

Sermon Matthew 5 21 37 6<sup>th</sup> S af Ep

Sermon: 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany (PPP)

Text: Matthew 5:20-37

Theme; The Ten Commandments

Goal: To go through the Ten Commandments as they show us how sinful

we are, and to point to Christ, who fulfilled the for us and gives us forgiveness and a new life.

Dear Friends,

**Introduction:** Do we have termites in Cape Town? The last parsonage we moved in in Brazil, - a big and nice old fashion house - was infested by termites! Some treatment was done, the house was well painted and looked nice, but the termites were still there. They infected all our furniture. - It was not just a matter of external appearance – to paint and to look nice, - but it was a deeper problem; they were inside the wood structure of the house.

When Jesus is talking about the Commandments in our text, He shows that sin is not just a matter of outside appearance and deeds, but it is a matter of inside, of the heart and of the mind. Jesus goes deep, very deep in the interpretation of the Commandments, to reach our inside structure, our heart, and to break our pride and the assumption that we are good people in the eyes of God and of the other people. He calls us to repentance, not just from what we do, but from what we think and say as well, as we confessed at the beginning of the Service: *“...we poor sinners confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against you by our thoughts, words and actions.”* He shows, like in a mirror, that we are unable to justify ourselves before God. We need “righteousness that surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law” (v. 20), that were considered righteous people in the eyes of the ordinary people; but Jesus said that they are like “whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the

inside are full of everything unclean” (Matt 23:27). And that righteousness required by God is offered us in Christ when we realize that we are sinful, confess our sins and weaknesses, and believe in Jesus.

Now, by God's grace, we are ready to live a new life, guided by the Commandments like a good rule in our new life. The Holy Spirit teaches us according to God's will and guides us along His paths. Therefore we sing and pray every Sunday: *“Create in me a clean heart, o God, and renew a right spirit in me.”*

Jesus mentioned the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> Commandment in our Gospel: “Do not murder” and “Do not commit adultery”. Let us use this opportunity to go through all the Ten Commandments as a review of them and as a teaching to our new lives in Christ. When we look to the Commandments and to our hearts, to our sinful nature, we get desperate. But when we look to the Commandments and to Christ, who fulfilled the Law on our behalf and paid our debts on the cross, we receive forgiveness and strength to the new life!

### **The Ten Commandments as explained by Martin Luther:**

#### **The First Commandment**

You shall have no other gods.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear, love and trust in God above all things.

#### **The Second Commandment**

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

#### **The Third Commandment**

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

### **The Fourth Commandment**

Honor your father and your mother.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

### **The Fifth Commandment**

You shall not murder.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need.

### **The Sixth Commandment**

You shall not commit adultery.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do, and husband and wife love and honor each other.

### **The Seventh Commandment**

You shall not steal.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbor's money or possessions, or get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his possessions and income.

### **The Eighth Commandment**

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest possible way.

### **The Ninth Commandment**

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

*What does this mean?*

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.

### **The Tenth Commandment**

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

*What does this mean?*

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 Close of the Commandments**

*What does God say about all of these commandments?*

He says, "I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments" (Exodus 20:5-6).

*What does this mean?*

God threatens to punish all who break these commandments. Therefore, we should fear His wrath and not do anything against them. But He promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments. Therefore, we should also love and trust in Him and gladly do what He commands.

When Jesus was asked "which is the greatest commandment in the Law", He answered: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." - The motto of our St. Thomas is: loved by god, loving others!

### **Conclusion:**

The Ten Commandments are still valid at our time. Some people try to minimized them. God's Law is serious! God's will is unchanged! As children of God, redeemed by the blood of Jesus and called into His family, the Commandments call us daily to repentance and guide us in our new life. God be thanked that He didn't only give us the Commandments, but

He gave His Only Son Jesus as well to redeem us from the wrath of the Law and to give us a new life. God's promises from the Old Testament are fulfilled in us, His people of the New Testament: “This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declare the Lord. I will put my law in their minds and write them in their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people... For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.” (Jeremiah 31:33-34). In Jesus' name. Amen.

Pastor Carlos Walter Winterle  
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