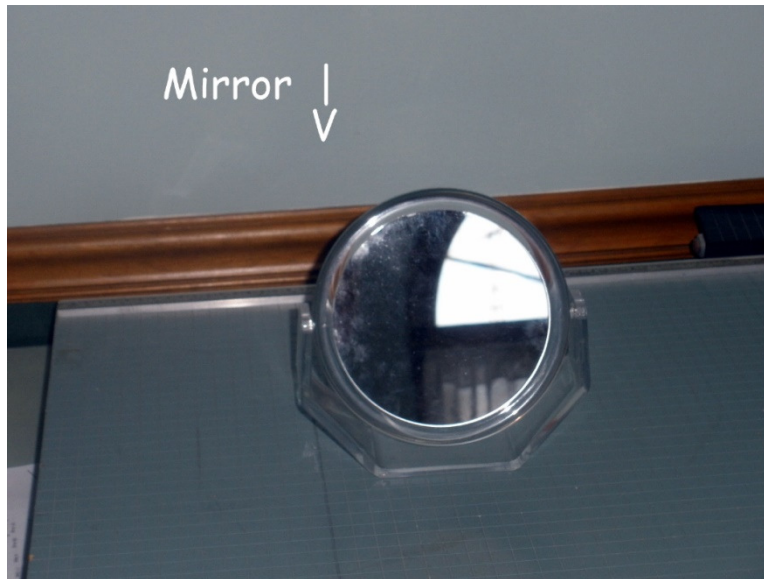


Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Greetings from the parsonage! It felt so good to wear a t-shirt again, even if just inside. Sunsets have started arriving later in the day and spring is on the way. No matter the time, no matter the weather, every day the Lord makes is a good day, and an even better day to get into His Word.



*Do you see your sin in the mirror of God's Law?*

This month our focus is once again on the one true God. But in order to know who the true God is, we must first reveal the false ones. The first and worst of these is Mammon, or wealth. Don't be confused or put at ease if you have little money, though, brothers and sisters, because Mammon can be just as powerful for those who don't have it as well. From those who have riches of unheard of proportions to those who have none but wish they did, Mammon takes center stage. "Those who have money and property feel secure, happy, and fearless, as if they were sitting in the midst of paradise. On the other hand, those who have nothing doubt and despair as if they knew of no god at all. We will find very few who are cheerful, who do not fret and complain, if they do not have mammon (BoC, p.287)." Even those who have and lose it

complain—ever heard the expression “You don’t know what you’ve got until it’s gone”? What’s the focus of that statement if not the Mammon which has been taken away.

Along with Mammon comes “those who boast of great learning, wisdom, power, prestige, family, and honor and who trust in them (BoC, p.287).” Do you think yourself wise—and if you are wise, is that the focus of your life? What about power? Do you have influence over others? If you do, do you still remember who it was Who gave you that power? Or do you live as though you have no one over you? Are you popular? Are you always walking around with an entourage? How much do you love your parents, children, brothers, sisters, wife, husband, friends? Is it more than God? Because even that is against the first commandment. When questioned as to the most important commandment, how did Jesus reply if not to say that loving God with all your heart, and your mind, and your soul, and power came first—even before family. *Then* He says that the second is like it (to love others). But if we put even family before God, we sin.

These are tough pills to swallow. I am constantly at war with myself over these very things; after all, to break any commandment is to break the first because I am putting something or someone in place of God, even if that someone is me. Praise and glory and blessing be to our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us the victory over sin, death, and the devil, and who has sent us His Holy Spirit to keep us in the one true faith to life everlasting. Go after the Lord Jesus Christ, because when you have Him, all the rest will follow. Until next time, dear friends in Christ!

Your brother and under-Shepherd in Christ,

Pastor Josh