

The Most Neglected Sermon - 12/08/19

Covetousness – The Tenth Commandment

TEXT - Rom 7:7 *What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid.*

INTRO- Covet - To covet is to seek for something, someone, some position, some recognition, or some pleasure not in the will of God.

In Scripture covetousness is so terrible a sin that it:

Separates a person from God Rom. 1:29, 32

Destroys community James 4:1-4 *From whence come wars and fightings*

Breaks fellowship in the church 2 Pet. 2:14 *Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:*

Is the just object of church discipline 1 Cor. 5:10-11

Brings the wrath of God on the covetous person in eternity 1 Co 6:9-10

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?

It is a special temptation for the Christian pastor and rightly debars him

from service 1 Ti 3:3 *Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;*

It is a form of idolatry, substituting things for the living God Eph 5:3

But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;

Eph. 5:5 *For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*

Exo 20:17 *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.*

Desire to have things is not evil in itself. It is the distortion of this God-given desire, aiming at what is not in the will of God for a person, that is such a terrible and destructive sin. According to Scripture, a covetous spirit becomes visible in those who steal, defame others, lust sexually, fight with a Christian brother to recover material losses, scheme and plot to make unjust gain, pursue recognition, are discontented, give sparingly or grudgingly.

Four reasons this topic is so important

1. **Covetousness is a root sin 1 Tim. 6:10** that leads to stealing, adultery, murder – almost any other sin.

2. **The sin of covetousness is an especially gross form of idolatry.** Paul speaks of the heinous character of sin, which puts the created thing in place of the Creator **Rom. 1:23**

3. **If the first and great commandment is to do with love,** covetousness stands opposite the great commandment.

Covetousness is interested in getting; love is interested in giving.

4. **Covetousness is a sin against the one who covets.** A covetous person builds inner tension, which often leads to emotional illness. Materialism is a very frustrating way of life because one can never be satisfied.

The more you get, the more you want.

The opposite of covetousness are two Spirit-given qualities:

1. Contentment 2. Generosity

1 Ti 6:6-8 *But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.*

Heb 13:5 *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

Php 4:11 *Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

Diotrephes was not content 3 Jn 1:9-10 *I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. 10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.*

Jer 51:13 *O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness.*

Learning generosity to avoid covetousness

Acts 20:35 *I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

Stages of learning Christian generosity

- **Babe in Christ – Babies are interested in getting not giving**

1 Co 3:3 *For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*

- **Emotional giving – Give only when there is an emotional appeal**
- **Legalistic giving –**

Mat 23:23 *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

Mat 6:2-4 *Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets . . .*

Mal 3:8 *Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.*

- **Mature Giving –**

Luk 6:38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

2 Co 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

Mat 6:33-34 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. **34** Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

- **Sacrificial giving**

Mar 12:41-44 And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. **42** And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. **43** And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: **44** For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

- **Faith Giving -**

2 Co 8:1-3 Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; **2** How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. **3** For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves;

Col 3:5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

CONCL – Covetousness often is not revealed publicly.