

Galatians 5; Lord's Day 44

THE EVIL OF SIN WITHIN

- I. The description.
 - A. To "covet" is to judge something to be desirable, and then to long for it in order to possess it.
 - B. To covet is a natural activity of man as a creature, and it is not per se sinful.
 - C. After the fall into sin, coveting can be either right or wrong.
 1. It is right if the thing desired is a good thing and the desire is moderate.
 2. It is wrong when the good thing we desire belongs to my neighbor.
 3. It is wrong when my coveting is immoderate (too much so we are not content) - called a "lust."
- II. While the state and the church cannot and do not punish for violations of the tenth commandment God does.
 - A. Scripture contains serious warnings concerning this sin.
 1. Scripture speaks of it as "idolatry" (Col. 3:5) and says it leads to hell (I Tim. 6:9).
 2. It is a deceitful sin, for it is called a "cloke" (I Thess. 2:5).
 3. And it is a mother sin, giving rise to many other evils within and without (a "root of evil" I Tim. 6:10).
 - B. This sin is deeply offensive to God.
 1. Covetousness damages love for God, as we become filled with love for ourselves rather than God.
 2. God hates covetousness because it is the act of worshiping earthly things rather than Him.
 3. Covetousness destroys relationships with jealousy, so we cannot love our neighbor.
 - C. Thus God condemns sin as it begins deep within us: in the imagination of the thoughts of our heart (Gen. 6:5).
- III. The positive calling.
 - A. Salvation in Jesus Christ means forgiveness for all of our coveting **and** also freedom from having to covet.
 - B. Rejoice at your neighbor's prosperity and good, seeing God as the Giver (instead of selfishly bitterness).
 - C. Consider the antidotes against this sin.