

Walking with Jesus Through Sinai:
 Seeking Moral Clarity in an Age of Chaos with the 10 Commandments
 CPC Adult Sunday Studies Fall 2024
 9 - Second Commandment, part 3

Applying the 2nd Commandment in Worship and Vainglory

A Note on our Sanctuary painting, "Anabaino"

- **"Anabaino"** - "Anabaino" is the Greek term for "I am ascending", which Jesus says to Mary in John 20:17 - *"Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"* And why does Jesus ascend? That he may send the Spirit so that God's saving presence in Christ would go global through church planting and we would accomplish the "greater works" of John 14:12!
- **It's not an "image" of anything!** - We obviously believe it does not violate the 2nd commandment! It is also *not* meant to specifically represent anything in particular; rather it is meant to evoke a sense of awe and worship in the Spirit. As Mako says, "the image is designed to be read in many ways, first as a holy fire, but also its organic shape will elude to the flowering of God's Kingdom via earthly materials and people. My prayer is that the work attests to the presence of Christ in our lives whose holy fire powerfully invades our broken lives, both now and in the future, turning our mortal earth in God's everlasting New Earth."
- **Makoto Fujimura** - An internationally recognized artist, he created this painting as part of a post-9/11 "Golden Fire" series, evoking rising from the ashes (he lived in NYC and was there on 9/11). It is made of pure layered gold and semi-precious minerals made in the Japanese "Nihonga" style, which rebirths pulverized materials.

On Worshipping IN Jesus (from last week's handout)

The only way to uphold the 2nd commandment is to worship Jesus - in, with, and through his worship of the Father.

*"We have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a **minister** in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up,*

*not man. . . . For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God **on our behalf**. . . . Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” (Hebrews 8.1-2, 9.24, 10.19, cf. 12.22-24)*

- James Torrance comments, “The worship and mission of the church are the gift of **participating** through the Holy Spirit in the incarnate Son's **communion with the Father** and the Son's mission from the Father to the world . . . There is only one true Priest through whom and with whom we draw near to God our Father. . . That is why the Reformers, in their critique of certain medieval concepts of priesthood, stressed the sole priesthood of Christ, and reinterpreted the church as a **royal priesthood participating in the priesthood of Christ**. . . . He receives the Spirit from the Father for us, vicariously, in his humanity, that out of his fullness he might baptize the church by the Spirit at Pentecost into a life of shared communion, mission, and service.” (Torrance, *Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace*)
 - Notice the so-called “**priesthood of all believers**” does NOT emphasize the individual believer as much as the fact that there is only one priest, in whom all believers participate, since there’s only one mediator, Jesus Christ.
- Christian, Trinitarian worship is not simply our duty, our offering, our prayers, with a sermon that motivates us, rather it is a **double movement** of God to humans and humans to God; or, in other words, from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit **and** to the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit.

On the Sin of Vainglory as an Example of Breaking the 2nd Commandment (Quotes from *Glittering Vices*, by Rebecca K. Deyoung)

Consider the difference between a celebrity and a hero - “When we compare what celebrities are renowned for and what our heroes are admired for, we typically find a chasm between the two—people whose glory far outstrips the

value of the goods for which they receive it and people whose **worth** far outstrips any glory they will ever receive.” (42)

Vainglory is “the excessive and disordered desire for recognition and approval from others.” (42) As all sin, it comes from a God-given desire, in this case to please and be approved, but “we veer off course . . . because of the excessive and empty ways we seek to satisfy this desire.” (50)

- Vainglory has a “love of the show . . . to seek whatever will bring in the most attention and applause.” (45)
 - Also, it’s often connected with hypocrisy, boastfulness, and **love of novelties**.
 - Especially dangerous for Christians because as we pursue holiness, the very growth becomes an occasion for us to boast!
- ***Different from pride*** - “pride excessively concerns excellence itself (i.e. my excelling others); vainglory, by contrast, concerns primarily the display or manifestation of my excellence . . . image is everything” (45-6).
 - “The **proud** person wants to be the director of the best show ever produced, and the **honor-seeker** desires rave reviews crediting her work as director from a certain circle of critics, but the **glory-lover** will happily sink to new depths of shocking spectacle as long as ratings will be high” (47).
- ***Glory*** - in one sense, glory is reserved for God alone; but in another sense, if glory is “simply goodness made manifest”, then we can rightly give glory to other humans, in the same way that we give them respect and honor. God has created us with “glory” (Psalm 8). “The glory itself isn’t the main problem; it’s the vanity of how we seek it and what we seek to find it in.”(50)
- ***Three ways we’re vainglorious, by desiring glory:***
 1. ***For the wrong objects*** - for “vain” things, like things that will fade or are empty.
 2. ***In the wrong ways*** - we’ll seek glory anyway that we can, as long as we can get it.
 3. ***When otherwise due God*** - we fail to see that we’re merely stewards of good things that God has ultimately provided. This is the most dangerous and nefarious version because it can be for otherwise good things. Augustine famously divides the two “cities” as the city of man,

which glories in itself, seeking human glory, and the city of God, which glories in God, seeking His glory.

On Fighting Vainglory

- **Living Doxology** - Giving glory to God in all circumstances. *“Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name give glory,” (Ps. 115.1)*
 - *“‘Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.’ For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.” (2Cor. 10.17-18)*
- **Pursuing Magnanimity**
 - Creating a culture of good glory - “we can bless the world and build up the body of Christ by appreciating good things as gifts from God and rejoicing in others’ goodness.” (64)
 - “Magnanimous people stretch themselves to inspiring acts of virtue as something to which God has called them. Their achievements genuinely deserve honor and turn our thoughts to the glory of God because they obviously aren’t something anyone could have done without grace.” (49)
- **In Community** - Vainglory isolates us, but honest community will naturally root it out. Trying to impress others actually isolates us from them!
 - “Relationships cannot flourish when we dupe others or use them as sources of flattery, as a dull background against which we can shine, or as useful props in our reputation-building program. . . . Like other sins, this vice isolates us, rather than bringing us into loving fellowship with God and other people. Vainglory’s contrasting virtues include **integrity**, **humility**, and **gratitude**. Pursuing these virtues keeps us real. Relinquishing our reputation-seeking yields a significant reward: we have a chance to be truly known and loved” (59).
- **In Silence and Solitude**
 - “In silence we can recognize our anxious affirmation-seeking for what it is: a drive to groom an appreciative audience and put ourselves in the best light. Regular practice of the discipline of silence quietly weans us off our over-dependence on human approval ratings. It also provides a break from voices clamoring with disapproval, including our own. When was the last time you spent time in a quiet place, with no role to play and no reputation to uphold, simply resting in God’s loving presence and listening attentively to him?” (61)