

# **The Sin No One Wants to Admit**

**August 13, 2017**

**Our Savior's Way  
Worshipping Sundays 8:00, 9:30, & 11:00 AM  
Pastor Tyson Labuhn**

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

This morning we're finishing up the 10 Commandments as part of our sermon series on Luther's Small Catechism. Having gone through the 1st through the 8th Commandments, we're taking a look at both the 9th and 10th Commandments.

The 9th Commandment says, "You shall not covet your neighbor's house." To which Martin Luther goes on to say that, "We should fear and love God so that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or get it in a way which only appears right, but help and be of service to him in keeping it."

And the 10th Commandment – one that is a little longer than that, says, "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor." To which Luther goes on to say, that "We should fear and love God so that we do not entice or force away our neighbor's wife, workers or animals, or turn them against him, but urge them to stay and do their duty."

Both the 9th and 10th Commandments begin with the words, "You shall not covet..." So what does covet mean? You know there's a story of a Sunday school class that was studying the Ten

Commandments. They were just about to read and talk about the 9th and 10th Commandment, when the teacher asked if anyone knew what they were about. So little Susie raised her hand, stood up and said, “You shall not take the covers off your neighbor’s wife....”

But if you took a look at this week’s Midweek Connect email, you might have noticed that it’s defined it a little differently. Coveting is the desire of something that we shouldn’t have.... It’s alright for you to want and desire something in your life, however this morning we’re talking about a wrongly motivated desire that leads us to try to make our own that which God never intended for us to have. The desire for that which has already been given to someone else, like their house and home. Their spouse. Their means of employment. Or their means of transportation and other possessions. Because once this wrongly motivated desire becomes lodged into our hearts, it can lead us away from the will of God and commit other sins such as murder, adultery, stealing, and lying. This is the sin that no one wants to admit.

A man by the name of Bob James once wrote, “Recently I laid a small circle of poison around a hill of stinging ants. Thinking the tiny granules of poison were food, the ants began to pick them up and carry them throughout the colony. I returned later to see how well the poison was working. Hundreds of the stinging ants were carrying the poison down into their hill. Then I noticed a hole in the circle of poison. Some of the poison was moving the opposite way away from the hill. Some smaller, non-stinging ants had found this "food" and were stealing it from their ant neighbors. Thinking they were getting the other ants' treasure, they unwittingly poisoned themselves. When we see someone with more than we have, we need to be careful. The hunger to beg, borrow, or steal our way into what is theirs can poison us spiritually.”

In Scripture we read about King Ahab in 1 Kings Chapter 21, who wanted his neighbor's vineyard so much that King Ahab's wife, Jezebel, devised a scheme to have the neighbor be accused of a crime that he didn't commit and be put to death, so that the land might be given to her husband. God saw this and sent the Prophet Elijah to confront King Ahab to repent of his sins. And of course, in 2 Samuel Chapter 12, there's the story of King David who wanted his neighbor's wife for his own. In doing so, King David killed Uriah, his neighbor, after Bathsheba became pregnant. God saw this and sent the Prophet Nathan to confront King David. And while King David turned away from his sins, there were still consequences that lead to the child's death.

Today, advertising often encourages us to be dissatisfied with what we have so that we might keep craving more. It tells us that happiness and satisfaction comes to us with new things. Some of these items might be in your neighbor's possession. And we might become envious and jealous. It might not always create hard feelings toward our neighbor or the desire to take something that had already been given to someone else. But when this desire for new things makes us ungrateful and dissatisfied with what God has given to us, it is still sinful. God sees this sin in us. You see, it's not necessarily the act, but this wrongly motivated desire that is sinful. God sees it when we don't help our neighbors in need to protect their property and possessions. God sees it when we engage in conversation with our neighbor's unhappy spouse and don't urge them to stay in their marriage.

Coveting is the sin that no one wants to admit, yet spiritually it poisons and kills us. These secret sins that we commit in our heart keep us in bondage to sin. We need new hearts that no longer lead us to commit these sins. We need a savior to free us from this bondage. In order for that to happen, God out of His great love for us, placed on His Son all of our coveting sins, as well as all the

sins that came from our coveting. Jesus willingly sacrificed Himself with our sins on the cross so that we might be forgiven and freed from our bondage to sin.

It's in Him that we receive new circumcised hearts in baptism. Hearts that desire God and truly love Him above all else. Hearts that both trust and are content with the provisions through which He supplies our daily bread. While contentment doesn't always come to us easily, when we're thankful for what has been given to us, keep a proper perspective on material possessions, and rejoice with others when they're blessed, we love God above all else and love our neighbors as ourselves.

So far during this summer, we've seen that while God's 10 Commandments were given long ago, they are still relevant to our lives today. God expects us to keep them perfectly in our thoughts, desires, words, and actions. Each of us simply falls short of this expectation which then reveals to us our tremendous need for a savior. It's because of Jesus Christ, that we are freed from the guilt punishment, and the power of sin, and are eternally saved. For that, we should give Him thanks and praise both now and always.

And now, may that peace which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in that same Christ Jesus, until He comes again to take us all home forever. In Jesus' Name, Amen.