

Trinity XIV

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Preacher: Fr. Wade Miller

[0 : 00] The very last of the Ten Commandments says, Thou shalt not covet. And as you probably know, to covet is to desire or want what others have.

It might be tempting to think of a commandment like, Thou shalt not murder, and feel as though we're doing pretty well. I mean, it's not like we have that noisy or nosy neighbor buried in our backyard.

But when it comes to coveting, that's a whole different story. Coveting has become one of the hallmarks of being an American because it's all about promoting our brand and striving for the American dream.

We are told that we should strive to get what others have in order that we live our best life now. We have a whole culture that lives in wanting what others have.

We want to look like someone else. We want to dress like someone else. We want to talk like someone else. And the idea of getting what others have has made us become craving consumers who live in a constant state of covetousness.

[1 : 22] Such covetousness has robbed us of a true Christian identity so that now we see our value only through the eyes of acceptance and the praise from others.

Now, the opposite of coveting is contentment. Contentment is not mere apathy. It's not complacency as though we do not strive to do better or excel.

No. Contentment, though, is an attitude of being satisfied in God. That nothing else can ultimately satisfy us but God.

Contentment is accepting our life as baptized Christians and not seeking to look or act like our pagan culture. Contentment rejects the temptation to be mindless consumers always craving what others have or becoming puppets or conformists to the ways of this world.

In other words, contentment is living a life of gratitude, a life of thanksgiving before God.

Contentment is the opposite of entitlement.

[2 : 44] It's a life of humility and trust in Christ, not thinking that we are owed something by others. Contentment is thanking God for his mercies that are new every morning rather than anxiously wondering what others think about us.

Contentment is not seeking to impress others or living in shame of who we are as Christians. It is finding our identity and our purpose in God.

And based on our gospel reading this morning, you can probably connect the dots where this sermon is heading. We heard here in Luke chapter 17, how our Lord healed 10 lepers.

Our Lord healed 10 men whose lives were all but over as they were considered unclean. And they were segregated far away from family, friends, and close communities.

This flesh disease made these lepers feel as though life was all but over for them. And as Jesus made his way from Jerusalem through Galilee and Samaria, he heard the cries from these 10 men, these lepers saying, Jesus, master, have mercy upon us.

[4 : 13] Jesus, master, have mercy upon us. Our Lord tells them to go to show themselves to the priest so that they, that the priest could then judge whether or not they were clean or unclean.

And as they made their way to the priest, they were healed from this horrible disease. And we go on to read, and one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned.

And with a loud voice glorified God and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.

Did you catch what's going on in this passage? Only one man turned back to give thanks to God. Out of 10, only one came back to give our Lord thanks.

And this man glorified God. And this one man fell on his face before Jesus. And what's even more surprising is that this man, as we are told, was a Samaritan.

[5 : 32] A Samaritan. A bitter enemy of the Israelites who was considered unclean based upon his ethnicity. This is the one who comes back to give glory to God.

A Samaritan leper is the one who gives thanks to Jesus. It reminds me of what our Lord says just two chapters later in the Gospel of Luke.

In Luke chapter 19, our Lord says that if the people of God failed to give him praise, then the rocks would cry out in giving our Lord all honor and worship.

But here is what I want us to learn from our Gospel text this morning. This one Samaritan leper did not follow the way of the other nine. He did not go with the herd.

No, he found his way back to Jesus to worship him, to give him thanks. He was not merely worried about his own welfare. He was not worried about what the other nine might think of him.

[6 : 43] He knew that this healing, this restoration of life was because of the healing power of God. The God who came in human flesh in the person of Jesus.

As baptized Christians, we are to imitate this cleansed leper. You see, we were people that were once unclean. And even though we didn't have leprosy, some flesh-eating disease, we possessed a disease much worse.

We were plagued with sin that leads to eternal death. And like this leper, we are now to make the number one priority of our lives a life of gratitude, of giving thanks to our God because of the cleansing that we have received in Christ Jesus.

We are to be content in Christ. And we are to use all that he has given to us for the praise and the worship of his holy name.

We are to be thankful worshipers of our God in thought, word, and deed. And this phrase, giving thanks, is where, as most of you know, where we get the word for Eucharist.

[8 : 08] Our life is to be one that is meeting God where he has made himself known in the church, where we now participate in the breaking of bread and receiving the cup, which is his body and blood.

We were cleansed in the waters of holy baptism. And we are being restored in this holy Eucharist. But living a life of thanksgiving, living a life of gratitude, is not only receiving the Eucharist, it is now being transformed, allowing the Spirit to transform us so that we now are his body and his blood to the world as we conform ourselves more and more to him and not in conforming to the ways of this world.

We are called to love what God loves. We are called to love what God loves. not coveting all that the world wants.

As baptized Christians, we have an identity in a world where it seems like nobody has their own identity. We have an identity of being restored, being renewed from death to life, which means that our life should be one of perpetual praise and thanksgiving to God.

And those who truly believe this, those who truly believe this are those who make the Eucharist the number one priority in their lives so that they now dwell in Christ and he in them.

[10 : 03] Friends, you know this. Let me just say it again. Money, it's temporal. Looks, fleeting, temporal.

Image, fleeting. Bodies, decay. Only life in Jesus Christ matters.

As Psalm 49 verses 10 through 12 says, the fool and the senseless person perish. They leave their wealth to others.

Their inner thought is that their houses will last forever. Their dwelling places to all generations.

They call their lands after their own names. Nevertheless, man though in honor does not remain.

He is like the beasts that perish. But thanks be to God that our life is in Christ who has conquered death and the grave.

[11 : 11] Therefore, as baptized Christians, let us live lives of perpetual praise and thanksgiving to God. Because that, that is the only thing that really matters.

Amen. In the name of the Father and of the Son of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Amen.