

The Seven Deadly Sins – Greed

In the past two lessons I have introduced the sins which are often referred to as the seven deadly sins (lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, envy, and pride) and discussed the first two of these – lust and gluttony. I want to reiterate here that I believe that all sin is deadly, and these sins are not identified in any list in Scripture as being any different from other sin. All sin is transgression of the law, and the wages of sin is death. I think, though, that it is worthwhile to look at these particular sins since they do seem to be at the root of many common sins. Perhaps that's why these were separated out by a pope (who, by the way, I do not give any more credence too than anyone else). Also, perhaps this is the reason that Satan keeps hindering me in completing these lessons. I ask you to pray for me that I might be able to complete these lessons on a more timely basis.

With that said let's look at the next of these sins – greed. Greed can be defined as an unhealthy desire to have more. Greed can also be defined as covetousness. Clearly, then, greed is a sin because the 10th Commandment is “Thou shalt not covet.”

Let's look at an example of greed. Joshua 7 says:

(1) But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel. (2) And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which *is* beside Bethaven, on the east side of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai. (3) And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; *and* make not all the people to labour thither; for they *are but* few. (4) So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai. (5) And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them *from* before the gate *even* unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water. (6) And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads. (7) And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan! (8) O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! (9) For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear *of it*, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name? (10) And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? (11) Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put *it* even among their own stuff. (12) Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, *but* turned *their*

backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you. (13) Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *There is* an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you. (14) In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes: and it shall be, *that* the tribe which the LORD taketh shall come according to the families *thereof*; and the family which the LORD shall take shall come by households; and the household which the LORD shall take shall come man by man. (15) And it shall be, *that* he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel. (16) So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken: (17) And he brought the family of Judah; and he took the family of the Zarhites: and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man; and Zabdi was taken: (18) And he brought his household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. (19) And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide *it* not from me. (20) And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: (21) When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they *are* hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it. (22) So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, *it was* hid in his tent, and the silver under it. (23) And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD. (24) And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor. (25) And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones. (26) And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day.

We see here how that greed can lead someone away from God. Achan didn't think there would be any problem with him taking a few spoils. No-one would ever know. The problem is Achan wasn't trusting God. God had promised to bless all of Israel, but Achan wanted to take care of himself. Even though he knew that it was all supposed to belong to God he got greedy. He found it so it was his. Greed leads down a dark road.

The Bible teaches that greed is within our human nature. Ecclesiastes 5:10-11 says:

(10) He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this *is* also vanity. (11) When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good *is there* to the owners thereof, saving the beholding *of them* with their eyes?

1 Timothy 6:10 tells us that the love of money is the root of all evil. Greed, then, is at the heart of all types of sin. Why does the harlot prostitute herself? Greed. Why does the gambler lose everything that he has? Greed. Why do pastors turn to numbers rather than teaching the word? Greed.

We are taught in the Scripture that we should be worthy of our hire. It is not greed to expect an honest day's pay for an honest days' work. It is greed, though, when we take advantage of those less privileged.

There are many other examples of greed that we could talk about – but I believe that if you were honest with yourself you'll find that you only have to look in the mirror to see greed. I want to ask you to do something – bow down right now and ask God to create in you a heart free from greed, a mind that is truly content with what you have, and strength to deflect the greedy hands of the Devil.

Yours in Christ,

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