

Thou Shalt Not Covet

2 Cor. 9:1-5

Lit. "... as a blessing, not as covetousness."

Whose covetousness would it be?

vs. 5 – the brethren came to Corinth to arrange the gift; as supporters, not covetous

NIV – "...as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given."

πλεονεξία (PLEONEXIA)

- a gift which betrays the giver's unwillingness to bestow what is due (W.E. Vine).

It was the Corinthians who would be guilty of coveting... coveting something they already had. Something they possessed that they were slow to give away, and only did so when for shame they could not keep it any longer. That is the property of a covetous heart. It is with this concept, then, that we translate from the temporal to the intangible.

2 Cor. 2:14-16 – What fragrance are you? Are you fragrant? Are you odorous? I fear that in some aspects both individually and collectively we have become muted to the outside world. There is no odor about us at all.

2 Cor. 2:17 – "peddling the word of God? We are to strive to be different from the other religions, denominations and corruptions around us. If we take away the option of visiting with us, how do we stand out from them? (Fall Focus Card) Does a postcard alone convey the delineation?

"... we speak in Christ in the sight of God."

2 Cor. 4:13 – We MUST speak because we believe.

Rom. 10:14 – "How will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?

Not a *preacher*, it is κηρυσσντοζ (root KERUSSO); *Lit.* one heralding.

We cannot do the work of the church without evangelism as a part of it. Do I stand before you in purity and a clean conscience about this matter... I do not, and God help me. I stand together with you in this same fault, if it be yours. But if we (collectively) are not fragrant, if we do not speak; then we must heed the warning of the letter to the Laodiceans that because we are neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm, God will spew us out of His mouth.

Zeal is not the issue (**2 Cor. 9:2**). The zeal for us is there as it was for the Corinthians, and yet the task was still unperformed. Why? From what I can read in the text the promise was made, it was known among the brethren, and they were zealous for it. It just had not been done. It seems it was a simple case of procrastination. Let it not be said that the Franklin church of Christ coveted the word of God in this way. That the duty was known and we were zealous for it, but it was not done.

The real world strays from the example a little with respect to the willingness of the receiving party. Often times we are met with rejection. Ask yourself, "How frequently have I taken the Gospel to someone?" Has it been within the last week? Two weeks? The last month? Over a month? "Who have I taken the Gospel to?" Who, more frequently than others? As Christians we are to be blind to

social standing, nationality, race, etc., but for the sake of discussion I must make a distinction. I would venture to say that most of us are Middle to Upper Class citizens. Perhaps it is a lack of effort. Perhaps we have not been successful because we have not realized the need for a change of focus.

Luke 14: 16-24 – Parable of the Dinner

Acts 13:46 – “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.”

Look around you brethren... If we were a business, what would our equal opportunity scorecard look like? Possessions and a lack of want are powerfully prohibitive against acceptance of the Gospel, and Satan uses them to his advantage. If our peers judge themselves unworthy of eternal life, then we must not discontinue speaking, but take the word outside our immediate sphere of influence. This would mean change within our own congregation – comfort levels tested; language barriers to overcome. You are not human if you are not apprehensive about change. Do you want growth? Real growth? Then we must take the word to those who are willing to receive it. Muster the courage, learn the language, do what it takes, but do not covet the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.