“Law of Love and Liberty: The God Who is Sufficient”

Exodus 20:1-21

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Steve Massey, Hayden Bible Church, 9/20/20)

“His half is bigger than my half!”

“Why can’t my husband be like him?”

“If only my job were like hers… “

God cares about how you think about your neighbor’s stuff. To covet dishonors God and dishonors your neighbor.

Before we get into this last commandment, let’s review a little. Are law and grace opposed to each other? No! This is a false dichotomy. They are actually partners. Law and grace are:

1. God’s revelation of Himself to His people
2. God’s sanctifying work in and among His people

His people are set free from sin and set free to holiness (see Psalms 119:97 and 119:165). Let’s also take a minute to review these two related heresies: legalism and license. Legalism, Pharisaical law-keeping, cannot be a means of being made right with God. License, doing whatever I want now that I am saved, is also heretical. The law for God’s chosen, liberated people describes the life He frees them to live.

Ex. 20:17 is pretty clear: “Do not covet… ***anything*** that is your neighbor’s.” That’s all-inclusive, folks. This commandment doesn’t just condemn an action, but an attitude of heart. It compels us to look at our own hearts in the light of God’s holiness. God calls His people to holiness, not covetousness. Even the Apostle Paul wrestled with this (see Rom. 7:7). I covet when I desire what God has given to someone else so strongly that I am discontent with what He’s already given to me. (Q1) So, is it wrong to want things? No, it’s not about desire; it’s about misguided desire that puts self first. A covetous heart reflects discontentment toward God and resentment toward my neighbor. Covetousness is the heart condition behind stealing. Covetousness is the heart condition behind adultery. (Q2 )

Look closely at Ex. 20:17 again. By God’s design, not everyone is meant to have the same stuff! We see that again in Eph. 4:11-12. By God’s design, unity thrives with differences. That is put on glorious display within the church. But when we covet, we lose interest in and gratitude for what God has given us personally (see Prov. 27:20). Covetousness leads us to Hell on the road of perpetual discontent (read Eph. 5:5-6). (Q3) So, what are we to do? We need God to give us a new heart through Christ. Unless God fills your heart, your soul will never be satisfied. In John 6:35 Jesus said, “He who comes to me will never hunger.” God is compelling you to turn to Christ. Jesus says, “I am the sufficient One.”

But don’t Christians still struggle with covetousness? (Q4) We covet when we refuse to accept the sovereignty of God. We covet when we forget about the sovereignty of God (see Dan. 4:17 and Heb. 13:5). Discontent cannot coexist with belief in the loving, providence of God. I covet when I insist I am owed more from God. If we really believed we only deserved Hell, we would certainly be grateful for everything and anything! Paul David Tripp said, “… only people who acknowledge how deep their need is and who admit that they have no ability whatsoever to meet that need on their own get excited about the grace that meets every one of their spiritual needs.” (New Morning Mercies, Sept. 20) Now read Phil. 4:6-7. GRATITUDE DEFUSES DISCONTENTMENT! (Q5) I covet when I forget that this world is only temporary. Read Luke 12:15 and remind yourself what life is truly all about. (Q6) TRUE CONTENTMENT DOES NOT COME FROM GETTING MORE FROM GOD, BUT FROM GETTING GOD HIMSELF. (Q7)

**QUESTIONS**

1. What was the last thing you coveted? (for me it was a 4-wheeler!)
2. What other sins start with a heart condition of covetousness?
3. How is covetousness like idolatry?
4. Why? Why do we still struggle with covetousness?
5. (Notice that peace comes with the asking, not the getting.)
6. What is life all about? What is eternal (vs. “wood, hay, and stubble”)?
7. What does Pastor Steve mean when he says, “… getting God Himself”?

“I Need Thee Every Hour” (Annie Hawks)

1

I need Thee every hour,

Most gracious Lord;

No tender voice like Thine

Can peace afford.

I need Thee, oh, I need Thee;

Every hour I need Thee;

Oh, bless me now, my Savior!

I come to Thee.

2

I need Thee every hour,

Stay Thou near by;

Temptations lose their power

When Thou art nigh.

5

I need Thee every hour,

Most Holy One;

Oh, make me Thine indeed,

Thou blessed Son.