



# His Word Is Truth!

This article is written by Pastor Tom Eckstein of Concordia Lutheran Church in Jamestown. "His Word is Truth" will appear in this paper every 3rd Monday.



Today I'm concluding my series on the Ten Commandments with the 9th and 10th Commandments which deal with the sin of "coveting." Throughout much of history there have been 3 ways of numbering the Ten Commandments (the text of Scripture itself does NOT number them). This series of articles has used the numbering tradition that divides Exodus 20:17 into the 9th and 10th Commandments (which deal with non-living objects and living things, respectively). Exodus 20:17 reads: "You

shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

In his Small Catechism Martin Luther gives the following explanation to the 9th and 10th Commandments:

**"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. 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."**

The most obvious application of these Commandments against coveting is that even our DESIRE to hurt our neighbor in any way is a sin before God (see Matthew 5:22 & 28; also

1st John 3:15). We can also be guilty of coveting if we use a corrupt system of laws to hurt others in ways that are condemned by GOD'S Law. One example of this is when laws have been used to justify racism. Another example is our own nation's unjust law that allows people to murder humans who are still in the womb. God condemns those who justify their sinful actions by appealing to unjust laws (see Amos 5:12 and Matthew 15:1-9).

The 9th and 10th Commandments expose the fact that we are ALL guilty of coveting things that God has not given to us. Even if we do not act on our covetous desires, those sinful desires themselves deserve God's wrath (see Genesis 8:21). In Romans chapter 7 the Apostle Paul writes: **"...I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, 'Do not covet.' But sin, seizing the opportunity**

**afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire."**

Simply put, Scripture teaches that we are opposed to God from the time of our conception (see Psalm 51:5) because we inherit a sinful nature from the first human, Adam (see Romans 5:12-14). Not only are we sinners unable to obey God's Commandments, but we don't even WANT to obey them (see Romans 8:7-8). Even when we sinners do try to obey the Ten Commandments, we obey with evil motives – such as trying to make ourselves worthy of God's mercy or when we try to impress others. *Therefore, there is no possible way we sinners can be saved by trying to obey the Ten Commandments. In fact, the Ten Commandments show us that we deserve only God's eternal judgment (see Romans 3:19-20 and Galatians 3:10).*

So, why did God even give us the Ten Commandments if they can't save us? In Galatians chapter 3 the Apostle

Paul writes: **"...the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith!"** God uses the Ten Commandments to show us our sin and the damnation we deserve. God humbles us so that we can receive and believe the Good News that we have forgiveness of sin and eternal life with God through His Son, Jesus! Jesus is the eternal Son of God, "God in the flesh" (see John 1:1-3 & 14), who was born to save us from our sins (see Matthew 1:18-21).

Jesus died on the cross in our place of damnation and then conquered death for us through His resurrection from the dead. The Holy Spirit now works through God's Word to convict us of sin and give us new hearts that trust in Jesus ALONE for salvation. God's Word comes to us in the waters of Holy Baptism, through the preaching and teaching of Holy Scripture, and in the Lord's Supper. God uses these "means of grace" to create and nurture our faith in

Christ apart from Whom we can do nothing (see John 15:5). As you remain connected to Christ you will be assured of God's mercy! The Holy Spirit will also move you to resist the covetous desires of your heart and joyfully obey the will of your Heavenly Father (see Romans 8:5-6 and Titus 2:11-14). *So, confess your sin and trust in Jesus today! (See John 3:16-18 and 2nd Corinthians 6:1-2)*



*Please read the next "His Word Is Truth" on Monday, November 20th!*

*Pastor Eckstein will discuss what God's Word teaches about "Thanksgiving"*

*For more resources about Christian teaching and issues, go to Concordia Lutheran's webpage: [www.concordiajt.org](http://www.concordiajt.org)*

*Paid for by Concordia Lutheran Church*