

The Law and Secret Sins

by Ernest C. Reisinger

The sermon explores the Tenth Commandment, highlighting covetousness as a root sin that reveals the need for grace and true conversion.

Duration: 1:02:26

Scripture: Exodus 20:14-15, Exodus 20:17, Mark 10:17, John 3:16, Ephesians 5:5, Ephesians 6:1-2

Topics: "Sin"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of not placing value solely on material possessions. He highlights the fact that many people sacrifice their lives for material things, only to find that they do not bring true satisfaction. The preacher suggests that being poor can sometimes be better because there are certain things that money cannot buy, such as the love and guidance a father can give to his children. He then references the story of the rich young ruler who asks Jesus how to inherit eternal life, and Jesus uses the law to address the man's deep problem. The sermon concludes with a reminder that grace does not change what is right, and that the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life can choke the seed of God.

Transcript

And tonight, I'm going to read the last one first, because the last one teaches us how all the others are to be carried out, which means that all the others hold overt acts of sin. Before we read the commandment, let's bow our hearts and our heads in a moment of prayer. Our Father, how helpless we are as humans to convey divine truth to men.

Yea, Lord, not only helpless, but we are hopeless apart from your Spirit. We thank you tonight that thou hast given us a measure of confidence in thy Spirit, and by virtue of this, you've weaned us from all gadgets and gimmicks and tricks. But we cast ourselves upon your mercy again tonight as we open your Word, and cry out, O Lord, as it pleases thee, send thy Spirit, and as we would aim the arrows of truth to the hearts of men and women, we pray that thou would send thy Spirit to carry the truth to that needy place where it must reach and rest.

Hear our prayer as we cry out for thee to send thy Spirit into our midst, even as we read thy Word. We ask these things for the glory of our blessed Redeemer, in his name, and for the good of his Church, even for us. I say I'm going to read the last one first and read it twice.

The 17th verse of Exodus 20, this is the 10th commandment, that's what our subject is tonight. We've talked about the law and the sinner, or the law and evangelism, the first night. Last night we talked about the law and the saint, and I feel that maybe I just ought to say one word yet about last night's message, and I didn't feel like I got quite finished before the clock got to the place where I felt I should stop.

Because we live in a day when people are hollering about grace, we don't need the law. And I want to remind you that grace never changes what's right. So if you've got any idea of grace, if you've got a kind of a grace that changes what's right, then you don't have the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ or the grace of the Bible.

Grace never changes what's right. In Ephesians chapter 6, verse 1 and 2, it says, Children, obey your parents and the Lord, for this is right. Now, grace does not change that.

And likewise, you can apply that to every commandment. Thou shalt not steal, this is right, that you shouldn't steal. Grace does not change that.

The only thing grace changes, two basic things, Grace changes our ability to do right. Number one. Secondly, grace changes our relationship to our guilt, because we have not done right.

Grace changes our relationship to our guilt, because we have not done right. And grace also changes our ability to do right. Now, that's last night's message, the law and the saint.

Now, if you look at Exodus, I want to read this passage before we look to tonight's message. Verse 17. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's. Now, if you bear that commandment in mind, as we read the rest, especially of our relationship to one another, you'll see that it's impossible to keep the rest apart from keeping this. Because you don't steal unless you covet.

You don't commit adultery unless you covet first. You don't murder unless you covet. And so the covenant is kind of back of breaking all the rest.

Now we'll read them all together, verse one. And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt, first commandment.

Thou shalt have no other god before me. Second commandment. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or 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.

Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them. For I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers unto the children, unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate me. The visitation of wrath and so on are to those who hate him.

But bless God for verse six, and this is how I got in, and showing mercy unto thousands that love me and keep my command. We need mercy. The third commandment.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Fourth commandment. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shalt not do any work.

Thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within the gate. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day. Wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

The fifth commandment. Hear this, parents. This is not for your children, especially your little children.

It's for your children after they know what they're doing, but this is for you up until that age, up until that stage. Honor thy father and mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. Sixth commandment.

Thou shalt not kill. Seventh commandment. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Eighth commandment. Thou shalt not steal. Ninth commandment.

It has to do with the tongue and our words. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. And then the last commandment.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's. And all the people saw the thunders and the lightnings and the noise of the trumpet and the mountains smoking.

And when the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, and this verse teaches us that they recognized the need of a mediator. I think the 19th verse ought to teach us that they recognized the need of a mediator.

And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear. But let not God speak with us, lest we die. And then Moses said unto the people, Fear not, for God is come to prove you.

And that his fear may be before your faces, and the reason for that is that ye sin not. Now I want you to turn for a text tonight to Romans chapter 7. I've referred to it several times this week. And tonight I want to talk about the law and secret sin.

Tomorrow night I'd like to talk about the law and the Savior. And on Friday night, as we've announced, we want to talk about the law, sex and sanctity from the seventh commandment. We don't want to be more pious than God, and I don't want to apologize for anything that's in the Bible.

And God has an awful lot in the Bible about marriage, the home, and sex, and immorality. An awful lot. And so we ought to say something once in a while, at least, about that.

But tonight in Romans 7, in relationship to our theme tonight, the law and secret sin, or the law and the subtlety of sin, maybe we ought to call it because it is that, we're talking about the tenth commandment. But I want to show you, as I've mentioned several times this week, and I can't emphasize it too much, that this is a great commandment to show people who live a pretty upright, moral life that they still need to be saved, and that they're still sinners. Saint Paul, as you know, was a Hebrew of the Hebrews.

He was very religious, to the point of persecuting the Church. He was not an idol hearer. He was zealous for religion, very zealous, persecuting the Church of Jesus Christ in the name of truth, and in the name of

true religion.

He was strict. He said he was a Pharisee, which means he was very legalistic. But tonight I want to show you that it's the commandment that we're speaking of that caused this good, moral man, at least, outwardly, to see his need of Jesus Christ.

And he attributes his whole conversion to the commandment that I speak to you about tonight. Verse 7 of Romans 7, he says, What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law.

And he said in another place, in Romans 3.20, By the law is the knowledge of sin. So he said, I had not known sin. How do I know what sin is? I hadn't known sin, but by the law.

For I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. Thou shalt not covet. The 17th verse of Exodus.

So he's really saying, this is how I learned my sin. I had not known lust, except the law said, Thou shalt not covet. Now, may I make a few general remarks about this tenth commandment tonight, before we look at it further.

First of all, this is the most subtle sin that we're dealing with. And maybe I will say what covet is, what it means to covet. It means a strong, controlling desire.

And, as I said before, without observing this commandment, the rest cannot be kept. It can be kept without observing this. I think another general remark is that this teaches us how the rest are to be understood.

That is, that they not only speak of outward acts, the commandments, when we put this in the Decalogue, this commandment shows us that the others not only speak of the outward acts, but the inward purpose and intent of the heart. That's what it shows us. The word covet means desire, an inordinate desire.

And this commandment differs from all the rest in that the others prohibit some overt act. This commandment does not deal with the act of things. Incidentally, in passing, I might say this ought to be one of the reasons the convincing arguments that the commandments are of not of human origin.

Because what good would it do man to make a commandment that nobody could know whether he kept or not? It would be foolish for man to make a commandment that would be impossible for him to know that anybody kept it. That's why you will find all the commandments, mostly in the Bible, on some statute book in our law, our courts of law. But you will not find this commandment on any human statute.

You see, you can't know it. And I think it should be at least a convincing argument to show that the commandments are more than human in their origin. Now, as I said, this is the commandment that looks on the heart.

And this is the root of Bible Christianity. The whole basis of Christianity has a lot to do with the heart. That's why if you've been around where I've spoken many times, you hear me continually referring to where Jesus tells us all of our sins come from.

Where they all stem from. Every sin you've ever committed. Every sin I've ever committed.

I don't care what sin it was. It had its roots in the heart. And that's why our Lord said in Mark 7, and I repeat these verses over... I've said them so many times that they're part of me.

When our Lord describes what man's real problem was. When he said in Matthew 7, Mark 7, 21-23, From within, from within, out of the hearts of men proceed evil thoughts. That's where all the evil thoughts used to be.

You say, why is it that I think evil thoughts? Well, they come from within, dear heart. From within, out of the hearts of men proceed evil thoughts. Adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness.

You see, it's right named in there. Covetousness, wickedness, deceit, blasphemousness, an evil eye, blasphemy. You say, why do men curse? Well, it stems from an evil heart.

Pride, where does pride come from? Jesus said in that section, it comes from within. Deceit, where does it come from? Within. And so this commandment deals with that place where all sin comes from.

I suppose that's why the greatest, the wisest man in all the world, Solomon, shows this great truth when he said practically the same thing, I suppose, that our Lord was saying when Solomon said, Out of the heart proceed the issues of life. Out of the heart proceed the issues of life. And therefore he went on to give advice to young men when he says, Keep thy heart with all diligence.

Because this is where the problems begin. That's why we should say to young men and older alike, Keep thine heart, young lady, with all diligence. Keep thine heart, young man, with all diligence.

For out of it proceed the issues of life. Then I said, I think, that this commandment that we're going to look at tonight shows us that God looks farther than anyone on earth. God looks farther than anyone on earth.

One more thing in general let me say about the commandment before we look at some of the things in the commandment itself, and that is this. This is the greatest commandment to sway spiritual pride and self-righteousness. This puts a death blow to self-righteousness.

This puts a death blow to Phariseeism. This is the commandment that puts a death blow to spiritual pride. This will make the strongest Christian cry out, O blessed man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? This is the commandment that will do it.

If none of the rest of the commandments will cause you to cry out, this commandment will cause the strongest saint to cry out sometime or other, O wretched man that I am. Now, what is it to covet? The larger catechism tells us two basic things about what it is to covet. It's an insatiable desire of getting the world.

That's what it is. It's an insatiable desire of getting the world, a desire for more than enough to covet. Not only that, it's an inordinate love for the world, an excessive love.

A man is not only a covetous man who gets the world unrighteously, but those who love it inordinately, because some people love it and don't get it. You think of the rich man always being the covetous man. No, many times this sin would be more common among the poor, because I want to repeat that.

A man is not only covetous who gets the world unrighteously, he's covetous, but those who love the world inordinately, he's a covetous man. And I say, as we pointed out, we read, this is the sin that drove Saul of Tarsus to Jesus Christ. This is why he could say the law was a schoolmaster, when he saw the spiritual

part of the law, that it reached his thoughts and the intents of his heart and his desires.

Now, what is it to covet? Or maybe I should ask the question differently. When is one given to covetousness? When is one given to covetousness? Well, I've jotted some things down with the help of some old saints, and I want to try to answer that question a bit by listing a few, four or five things, when one is given to covetousness. Now, you ought to be concerned about this, dear heart.

If you're a Christian, you ought to be concerned, because this is a subtle sin, and I'll point that out after a while. And if you're a non-Christian and you have a standard of morals that have not reached your heart, a standard of morals that puts you high morally in the community, or passes you for a moral man in society, but if that standard is something that's apart from what reaches your heart, then you ought to pay attention when one is given to covetousness. First of all, when his thoughts are wholly taken up with the world.

A good man's thoughts are in heaven. That doesn't mean he's not interested, he doesn't get so heavenly minded that he's no earthly good, but a good man's thoughts are in heaven. Thoughts wholly taken up with business.

I said wholly. Wholly taken up with business, homes, sports, shop, farm, treasure. That man is a covetous man.

That's how the wicked are described. Then a man is another time when a man is given to covetousness, is when all his conversation, all his discourse is about the world. He that is of the earth, said Jesus in John 3.31, he that is of the earth is of the earth, and of the earth he speaketh.

All these secular things, even though they be good and not bad in themselves, but all this conversation, all this thought, are about secular things. Someone has said a covetous man's breath is like a dying man's breath. It smells strong of the earth.

It smells strong of the earth. You can tell them by their conversation. Even as the little maid said to Peter, thy speech betrayeth thee, and a covetous man, his speech will betray him.

Because it's always of the earth. Words are the mirror of the heart, dear hearts. And I say, they show what's within.

Man is always talking filthy things. That's what's within. Whatever's within.

Words are a mirror of the heart. And then a man is thought to be covetous, or said to be covetous, when he takes more pains of getting the earth than getting heaven. When he takes more pains in getting all, when he will turn every stone, when he will lose sleep, when he will take every step for the world, but take no steps or pain for Christ or heaven.

None at all. When he takes no steps or pains for Christ or heaven, or for knowledge of eternal verities, he's a covetous man. When all of his sleepless hours, and all of his efforts, and all of his steps, and all of his energy is directed to get things to, but not an ounce of time for heavenly knowledge, not an ounce of time for eternal verities, he's a covetous man.

He would be content, this crowd would be quite content, if salvation would drop in their mouth like a ripe plum. They'd say, oh, I'd like to have salvation, but it would just drop in my mouth like a... These people are low to put themselves to much work or trouble to obtain Christ or salvation. These people hunt for the

world, but they only hope for heaven.

They don't need anybody who hopes for heaven, but they don't hunt for it. They just kind of hope, vaguely, that things will work out, and heaven will be all right by and by. You say, how much effort have you put in to try to find out about it? Strangely silent.

That man is said to be a covetous man. A man is said to be covetous when his heart is set upon worldly things. But for the love of them, he will part with heaven.

And for a wedge of gold, he will part with the pearl of great price. Many a man, for a wedge of gold, he will part with the pearl of great price. A wedge of gold.

We're going to look at a fellow like that tonight. A fellow that I believe this is the root sin that sent him to hell. And then a man is covetous when he overloads himself with business or work and has no time to serve Christ.

No time to serve Christ. I said last week to some people, and I have said it before, that three basic things happen in every true Bible conversion. The degrees may differ.

And they may differ in some individuals at a different time in his life. But three basic things happen. A man that's truly converted has a hunger for God.

It may go up and down by degrees. It may not always be fervent as it is at other times. But he has a hunger for God.

And a man that's truly converted has a hatred for sin, and even his own sin. And another thing, he has a heart that serves the Lord. He wants to do something.

Paul of Tarsus, when Christ sovereignly struck him down and called him by his grace, the first thing he said was, Lord, what would you have me to do? And a man who gives himself, overloads himself with business and work, but he has no time to serve Christ in his church. He has no time. And I tell you, I'm concerned about this in our day because I know some men that are not only going to lose heaven because of this, but they're already losing their family.

In this world, they're paying the price for overloading themselves with business and work. They're already paying the price. I've met more than one man that's lost his whole family because he's overloaded himself with work.

God never meant it like this. It's God giving you a family. Look after them.

And I say, apart from the religious aspect, apart from this, there are people tonight who are losing their families, let alone heaven, because they're overloaded. That's covetousness. No time for your soul.

You're under the power of covetousness. If you have no time for your soul, I don't care if you're 10 years old or 80 years old, if you have no time for your soul, you're a covetous man. And I say, oh dear man, would you not hear Christ say in Luke chapter 15, where he says, take heed.

Listen to Christ speaking about this. Take heed in Luke chapter 12, 15. Take heed and keep yourself from all covetousness.

Why? He gives the reason. For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth. How many of us could not close our eyes right now and think of four or five people who gave their lives for things, and some of them attained, only to find it was a soul bubble, and it really didn't satisfy.

Many a man tonight is laboring to give his family laboring, generously a good father, laboring to give his family all that money can buy. And he hasn't given them one ounce of what money can't buy. That's why sometimes it's better to be poor.

Because there's some things that money can't buy that a father can give his son. There's some things that you can give your children that money can't buy. There's no price on it.

Many a man loses sight of this great truth. He labors to give his family what money can buy, but misses the great point. He doesn't give them what money can buy.

And that's why Jesus said this, Take heed and keep yourselves from all covetousness. For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth. Selling your children, selling your home.

I'm not talking about your houses. Your home and your house is two different things. Many a man doesn't own a house, but he's got a wonderful home.

There's many a man who doesn't own a house, but he's got a home. And a lot of people own houses and don't have a home. I'm not talking about that.

Now, I say to you tonight, covetousness is a moral vice that infects the whole soul. And I want to tell you three things particularly about this awful sin of covetousness that I hope you remember. First of all, I want to say it's a very subtle sin.

And fact is, many cannot discern it. It's a very subtle sin. You say, why is it subtle, Mr. Riesinger? Well, first of all, a lot of times, it dresses itself in the attire of virtue.

Now, how does it do that? It dresses itself in the attire of virtue. In 1 Thessalonians 2.5, it says this, it is called a cloak of covetousness. Now, how does it dress itself in virtue? Well, it wears a cloak.

It cloaks itself under the name thrifty sometimes. Hard worker, providing for one's family. A subtle sin.

And many times, the back of all this ambition people seem to have, and all this wonderful frugality and thriftiness that they have. And we admire them in the world. We admire if a man will just work 16 hours a day, or work and work and work and work.

We say, oh, he's an ambitious man. This man really works. He knows nothing but work.

And we kind of want to tell you something. The reason it's a subtle sin because many times, back of that, behind what we call virtue, it's cloaked itself beautifully in what we call virtue. Behind it, nothing more than a subtle sin for that reason.

And for the same reason, this awful sin is a dangerous sin. Why is it dangerous? Subtle, yes, it's subtle. But it's dangerous also.

Why is covetousness so dangerous, my friends? Well, I'll tell you why it's so dangerous. Because it chokes. Oh, it's good.

If you look in Luke 8, verse 14, where our Lord is explaining upon the disciples' request, where he gives the parable of the sower, and he tells about the seed, and he said it's the Word of God. He talks about the seed being the Word of God. And our Lord goes on to describe the different soils.

He says some fell by the wayside, some fell among thorns, others fell on shallow ground. But when he answers his disciples' request to explain that, they ask him down in about verse 9, they say to him, what might this parable be? And then he goes on in verse 12 and 13 and 14 and 15 to explain the parable. But I don't want to go into that parable tonight other than verse 14, because I say it's a dangerous sin because it chokes the seed of God.

This is the sin that chokes the seed of God. And in that explanation he said this in Luke 8, verse 14. He said the one that fell among thorns, he said it's choked, and notice what with.

I'm going to read it verbatim. Choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life. That's what chokes it.

That's coming. It's choked with the cares, riches and pleasures of this life. And it's also sad.

Do you have any real old un-Christian friends who have been godless all their life? Nice people. You ever been with them when they die or when they come here at the end of the road? You ever been with them? Doesn't matter if they have much or nothing. It's a sad thing because they're without hope.

And not only that, worse than that, I've been with some who didn't even recognize that it was a sad case to be without hope. And that's worse than being hopeless. It's bad to be hopeless.

But it's an awful thing to be hopeless and not even realize it's important that you have hope. That's worse still. And I say this sin is not only subtle, but it's dangerous because it chokes.

And it chokes because of the cares and riches and pleasures of this life. It chokes out the good seed. We preach to get men's hearts to heaven, but this sin, it seems, chains men's hearts to the earth.

This is what I'm preaching against tonight. I'm preaching against the chains that chain a man's heart to the earth. And I'm behind this pulpit preaching trying to unloose you from those chains that have chained you to the earth.

To turn your eyes heavenward, eternal, to think of what Christ did. Oh, we're not of this school that believes we must be so heavenly minded that we're no earthly good. Definitely not.

God has put us here, and we should use all that we have to the best of our ability. Now if he's given you a job, you better work at it because it's a sin if you don't. If he's given you any material things, you better use it properly because it's a sin if you don't.

It's not the sin to have it, but how do you use it? And tonight we preach because this is the sin that chains men's hearts to the earth. And we try to preach to break those chains. When our Lord was here, you remember he said, my kingdom is not of this world.

When we preach about Christ's kingdom, we're not preaching about a kingdom of this world. You remember when he said, my kingdom is not of this world? Or my servants would fight. It's both.

It's both. Now there's another thing about this awful sin. It's not only subtle and it's dangerous, but there's another thing.

This is the mother. And I pointed this out when I read the commandments. That's why I read the last one first.

This sin is the mother of sin. This sin is the mother of sin. Would you, as I go over most of the commandments, would you allow me tonight to apply this sin and show you how it's a mother of the other sin? Would you do that? First of all, how is it a mother of sin? Well, the love of money is the root of all evil.

Not money, the love for it. And I'll talk about that a little later. Because we can never talk about this sin without talking about money.

And so I'm going to have something to say about that in a little while. But before I say it, it's the love of money that's the root of it. People say money is the root of all evil.

Always correct them. Don't ever allow anybody to quote the Bible like that. That's a bad quotation.

Because the Bible does not say that, and I'm going to explain that in a little while. Always correct them. Did you ever hear anybody say money is the root of all evil? No, sir.

I tell you, you wouldn't have many clothes on tonight if it weren't for money. You'd have a pretty skinny wardrobe, and your old wife's box would be pretty thin, and you wouldn't be driving that car you have out there. So money can't be so bad.

It isn't so bad. I wouldn't like to be here without any of this. Or do you know where I could borrow some? Would you? No, no.

The Bible doesn't teach that. The Bible doesn't teach money is, it says the love of money is the root of all evil. And we'll have something to say about that.

But let's think about covetous as the root of all sin. A breach of all the commandments. First of all, a covetous man has mammon as his God.

And the first commandment says, thou shalt have no other gods before me. A covetous man bows down, not to the grave and image in churches. No, no.

But he does bow down to that image on his coin. A covetous man, using or taking God's name in vain. An example I think we have is Absalom.

It's a wonderful example how a man can be covetous, the root of it, and he takes God's name in vain in a covetous way. Absalom, as you remember, if you read the story in 2 Samuel, Absalom wanted his father's crown. Absalom wanted his crown.

But you know what he hid behind to try to get his father's crown? Why, he said in 2 Samuel 15, 7, he talked about paying his vows to God, which was taking God's name in vain. That's the commandment there. And then a covetous man, he doesn't keep the Sabbath day holy, because he's only thinking about

himself.

He will ride and run to pleasures instead of reading his Bible and try to hide his ignorance by saying, I have no time to study. What does he do with all the Sabbath? What have you done with all the Lord's days since you've been alive? And then you plead ignorance. I don't know anything about the Bible.

I don't know anything about Christ. I don't know anything about God. Well, why don't you? Because you're covetous and you've spent your Sabbath days on yourself, and lies and pleasures and not seeking out God.

This Bible knowledge doesn't come, the knowledge of Christ and the knowledge of the Bible doesn't come wrapped up in some little package down from heaven. Well, once you have it, if you've memorized any verses of Scripture, it's because you've labored to do it. Do you know something about the Bible and your soul of God and Christ and the commandments and your duties? It's because you spent a little effort trying to... A covetous man doesn't keep the Sabbath day holy and a covetous man doesn't honor his father and mother unless he thinks he can get their money if he's really covetous.

And six, the covetous man is usually at the bottom of murder. We see that sixth commandment, Thou shalt not kill. Covetousness is usually at the bottom of murder.

And certainly I don't think you are. That's why Ahab killed Naboth. Ahab was the king, had all kind of vineyards.

And he looks over and he wants dear old Naboth's little vineyard and so he had him killed. But down at the bottom of it, he wanted what that man had. That's why he had him whacked out of the way.

And so I say covetousness is at the bottom of most murder. Many people tonight only reach the top by covetousness. And then of course, I don't think I have to strain on the point.

Covetousness after another man's wife is at the bottom of much adultery. You want something that's not yours? Covetousness is at the bottom of that. Then if we look at the eighth commandment, we see that a man always covets in his heart before he steals.

I suppose that's why God lifts it. I took down this verse, 1 Corinthians chapter 6, verse 10, where God lifts it with that. And so covetous, a man always covets in his heart before he steals.

He decides that he wants this. I must have it. That's why I suppose in 1 Corinthians 6, 10, we have it listed.

Notice how it's listed and what it's listed with, covetousness. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulteresses, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. Now know this word covetous, what it's listed with.

It's listed with all thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners, adulterers. And so I say, that always, always, a covetous heart goes before a man breaks that commandment that says, thou shalt not steal. Tonight I particularly want to call your attention to what I believe is a picture of a covetous man, a sad picture, one of the sad pictures in the New Testament.

And I'd like you to turn there tonight. I might say before turning there that, and I can't emphasize this too strong. Let me just say a word.

I said a moment ago that I'd say something about the love of money is the root of all evil. Somebody asked me a question once, and they said, if it's lawful to make money, why is it unlawful to love it? Now, we all believe it's lawful to make it, don't we? Don't you all have a job? Well, sure you do. And certainly there isn't any law on how much you make.

If a man, tomorrow morning, everybody, if the boss says to everybody tomorrow morning, I think I'm going to give you, I'm going to give you \$10 an hour instead of \$4 an hour. It's not a sin for you to get \$10 an hour, I suppose, if he wants to do it. So in the case of how much you make, if you've made \$100,000, or if you've made \$2,000, there's no sin in this.

You see? Well, let me go back to the question. If it's lawful to make money, why is it unlawful to love it? Hmm? What would you give to that answer? Somebody asked you that question. If somebody said to you, if it's lawful to make money, why is it unlawful to love it? Because the Bible's clear.

The love of money, the love of it, is the root of all evil. Well, let me answer what I think is a good answer, at least it satisfies me. Money should be only a means to an end.

That's what it is anyhow. Money should only be a means to an end, to glorify God with our substance. And you see, the Bible's also clear on this, that we cannot serve two masters.

For either, Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 6, 24, no man can serve two masters, for either he will love the one and hate the other. Now, if we love the means, which is the money, then we cannot love the end, which is to glorify God. You can't love both.

You can't have two masters. Now, money, no harm. There's no certain amount that you're supposed to have or not to have.

This is all the providence of God. Whatever station he puts you, be content. I don't know what station that is.

That's not the problem. The problem is that this is only a means, one of the means, to glorify God. And you can glorify God in different stations.

If you're a laborer, you can glorify God in the station as a laborer. God has made you a mechanic or a foreman or a superintendent or an owner of a business. You can glorify God in your station, wherever it is.

With how much money you make, that's immaterial. It's why you want it and what do you do with it. And you see, you can't have two masters.

So if you love the money, then you cannot love the end, which you wanted. Because you can't have two masters. You can't have two masters.

That's why, if we love the means, which is the money, we seek to love the end, which is the glory of God. Now, before I turn to a specific case in the New Testament about this sin, let me just say this. I want to read you one verse of Scripture found because this sin, this sin, the sin of this commandment will shut you out of heaven.

And I wouldn't be a friend to your soul if I didn't tell you that tonight. In Ephesians chapter 5, I'm going to read it verbatim. Chapter 5, verse 5, it says this, For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of God.

And I want to turn you in the New Testament tonight, and I'd like you to turn to it. This is the last passage of Scripture. Would you turn to a New Testament incident of this sin? Would you turn to Mark chapter 10, verse 17? And I want to read you this passage of Scripture.

Mark chapter 10, we're going to close with this passage of Scripture after a few comments. Because this is the sin of it. This is the sin involved.

The story, or the incident, or the record, I should say, of the rich young ruler. Verse 17, And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running and kneeling to him, our Lord, that is, and asking our Lord, and this is what he said, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus didn't say to him, now, just you kind of memorize a couple little verses, or memorize John 3, 16, he had to get to this man's sin. And I want to remind you, when I talk about the law and evangelism, here's a perfect example where our Lord used the law in evangelism.

As our good pastor brought out on the radio the other day. Is this the passage he used? No. I thought I heard you say that.

But this is what our, this is how our Lord thought. Here's a man that wants eternal life. He didn't say, memorize a verse.

No, because this man had a deep problem. He was a good man, and I'm going to show you that he was a good man. He was a good man, and his problem was very deep.

And so our Lord had to use the law. And when he asked this question, our Lord used the very law that I'm trying to preach to you this week. And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that's God.

Thou knowest the commandments. That's what he said to him. Do not commit adultery.

I don't know why he started with that one. Do not kill. Do not steal.

Do not bear false witness. Defraud not. Honor not.

And our Lord gave him every commandment that had to do with our relationship with our fellow men. But he didn't give him, notice, he didn't give him any commandments that had to do with God, because he's going to get to his sin in a minute. Thou knowest the commandments.

And then he answered and said unto them, and I'll tell you, I don't think there's anybody here could say this tonight, and I believe this fellow is a good man. That's why I said it. And he answered and said, I mean good in the sense of moral.

And he said unto him, Master, all these things have I observed from my youth. I blush in shame tonight, but I couldn't say that, never could. Don't know how he could, but I'll believe him anyhow.

All these things have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him, loved him, and he said unto him, One thing thou lackest, it was in this relationship with men, one thing thou lackest, go sell whatsoever

thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come take up thy cross and follow me. And he was sad at the saying, and he went away, for he had great possessions.

Now I want to be very clear on something tonight. You know, some people have, this has been a great stumbling block, this passage of scripture has been a great stumbling block to a lot of people. And they thought that everybody to become a Christian has to sell all that they have and give to the poor.

Well, there wouldn't be any Christians. And you wouldn't be a Christian because you haven't done it. And I haven't done it.

That's not what he's talking about. When John the Baptist stood before Herod and preached to him the gospel. John the Baptist didn't say to Herod he was rich because he was king.

He didn't go sell all that you have and then you'll have eternal life. You know, he said to Herod, it's unlawful for you to have your brother's wife. He was living in incest.

And Herod's thing, the sin that kept him from the kingdom of God was his incest with his brother's wife. And Jesus, or John the Baptist either did not say to Herod, go sell what you have or dethrone yourself from the kingdom. He didn't say that.

When the Philippian jailer cried out to St. Paul, Sir, and Pilate, Sir, what must I do to be saved? They didn't say. He goes, money was not his problem. Covetousness was not his problem.

And therefore they didn't say that. And I think the context of this is very clear why our Lord said to this man, go sell what thou hast. Because it was obvious by the context and it said he was sad at the saying, this was his God.

This was his God. This was covetousness. I say he was a good unsaved man.

He was a good unsaved man. He passed the tests of human morality. I believe the context without straining it shows that he had good manners.

He was polite. He wasn't born on the wrong side of the track. He was wealthy.

He was polite. He said, good master. And he knelt down.

He was polite. His moral life, according to this context, it was strict. I don't think he was a hypocrite because when Jesus dealt with the hypocrites in Matthew 23, he said, war on to you scribes and hypocrites you snakes.

That's what he called them. And he didn't say that. In this text, it said he loved him.

He didn't call them snakes and scribes and Pharisees and all the scathing remarks that he used in Matthew 23. I see another thing in this context that this man was interested in salvation. And you must be interested in salvation or you wouldn't be here.

And I say it was more than a shallow interest. Why do I say it was more than a shallow interest? Because it says he came running and noticed question, will you please, not some silly question about where did Cain get his wife or something like that. Nothing about this world.

He came running and noticed question was, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? So I say he was interested in salvation. Now, let me ask you something. Could we question this young man after he gave that answer? No.

No. But Jesus could because he could see the hearts of men. Jesus could question him and Jesus did.

And Jesus Christ brought his heart to the bar. You can't do that. All men would preach the word.

I can't go up to it. If a man came down that moral wall with me and said he loved God and all this, I'm stopped because I can't see his heart. I can only see his heart through the Bible.

And I know what kind of a heart all men have. Not anyone in particular but all men by the Bible. But I say we could not question him so much but Jesus could and Jesus did.

And Jesus brought not his conduct to the bar but he brought his heart to the bar. The tenth commandment if you will. And what did Jesus discover there when he brought his heart to the bar? One thing thou lackest.

He's bringing his heart to the bar. One thing thou lackest. What did he discover? Why he discovered very simply that this man had an idol.

He was covetous. He was clothed with and he clothed his covetousness with morality. All these things have I done for my youth.

Ah you can see it by his question. He wanted to be saved by himself. He wanted to be saved by himself.

Something I do. I do. I do.

I do this. I do that. He wanted to be saved by himself and he wanted to be served by himself.

Christ's demands are the same for us today as it was for this man. Now your problem may not be mine. I don't know what it is.

I'm not God. But I know this and I'm sure this from my Bible. That the demands of Jesus Christ he demands all one is.

He demands all that you are. Whatever realm that is. And not only that, the demands of Jesus Christ is that he demands all that you have and all that I have.

How do you use all that you are? I don't know. That's between you and God. How do you use all that you have? That's between you and God.

But there's one thing I'm sure of as I open this Bible that the demands that Jesus Christ made on him is no less from me today. He demands all that I am and he demands all that I have. There will be some of you in hell because you won't face him.

That's the only demands I see in this Bible. Old Isaac Watts that great hymn writer I can't put it any better than he put it. Do you remember that great hymn? You've stood behind a hymn book and you've sung the hymn many a time.

Were the whole realm of nature mine that were present far too small. Love so amazing so divine demands what? Demands my soul my life my all. Have you learned to distrust yourself? That's where this fellow is from.

He hadn't learned to distrust himself. Therefore he could not learn to trust Christ. It could not be Jesus only because he hadn't learned to distrust himself.

Have you learned to distrust yourself? If you're a Christian you have. You have learned to distrust yourself. It drives you more to lean on Jesus.

Some of you have made a profession. God by spirit has put his finger on things in your life and he's leading you along. You've said yes, Lord I'll do this.

Yes, Lord I'll do that. And the Holy Ghost has put his finger on something else. You've rationalized and you've taken corners and you've done all that fancy stuff.

You don't have peace because the old lie still comes up. Still a battle. Still a fight.

I want to call your attention to one very important thing in closing about this. To me, you know, I hate sentimentalism and I think that sentimentalism has been a curse to the Christian Church. I really do.

One of the great curses of the Christian Church is sentimentalism. And if there's any passage in this book that puts a death blow to sentimentalism, it's this passage. Because these people have a kind of a God that just loves anything, anybody, anyway, regardless of what they do, what they say, how they act, how they live.

I think this puts a death blow to that. And I want to call your attention to that in closing. Because I think it's right in the context.

I read this. Jesus was our kinsman redeemer. He was a man as well as God.

And in verse 21 I read this. After this man asked him what he must do, after our Lord put the finger on him, he said this, then Jesus beholding him loved him. I want to tell you he wouldn't compromise the truth.

Even though he was nice and good, he wouldn't say, I think you can make it. That little problem you have, we'll take care of after a while. Everything will work out.

I say he was moral. And I say that Christ loved him. What I want to make, the point I want to make is this.

He would not compromise wholeness and truth for love because it would have been sentimentalism if he had. And the Bible said in words that you and I can understand. Jesus beholding him loved him.

He said one thing, thou lackest. He put his finger on his penis, coveted him. And then I read this.

And he was sad at that saying and he went away. The point I want to make with you tonight is this. Jesus Christ, that's what I want you to see.

You read his record, he far outstrips you. One thing, Christ loved him but he let him go. And I want to say to you with all the strength of my voice and the conviction of my heart that he'll let you go, man or woman, boy or girl, before he'll compromise with holy truth.

He loved him but he let him go. One thing, not that Christians do not commit many sins all day long, but the difference is he was married to it. He was married to his sin, that was the difference.

He had signed a peace treaty with it, just like he had signed a peace treaty with the woman. He wouldn't get rid of the woman. This man wouldn't get rid of his money.

Yours may not be women or money. It may be pride. I don't know what it is.

I'm not God. But I know this. If God by spirit put his finger on it, tonight or any other time, I know this.

That unless you deal with it and come clean and cast yourself on the mercy of Christ, he'll let you go. He'll let you go. Let's stand and pray.

Our Father, as we look into the face of men and women who are eternal, give us a sense of holy compassion. Help us as Christians to water these truths with our prayers. Lord, thou dost know that the best we know how.

We've tried to be honest with men and their soul tonight. We've laid open thy word which is so clear, abundantly clear, on this great truth. We go about this great work, our Father, as the surgeon amputating the leg of his son, painful but necessary, and so we pray that you take the truth tonight that we've tried in carpenter fashion to give to these people and send your spirit to drive it home as it were to the place where it needs must go to bring fruit unto salvation to some and righteousness and conviction.

Oh, God, we commit ourselves to thee and we thank you for the mercy seat. We pray that some who've never found the mercy seat might find it today. Hear our prayer, hear our pleadings, hear our call, because we cry in the worthy name of the Son of God, even our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

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