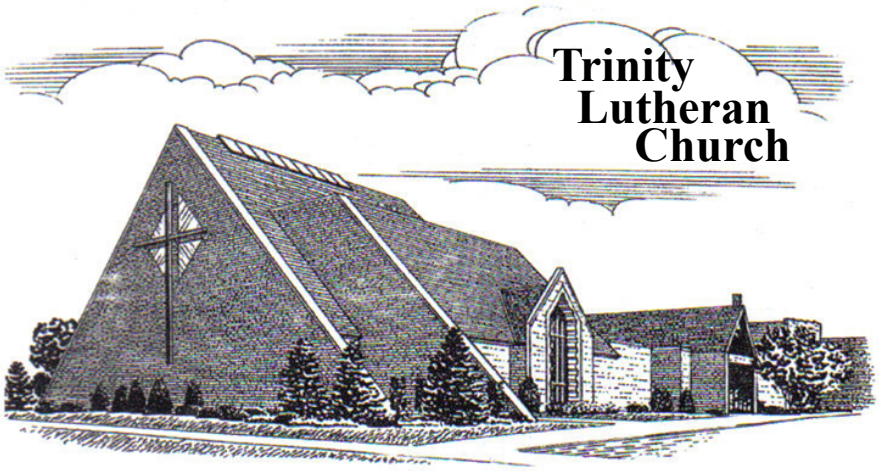
The Ninth and Tenth Commandment



Nov. 16-22, 2026

Weekly Outline

Invocation
L: You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you
C: because he trusts in you.

L: Let us pray:

Almighty Father, Lord of heaven and earth, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us after your great goodness; according to the multitude of your mercies, do away our offenses; wash us thoroughly from our wickedness, and cleanse us from our sins; for Jesus' sake,

C: Amen.

Scripture

Nov. 16: 1 Kings 21:1-16

Nov. 18: 1 John 2:15-17

Nov. 20: Matthew 15:10-20

Devotion

Closing Prayer
L: I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that you would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please you. For into your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me.
C: Amen.

Monday

The commandments end where they began, with the heart. In the First Commandment, God directs our heart to him alone. In the Ninth and Tenth Commandments, God forbids sin from taking root in our hearts in any way. It is not enough if we do not kill our neighbor; we must not desire his hurt either. It's not just that we must not commit adultery with our neighbor's wife; we must not desire her either. Before the hand commits sin, sin in the heart precedes it. Therefore, God addresses sin in the heart when he says, "You shall not covet."

Our story from 1 Kings illustrates how sin in the heart leads to all kinds of sin with the hands, up to and including murder. In 1 Kings 21, we meet a man named Naboth who has a vineyard next to the palace of King Ahab. That is some prime real estate, but it's also a dangerous lot to own when the king decides he wants it. When Ahab offers to purchase the vineyard, Naboth turns him down because the vineyard was the inheritance he had received from his fathers. Ahab mopes around the palace, lusting after a vineyard that is not his, when his wife Jezebel offers to acquire the vineyard for him. And she does, by setting some false witnesses against Naboth who get him killed. The greatest sin that we can commit with our hands is murder. But where does that sin originate? In the lusts, covetousness, and hatred of the heart. So it is with all sin.

If there is any commandment that reveals our need for a Savior, it is this, "You shall not covet." Even if we can self-righteously claim that we have never harmed our neighbor with our hands, we have surely wished him harm in our hearts, coveting his land, his family, his success, even his life. What we need is not another program of self-improvement, but the new birth that comes to us through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He came to rescue us from all sin, even the sin of our hearts. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Wednesday

In this short letter, the apostle John names three things that cannot coexist in our hearts along with the love of the Father: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. These three lusts describe every human heart before it is rescued by Christ. It is a world of sin all its own.

The lust of the flesh is every desire of the body. Bodily desire in and of itself is not evil, but when our hearts become set on the fulfillment of desire as though it is the highest good, that is sin. The lust of the eyes is covetousness. It is the dissatisfaction that enslaves us when we look at what others have and we do not. The pride of life is the security of wealth. We don't have to be wealthy for the pride of life to be found in our hearts. Even the poor can covet wealth, thinking that if they only had more money, their lives would be perfectly happy. God forbids each of these sins when he says, "You shall not covet." He means, "You shall not let your heart be enslaved by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."

But God does not forbid these sins because he wants his children to be unhappy. Rather, John says, "The world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever." It is the height of foolishness to live for the things of the world because the things of the world are temporary. They will pass away, and so will anyone who builds his life on them. But the one who builds his life on Christ abides forever. So full of faith in this promise, let us be wise builders, constructing our homes on Christ alone. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Friday

There are two ways that we could look at how sin and evil enter our lives. The first is that it comes from outside of us. In ourselves we are good, but sin and evil enter our lives because we live in a sinful and evil world. The other way is to look for the origin of sin and evil in the human heart. Sin and evil find their way into the world because we sinners are present in the world. In our Gospel reading, the Pharisees take the first view while Jesus takes the second.

Here is the setup. The Pharisees have noticed that Jesus' disciples eat with unwashed hands. Washing hands before a meal was not for the sake of hygiene in the ancient world, but ritual purity. The theory was that as a person went about his day, he touched things that were unclean in the sight of God and thus became unclean himself. Therefore, he ought to wash in order to remove the uncleanness and make himself acceptable to God once more. The Pharisees acted as though sin and evil entered a person's life from the outside in. The world was the problem, not their own heart. Jesus denies this. He says, "Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone." It is not contact with the world that makes a man sinful and evil; rather, sin and evil are found in the world because of that man. This is Jesus' teaching.

The Ninth and Tenth Commandments teach the same thing. Before we sin with our hands, it is found in our hearts. And when we go looking for an explanation for sin, we must start with the source, you and me. These last two commandments leave us looking for a Savior, because no one can save himself from the sin in his heart. But as Paul says concerning sin and death, "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." In Jesus name, Amen.

Evening Prayer

You may pray one or more of the following after dinner or before bed:

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have graciously kept me this day; and I pray you that you would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.

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Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep; if I should die before I wake, I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take; and this I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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Visit, O Lord, our home, and drive from it all the snares of the enemy; let your holy angels dwell in it to preserve us in peace, and may your blessing be upon us evermore; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

A Parent's Blessing

You may place your hand on the head of your child before kissing them goodnight and say:

My loved one, rest securely,
for God this night will surely
from peril guard your head.
Sweet slumbers may he send you
and bid his hosts attend you
and through the night watch o'er your bed. Amen.

Memory Verse

