



“The Good Life”

Exodus 20:1-2

April 19, 2020

Sermon Series: “The Ten Commandments: God For Us”

Rev. Dr. Henry Hansen

GETTING STARTED

1. Share one joy you personally experienced on Easter Sunday or Easter week.
2. How are you doing right now with the shelter in place and what’s going on with the COVID-19 pandemic?

LEARNING & LIVING OUT SCRIPTURE

Together, Exodus 20: 1-21, with an emphasis on verses 1-3

3. What’s so poignant about verse 2? Take some time describing the relationship between the commandments and the story of God’s people.
 - a. Why is it important for us to consider how any commandment given by God is related to the story of his redemptive in people’s lives, as opposed to a list of simple “to do’s?” Consider God’s desire for us to experience freedom in life and how the right constraints lead us to greater freedom.
4. When this passage says “I am Yahweh (The Lord), your God,” how is that a unique and exclusive claim that’s being made? Return to the story from early on in Exodus. Consider the relevance of God revealing himself to Moses as “I am that I am,” and what has transpired since that disclosure.
5. When God reveals that he is “jealous,” later in Exodus 20 and also in Deuteronomy 5, what does that mean and how is his jealousy different from our own when we are jealous of something or toward someone?
6. What has the possibility of qualifying as another “god?” Consider the difference between a god and an idol, which is a distinction that will be made in next week’s message.

7. Henry talked about the default religion of American Society which is: **Moral Therapeutic Deism (MTD)**

Moral – Do good. That’s all the matters in this life and for the afterlife.

Therapeutic – Feel good. Whatever validates my feelings and improves them, is useful.

Deism – God’s out there. He’s out there someplace and will help me out when needed and make me feel better.

Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching*

To begin, describe why – according to the Ten Commandments – should we be “moral?”

Now, critique the model of MTD, and how each view in this religious point of view, differs from what Christians believe about Christianity.

8. What connection do you make between The Ten Commandments and Easter? How is this series a natural extension of our celebration of the resurrection? Consider what was said earlier about our obedience to Christ is in relationship to God’s story and its impact on our lives.

LIVING OUT “REAL LIFE”

9. In the message, Henry referenced the Indiana Jones film series, specifically The Raiders of the Lost Ark. You’ll recall the ark inhabited The Ten Commandments. Later in the message, it was said that you are the “ark.” IE, you carry within you the instructions of God on your heart and specifically you have within you the kingdom of God (Luke 17:21) because of Christ. Why is it important for us to know the kingdom of God is localized in us instead of a physical chest, temple or other type of edifice? Why is that vital for living out the Christian faith?
10. It has been said of the commandments before that they are often treated as “the six commandments and the four ‘do the best you cans.’” Are there any in there off the top of your head that you sometimes see as a “do the best you can.” Bear in mind also that as we view the commandments, we’ll infuse their meaning with the teachings of Christ.
- a. Example: the commandment “do not murder,” will focus also on the commandment given by Jesus in the beatitudes against hating another person and that hatred is equal to murder.

How are you doing with the various commandments as you simply think aloud?

11. Finally, in living out the commandment to have no other gods, practice this deliberately every day of the week –

“Arrange your days so that you experience total contentment, joy, and confidence in your everyday life with God.” Dallas Willard

SHARING & PRAYER REQUESTS

Pray for our government – locally and nationally – that it make wise decisions not based on politics but the safety and well-being of its people.

“A Few of Your Favorite Things”

Deuteronomy 5: 4-5, Exodus 20: 4-5

April 26, 2020

Sermon Series: “The Ten Commandments: God For Us”

Rev. Dr. Henry Hansen

GETTING STARTED

1. What are some of your favorite things?
2. How are you doing right now with the shelter in place and what’s going on with the COVID-19 pandemic?

LEARNING & LIVING OUT SCRIPTURE

Together, Deuteronomy 5: 4-5, Exodus 20: 4-5

3. The first and second commandments have to do with the object of one’s worship. Why do you think that is?
4. What’s your understanding of what an idol is? Consider definitions that were given by Henry when he described it during the message that included a quote by Tim Keller.
5. This commandment references God as a jealous God. Return again to that motif and what it tells you about God and his feelings toward you.
6. Read Exodus 32: 1-7. During this period, the Israelites were in a period of waiting. How can waiting have a tendency to bring out the worst in people?
7. Henry talked about the default religion of American Society which is: **Moral Therapeutic Deism (MTD)**

Moral – Do good. That’s all that matters in this life and for the afterlife.

Therapeutic – Feel good. Whatever validates my feelings and improves them, is useful.

Deism – God’s out there. He’s out there someplace and will help me out when needed and make me feel better.

Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching*

During the message, it was explained how our feelings can initially be a very bad indicator of how we’re doing with our relationship with God. How do you observe that Christianity in America has a tendency to play into therapeutic notions of God and what we think he’s supposed “to do” for us. Consider too how perhaps you’ve fallen into therapeutic notions of God – IE, God’s here to make us all feel better. Contrast the difference between God as comforter versus making us comfortable.

Further, consider what’s wrong with Deism. How is Christianity different? Isn’t God more than merely “out there somewhere?” What about God being our savior and involved with our lives?

8. Remember again the prologue – IE, the first two verses of the commandments in Exodus 20. It steps the Ten Commandments within the story of their redemption out of slavery. What does that

matter?

9. Henry mentioned the concept that originated from John Piper of being a Christian Hedonist. What was the point of that in terms of how it related to God and also having “favorite things?”

LIVING OUT “REAL LIFE”

10. Name idols you’ve struggled with before. Consider examples Henry gave: comfort, control (and technology as an expression of one’s need of control), money, beauty, comfort, passion, and so on. Remember again the definition Henry gave and how idols are things that have psychological and emotional power over our lives.

How did you smash that idol? And if you’re struggling with one now, how will you turn from it?

11. Look at the examples below given in the sermon. Which are you most inclined to practice.

Living out the Second Commandment: Life as a Christian Hedonist

- A. Instead of your daily walk(s), to be a chance for exercise and sanity, let them be an opportunity for you to enjoy God more. Salvation in our lives begins with to enjoy God – today.
- B. Stop being so productive. Ask yourself – what’s that about? Why do I need to keep busy? Why do I need to keep worrying – what’s that about? Is there an idol in there somewhere of image, importance, or perfectionism?
- C. Let go a little. Whatever you’re holding onto can’t save you.
- D. Accept God’s gift of grace through Jesus Christ if you haven’t already.
- E. Ask yourself – What am I doing to enjoy God today? Enjoy him. Enjoy him. Enjoy him. He delights in you.

SHARING & PRAYER REQUESTS

Pray for our world right now in light of COVID-19 and that what has transpired and what will become “new normal,” would become an opportunity for people to know the Gospel.

“Name Above All Names”

Exodus 20:7

May 5, 2020

Sermon Series: “The Ten Commandments: God For Us
Rev. Ray Medina

GETTING STARTED

1. Check in with each other about how you're doing and how COVID-19 is affecting you directly. Be mindful of understanding the other as this is discussed.

LEARNING & LIVING OUT SCRIPTURE

Together, Reread the biblical text for the morning: Exodus 20:1-17 (esp. v.7). If your group wants to read more Bible, read Jesus' interpretation of the commands from Matthew 5:33-37; Matthew 12:33-37. Other Scriptures could include James 3:1-12.

2. Which misuse of God's name was new for you? Misusing God's name to control outcomes (incantation)? Misusing God's name to validate sincerity? Misusing God's name to bear false witness (false prophecy)? Misusing God's name meaninglessly or in vain?
3. Can the Ten Commandments be understood apart from the salvation story of the Hebrews' liberation from Egypt? Why or why not?
4. What do you think about Ray's positive definition of commandment #3, “Whole-hearted worship of the one, true God involves the right use of God's name?”
5. How can we rightfully use God's name as a family or with our roommates at home?
6. How can we rightfully use God's name as bible study teachers or small group facilitators?
7. If it's easy to misuse God's name meaninglessly, what spiritual practice can help us dig deeper and better understand what our language is about?

SHARING & PRAYER REQUESTS

Pray for the containment and elimination of the Corona Virus. Pray for healing for those who are sick from it.

“A Weighty Commandment”

Exodus 20:12 – Honor your Father and Mother

May 10, 2020

Sermon Series: “The Ten Commandments: God For Us”

Rev. Dr. Henry Hansen

GETTING STARTED

1. What is a positive memory of Mother’s Day that you’d like to share?
2. How are you doing right now with the shelter in place order and the changes going on in our nation and world because of COVID-19?

LEARNING & LIVING OUT SCRIPTURE

3. Why in your own words (quite apart from the sermon), do you think this commandment is important? Why should a person honor their father and mother?
4. In the message, Henry described the Hebrew word for honor which means “weighty,” and communicates a degree of seriousness.
 - a. What actions in a person’s life would bespeak of giving weight or heft to something or someone? Example: time, energy, intentionality, and so on.
 - b. Also consider the word for honor from the Hebrew word Kabod which also means glory or weight. What then, does honoring one’s parents have to do with a person’s relationship with God?
5. Consider the relationship between the first three commandments and the fifth one. Notice the shift of commands that begin with the fifth and continues to the others. What does this progression communicate about priority and value of Divine and human relationships?
6. Reflect upon the dynamic nature of this commandment. It is age specific in terms of how it applies uniquely to any given phase of life: childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, and being a full-fledged adult. Explain how “honor” looks different in each phase.
7. Think about how this might apply to one’s relationship to one’s in-laws? Does it apply the same? Is this commandment relevant to how you or anyone treats their mother and father-in-law? Discuss this and consider its merits.
8. There are many passages in the bible that tell us we are adopted as God’s children. Think about that and the power of our relationship with God.
 - a. Why is the priority of this relationship so fundamental to how we expect things from mom and dad as well as how we relate to them?
 - b. What are some things we can only get from God that we cannot expect nor receive from our earthly parents?

9. Henry talked about the default religion of American Society in his sermons on the first and second commandments, which is: **Moral Therapeutic Deism (MTD)**

Moral – Do good. That is all that matters in this life and for the afterlife.

Therapeutic – Feel good. Whatever validates my feelings and improves them, is useful.

Deism – God is out there. He is out there someplace and will help me out when needed and make me feel better.

Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching*

How is adoption and our knowing God as Father and a God of “motherly compassion,” so profoundly and fundamentally different than a mere understanding of God as Deistic – IE, he’s “out there someplace and will help me out when needed and make me feel better?” Consider the powerful claims of the Christian faith.

10. Ephesians 6:4 tells us to “not provoke our children”. Have you thought of the weight of your own role as a parent (if that applies)? In what sense should a parent honor their children?

LIVING OUT “REAL LIFE”

11. Speak openly about some of the challenges you have faced in light of the fifth commandment. How has this been a natural commandment for you to follow and how has it been difficult?
12. Take up a specific practice of honoring your parents this week. You may choose from examples given in the sermon of how to do this or simply create your own.
13. Also, allow yourself to be challenged with the notion that before we are children to our parents, we are children of God. What does it mean to you that God is your Father?

SHARING & PRAYER REQUESTS

Pray for our world right now in light of COVID-19, that what has transpired and what will become “new normal,” would become an opportunity for people to know the Gospel.

“God’s Great Yes”

Exodus 20: 8-11

May 17, 2020

Sermon Series: “The Ten Commandments: God For Us,”

Shannon Coon

LOOKING AT THE SCRIPTURE

1. When you read this Commandment, what is surprising for you about it?
2. What is the context within which this Commandment is placed?
3. Now look at Deuteronomy 5:12-15. Here is the same Commandment, but it is put into a different context than in Exodus. What is the context of Sabbath in Deuteronomy? How does that change your perspective on the importance of the Commandment?
4. How does this Commandment feel like God saying a great “Yes!” to us, instead of a “thou shalt not?”

REMINDER

Sabbath is a day to keep “holy.” That means that it is a day set apart from normal activities such as work, chores, errands, shopping, etc. It is also a day that is set apart for: REST.

R – Remember. What are some of the things to “remember” on your Sabbath day?

E – Enjoy. What is it that you would “enjoy” on your Sabbath?

S – Sing praises. What kind of worshipful experience would you like to have on your Sabbath?

T – Time out. What do you need to just stop and pay attention to instead of doing, doing, doing?

FOR CONTEMPLATION AND/OR DISCUSSION

If you are not already in the practice of setting aside one day a week for a Sabbath, there may be justifications for that. These questions will help you consider what might be keeping you back from observing a Sabbath

1. When you were a child, did your family observe a Sabbath day? Why or why not?
2. When you consider slowing down for one day each week, what obstacles and fears do you find in your heart?
3. If God were to ask you to stop something for 24 hours, what might that be?
4. What is one thing that you would find extremely hard to give up in a 24 hour period? (Social media? Checking emails? Letting the kitchen floor go one more day un-mopped? Multi-tasking?)
5. What are some logistical obstacles that you may have when trying to envision a day of rest? (for instance parents of young children can’t just take a day off of parenting!) Can you find some creative ways to meet those obstacles? (Maybe half the day is for one parent to “be on” and the second half is for the other parent? Maybe it’s a day for grandparents to come help? If your children are older, invite them into the rituals and make it fun – the whole family making dinner together, etc.) Is there a way to turn the things you cannot NOT do into something more enjoyable?
6. Is there something in your life that may have lost meaning to you because you haven’t stopped *doing* in order to just “be?”

7. What is something you find yourself longing to do but just never can find the time to do it? (a creative project? Playing an instrument? Just sitting and reading? Swimming in your backyard pool? Riding your dusty bike in the garage?)
8. In what way is this Commandment liberating to you? In what way does it seem threatening to you?

PRACTICALITIES

Jesus recognized that Sabbath had become too burdensome for people because there was such a long list of types of work and prohibitions for Sabbath (and the punishment for breaking this commandment was death!) And so Jesus told the Pharisees that Sabbath was made for humankind, NOT humankind for Sabbath. It is, as Karl Barth called it, God's "YES!" to us. And when Jesus was scolded for healing someone on Sabbath (because that could qualify as work), he responded that it is a day to "do good." That leaves a lot of room for us to plan our Sabbath. Here are some ideas of Sabbath practices:

1. Choose at least one heavily used appliance or device (phone, TV, computer, washer/dryer) and let them rest for the day, or for a length of time when you will not be disturbed or responsive to them.
2. Plan your food for Sabbath ahead of time. Make the lasagna the night before. Or plan that your Sabbath will be a "take out" dinner. Or, if cooking is life-giving to you, prepare a special meal either for you or your whole family. Some special dish. Serve it on the good dinnerware, light a candle, take a long time to savor the food.
3. Find a way to bless each person you encounter on your Sabbath. Perhaps it is giving words of encouragement, love or support. Perhaps it is simply listening to someone. Maybe it is a call to someone you haven't talked to in a while. Or, maybe it is just sitting in silence for a while and whoever comes to your mind, you say a prayer of blessing for them.
4. Intentional silence is important for Sabbath. Choose a period of time or activity - a walk, bike-ride, time in the hammock – and refrain from speaking. Pay attention to all that you notice during this time of silence.
5. Find a way or a place that you can enjoy the beauty of nature. A hike (or car ride!) in a beautiful place; kayaking; bird-watching; gardening; sitting by the creek and listening to the water. Allow yourself to savor the nourishment of the earth, of being connected to the earth as God's creatures.
6. Play. What does that look like for you? A cannonball in your pool? Building a fort with your kids? Turning on some great music and dancing like there's no tomorrow?
7. Allow yourself to find a way to get restored. Naps are great! Find what will recharge you and restore you. Refrain from anything that is NOT life-giving to you.
8. If your Sabbath day is not Sunday, there are ways to incorporate private worship into your day. Play your favorite hymns or praise songs. Spend time in the Word. Read a devotional or write a prayer. Light a candle, read a psalm of praise, lift your arms to God. Make a list of all the things you are grateful for from the past 6 days.

Two excellent books: "The Sabbath" by Abraham Joshua Heschel and "Sabbath" by Wayne Muller.

“The Fine Print of the 6th Commandment”

Exodus 20:13 – Thou Shalt Not Kill, and Matthew 5:23-34

May 24, 2020

Sermon Series: “The Ten Commandments: God For Us”

Rev. Dr. Henry Hansen

GETTING STARTED

1. What did you do this Memorial Day Weekend and how did you reflect on the meaning of the holiday, especially in light of COVID-19?

LEARNING & LIVING OUT SCRIPTURE

2. What did you learn about this commandment from Sunday’s message? Think too about the concept of the Sabbath (last week’s sermon) being the hinge commandment – how do the commandments shift from the first four, thereafter? What becomes the focus?
3. Review the passage from Matthew 5 and consider the implications of Jesus’s explication of the commandment that forbids killing. Bear in mind this is the fine print of sixth commandment.
4. Think about the face value of the commandment and how it might apply to issues such as war and capital punishment. Consider your own understanding of moral issues. Are your views on issues such as Just War and capital punishment shaped from a biblical standpoint or merely a social and political one? IE – do you view issues of our time through the lens of Christ instead of popular (social, political, or otherwise) opinion? How might the commandment that forbids “killing,” apply to other issues or our day.
5. Martin Luther and John Calvin explained that “In the moments we fail to observe ‘I was hungry and thirsty, and you gave me no food or drink. I was a stranger and you did not welcome me. I was naked and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not visit me,’– we are guilty of neglecting to follow the sixth command.” What is the connection Calvin and Luther were drawing there in terms of the demands of discipleship and loving others?
6. Earl Palmer said this commandment is “the grand positive.” What was meant by that as it was applied in the sermon? Remember the title of the series – “God For Us.” What specifically was said in the message about what the grand positive means?

LIVING OUT “REAL LIFE”

7. Ponder the closing story Henry shared in the message. Describe the woman’s strategy toward responding to what this young man did to her and how it impacted her and him. What does it teach you?
8. What does this commandment – bearing in mind both Exodus 20 and Matthew 5 – teach you about the Gospel?
9. Identify one takeaway from the message and what this allows you to reflect more deeply upon, both theologically and for personal application.

SHARING & PRAYER REQUESTS

Pray for safety for people this Memorial Day Weekend and/or throughout the week as Butte County takes steps toward reopening. Pray for government officials, law enforcement, business owners, and everyday citizens.

“Faithfulness is Sexy”

Exodus 20:14

May 31st, 2020

Sermon Series: “The Ten Commandments: God For Us
Rev. Ray Medina

GETTING STARTED

1. Check in with each other about how you're doing and how COVID-19 is affecting you directly. Be mindful of understanding the other as this is discussed

LEARNING & LIVING OUT SCRIPTURE

Together, Reread the biblical text for the morning: Exodus 20:1-17 (esp. v.14). If your group wants to read more bibles, read Jesus' interpretation of the command from Matthew 5:27-30. Other Scriptures mentioned or alluded to include 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8, Acts 2:1-4, 1 Timothy 2:13.

2. How is the command “Do not commit adultery” a “God for us” command? How is this prohibition a blessed way of life for God's people living in the Promised Land? From what did this prohibition spare them?
3. What do you respond to God's love being described in Scripture as *eros* love (wild, passionate, lavish, delight)?
4. How can the church be committed to following Jesus within faithful relationships without self-righteously shaming people who, in a season of spiritual lapse or disillusionment, resort to instant gratification?
5. How can we encourage and edify single young adults in what has become a twenty year “waiting” period between puberty and marriage?
6. How can we encourage and edify young marrieds to cultivate faithfulness and passion in their marriages?
7. How can we encourage and edify seasoned married couples to renew their marriages with both passion and faithfulness?

SHARING & PRAYER REQUESTS

Pray for the containment and elimination of the Corona Virus. Pray for healing for those who are sick from it.

“It’s About More Than Stealing...”

Exodus 20:15 and Ephesians 4:28 – Thou Shalt Not Steal

June 7, 2020

Sermon Series: “The Ten Commandments: God For Us”

Rev. Dr. Henry Hansen

GETTING STARTED

1. Talk a little about your summer plans and what you intend to do with this sun-shiny season outdoors, indoors, or otherwise?

LEARNING & LIVING OUT SCRIPTURE

2. What did you learn about this commandment from Sunday’s message? Contrast the negative side of the command (forbiddance) with the positive. Read Ephesians 4:28 to inform your answer.
3. Describe different forms of stealing. Consider for example that Henry included online piracy, padding your bank account during tax season, and so on. Think of as many examples as you can of stealing.
4. Read John 12: 1-6. Contrast Mary with Judas. What are some key differences in character and contribution?
5. What are ways – based from a Christian point of view, we can steal from people in need? If the true Christian way of life is not “what’s mine is mine,” or “what’s yours is mine,” but rather “what’s mine is yours,” then what does this point us to in terms of our obligation as Christians? And what are societal factors that contribute to the first two mantras of “what’s mine is mine” and “what’s yours is mine?” Why would some end up living that way, even without knowing it? What creates such a mindset or behavior?
6. What does our image of God have to do with this commandment? Think about what provokes stealing in any form. How does our view of God compel us toward abundant grace and generosity?

LIVING OUT “REAL LIFE”

7. Think at a basic level about your own philosophy of ownership. Do you lean heavily into one camp between the three ways we might choose – what’s mine is mine, what’s yours is mine, and what’s mine is yours? What were you taught growing up and what was modeled for you?
8. Is there anything you possess that does not belong to you? Consider returning it, no matter how trivial of an item it might seem to be. Notice the after effect and sense of liberation Christ desires for you. And think about confessing to someone if you’ve wronged them in this way. There is no shame – no matter how deeply buried your transgression, to confess it and find restitution.
9. What does living with an open hand have to do with making the world a more equitable place to live? Dwell upon the call to serve and how the philosophy “what’s mine is yours” might make the world a better, more just place.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Pray for our task force. Your pastors and church leadership miss seeing you, and all of us miss each other.
Pray for safety, wisdom, and God's providential care.

“Let’s Get Honest”

Exodus 20:16 and James 3:5-8

June 14, 2020

Sermon Series: “The Ten Commandments: God For Us”

Shannon Coon

LEARNING & LIVING OUT SCRIPTURE

1. What did you learn about this commandment from Sunday’s message?

There is a meaning of the commandment during judicial proceedings and outside of court. How are these interrelated?

2. How is this commandment, at its heart, an expression of loving your neighbor? How is this commandment a protection for those who are underprivileged or marginalized?
3. There are various ways we use our words to deceive and injure others. The Old Testament calls it “violence of words.” What are some everyday examples of the ways we can find ourselves misusing our words?
4. James has some very harsh words about the power of the tongue. Do you agree that sometimes it is so hard to tame the tongue?
5. What are some reasons we lie? Or distort the truth? Or exaggerate or use hyperbole? Or withhold the truth? Or tell “little white lies?”
6. The positive aspect of this commandment is....to tell the truth! To use care with our words. “Word Care.” Consider the following ways we can exercise “Word Care” in our lives:
 - “Speak the truth in love” (Eph 4:15) – using loving speech toward others, which is often just seeking to understand someone who is different than us, or being willing to hear what someone has to say even when we disagree with them;
 - When speaking about someone, we can ask ourselves these questions: Is it kind? Is it true? Is it necessary to say?
 - When speaking to someone, we can ask ourselves these questions: Does this need to be said? Does it need to be said by me? Does it need to be said by me now?
 - We can commit to refraining from gossip and rumor-spreading, exaggeration in our speech, etc. (“Taming our tongue”);
 - We can speak words of life, affirmation, and blessing to people on a regular basis;
 - We can ask someone for forgiveness if we have hurt them through our words.

LIVING OUT “REAL LIFE”

Following this commandment requires that we first get honest with ourselves about the role lying or deceit plays in our lives. Here is an interesting study that you can do of yourself. Over the next week, keep a list of any exaggerations you spoke, white lies, flattery, spin, a “lie for the good of the order,” or when you use any kind of negative speech about someone, true or untrue. It is an eye-opening exercise! Ask yourself what may have motivated you to speak in those ways. Ask God in prayer to help you amend your speech and to practice “Word Care.”

“The Heart of the Matter”

Exodus 20:17 and Mark 10:17-22

June 21, 2020

Sermon Series: “The Ten Commandments: God For Us”

Shannon Coon

LEARNING & LIVING OUT SCRIPTURE

1. What did you learn about this commandment from Sunday’s message? Are all desires bad? What are some good desires that we have in our lives?
2. Consider this quote: “Longing for what someone else has is a dangerous direction.” What does this mean in light of the 10th Commandment?
3. Consider the illustration that Pastor Rick Warren of Saddleback Church gave regarding “possessing things.” He related a story of a congregant’s boat he borrowed for the day. He had so much fun with it that he started thinking to himself “I wish I owned a boat too.” But he then changed his thinking. What did he replace that thinking with?
4. Coveting is all about desire. It is “disordered desire.” The first example of this in the Bible is the story of Adam and Eve who desired fruit from the one tree that was forbidden. What made it especially desirous was the lie they were told that if they ate of it they would become just like God. From that story onward, we see characters in the Bible who chased after “disordered” or uncontrolled desires. Who are some of the examples that come to your mind?
5. There was not time during the sermon to focus on a New Testament character. Take a look at the story in Mark 10:17-22. After reading it, meditate on these questions: What was Jesus asking of the young man? (Not only literally, but also what was the request underneath the surface request?) How did the man answer Jesus? Why do you suppose the young man could not take Jesus’s request seriously? In other words, what was “getting in the way” of saying “Yes” to Jesus? What does this story say to us? (Hint: this is NOT a story that says that wealth is a bad thing!)
6. How does the 10th Commandment point back to the 1st Commandment? In other words, if the First Commandment says: _____, then the 10th Commandment drives that home because it is about guarding our hearts against chasing after anything other than _____ to satisfy us.
7. How do you react to this quote from St. Augustine: “Our hearts are restless until they rest in you, O Lord”?

LIVING OUT “REAL LIFE”

The positive aspect of this commandment, just as the previous six commandments, is about “love of neighbor.” If we are not pining for the things our neighbor has, then it is because we are aware of the “enoughness” that we have in our own lives. Consider this quote: “ ‘Enough’ is what most of us would be glad to have if we didn’t see others with more.” When we start thinking “the grass is greener over there” or when we start comparing ourselves to others (social media is a key place where we do this), then we venture down the slippery slope of not trusting God with providing “enough” for us. Neil Plantinga in his book, “Not the Way It’s Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin,” uses the term “spiritual hygiene” as a way to guard ourselves against sin and to position ourselves for the grace of participating in the Kingdom of God.

- 1) One habit of spiritual hygiene which guards our hearts against coveting is the practice of gratitude. Just as brushing our teeth is done regularly, practicing gratitude on a regular basis not only guards our hearts, but also fills them. In fact, you could make a mental gratitude list every time you brush your teeth! It is an opportunity to thank God and praise God for the abundance he provides for you every single day. And you could include in that gratitude prayer a request for the strength and selflessness to celebrate with others in your lives when they receive wonderful gifts too.

- 2) Another habit of spiritual hygiene is regularly examining our desires. If it is really “eating at us” that we can’t have a certain opportunity or possession of someone else’s; or, if we are so strongly desiring someone else’s spouse, then there is something underneath that desire. There is something “beyond it.” Perhaps we are desiring respect, or a sense of being successful, or affection from our own spouse. These are the root desires that God wants to help satisfy in your life. It is good spiritual hygiene to regularly look at what our desires are telling us.