esau despised his birthright.

He no longer honored where he came from. He hated it. He despised his birthright, and everything that went along with it.

But look at this moment of weakness for Esau. Look at this one stupid decision. He is hungry, so hungry that he thinks he will die, so he comes in, smells the deliciousness, and says this:

Genesis 25:30 “Esau said to Jacob, “Let me eat some of that red stew, for I am exhausted!” (Therefore his name was called Edom.)

Edom means red. The color of the stew, and the future of his entire genealogy and timeline. Everything in Esau’s family line became defined by the moment that he dishonored where he came from. He traded his birthright for red stew, and so generations later they are still known as the Edomites. As the ones who traded their birthright for the red stew.

Honoring your Father and Mother means much more than doing what your parents say. In fact some times you may out of service to God not do what your parents say, but still show them honor.

Honoring your Father and Mother means you honor where you came from. You honor where God placed you. You honor your family, first. Don’t take them lightly, you don’t make them feel worthless. You make them feel loved and you make them feel like they are worth ten million dollars because they are. The good things they taught you, you pass them onto the next generation. Honor is all about transferring.

And you honor your Father and Mother, because from the beginning of your life, they are the first picture that you get of Jesus. They are the first image of grace you will ever get.

And maybe they have distorted that image for you over time, or maybe they have lived it so well that you grew up blanketed in the love of Christ and ready to do anything.

At any rate, you have learned from your parents. You have learned about life... maybe what to do, maybe what not to do. But they have been Gods vessel in your life to teach you something.

And maybe for all the effort you have in your heart you could never muster up an ounce of respect for the people that they are, or the people that they were.

But you must always honor them.

If Satan can take out honor in the home, he can take it out of society as a whole. Because if you cant honor those closest to you, why would you ever honor your civil authorities? Why would you ever honor the people who sit in the chairs that make decisions that affect you, when they make a decision you don't agree with? If you can't get it right in the home, you will never get it right out there. You will never get it right with the government, or in the workplace. If you can't honor your parents, why would you honor your boss?

If you can't honor your kids, why would you honor your employees?

If you can learn honor in the home... in the relationships that matter most, it will bleed over to the rest of your life.

Think about the commandments.

Think about six, seven, and eight which we have already talked about.

If you honored your wife, and you treated her like she was worth fifty million dollars, would you ever even think about cheating on her? Of course not. You are the richest man on the planet.

If you honored your friends, would you ever steal from them? If you honored human life, and you placed the value on every life that it actually has, would you ever even think about murdering someone? No.

These commandments are not just a set of rules to follow and if we walk the straight and narrow then in the end we will get to see Jesus.

No.

These are realities. This is the best way to live the best kind of life.

And the only way to really maintain a lifestyle of honor is to live in the reality that Jesus died for everybody just as much as you. He died for the person you are mad at just like he died for the person you love.

You have to see people that way. That when you dishonor someone you are dishonoring a child of the living God.

When you curse (or make light of) your brother or sister you are making light of someone that Jesus is living inside of.

Someone that Jesus died on a cross for.

And maybe you are in this place, and you feel like you have never been honored by anybody. You feel like nobody has ever treated you like you have value. Well let me tell you about Jesus. Because Jesus Christ is the son of God, and he left his throne in heaven, the place of the absolute highest honor, and he came to earth as a baby, lived a sinless life, and died on a cross in the place of your sins, and my sins, because of how much value He put on each of our lives.

What is worth more, than your whole life?

There has not been a more honorable act in all of human history, than the God of the universe placing so much value on you that he took your place on that tree.

So let Him be your example today.

If you are married in this place and you feel like your marriage is a mess, the first place to start is honor.

If you feel like nothing at work is going your way, the first place to start is honor.

If you feel like restoration in any area of your life is not possible, the first place to start is honor.

Honor your way out of your messes. I am telling you, read the bible. It will work.

You will never go wrong showing honor. And it will open your entire world.