

Sermon Notes

Exodus 20:17; Deuteronomy 5:21
The 10th Commandment
A Sermon Series on the Ten Commandments
February 15, 2015

Introduction

1) The Ten Commandments are given twice in the Bible.

Ex 20:3-17; Deut 5:7-21

Exodus 20:17

17 You shall not **covet** (חָמַד, *hāmad*) your neighbor's house; you shall not **covet** (חָמַד, *hāmad*) your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Deuteronomy 5:21

21 You shall not **covet** (חָמַד, *hāmad*) your neighbor's wife, and you shall not **desire** (חָסַד, *'avah*)* your neighbor's house, his field or his male servant or his female servant, his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

* = The Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament) uses the word *epithuméo* (ἐπιθυμέω) in both verses for "covet" and also for "desire" in Deuteronomy 5:21.

2) In one sense the 10th Commandment is pretty straight forward.

- a) It is like the vast majority of the other Ten (8.5 out of 10), it is put in the negative. ("You shall not . . .")
 - b) Coveting is forbidden.
 - i) The Hebrew word in the broad sense means "desire" or to "take pleasure in."
 - ii) In the bad sense it means an inordinate, ungoverned, selfish desire.
 - c) Like the 9th Commandment, the focus of this Commandment is made clear, one's neighbor.
 - i) Neighbor here does not merely mean someone living near you.
 - ii) Neighbor in the Bible refers to everyone.
 - * A fellow Israelite (Lev 19:18), alien, (Lev 19:34) and even a pagan (Ex 11:2).
 - * Jesus explicitly defined one's neighbor as everyone in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Luke 10:25-37
 - * Especially fellow Christians. Eph 4:25
 - d) The totality of what one shouldn't covet is made very clear.
 - i) Your neighbor's house, field (as found in Deuteronomy), wife, male/female servant, animals (ox & donkey are listed).
 - ii) For an ancient bronze/iron age person, this is basically everything of importance that a normal person would desire. (Wealth was based on farm land, not money.)
 - iii) The totality is clearly expressed with "anything that belongs to your neighbor."
- d) So it is forbidden that we have a jealous desire for anything anyone else has.

3) In another sense the 10th Commandment is unique.

a) All the other Commandments are focused on community crimes which can be policed.

b) Breaking Commandments 1-9 could bring the death penalty in ancient Israel.

1st Commandment (other gods) Lev 20:2,27; Deut 7:4; 8:19-20; 13:1-5; 18:10-11

2nd Commandment (idolatry) Deut 4:25-26; Ezek 18:12-13

3rd Commandment (Lord's name in vain) Lev 24:16; Deut 18:20; 1Kgs 21:10; Matt 12:31-32

4th Commandment (Sabbath) Ex 31:14-15; 35:2; Num 15:32-36

5th Commandment (honor parents) Ex 21:15,17; Deut 21:18-21

6th Commandment (murder) Gen 9:6; Ex 21:12; Lev 24:17; Num 35:30-31; Deut 19:11-13

7th Commandment (adultery) Lev 20:10; Deut 22:22; Prov 6:29

8th Commandment (stealing) Ex 21:16; 22:1-4; Ezek 18:12-13,18; Luke 23:41 (Matt 27:44)

9th Commandment (false witness) Deut 19:15-21; Prov 19:5,9; 21:28

c) Individual spiritual conditions such as impiety, anger, lust, greedy and lying are not listed, which would be impossible to police.

i) These are still forbidden by Scripture. Matt 5:17-48

ii) They show our fallen condition and the need for Christ and His cross. Gal 3:15-29

d) For the church we should be against all sin, but the Ten Commandments, in the narrow sense, deal with sins that should bring excommunication if there is no repentance. Matt 18:15-20; 1Cor 5:9-13; 2Thes 3:6,14-15

4) If Commandments 1-9 are about policing by the community, then why the 10th Commandment?

a) How do you police a "jealous desire?"

b) There is no death penalty for coveting (in the earthly sense).

About Coveting

1) Coveting is a very dangerous sin, it is the root of all other sins. 1Cor 5:11; 6:9-11; 10:6; Gal 5:17; Eph 5:3-5

a) It shows our corrupted, fallen heart. Mark 7:20-23

b) It has its origins in the original sin from the fall in the garden.

Genesis 3:6 – "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was **desirable** (חָמָד, *hāmad*) to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate."

c) God's Law shows how dangerous coveting is. Rom 7:7-13

d) Coveting leads to violating all the other Commandments.

i) Not obeying God Josh 6:18; 7:21

ii) Idolatry Deut 7:25; Is 1:29; 44:9

iii) To hate your neighbor. Rom 13:8-10

iv) Murder James 4:2

v) Adultery Prov 6:24-25; Matt 5:27-28

vi) Stealing

Prov 12:12; Micah 2:2; Acts 20:33

vii) Speaking falsely.

Prov 1:22

The Opposite of Covetousness

- 1) We have been reading the Ten Commandments with three different levels of interpretation as found in Protestant tradition.
 - a) Narrow literal reading of what is forbidden for the community.
 - b) Broader spiritual reading of what is forbidden for the individual and shows our fallen nature before a holy God.
 - c) Positive reading that the opposite of what is forbidden is loved by God.
- 2) Contentment, charity and generosity are the opposite of covetousness, and therefore are beloved of the Lord. 2Cor 9:5
1Tim 6:6; Heb 13:5
- 3) Part of God's judgment is that He removes the things we covet in this world.
 - a) **Psalm 39:11** – *“With reproofs You chasten a man for iniquity; You consume as a moth what is precious (חַמָּד, ḥāmad) to him; Surely every man is a mere breath.”*
 - b) Creation is good, and enjoying the creation in this life isn't wrong, but a blessings from God. Gen 3:21; Job 42:10-17;
Ps 8:1-9; 89:11-12; Matt 5:45
 - i) Yet the creation is fallen, including our desires. Gen 3:14-19; Rom 1:18-3:32; Eph 2:1-3
 - ii) If the creation becomes the source of your happiness, then it becomes an idol. Deut 4:16-18; Ps 106:20;
Acts 17:29; Rom 1:22-27
 - iii) Our faith, hope and love, is to be in the Creator not the creation.
 - c) All the things of the world (good & bad) will pass away, except the things of God.
 - d) **Isaiah 40:6b-8** – *“All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; Surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.”*
- 4) There are things that we should desire/covet.
 - a) To be an elder in the church. 1Tim 3:1
1Timothy 3:1 – *“It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires (ἐπιθυμέω, epithumēō) to do.”*
 - b) Diligence in the Lord. Heb 6:11
 - c) The fear of the Lord and His judgments. Ps 19:9-10
 - d) Godly wisdom. Prov 21:20
 - e) The Lord's Supper and Christian Fellowship. Luke 22:15
 - f) Christ Himself. SoS 2:3; Matt 13:17
 - i) **Matthew 13:17** – *“For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired (ἐπιθυμέω, epithumēō) to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.”*
 - ii) **Song of Songs 2:3** – [The Bride (i.e. the church) speaks of the Bridegroom (i.e. Christ)] – *“Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the young men. In His shade I took great delight (חַמָּד, ḥāmad)*

and sat down, and His fruit was sweet to my taste.”

- 5) The fact we so clearly desire the world over Christ shows the need for the Gospel.
 - a) The Gospel is about God’s desire for us through Christ.
 - b) The more we embrace the totality of the Gospel, the less we will covet the things of this world, and more desire union with Christ.

Romans 6:1-19

- 1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?
- 2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?
- 3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?
- 4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.
- 5 For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,
- 6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;
- 7 for he who has died is freed from sin.
- 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,
- 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.
- 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.
- 11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.
- 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts,
- 13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.
- 14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.
- 15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!
- 16 Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?
- 17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,
- 18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.
- 19 I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.