

## **“Do Not Covet”** **Exodus 20:17**

### **Introduction**

- We are taking a few months to go through the 10 Commandments found in Exodus Chapter 20
  - Now why in the world in New Testament age of Grace Times would we want to do that?

### **Well for one reason on Wednesday Nights we are looking at the Book of Exodus from which the 10 Commandments come in its entirety**

- And seeing the context for what we are studying is so important and so I want to connect the two
  - This week.....

### **Okay, sounds interesting but why are we studying the law with all its weird customs and dietary laws**

- Well remember the first five books of the Bible are called the Law, but much of it is what the New Testament calls the Law of Moses
  - the holidays the Jews were suppose to keep
  - the rights of cleanliness that the Jews were to do
  - the Law of Moses was given to the Jewish people for that time
- The 10 commandments are different – they are given to all people for all time
  - Why???

### **Why are the 10 Commandments Important?**

#### **#1 – The Law Drives us to Christ**

- We wonder why don't people see their need for Christ? Why do people walk away from Jesus?

### **Why are the 10 Commandments Important?**

#### **#1 – The Law Drives us to Christ**

#### **#2 – The Law Directs us in Christ**

- The Law shows us our duty to God and to our fellow man – this is how you love God and love people
  - And in a day and age where so many including Christians do whatever is right in their own eyes, because we have lost the standard
- We live in the age of Grace which I am thankful for, we could not be saved without grace
  - But we sometimes think well then it doesn't matter how I live, grace brother – no friend there is a standard

### **Why are the 10 Commandments Important?**

#### **#1 – The Law Drives us to Christ**

#### **#2 – The Law Directs us in Christ**

#### **#3 – The Law helps us Discover Christ**

- You learn something about the Law giver from the laws

**Some of the laws on the books in our city governments let us know that at one time someone making laws was dumb**

- Now we are going to go to the East Coast, where I thought everyone was real smart, but I found these laws...
  - In New Jersey – it is illegal to wear a bulletproof vest while committing a murder –
  - it is also illegal to delay or detain homing pigeon
- New York – the penalty for jumping off a building is death – doesn't that kind of go without saying?
- In Pennsylvania you are not allowed to run for governor if you have participated in a duel
- Rhode Island – you are not allowed to bite off another person's leg – I thought that was illegal in all states

### **But those laws tell you something about the lawgivers**

- well the 10 Commandments are the same
  - and what we primarily will discover about God from His law is that He is love

### **“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” - I John 5:3**

- As we keep His commandments
  - Not to save us, not to qualify us for His love
  - But just as we are directed in Christ - I experience His love for me
- And this is obviously true as we get to commandment number 10
- with the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment God forbids you and I to be involved in coveting
  - now what is God doing – Is He nitpicking, does He just want to get to an even number

### **No – I believe this is one of the most significant commandments to enjoying all that God designed life to be, so let's understand it this tonight**

- What does it mean to covet?
  - **Webster defines “coveting” as wanting, with a deep desire, what you already have enough of**
  - And that is good biblical definition

### **But the problem is that is what our culture is based on**

- Yesterday after being in Target and Bed Bath and Beyond – I had to go to a guy store, so I took my kids into Best Buy – and straight for the plasma TV section – HD – Football, surround sound – and then the sales men asks me what type of TV I have – I have a fine TV but then he shows me my picture and then switches and again the need

### **Our society loves it – But God condemns it**

- and in three areas especially- note takers

### **Don't covet....**

#### **#1 - Your neighbor's house (stuff)**

- We always need more stuff – I love the Veggie Tales Madame Blueberry – show it to your kids talk about today's lesson
  - **Stuff Mart – I love that name – I wish a certain retail company would rename themselves that – Stuff Mart – because I go there and get more stuff – and then I go to other people's houses and see their stuff and realize I need more stuff, so I go back to stuff mart and get more stuff**

- And the magazines come and the commercials come on and suddenly I need more stuff
  - God says, “Don’t covet your neighbors’ house – don’t covet their stuff – Don’t waste your treasure on things that break down and can be stolen

**Now before I go any further – there is nothing wrong with having things – the Bible makes that clear**

- Turn to **I Timothy 6:6**

**“Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into *this* world, and *it is* certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” – I Timothy 6:6-10**

**Now to the rich (all of us according to the world’s standards)**

- Don’t trust in riches – don’t love them – be content – for “the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil” – not money itself
  - Use it – and many of you understand this, and do this

**But sometimes it just about more stuff**

- in my garage is a collection of golf clubs – and they are in the garage and not in closet because they are old – but I can remember with each one – seeing and seeing turning into needing and needing turning into saving, hoarding, storing – buying and when I would then, next year’s model came out – and I saw, and needed... - how sad – how foolish
  - to store up treasure only in that which now is covered in rust
  - don’t covet your neighbor’s house - stuff

**Don’t covet....**

**#1 - Your neighbor’s stuff**

**#2 - Your neighbor’s wife (relationships)**

- it’s not the house, but the girl
  - look at the way she treats him, and she is so beautiful – oh I wish my wife were different, I wish my husband was that way

On rare, rare occasions – rare because the shortness and baldness take care of most of that – but someone will say to Christy my wife – your husband is so wonderful – up with kids – in the word with them – dishes – perfection – and though she would never say it – she’s thinking – and then he picks his nose – then he digs lint out of his bellybutton that is now deeper than I remember when we were first married – because she knows – she sees my first thing in the morning – she’s around when I haven’t had my quiet time nor my caffeine and I can get a little grumpy

- but we always think the grass is greener

**It cracks me up listening to single people talk about how their marriage will be**

- You so lucky to married – I agree, I love Christy – why do you think I’m lucky – because you have someone there and you can just spend every evening sharing, holding.... The singles say, and then the singles ladies say “he will paint my toenails and watch classic movies with me” – yeah sure in-between cleaning kid vomit which occurs every month apparently off your VCR while your kids ransack your room
  - It doesn’t work that way – don’t covet some relationship you don’t have

**You know I pick on single people, but the opposite is true as well**

- I have counseled married men who dream of freedom and single life was so great – spent every night alone
  - Maybe I’m just closer to that time in my life – but that was not the case
  - I remember when my family would go to California every summer – at first I would be a little excited, I am free
  - But if you are not a dirtbag, there is really nothing to do – I wanted my family back
  - It was lonely

**That is why again Paul says Godliness with contentment is great gain**

- don’t covet your neighbors stuff
  - don’t covet your neighbors relationships
  - and the same principal applies with the last one

**Don’t covet....**

**#1 - Your neighbor’s stuff**

**#2 - Your neighbor’s wife (relationships)**

**#3 - Your neighbor’s servants, oxen, cattle (status)**

**In that day your status was determine by how many servants, how many animals, how much land you had**

- And we covet position, power
  - when I am the boss – I am focused on the next level
  - With each thing in life there is an ounce of satisfaction
  - Elementary to Junior High
  - To driving
  - To being on my own paying my bills
  - To being married
  - To have kids (then they make you wipe them)
- With everything
  - We think – when I get this
  - When I get promoted
  - I remember thinking during my first gig at Calvary Chapel Vista

I used to on Easter Sunday, we would do this huge affair – all day Saturday – then 4am on Sunday to wipe down chairs from the dew over and over again and then get into a suit (two times a year) and begin to sweat. Then I watched my pastor arrive 15 minutes before the service started, get up, teach, leave. And people would say – Wow – what a man of God – and I would think – I can’t wait until his gig – what is that – people are like handing me their empty coffee cups so I throw them away for them and he stands there for a hour being congratulated on a great Easter – what in the world – what a job

**Humm – And then I became the guy - I will never forget the first time I had a make a decision that would affect people I loved on both sides of a the issues at this church – wishing I could pass it off to someone else  
We think “The grass is always greener on the other side, with more stuff” – but the reality is its not – it has thorns and thistles and at the same time flowers and soft mulch just like your patch of grass does**

**“You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.”**

**God condemns coveting and commands you and I not to be part of it**

- Now before we go, and very quickly – why?
  - is God being nitpicky here
  - Just coming to the end and needing a round number
- Absolutely not
  - Why is coveting devastating
    - Listen – because it shifts your focus from where it needs to be, where it must be
    - What do you mean

**Turn to Luke 12:15**

- Jesus warns about covetousness
  - Then tells a story about a man who had much, but notice, was not enjoying it – He tells his soul now we will, now we will start – but he already had much – “deceitfulness of riches”

**But God says – You fool – You had everything – didn't enjoy it, didn't use it for good – didn't invest it in eternity in things that would last forever – and tonight – you're dead – great going buddy – you never truly enjoyed what you had, and you send nothing ahead – how sad – fool**

- So what do I do
  - Read on – Luke 12:22-23 & 29-37a – this is the key

**“Sell what we have”??? – No - he is speaking to the disciples a group who had a little different circumstances than you and I – it is good to provide for your family – don't sell all you have and then come to me... that is not the point**

**He tells them a faithful steward, servant is watching, knowing His Lord is coming back, investing in eternity, in things that matter, living for heaven**

- And God knows that man or woman who is consumed with coveting will never have that focus – because their focus is here
  - They may or may not amass wealth that is not the issue – this issue is you will never enjoy whatever it is you are coveting – and, you will miss being focused on what matters – eternity!

**You ever walked a dog at night and the stars are just amazing – the heavens are declaring the glory of God, but what is that dog doing – sniffing in the bushes, sniffing at others dogs who have been there before and left part of themselves – and they miss everything**

- They are a dog – and we are just like them when we go through life saying – a bigger house – a nicer car – I need be with that person, no that person – I need to get ahead, be my own boss – sniff – fool

**Look up – Your redemption draws near – probably not tonight – but you will**

- Are you coveting – are you focused on only what is around you, what you are doing next
  - Or are you content with what you have – focused on what will be your eternity

**This is the love of God – Listen, Father is saying to you – this is best for your life – oh but it will be so burdensome – no it won't – but I don't – no it won't – it will be the greatest joy, but it is how God designed life to be, and anything less is sin – missing the mark God has for you**

- coveting is wanting more of what you already have enough of
  - and this commandment I think is one of the most significant
- We are not satisfied – we want more stuff, we want more from a relationship or more relationship, we want more from this life
  - And yet as we go through the scriptures what we find in all we need for life and godliness is found in Him, in Jesus
  - That in His presence is fullness of joy, that at His right hand are pleasures forever more
- The enemy knows that, but if he can keep you always looking other places than the one place you will be truly satisfied, well then he has won

**We think this law, these 10 commandments as restrictive**

- But think about it like if you were living in the amazon – and so you put up the fence to protect your kids from going where they shouldn't and it keeps the predators out
  - It is to free us up to enjoy all the life was meant to be without the pitfalls and the predators
  - God says I have taken you out of Egypt, now here is how you can be truly free
  - This is the love of God – Keep my commandments
- Not to save you, but so you will experience all that life is meant to be