

Sun., May 24, Drive-In Worship

2020 Ten Commandments Series: Set Free to Live Free: The 10 Commandments

Second Series: Love Others

Second Series Memory Verse: “I will always obey your law, for ever and ever. I will walk about in freedom, for I have sought out your precepts.” -Psalm 119:43-44

Second Series Text: “The second is like it: You must love your neighbor as you love yourself. All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands.” -Matthew 22:39-40

Second Series Scripture: Exodus 20:1-21 and Psalm 16

Message: Live Free: Do Not Covet

Memory Verse: “Guard your heart because it’s the wellspring of your life.” -Proverbs 4:23

Scripture: Exodus 20:17, James 4:1-2, Philippians 4:11–13

Blurb: If you could have anyone’s car, home, abilities, physical appearance, spouse, or life, whose would you have? Notice, as you consider this question, the awakening of that inner “itchy” feeling as you want what you can’t have. That’s coveting. It’s not just wanting (we all want nice things), but it’s the inner restlessness in wanting what is (or should be) beyond your grasp. This Sunday our discipleship goal is to want instead what God wants for us.

Opening Music: [Piped music over the speakers] -Pastor Andrew

Welcome -Pastor David

Memory Verse -Pastor David

“Guard your heart because it’s the wellspring of your life.” -Proverbs 4:23

Worship Music Set -Sanctify (acoustic)

O Taste and See

All I Have Is Christ

Blessed Are All (Only in Jesus)

Worship Prayer -Pastor Andrew

Prayers: In Honor of Memorial Day -Pastor Andrew

Offering: Cassi

Generational Bridge: “Lemuel the Lion” -Pastor Andrew & Vicky

Call to Focus: “Psalm 16:1-2, 5-11” -Pastor David

L: Protect me, God, because I take refuge in you.

P: I say to the Lord, “You are my Lord. Apart from you, I have nothing good.”

L: You, Lord, are my portion, my cup; you control my destiny.

P: The property lines have fallen beautifully for me; yes, I have a lovely home.

L: I will bless the Lord who advises me; even at night I am instructed in the depths of my mind.

P: I always put the Lord in front of me; I will not stumble because He is on my right side.

L: That's why my heart celebrates and my mood is joyous; yes, my whole body will rest in safety.

P: You won't abandon my life to the grave; you won't let your faithful follower see the pit.

L: You teach me the way of life. In your presence is total celebration.

P: Beautiful things are always in your right hand.

Message: 10 Commandments "Live Free: No Coveting" -Pastor David

The 10 Commandments, Live Free: No Coveting

So, you might have noticed that today we are on the last of the Ten Commandments. No, you didn't miss something. I've switched them. I've switched the order. Two Sundays ago we took up the Eighth Commandment: no stealing, and in there I introduced the idea that stealing was actually a heart issue. It has its roots in coveting. But then, God gave a coveting it's own commandment!

But also, next Sunday is Pentecost, when we celebrate that we've been given the Holy Spirit. I've been digging in the Bible in how the Holy Spirit is in many places referred to as the Spirit of Truth. This is such an awesome connection to the Ninth Commandment—no lying—that I wanted to slide that commandment to Pentecost. So, today we'll take up no coveting, and next Sunday, Pentecost, no lying, as we worship the Holy Spirit of Truth.

Wanting. Coveting. Stealing.

Have you noticed how hard it is to really be happy for someone else when things go well for them and they get something awesome? At a very basic level: My wife sees in the store my son's favorite candy bar. She thinks of him. She buys it for him. She brings it home, and, in front of me, gives him his favorite candy bar. "Here you go, son, I thought of you and know you loved this."

What is my response? Am I happy for him? Am I impressed with how my wife was showing him love? Do I take her aside and say, "Good job, dear! You affirmed him and encouraged him.?"

No. What do I say? "Hey, where's my candy bar? Why didn't you get me one?"

Do you see what I've done? I make it about me. It's no longer about my wife or my son. I do not enter into the happiness there, neither my son's pleasure in receiving, nor my wife's joy in giving. Instead, I do three selfish things:

First I *compare*. Nathan has a candy bar, and I don't. I really didn't want one until I saw his. But now I do. My new wanting comes from comparing.

Next I *compile*. I make a list of what I have and don't have, and what Nathan has and doesn't have. I place value on what is and is not on this list. I conclude I'm missing out! Now, I focus on my lack a candy bar, fixate on that—how my list is shorter than his—and then I decide I need one, too.

The third thing I do is *complain*. My response, my action, is to focus on my lack and dwell on how much I want what I don't have. I don't celebrate with Nathan, I express and bemoan my lack.

Let's make this less trite. My coworker gets the end cubicle, or the raise, or the promotion. We were friends, but now there's a rift. What happened? Rather than being happy for her, I compared, compiled, and complained!

My neighbor gets a new outfit...phone...jetski...lawn tractor...car...event tickets...vacation...house...baby...marriage...fill in the blank. On the outside, our faces are smiling and we're saying, "Congratulations! How exciting!" Out of our mouth comes, "I'm so happy for you!" But it's a lie. Why? Because on the inside, I'm comparing, compiling, and complaining. Why can't I just be happy for them? Why can't I just celebrate with them? Why is that so hard? Why does jealousy creep in?

We have such a hard time dealing with other people's successes. In our own political climate, there is a general irritation with "rich people." Can you say "The top five percent" without disgust

in your voice? Why can't we just be happy that their hard work, their risks, their calculated choices, have paid off? Not all have had unfair advantages. The Bible says, "rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep." (Romans 12:15)

I was watching one of those old black and white sitcoms last week...I got sucked in when I was watching some old Lawrence Welk episodes...anyone remember Lawrence Welk? He and Myron Floren were North Dakota boys, too. Anyway, I can't remember which show but it was something like My Three Sons or Father Knows Best. And the woman had a smiley, friendly visit with another lady, and heard all about that lady's new car. They said "farewell," the lady blew her a kiss, then turned around and said to her friend, "Ooo, I just *can't stand* that woman, with her perfect hair and her rich husband and her kids in college and now her new car!" I smirked, but it's much easier to see in an old rerun, isn't it, than *in the mirror*?

It's a human condition! The communist uprising in Russia was fueled in no small part because of simple jealousy of the higher class, cloaked in a cry of injustice. I remember reading an account about the French Revolution, and how an elderly aristocrat was attacked by a peasant, and the shocked gentleman argued, "Why are you doing this? I thought we were friends! I helped you out when your wife was ill and just last year I gave you a horse when you hurt your leg so you could work! What did I ever do to harm you?" But the peasant said, "We're not friends! Rich people don't deserve friends! All you've known is ease and comfort. Me? I've had to struggle. You don't deserve all this! So, I'm taking it!" And the man shot the aristocrat and killed him.

That scenario has been played out in many ways countless times, back through time, in every human context. People—yes, you and I, perhaps in a less dramatic way—have had a hard time being happy for those who are more fortunate.

Why? Because of that natural, selfish reaction to compare, compile and complain. The Bible calls that coveting!

Now, coveting is not just wanting something nice, or even desiring the cool thing that someone else has. Wanting, in and of itself, is not bad. Just like, in the Bible, money is not bad. But it's so hard to keep money in it's rightful place and not start loving it or making it your focus. Same with wanting. It's so hard to keep the wanting from slipping into coveting. Perhaps that's why God made it it's own commandment! It requires our ongoing careful attention!

Coveting is that inner gnawing feeling when wanting turns aggressive. We start thinking about it all the time, and we become emotionally connected to not having said thing. We start to believe that our happiness becomes dependent on getting it. That's coveting. In today's words, coveting is going from "that would be nice" to, "Oh, I really *need* that!"

Coveting, you see, is that it's a form of idolatry. It's getting our inner satisfaction, our joy, our sense of completeness, from what we have. That should come from our God and what He provides for us. God has a plan for us and is showering us with more-than-sufficient blessings. Coveting means that we are not content with what God has given us. It's idolatry because ultimately it is *not wanting what God wants for us*. It's a rejection of God's provision, believing it's not good enough. My desire for me is not aligned with God's desire for me. See the problem?

The last commandment, Exodus 20:17 says, "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."

Now, some Bibles list the 10 Commandments a bit differently. Some combine the first two commandments: Having no other gods before God and taking His name in vain, and then separate the last one: coveting your neighbor's wife and coveting your neighbor's possessions. Our Bibles keep the first two separate but combine the last one. I argue for this because I think the wife

commandment is covered in adultery. This one is really about your relationship with your neighbor's stuff, his possessions. Now, we're not going to argue with how, in the ancient world, men owned their wives. Just don't miss that it's about what your neighbor has and enjoys.

The commandment lists some specifics, but only to show that this commandment is specific and real. It's not an exhaustive list. What is it, specifically, that you covet? It's things like your neighbor's hair, and rich spouse, and kids going to college, and car.

This commandment, notice, is internal. It's not about an action, like murder or stealing. It's an inner disposition. It's a matter of the heart. It's a way the first commandment lives in our hearts. If you put God first, then you want what He wants for your life. Coveting is a sin, not a crime. God's commandments, you see, aren't rules or laws. It's not about *compliance*. It's about *allegiance*. Remember our proclamation each week? It's believing that, say it with me, "God's way is my best life!"

Proverbs says, "Guard your heart, it's the wellspring of your life." Just as water flows out of a spring, so life flows out of our heart. Jesus says that out of our heart come the desires we have and the words we speak: that it all comes out of our heart.

All of us are trying to get certain behaviors under control, certain addictions, certain compulsions, certain longings, certain failures. But we struggle to manage the behaviors, because we don't deal with the well from which they spring. Biblically, we need to get to "the heart of the matter." When the Bible talks about the heart, it's talking about the center of the person. This issue of coveting is really a heart desire. It's an internal issue that leads to external action.

James 4:1-2 says, "What is the source of conflict among you? What is the source of your disputes? Don't they come from your cravings that are at war in your own lives? You long for something you don't have, so you commit murder. You are jealous for something you can't get, so you struggle and fight." Do you see the word James uses for coveting? Its your inner *cravings*!

Here's the first big idea: if you deal with the heart issue, the behavior issues will fall in line. And, if you deal with your coveting problem, you will resolve lots of your behavioral problems.

You know you have a coveting problem when you see yourself crossing the line and you *compromise your character for what you crave*. Here's a simple test—I call it the "light test"—describe your actions in the light of day rather than in the secret of night. Can you easily tell your behavior—what you decided to purchase on line at 2 a.m.—to your spouse, your kids, your mother, at 2 p.m.? Or do you prefer they not know about it? That's compromising your character.

Your desires are selfish, not wise or godly. They are not easily in alignment with your commitment to follow Jesus and be His radical disciple.

The cure for coveting is new desires in your heart. And only Jesus can give you new desires. Only He can transform your heart so your desires are in alignment with God's desire for your life. So, first of all, you must spend time with God—we call that prayer and worship—and in His word—we call that devotions—so that God can transform your heart and your heart's desires. It's not usually a light switch. It comes when you spend time with your Creator. You can't skip worship and expect your heart's desires to be changed.

So, first, spend time in God's transforming presence so your heart will be changed.

The other big idea is that *the Christian crushes coveting with contentment*.

As we learned this past fall, our consumer culture is driven by materialism. We are steeped in this culture all day long. If we let our Christian guard down, coveting is always there. That's why we must constantly go back into God's transforming presence.

In Luke 12:15, "Jesus said to them, 'Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness.'" It's an ongoing realignment. Like steering a car. It's an ongoing drive. We have to

steer away from those temptations that draw us in, and steer into God's path. "She got a new car. I want a new car. But wait, my car is sufficient. I will choose to be content. It is more important to me to be able to give \$400 a month to our missionaries than to a new car. I'm far happier this way. And, I will be truly happy for her, and not judge her, because it is good that she gets to enjoy good things, too."

Our world is darkness. Like a plant, it's only when we put ourselves under the Light of God that we can grow and flourish.

What is the Light that produces contentment? First, it's trusting in God's *plan* for our lives, it's surrendering our will to God's. That's hard and ongoing! Secondly, it's trusting in God's *provision* for our lives. It's replacing how we frame our lives: from scarcity to sufficiency. It's reminding ourselves, I have more than enough! Thirdly, it's remembering that joy and contentment are *independent of poverty or prosperity*. Contentment has nothing to do with what you own. Well, actually, it seems to only affect you inversely: the more you have the *less content* you are!

You've heard that famous passage in Philippians 4, where Paul describes the secret of his contentment in God. But we need to hear it again...and again! Philippians 4:11-13, "I'm not saying all this because I need anything, for I have learned how to be content in any circumstance. I know the experience of being in need and of having more than enough; I have learned the secret to being content in any and every circumstance, whether full or hungry or whether having plenty or being poor. I can endure all these things through the power of the One who gives me strength."

When we trust God's plan and provision for our lives and separate our joy from possessions, and when we frame our perspective by sufficiency and resolve to be content, and when we spend time with our God who has the best plan for us and allow Him to replace the desires of our hearts, then we break the cycle of compare, compile, and complain. And then, we can rejoice with those who get pregnant, even when we're still infertile. We can be happy for those who get engaged, even when we're still single. We can celebrate their promotion and raise even when we get laid off. We can enjoy a ride in their new car and still feel completely content driving our old beater. We keep the issue not between them and us—that's jealousy—but between us and God—that's contentment. And we can learn, in every situation, to be content. And contentment crushes coveting.

Amen.

Closing Song: *Go Forth for God* -Sanctify (acoustic)

Announcements: -Pastor David

This Wed., May 27, 6:30 p.m. All Church Game Night: Zoom Bingo! Real prizes!

Next Sunday: Drive in church again!

June 7: Outdoor worship (bring lawn chairs!) Graduation Sunday (Armando Lorenzi and Jame Richter) with cake!! Holy Communion. Last Ten Commandments message.

June 14: Outdoor worship (bring lawn chairs!) Confirmation Sunday: 5 confirmands (Noah Bonsell, Katelyn Bautch, Aimire Lloyd, Tony Lloyd, Jacqueline Wyne) Cake!!

Memory Verse -Pastor David

"Guard your heart because it's the wellspring of your life." -Proverbs 4:23

Benediction -Pastor David

Closing Music -Pastor Andrew