**If you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my own people.** (Exodus 19.5a)

Imagine the chaos if we could choose which side of the road we would drive!

Why have rules? Without them there would be chaos. Without them we might not know right from wrong.

* Rules tend to tell you what not to do, and when you have broken them.
* Rules support relationships.
* Rules usually only work if there are some sanctions for breaking them.

Why would we want to obey any god? Gods have power which you might need, so you strike a bargain.   
Israel could have worshipped and obeyed any god or gods, but through Moses they began to worship and obey YHWH.

Other gods would have had their rules and sanctions – we do not know much about them. The 10 Commandments are full of “Thou shalt not”s. They support relationships; they relate to God and being one of the People of God – in the next two weeks we look at these aspects.

The sanctions are only implied: you will stop being the People of God.

Laws are hard to keep when they are external and unexplained, open to abuse, we don’t care about the relationships they foster, nor fear the sanctions. At times a particular law seems pointless, or against relationships, or is so unjust we no longer fear the sanctions. Then it is easy to break it.   
Is this ever true of the 10 Commandments? How confident are we that they have come from God?

In the end we do want to obey God once we know a command has come from God. All the while we see the point, support the relationships, and fear the sanctions The 10 Commandments are easy to keep. May God help us to see them positively, as even promises? (Could “Thou shalt not commit adultery” be a promise as well as an order?)