

# Sermon for A Year with the Catechism The Ninth and Tenth Commandment

**Date:** November 21, 2021

**Location:** St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

**Old Testament:** Micah 6:1-8

**Epistle Reading:** Romans 13:7-10

**Gospel Reading:** Matthew 22:34-40

**Sermon Text:** Exodus 20:17

**Sermon Title:** The Ninth and Tenth Commandment

**Introit:** Psalm 1:1-5; Antiphon 1:6

## Hymns:

LSB 584 – Faith and Truth and Life Bestowing

LSB 581 – These are the Holy Ten Commands

(v. 1,10, 11-12)

LSB 583 – God Has Spoken by His Prophets

LSB 587 – I Know My Faith is Founded

LSB 588 – Jesus Loves Me

LSB 579 – The Law of God is Good and Wise

## Liturgy:

Divine Service IV. p. 203



## Songs:

Word Of God Speak - MercyMe

Image Of God - We Are Messengers

Lord Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word

Good Good Father - Chris Tomlin

Agnus Dei (Lamb of God)

Sanctus (Holy, holy, holy) - Koine

Where I Belong

## Liturgy:

Creative Worship



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**Text: Exodus 20:17**

You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.

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In the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Well, here we go again. Another commandment, another rule, another edict, telling us what we can't do. We've already been called: adulterers, thieves, murderers, idolaters and the list goes on. Now we get hit with still another rule, still another accusation. This rule tells us just wanting stuff, just wanting to have or get better things, is wrong. Don't covet. It is so important, two commandments are dedicated to telling us what the command is and what it means.

Basically it means don't want what someone else has got. Stop wishing, stop desiring, stop longing, stop dreaming, stop clamoring for what your neighbor has. Stop desiring a good husband, or a good wife, or good kids, or a good car, good smart phone, or better and more clothes, like your neighbor has. You've already got too much stuff anyway.

So, stop it. Stop wanting more stuff. Stop wanting newer stuff. Stop wanting better stuff, or cooler stuff. Stop chasing the American dream. Stop feeding the fuel of capitalism. Just stop it!

That is starting to go just a little too far. I can understand not killing people. I can understand not stealing. I can understand not lying about people or spreading those lies. I understand that I should work, and maybe work hard, for what I want, but telling me I should not want, that's just too much to ask anyone. It just might seem like the demands of the Decalogue<sup>1</sup> are reaching far too far.



Yet just as things start getting tough, just as things start to have a little too much detail, just as we start to feel the Ten Commandments reaching into each and every place in our lives, we get it all boiled down to a short summary.



We heard it in our Old Testament reading. The prophet Micah makes it simple. He says do what is right, love mercy, and live humbly with your God.<sup>2</sup> That's not so bad. We've whittled it down from ten rules to only three. That's pretty good, but St. Paul, in the Epistle reading, does even better.



He pares it down to one rule. "Love never does anything that is harmful to a neighbor." In fact Paul is able to get it down to just one word when he says, "therefore, **love** fulfills Moses' Teachings."<sup>3</sup>

- 1 A fancy name for the Ten Commandments.
- 2 Micah 6:8
- 3 Romans 13:10

That should make things so much easier. Forget the Ten Commandments, that's way too many rules to remember. Forget the three ways to do right. Three is just too high to count. Who could remember all of that? One commandment: now that sounds like something we can handle. Even better, one rule, with only one word, that's even better still. Just one word, "love."

Whew! What a relief! No more legalism. No more, "don't do this, and you better do that." Just love. That's much better, much more easy. So... go love! Go love your neighbor. When he is feeling down, takes some time to spend with him, and do your best to encourage him. If he's not feeling well, stop in and check on him. Bring him some soup and help him get well. When he's short on cash, just give him some of yours. Maybe even give him more than just what he needs. When he's lonely be his friend. When he's confused you find him the answer. When he's got a problem, well you just make it your problem to solve. That's what love does.

So who is your neighbor? Well its those people that you like, and who like you too. It's also those people who always annoy you. It's those people who make fun of you, or your faith. It's those people that are always begging for stuff. It's those people who lie about you.

All of those people need your stuff, and if you love them you should just give them your stuff. That's what love does. Love is generous. Love is patient and love is kind.<sup>4</sup> Shouldn't you be generous and kind? That makes it all so much easier. Just love. There's nothing complicated or confusing about that.

It's easy, just love them. After all, the stuff you've got isn't worth much compared to the promises of Heaven. Everything you've got was really given to you by God who loved you. What better expression of love then to give away, in love, all those things that were given to you in love. It's so easy right?

No! Love may be the shortest summary of the Law, but it is no simplification of the Law. In fact love makes it harder. The command, "just love" is more difficult than any list of rules concerning how to live and act, especially when we remember that we must love everyone; even those people we don't like.

The truth is: if the only commandment God gave was, "just love" that would make Him a terrible God, a hateful God, a cruel God, because love is insatiable. It can never be satisfied. It can never be finished. It can never be done. Love is forever, and you cannot stop, ever.

You must have nothing, and the ones you love everything, and even then you have still not done enough. There will always be more. There will always be

4 1 Corinthians 13:4

another friend to encourage, another problem to solve, another mouth to feed.<sup>5</sup> There will always be another unfaithful person to be brought to faith, another sinner that needs to be saved. There will always be more, and more, and more.

Summarizing the Law does nothing to soften the Law, or make it easier to obey. In fact shortening the Law is to make the Law more severe, more difficult to obey. Reducing the Law to “just love” does nothing to make life easier because love always wants, and needs, more.

You must keep giving until you have nothing, and then it will be you doing the receiving. You will be the one in need, and as soon as you are given something, in love, you must give it away in love. It never ends. It just goes on and on and on forever! Make it all STOP!!!

The Law just wants too much. God just wants too much. Even one rule, is just one rule too many, because I want to keep my stuff, and I want everybody else’s stuff. Of course then I’ve just got myself all wrapped up in the sin of coveting again, and we have to start this message all over. There is simply no escape, except to give up and die. Right?

Wrong!

You see what you need is not a list of rules to obey or things to do. What you need is someone to obey the rules for you; someone to do those things for you. What you need is not a one word rule “love.” What you need is someone to love you. What you need is not a summary, or a shortening, of the Law, what you need is a Savior who will save you from the judgment of all the Law. All 613 commands of Scripture.

That is exactly what you’ve got. You’ve got Jesus. Jesus who was born to die under the Law, not for Himself, but for you, so that you could have everything. Everything in this world will fade, break or wear out, but everything in Heaven really is forever.

So as we conclude this Church Year, and this series on the Ten Commandments, take this message with you:

The Law of God is good and wise  
and sets His will before our eyes,  
It shows us the way of righteousness  
but dooms to death when we transgress.

5 Matthew 26:11

To Jesus we for refuge flee,  
Who from the curse has set us free,  
We humbly worship at His throne,  
Saved by His grace, through faith alone.<sup>6</sup>

As we conclude this series on the Ten Commandments, we are also concluding another Church Year. In that light I'd like to ask you one more question. Why does it matter? What is the point of all of this? The answer is all about the end. Not the end of the Commandments. Not the end of the year. It is about the end of all things. It is about the new heaven and new earth.

The reason all of this matters is because in the end there will be only two places to stand. Some will be in, eternally. Some will be out, eternally. Where the most simple and basic foundational teachings of the Bible are dismissed as: irrelevant, worthless valueless; something to skip, so is your faith: irrelevant, worthless and valueless before God.

Faith in a god who obeys us, faith in a god concocted from our own imagination, faith in a god who only wants what we want, is not a god. It is a slave at best. It is what Ambassadors of Reconciliation showed to be an idol. All idols drag you down. All idols carry you away from:

The Son of Man [who] will send His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all causes of sin, and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.<sup>7</sup>

This stuff matters. The reason we are taking a year to walk through these things is because this stuff matters. It matters, because the end matters. The end is real. The end will come. With it will come your place before the throne of God. It matters. It is important.

It is Jesus, and Jesus alone, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.<sup>8</sup> It is He who makes:

the righteous shine like the sun,  
in the kingdom of their Father.  
He who has ears, let him hear.<sup>9</sup>

Amen.



6 LSB 579 – The Law of God is Good and Wise v. 1 & 6

7 Matthew 13:41-42

8 John 14:6

9 Matthew 13:43