Dear Reader,

I am new to producing reading sermons. So, if you have any suggestions as to how I might improve my format or what I include – please email me at [cdanielwilson@gmail.com](mailto:cdanielwilson@gmail.com). **I will warn you, that I do not use short sentences**. I will endeavor to work on this over time, but I don’t naturally write that way. However, you can easily break most of my longer sentences into 2 or 3 smaller ones where I have “…” or “–“ or commas. If you do the work on making it into smaller sentences – feel free to email it to me, and I am happy to share your work with others. I do have some of these available which people have sent me. I will eventually make them available as part of the normal manuscripts.

I have left my sermon manuscript formatted the way I normally write and read my sermons. They are colourful and written in conversational English. If you are a grammar nazi – then you will be frustrated with my punctuation and phrasing. However, once you read it out loud, you will normally be able to tell what I meant to say. SERIOUSLY, READ IT OUTLOUD. You will also see that I use a good bit of bold, italics, underlining and different colours to signal what are the most important things to say, and also to make it easier for my eye to pick up my place in the middle of paragraphs. I would recommend that you keep as many of those things as possible to help you keep your place. However, you will probably want to increase the spacing between lines. I highly encourage you to commit as much of the introduction or children’s illustrations to memory as you can, so that these can be delivered to the congregation with maximum eye contact.

**Where possible, I highly recommend that you listen to the sermon as I preached it at either the Nelson website or the website of North Shore.** I recommend that because that will also help hear the places where I added or skipped over material in the manuscript, and the places where I clarified my meaning. I have edited bits and pieces which I thought most important, but I have not sought to include all the additional material that comes to me while in the pulpit. I would practically have to use a transcription service for that. However, I hope and pray that this sermon will be a blessing to you and to your congregation. To God be the Glory!

Blessings in our Lord, Pastor Daniel Wilson

**My Suggestions for the Order of Service**

Song before the service: #73

We gather as God’s redeemed Affirming that: ***OUR Help is in ...***

*As we do so,* ***We Receive God’s Greeting… Grace and Peace to you from God/Father/Son/HS.* Amen**

*Let us now Worship our God as we sing a* **Song of Praise** **#19 “We Praise Thee, O God” vs.1,4-6**

**Please remain standing to profess faith… *Using the Apostles Creed (Please be seated)***

**Scripture Reading – Lord’s Day #44**

Sing a Song of continued worship: **#39B “Teach me the measure of my days”**

*Let us come before the Lord now in our time of* **Congregational Prayer**

***Scripture Reading:*** *Colossians 3:1-17*

**We now have the opportunity to return to the Lord a portion of our FIRST AND BEST – as we bring to God, *His tithes & our additional free will offerings (Deacons)***

*Let us continue to worship as we sing*: **#119:9-16 “How can the young keep their life pure?”**

Scripture Reading/Text: Deut. 5:21 **Sermon Title: “The Ultimate Catch-all”**

**\* Song of Response: Psalm #119:33-40 “Teach me, O Lord”**

***Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God the Father, and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be and abide with you all forever more. Amen***

***Doxology*: #530**

# **Evening Sermon: “The Ultimate Catch-All” (read Deut 5:1-**21)

Text: Deut. 5:21 You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, you shall not set your desire on your neighbor’s house or land, his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

**Reading: Colossians 3:1-17**

**Introduction:** Children, have you ever played at a friend’s house and you really enjoyed playing with all the neat toys they had?! You loved playing with their toys so much that you told your parents all about it?!! You were so excited, you asked your parents, “May I have one of those little cars (or that doll)?” And your parents probably said, “No, not right now, we don’t just go out and buy toys for no reason…” **How did you react?** Did you say, “Ok, well if you do want to buy me something as a gift that would be lovely…” ?? That is how you SHOULD reply, but that probably wasn’t your reaction… was it? Did you whine and cry and fuss about it not being fair? If you started to cry and have a tantrum, then somewhere in your mind, while playing with your friend… your appreciation for your friend’s toy, turned into coveting what they had! (your good enjoyment of a toy, turned into an evil desire!)

(**Review**) Last time, we looked at the 9th Commandment. We saw that God hates Lying, and that He is gracious! We really don’t have to worry or be anxious about the sticky conscience situations everyone always likes to debate about… Because at the end of the day – we are saved by grace through Christ! If we seek the Lord in good conscience, and we strive to obey His law while Trusting that God knows best… Then God will provide what is right! And even if you do stumble and fall – through faith in Christ, we know that we will hear those final words of commendation on the last day = Well Done, Good and Faithful servant! Enter into the Joy of your Lord! But of course, that doesn’t meant that we don’t strive for godliness… Rather, God calls us to be perfect as He is perfect, and we are to attempt that in good faith! As we turn to the 10th commandment tonight, we see the depth of the perfection to which we are called! For beyond outward duty and actions, ***Here God requires that we never covet anything that belongs to our neighbor… and:***

**I love Heidelberg Catechism #113 – it is an excellent summary of the commandment: READ/Recite**

God’s will in the 10th commandment is: That not even the slightest thought or desire contrary to any one of God’s commandments should ever arise in my heart. Rather, with all my heart I should always hate sin and take pleasure in whatever is right.

*We will divide our time tonight under 2 headings*

1. **The Two Book-Ends**
2. **The Impossible Law**

*We begin with our first point:*

# **The Two Book-Ends (REPEAT)**

* 1. **There are two Catch-All commandments : #1 and #10**

In the First commandment, God requires that we have no other Gods before Him. And as we saw back in November of last year, essentially every sin is related back to failing to put God first in our lives! If you trust money will provide for your needs, and you lie, cheat, or steal to get more money, then you have made money your idol in place of God! If you believe that sports, sex, marriage or family will fulfill you and make you happy – then you have fallen into idolatry because God is the only one who fulfills!

The 10th commandment is a catch-all in much the same way: because as our catechism has rightly explained: *this commandment* prohibits even the slightest thought or desire to break one of God’s commandments. So before you actually steal, before you disobey your parents, before you lie, you first decide to do so… ***and that decision is a covetous one!*** You might think, “How is thinking about breaking the law coveting?” *Quite Simply:* Why do you steal? Because you covet that item which you steal! You want it in an ungodly way – you want it more than you trust God to provide what is right for you! The same applies to every commandment! You covet some thing or some situation…

Just as breaking any commandment ultimately boils down to idolatry, every sin is related to some form of covetousness! And these two commandments are placed first and last to ensure that we all recognize that we cannot keep this law! ***God is requiring perfection from our heart’s desire, to our slightest word & action!*** To see just how thorough this commandment is, let’s take a moment to explore just the 10th commandment:

* 1. **What does coveting look like?**

Let me point out right away, that looking through a catalog and seeing a nice new computer, or book or toy that you would like to buy is **not necessarily** coveting. Not all “wanting”; not all desires are coveting. Rather, Coveting is setting your heart on something, so that when you don’t get it ***you get sinfully angry/upset/depressed!***

For instance, going back to the illustration I used in the introduction – many children have admired the toys of their friends/cousins, neighbors. And they come back and ask Mom and Dad for one of those types of cars, or one of those dolls. When you as a parent tell them no, you know your child is coveting if they pitch a tantrum of some kind! If they whine and say, “Why Not! He gets to have one… - Why can’t I?!” and they stomp their feet or grumble about it not being fair etc (you know what I mean) – *If that is your child’s reaction, then they were coveting.* ***Because their desire for that toy (or treat) has become the center of their desire – they will not be happy unless they get it.*** If you see that in your child, don’t give in to them. Rather: you can stop them and explain that God tells us not to set our desire on someone else’s belongings like that! **Instead:** they need to be content with what God has given them, because God promises that we will lack no good thing. Therefore, if we don’t have the money for that toy/treat, or the time for that kind of fun trip, then God knows that it would not be good for us to have it. And they need to trust God.

So, Coveting is setting your heart or your desire on something, so that if you don’t get it, you respond sinfully! Adults, you covet more than you probably ever imagined possible! I will give you some examples:

Men, you have probably come home from work a few times after a rough day and all you wanted, was to have a nice quiet coffee/cold drink and sit in a comfy chair for a few moments peace … and all you hear when you come into the house is yelling and screaming of the kids and your wife is annoyed and frustrated and dinner is late (everything that could go wrong, seems to be going wrong!) **At that moment**, your reaction reveals whether you were genuinely desiring that little bit of comfort, or whether it had risen to the level of a sinful/covetous desire! *If you get angry and start fussing, then your genuine desire for rest had become an idolatrous evil desire!*  Or, perhaps more clear cut examples of covetousness: ***you men may covet*** your friend who spends money on special trips with the guys (racing, rugby, hunting or fishing etc) ***or you covet that*** he has the garage with all the best tools **Or, maybe You covet his freedom**, because he never has to spend time with his family, but always does what he wants when he wants…! *Dreaming of being your friend or having his toys is sinful covetousness!*

Women, when you speak to a friend and you hear about or notice something that their husband does for them, and you think “Wow, my husband doesn’t do that” – if your very next thought is one that is derogatory toward your husband: “That loser” “He doesn’t love me like he should” “I wish he was more like her husband…” **then you have begun to covet!** Because in those thoughts you are not loving your husband! Your sinful response reveals that you have begun to set your desire on your friends’ husband in a covetous way! **Now: You may think**, “I don’t stop loving my loser, ***uh, my husband*** just because I put him down, all I am doing is telling it like it is!” But in reality you have stopped doing what you are told to do in **I Cor. 13:** Love is kind, it is not rude/self-seeking, it is not easily angered***, it keeps as detailed record of wrongs… NO, it keeps NO record of wrongs.*** Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth, always protects, trusts, hopes and perseveres! ***Your thoughts in those moments are delighting in the mistakes and flaws of your husband, recording all the times that He has failed to measure up to your new standard – your friend’s husband.***

Parents: we most often covet obedient children! We sinfully want our children to stand up and perform when required and the rest of the time to sit down and be quiet! **We covet what other parents have achieved.** You know it is coveting, when you respond to other parents: “well, yeah, your kids will rebel one day!” or when you respond in anger toward your own children. You say things like “Why can’t you just behave like so-an-so?!” That reveals a discontented covetous heart! ***You see: you can recognize covetousness and evil desires when a certain desire leads you to sin!***

IT’s like Solomon with the two prostitutes who both claimed a certain child was theirs… He said, bring me a sword, if you both claim the child I will cut him in two and you can both have half – the evil covetous desire of the false mother said, “Yes, cut him in two, neither can have him” – but the true loving desire of the real mother, said, “No, give her the child, don’t kill him.” You can test whether your desires have become idolatrous or covetous by what happens when you don’t get them… If they lead you to sin (in anger, depression, etc), then those desires have become too important to you! ***If your desire leads to a humble response, and the fruit of the Spirit, then it is a God-honoring desire.***

So, you see… Covetousness is one of the most dominant sins of our lives! ***But what do we do about it?***

*Well, that brings us to Our Second point:*

# **The Impossible Law (REPEAT)**

* 1. ***The Catechism rightly points out that this and all the commandments are impossible to keep perfectly!***

In this life, even the holiest saints have only a small beginning of the obedience required by the Law! None of us can claim to be without sin! We are all sinful, there is none righteous, no not one! ***And you are thinking, Um, you aren’t helping us any, you are saying we can’t do it! That’s right!***

***And yet***, the Catechism points out: *that with all seriousness of purpose*, we do begin to live according to ALL, not only some, but ALL of God’s commandments! And this is where the catechism is absolutely genius, because we naturally respond – Well, if no one can obey the 10 commandments perfectly in this life, WHY THEN DOES GOD WANT THEM PREACHED SO POINTEDLY? WHY?!

For two reasons: FIRST: so that the longer we live, the more we may come to know our sinfulness and the more eagerly look to Christ for forgiveness of sins and righteousness!

And Second: so that, while praying to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, we may never stop striving to be renewed more and more after God’s image, until after this life we reach our goal: Perfection!

* 1. **But How do we strive against sin?**

You most likely answer first – prayer, Bible reading, trying harder etc… But that isn’t what the catechism says. The more we see our sin, the more we look to Christ for forgiveness and FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS – Christ is the one who gives us righteousness! ***So, Yes! We pray and read the Bible, but that alone doesn’t change anything: because YOU can’t obey the Law!* *But Christ can and did.* If you are saved by Faith, then you have to live by faith!**

All too often we begin with Christ, and then somehow try to finish in our own strength! This is very common, the Galatians tried to do it, the Colossians tried to do it… *The Galatians* *had fallen into the trap of thinking that God’s strength and provision came because they obeyed the law! The Colossians thought that simply following regulations about food, drink, worship and everything else would do it – but* **as Paul pointed out at the end of Colossians 2,** *such regulations have the appearance of wisdom, but they don’t have any value in restraining sin!*

**You see**, if you have habitual sin problem (*something you really struggle with*), then your problem is **NOT** that you CAN’T change… It is NOT that you don’t have the strength to change – ***that is all true***, but the REAL Problem is that you are NOT Properly Relying on Christ! **SO WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?**

Open your Bibles again to Colossians 3:1-17… Paul doesn’t tell the Colossians to try harder; instead he teaches them **how** to properly rely on Christ. And in doing so, He gives us the solution to our sin struggles: He says, “Set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God” and then he clarifies what he means: “Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory!” ***The first part of the solution to covetousness, idolatry and sin is to put your heart, your mind, your life focus on Christ and Heaven.***

When you blow up in anger/ get depressed and frustrated at your child, spouse, or co-worker you are revealing ***that in that moment***, your heart is set on the things of this earth! Your goal is to get them to do something or respond in a certain way and when they refuse or fail – you let them have it (either verbally – venting your anger, or in your mind – causing depression, anxiety and/or bitterness).  ***So, Practically Paul is telling us to*** *STOP focusing on earthly things,* ***Like****: How to make your children do what you want, How to be successful in this world, How to get people to do things your way, How to get that extra pleasure, comfort, joy, sleep, fulfillment etc etc!* **INSTEAD**: ***Set your goal for success not on attaining those things, but on spending eternity with Christ!*** … on Worshipping HIM!

AND this is the FREEING EMPOWERING MOVING PART!! **Your eternity with Christ is given to you freely *by faith*, apart from action!** ***That Goal has ALREADY been given to you in Christ!*** So, your adultery, your hatred, your untaught rebellious children, all your flaws can’t ruin your goal of going to heaven! Because Christ accomplished everything! EVERYTHING! **And by Faith, your life is now hidden with Christ in God** – we can’t lose that goal of eternity in heaven!

***If your Goal is not threatened by the difficulty of this life, then you will respond to pain/stress differently!***

So when your children aren’t obeying and are running wild – *you put your heart and mind upon Christ at the right hand of God in heaven…* “These children aren’t threatening my eternity in Heaven… I simply need to deal with this as God tells me – punish where needed, and teach them from God’s Word… Showing them the grace I myself have received in Christ!”

When a work relationship falls apart – difficulty at your job… **You remind yourself that your job is NOT your life.** Rather, your life is hidden with Christ in God – God is the one who has been paying your bills, not your job. God is the one who will continue to provide for all your needs! And the stress/curse of work won’t last forever, the day is coming when you will spend eternity with God in Heaven!

When your focus is on Christ, then in those tense moments you can take a step back in your mind and think clearly: “This isn’t worth yelling about – my place with Christ is secure – what would He want me to do here?” “I know that I have done worse to others… how should I respond in gracious way?”

That is how you are empowered by the Spirit to put OFF covetousness and idolatry, **AND to** clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience – forgiving others even as the Lord forgave you!

He forgave us apart from deserving! When we were His enemies, He forgave us in Christ. So, when Christ is our goal we will forgive, even as we have been forgiven. And that is what the Law is ALL about – to show us how greatly we have been forgiven, so that we would Love God and Others as we have been loved!

**… To the Glory of God, and for our own eternal good! Amen.**