

Session # 4 on the 2nd Commandment; “Showing Mercy to Thousands”.

The 2nd Commandment of the 10 Commandments is this:

Exodus 20: 4-7 – “You shall not make for yourself a carved image – any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.” “For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.”

We want to focus on the phrase – “Showing mercy to thousands”. We have been learning that in order to worship God aright, we first of all have to know God. We come to know God through calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in order that we might be saved from our many sins. In order that we might be saved, God must show us mercy. Mercy is not receiving from God what we so richly deserve which is to be punished for our sins. We have no right to mercy except through the expiatory sacrifice of Christ. The sacrifice of Christ was expiatory; that is, it satisfied the righteous anger and wrath of God against our sins. Instead of punishing us for our sins, that punishment is placed upon Christ at the cross by God the Father. Mercy should be prayed for, in order that God might show it to us.

Isaiah 55: 7-9 shows this – “Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near.” “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways says the Lord.” “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

Thomas Watson says, “Mercy overflows in God more than sin in us.” “His mercy can drown great sins, as the sea covers great rocks.”

You should labor to know God’s mercy is for you. Psalm 59: 16 and 17 – “But I will sin of Your power; yes, I will sing aloud of Your mercy in the morning; for You have been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble.” “To You, O my Strength, I will sing praises; for God is my defense, my God of Mercy.” Our God is God who shows mercy to thousands, to those who do not worship or make idols.

Thomas Watson again: “God is merciful to those who do not provoke Him with their images and will entail mercy upon their posterity.” P. 271 – Body of Divinity, On the 2nd Commandment.