

Immerse Day 68 :: May 5

Happy Cinco de Mayo, everyone!

It is always interesting to me that today when we read the Pentateuch, as we are in this session of Immerse, we are always shocked again by the number of rules God gives His people, and the dire warnings of punishment should they break any of them. We see a God of judgement, of law, of punishment. It is only when we can remember that these laws were not written to 21st century America but to 15th century BC Israel that we can begin to see them more clearly. We need to recognize not only a time barrier of nearly 3500 years, but also a cultural barrier of over 6000 miles.

Today, Moses gives his take on these laws. *“What great nation has a god as near to them as the LORD our God is near to us whenever we call on Him? And what great nation has decrees and regulations as righteous and fair as this body of instruction that I am given you today?”* The Law is not a jail that locks us in according to Moses the Lawgiver. It is a set of rules that helps us to be holy. It is a sign of how much God loves us that He gives us so many and such detailed rules for daily life.

Moses sees these as a refiner’s fire, one of my favorite metaphors from the Old Testament (specifically, Malachi). The law is what God uses to burn away the junk and impurities in our lives, leaving only pure, useful metal. In one of my favorite book series, a blacksmith plays one of the main roles, one with which I identify as I read. And so I have a more visceral feeling about impure metals, which break and warp and fail us.

How do you view these laws we’ve been reading? Jesus fulfilled them, purified them if you will, and so we are not bound to these individual laws but to the purpose for these laws: holiness. We are to be holy as God is holy, as Jesus was holy, and as God intended us to be. Our task is to understand what holiness means and seek it, allowing God to refine us and burn away that which impedes us, which tarnishes us, and which makes us less than the loving, good, joyful people God created us to be.