

**THE BOUNDARY OF ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP**

**Intro:** - The first commandment is distinct from the second: The first tells us who to worship. The second tells us how to worship.  
 -Roman Catholics & Lutherans number the commands so that the first two are combined into one, and then divide the tenth.  
 -We must understand the principle behind the second commandment, lest we today present worship that is not acceptable!

**I. THE PRINCIPLE OF THE SECOND COMMANDMENT: GOD IS GLORIOUS!**

- A. The glory of God in his infinity.
  1. God is without limit or measure (Deut. 4:15-18, Isa. 40:21-25).
  2. God is eternal.
  3. God's glory radiates from his infinite virtues revealed to us in his creation, his Word, and in his Son.
- B. The glory of God in his transcendence.
  1. God's immanence means that he is in the world; his transcendence signifies that he is highly exalted above the world.
  2. God is absolutely super eminent in himself and in all his perfections.
  3. There is an impassable gulf between the world and God's infinite glorious being. He is God!
  4. There is no creature in heaven or earth or beneath to whom God can be compared.
- C. The glory of God as Spirit.
  1. As Spirit, God is invisible. Image worship trample under foot this spirituality and invisibility of God.
  2. This truth of God's spirituality is taught in more than one way in Scripture: The Israelites did not see a similitude in Horeb.
  3. Therefore it is impossible to make a visible image of the spiritual God (Deut. 4: 12,15-18,23 Rom.1:20,23).
  4. Positively, Christ commands that God is Spirit and must be worshipped in Spirit and in truth.
- D. The glory of his jealousy:
  1. God is jealous of his glory. He will not give his glory to another, a god of our own making.
  2. God reveals who his is, reveals his image in creation, his Word, and in his Son. From there we must learn how to worship.
  3. Those who refuse to worship as he commands trample his glory under foot, and do not worship acceptably.

**II. WHAT THE SECOND COMMAND FORBIDS:**

- A. Forbidden are graven and other images of God.
  1. Immediately we see condemned are the images in the Roman Catholic Church of angels, saints, and Christ.
  2. These were condemned by the Council of Constantinople in 754 AD but legalized by a synod in 842 AD.
  3. The Council of Trent (1545) confirmed having & worshipping images to glorify God and attract people (books for the laity).
  4. We must notice that the sin of image worship dwells in our own sinful flesh, where we are wont to worship our own lies.
  5. Forbidden are the mental images of God that arise from modern theology, philosophy, false teachings & heresy.
- B. Forbidden by this command is will-worship (Col.2:23).
  1. This involves public worship services but also our personal lives. "What wilt thou have me to do?" I am not my own.
  2. What do Cain, Aaron's golden calf, Jereboam, Nadab and Abihu, the Judiazers have in common?
  3. How will God be worshipped?
  4. Will the kind of worship service we have be based upon what will attract or gain members, what entertains our flesh?
- C. Forbidden is merely formal worship.
  1. It is possible to have orthodox worship and orthodox theology, and yet have the Lord reject it because our heart is not in it.
  2. When the Word is preached, do our hearts remain cold as a stone, refusing to receive a blessing?
  3. When God's praises are being sung, do we refuse to open our mouths and move tongues to sing his praise.
  4. When the congregational prayer arises, are our minds wandering or are we allowing our eyes to close in sleep?
  5. What must distress us re. this false worship of Jehovah is not that we feel uncomfortable, but God's honor is trampled.

**III. THE DEMANDS OF THE SECOND COMMAND:**

- A. God demands true worship.
  1. God revealed his glorious image in his creation, but humanity desired the lie of Satan over the truth of God.
  2. God reveals himself and his attributes and works in Scripture, that we may know, worship, and serve him.
  3. God has revealed himself in his Son, Jesus Christ who is the image of the invisible God (John 1:18, Col. 1:15, John 14:7).
  4. Acceptable and God-glorifying worship is doctrinal preaching which sets forth the truth and applies it!
- B. God demands spiritual worship.
  1. We are able to worship God only through Christ Jesus and his Spirit poured out into our hearts.
  2. By faith, we are able to hear and understand spiritual things and respond accordingly: joy, sorrow, repentance, obedience.
  3. Our worship must be from our hearts, governed and guided by Christ's Spirit.
- C. God demands biblically regulated worship.
  1. As worship was prescribed by God in the Old Testament temple worship, now our worship continues to be regulated.
  2. Our worship and our lives are not our own to do with as we please, but prescribed and regulated by God's Word.
  3. In our worship, only those things that God commands are allowed. Scripture/preaching, singing, prayer, giving of gifts.
- D. The motivation of obeying this command.
  1. ***The honor and glory of our great God!***
  2. Judgment and punishment for the disobedient is to the third and fourth generations.
    - a. This shows the seriousness of sin against God.
    - b. God punishes sin in succeeding generations: God punishes sin with sin. Sin develops in the generations.
  3. A glorious promise is made to the obedient:
    - a. In the way of obedience we enjoy God's rich benefits.
    - b. In the way of obedience we enjoy God's great mercy!
    - c. The blessings of obedience are carried out in our generations