COVETOUSNESS

**DATE: 4/29/2018 am**

**TEXT: Exodus 20:17**

**INTRODUCTION**

We come to our last message in our series on the 10 Commandments

We’ve called this series **“A Perfect Ten for a Perfect Life”**

We now come to the 10th Commandment which reads …

**v. 17 – *“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's”***

We are told by God that we are not to Covet

What exactly does that mean?

**Covetousness** *is wanting that which belongs to someone else, basically it is envy and greed*

**v. 17** gives us some examples of what we are not to covet

But the key to understanding Covetousness is found in the definition of the word itself

To Covet means to *lust after or to long for with great desire; something that doesn’t belong to us, it is an inordinate (excessive) affection. It’s wanting something so bad that you will do anything to get it!*

The Apostle Paul characterized the last days

(Those days just before Jesus returns)

**II Timothy 3:1,2 - *“This know that in the last days perilous times shall come”***

Then he described those ***“perilous times”*** – as people being ***“lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy”***

The word ***“perilous”*** is often used to speak of *that which is difficult or dangerous*

I find it interesting that that Paul listed Covetousness as one of the characteristics of the last days

Paul was saying that the time would come when people would abandon the principles of morality and reduce themselves (among many things) to being Selfish and Greedy individuals

As we study this last Commandment, I want for us to see why Covetousness is so Dangerous to our lives

**~~~Prayer~~~**

**I. THE “COVETOUS” LIFE?**

Jesus said in **Luke 12:15 - *“Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses”***

The word ***“beware”*** speaks of *being on the watch for, or guarding against something*

Jesus was telling us to Guard Ourselves from becoming Covetous

There are many examples in the Bible of a Covetous life

-- It was Covetousness that motivated Eve to believe Satan’s lies and eat the fruit

-- It was Covetousness that caused Achan to steal and hide that which he stole

He even confessed - ***“I coveted them and took them”*** - **Josh. 7:21**

-- It was Covetousness that lured David into adultery

-- Ahab Coveted Naboth’s vineyard

-- Covetousness drove Judas to betray the Lord Jesus for 30 pieces of silver

-- Covetousness was the reason Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Ghost and kept back part of the money

God tells us not to Covet because He knows the kinda trouble it will get us in

First, let’s look at …

**A. A Desire that is ‘Excessive’**

**Covetousness is a Desire that is Excessive**

To **Desire** something is to *wish for or want something*

Something that is **Excessive** is *over the top, not normal, extreme*

**An Excessive Desire** is wanting something so badly that you would do anything to get it

The word ***“covet”*** in **Exodus 20:17** means *“an inordinate desire” for something*

It describes *a strong desire to possess*

The word is often translated ***“lust”*** which depicts that Excessive Desire for something

A Lust is *an intense and unrestrained craving*

It’s when a person gives in to their baser passions

The 10th Commandment is not condemning our Desires

There are Desires that are wholesome and God honoring

When we talk about Covetousness, though …

We are talking about Desires that are Excessive, an over-powering desire to have what you don’t have and/or what others have

**Quote:** Adrian Rogers says that *“to covet means to have an unlawful desire for that which is not rightfully yours”*

**Quote:** Jerry Vines says covetousness *“is when your desires for something you do not have becomes the ruling passion of your life*

*…excessive desire for what we do not have and envious desire for that which someone else has”*

A Covetous person is after everything they can get

They are after more and more, and then even more

They never have enough / They are consumed with having more

And most of the time they don’t think that they have to work for it (It’s an entitlement mentality)

Covetousness is a Greedy, Selfish, and Excessive Desire to have more and more, and then even more

It has been well said that the Bible never condemns having things, but it does condemn things having us

A Covetous person is someone that is not Only Greedy, Selfish, and Envious, but also one that is Consumed with getting what they want

Covetousness is not only **a Desire that is ‘Excessive’**

But is also …

**B. A Desire that is ‘Expressive’**

When a person is Covetous in their heart, it will show

It tells on them – it’s Expressive

It will reveal that a person is living for material things

Covetousness is revealed in a person’s life

**Ill.** The city of Pompeii was completely destroyed in 79 A.D. when Mt. Vesuvius (a volcano) exploded, completely destroying the city and burying it under tons of ash and lava. It remained buried until excavations began in 1745. One of the fascinating sights of the ruins is the numerous molds of people in the final moments of their life. Many were not able to get out of the city and were covered with the ash and materials that fell upon them, preserving them like statues to tell for generations to come the story of their tragic end. One was the form of a woman who instead of fleeing immediately, stayed behind just long enough to collect as much of her jewelry as she could carry. Snatching up her rings, she hastily thrust them on her fingers. There was no time to hunt for a box or bag in which to put the rest, so she grabbed as much as she could, rushed out into the street, clutching her pearls, diamonds, rubies, sapphires, gold brooches and earrings. But her delay cost her life. As the poisonous fumes overcame her, she fell and died, still clutching the things she prized even above life.

The Covetous person will reveal what is truly important in them

Covetousness is the Desires that consume someone to want more and more

Covetousness Expresses that the material has precedent over the spiritual aspect of a person’s life

Again, I remind you of what Jesus said in **Luke 12:15 -**

***“Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses”***

Life is not in what you have, but rather in Who you know

Jesus said in **Mark 8:36 - *“For what shall it profit a man,***

***… if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”***

**THAT IS WHAT A “COVETOUS” LIFE IS**

**Expressive, Excessive**

Next, let’s look at **How** Covetousness **…**

**II. “CONTAMINATES” OUR LIFE**

To **Contaminate** something is to *spoil, ruin, pollute it*

I use the word *contaminated* because Covetousness will always spoil or ruin a life

Jesus said in **Mark 7:20-23 - *“That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man” “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,” “Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:” “All these evil things come from within, and defile the man”***

The word ***“defile”*** simply means *to pollute, to make profane (socially unacceptable)*

Jesus described how certain things (and among them was covetousness) Contaminates a life

How does Covetousness Defile or Contaminate our Life?

For one thing, Covetousness …

**A. Defiles Our ‘Social’ Life**

When I speak of our social life, I am referring to how we relate to each other

As we have seen in past studies,

The 10 Commandments instruct us in how we are to relate to both God and man

The first four instruct us in how to relate to God and the last six in how we relate to one another

Take for example the Commandments that instruct us in how we are to relate to one another

#5 - We are to honor our parents

#6 - We are not to murder or take a person’s life

#7 - We are to be faithful to our spouse and not commit adultery

#8 - We are not to steal or take another person’s property

#9 - We are not to lie about someone or bear false witness

The interesting part is that a Covetous person can break every one of these Commandments

Many children have neglected the welfare of their parents because of their greed and selfishness

Murder is often the result of a desire to have what one does not have

Ahab’s sulking greed for a particular vineyard led to the death of Naboth its owner

The same is true for stealing

Achan couldn’t resist taking an expensive Babylonian garment, 200 shekels of silver and a wedge of gold

It was Covetousness that caused him to steal

And because of it, his whole family suffered

Adultery always flows from Coveting another man’s wife or another woman’s husband

David saw Bathsheba, another man’s wife and Coveted her

It led to his adultery and even the arranged death of her husband

Lying about another is often motivated by selfish desires

The soldiers that guarded the tomb of Jesus told the lie that the disciples had stolen His body at night

It was hush money that motivated their lying

How many times have you known of someone that would lie about someone else in order to get a promotion or look good in the eyes of the boss?

Covetousness will Defile our relationship with others and how we view and treat those people

It makes us treat people Disrespectfully, Deceitfully and Dishonestly

You certainly don’t want a Covetous person as a friend

They will stab you in the back to get what they want

Covetousness not only **Defiles our ‘Social’ Life**

But it also …

**B. Defiles Our ‘Spiritual’ Life**

The first 4 Commandments instruct us in our relationship with God

Covetousness is often the reason why we break these Commandments

The first 2 have to do with putting God first and having no other gods before us

**Colossians 3:5 - *“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry”***

The Bible says that Covetousness is Idolatry

Idolatry is putting something before God and in the place of God

When it comes to abusing and misusing the name of God and violating the Lord’s Day, Covetousness is often the reason

Covetousness causes us to put our own priorities first

Instead of seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, we seek first our own wants and wishes

You can do what you want, but I would caution against it

Paul made an interesting statement about Covetousness in **I Tim. 6:9,10 –**

***“But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition” “For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some Coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows”***

He speaks of those ***“that will be rich”***

In other words, he is speaking of those who desire, above anything else, to have things

Paul said such people fall into all kinds of temptations and snares and are motivated by many foolish and hurtful lusts that lead to their own destruction

He then speaks of the love of money

Notice carefully he does not say that money is the root of all evil, but the *love* of money

Paul is speaking of someone who loves money and material things more than anything else in their life

That consuming desire to have more and more, and then more, is the root of many evils in their life

It is the statement, ***“which some coveted after, they erred from the faith,”*** … that I want you to see

Paul describes those who erred from the faith simply because they saw dollar signs

The word ***“err”*** means *to go astray*

Their Covetousness caused them to drift and stray from God

Instead of putting God first and keeping Him first,

Their desire to be rich (Have things) turned their heart away from God to worldly things

We all know of people that got out of Church and away from God because they put materials things before God

It is no wonder that Jesus said - ***“Beware of covetousness”*** in **Luke 12:15**

Covetousness results in …

**A CONTAMINATED LIFE!**

**Both Socially and Spiritually**

Finally let’s look at …

**III. THE “CONTENTED” LIFE**

The answer to Covetousness is Contentment

The question is how we can be Content?

The answer to Contentment can be found in **Hebrews 13:5**

***“Let your conversation (lifestyle) be without Covetousness; and be Content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”***

The Secret to Contentment involves first off …

**A. A ‘Thankful’ Heart**

People are just not thankful any more

You can tell how thankful you are by …

How often you find yourself expressing thankfulness to God or someone else?

The writer of Hebrews tells us to be ***“content with such things as ye have”***

Instead of being Dissatisfied because of what we Do Not have, we should be thankful for what we Do have

Paul said **I Timothy 6:8 - *“And having food and raiment let us be therewith content”***

But unfortunately, we are never satisfied with what we have

That’s Covetousness!!

I came across what someone called a “Spiritual Survival Kit”

In this kit you will find a Toothpick, Rubber band, a Band aid, Pencil, Eraser, Chewing gum, Mint, Candy Kiss, and a Tea Bag. The Toothpick is to remind you to pick out the good qualities in others. The Rubber band is to remind you to be flexible, things might not always go the way you want, but it will work out. The Band Aid is to remind you to heal hurt feelings, yours or someone else's. The Pencil is to remind you to list your blessings every day. The Eraser is to remind you that everyone makes mistakes. The Chewing gum is to remind you to stick with it and you can accomplish anything with Jesus. The Mint is to remind you that you are worth a mint to your Heavenly Father. The Candy Kiss is to remind you that everyone needs a kiss or a hug every day. The Tea Bag is to remind you to relax daily and go over that list of God's blessings.

We all have so much to be Thankful for

If you feel otherwise it is because of what you value important

If money and possession are what you value the most, then you may have a hard time being Thankful

But if you value life and the things that money can’t buy, you will realize that you have a lot for which to be Thankful

If you look, you can always find something for which to be Thankful for

Instead of Complaining about what you don’t have, try praising God for what you do have

A Thankful heart will have no room for Covetousness

**A ‘Thankful’ Heart**

**B. A ‘Faithful’ Life**

The writer of Hebrews tells us to ***“be content with such things as ye have”*** because, ***“for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”***

God links Contentment with knowing the presence of God

We are given the promise and assurance that if we have nothing else, the Lord will always be with us

All our wealth can be lost in a matter of hours, but our Lord will never leave us

The Lord will always be Faithful to us

The problem is that most people don’t have any kind of a Relationship with the Lord

So, they don’t know His presence in the first place

People don’t pray and don’t read their Bible like they should

The Secret to Contentment is the Lord Himself

It is the experience of walking close to God

Paul said in **Phil. 1:21 - *“For to me to live is Christ”***

Jesus was the reason that Paul was able to be Content no matter what was going on in his life

In Jesus we find all we need for every need in life

In Him we have all we need to face both this life and the life to come

I love **Psalm 34:8 - *“O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him”***

**CONCLUSION**

God’s reasons for condemning Covetousness valid

At its very core, Covetousness is love of self

Envious, selfish citizens are unhappy and discontented

A society built of such people is a weak one because envious malcontents (as stated before) will be more likely to commit crimes against one another, further weakening our societal structure

Furthermore, the New Testament identifies Covetousness as a form of idolatry, a sin which God detests (**Col. 3:5**)

In the end, Envy and Covetousness are Satan’s tools to distract us from pursuing the only thing that will ever make us happy and content—God Himself

God’s Word tells us that ***“godliness with contentment is great gain”*** and that we should be content with the basic necessities of life (**I Timothy 6**),

Because true happiness is not attained by things, but by a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ

By this alone do we gain that which is worthy, true, solid, satisfying, and durable

All of which are the unsearchable riches of God’s Grace

**A COVETOUSNESS LIFE**

**A CONTAMINATED LIFE**

**A CONTENTED LIFE**