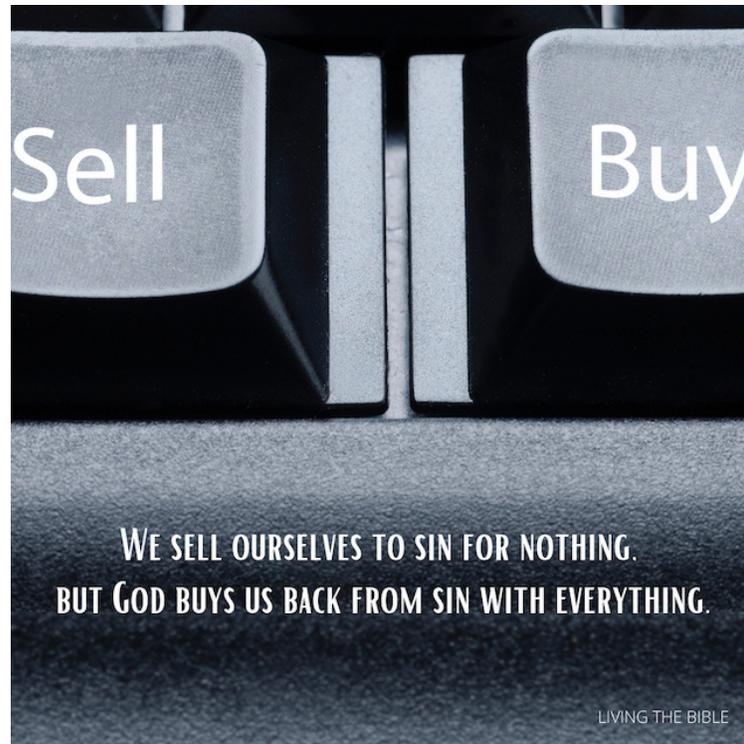

THE FOUR R'S EXODUS 19:1-6



What's the greatest problem in the world? Covid-19? Racism? Riots? Recession? These are all great problems but none of them are the greatest problem. The greatest problem is self-salvation, otherwise known as rule-redemption. The core idea is that we can be saved by our works, our obedience, our commandment-keeping. I can offer God enough obedience to persuade him to save me.

Why is that the greatest problem? Because no matter how hard we try, we cannot save ourselves and we cannot please God. Any attempt to do so ultimately downgrades God's Law. And we kind of know that in our consciences don't we. We're not happy, God's not happy, and the Law's not happy.

But there is a better way and a happier way. Let's see how God sets this up when he officially constituted Israel as his nation in Exodus 19:1-6.

LEARNING

GOD REDEEMS US (3-4)

Three months after God brought Israel out of Egypt, they arrived at Mt. Sinai, just as God had promised Moses in Exodus 3:12. There, God called Moses up the mountain and said to him: **“Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings’”** (3-4). In a short sentence, God sums up his redemption: I destroyed your enemies and I carried you like a mother eagle her eaglets.

WE SELL OURSELVES TO SIN FOR NOTHING,
BUT GOD BUYS US BACK FROM SIN WITH EVERYTHING.

What does he redeem us to? To relationship with him.

GOD RELATES TO US (4)

This redemption was not just an act of great power but an act of great love. **"I brought you to myself"** (4). He brought them out of Egyptian hate and brought them into his loving embrace. He didn't just bring them to a mountain, he brought them to himself.

WE RUN FROM GOD,
BUT GOD RUNS TO US.

How does he keep the relationship healthy and happy? With relational rules.

GOD REGULATES US (5)

"Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant"(5). Here's the third R: **Redemption > Relationship > Rules**. There's nothing more important than keeping the third R third. God's not saying, "Keep my rules and I'll redeem you and be in relationship with you." No, he's saying, "I've redeemed you and brought you into a covenant relationship, now therefore, in light of all I've done for you, and as an expression of covenant gratitude to me, "Keep my relational rules." I've established my covenant with you. Now, keep it healthy and happy by keeping my covenant rules.

WE OBEY TO WORSHIP OUR SAVIOR,
NOT TO WORK SALVATION.

How does God encourage us here? With a great reward.

GOD REWARDS US (5-6)

To further encourage obedience, he promises them a triple reward: **"You shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation "**(5-6).

REWARD IS NOT THE BASIS OF SALVATION,
IT IS OUR BONUS IN SALVATION.

How does God encourage us here? With a great reward.

LOVING

Our greatest problem is self-salvation or rule-redemption. God's solution is redemption > relationship > rules > reward (see also John 14:15-21). God redeems us for relationship, provides rules to keep that relationship happy and healthy, and rewards covenantal obedience as a bonus. Whether or not you ever learn the three R's, make sure you learn the four R's. If you solve that problem, you've solved your greatest problem.

LIVING

Obey God's rules out of gratitude for his covenant redemption and you will be blessed with a great relational reward.
