

Horban

Sunday, July 14th, 2013, 6:00 p.m. - Teaching #1665

HONESTY IN DEALING WITH THE PROPERTY OF OTHERS (continued)

Exodus 20:15 - "You shall not steal."

Ephesians 4:22-28 - "...to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, [23] and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, [24] and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. [25] Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. [26] Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, [27] and give no opportunity to the devil. [28] Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need."

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 - "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, [10] nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, *nor swindlers* will inherit the kingdom of God. [11] And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

Last week we unpacked two points regarding the application of the commandment about stealing to the New Testament church. The first point was Jesus earmarks the Devil first of all as a thief. There is nothing original about him. He *takes* and he *distorts*. We got this idea from John 10:10 - "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." And the fascinating thing about Jesus' remarks is the way He says the Devil both *kills* and *destroys* but isn't *called* a *killer* or *destroyer*. What the Devil *is* is a *thief*.

Then we considered the way Paul applies his instruction about the new life of the Holy Spirit to people who used to be *thieves*. And we drilled down into a number of principles of *spiritual replacement* in Ephesians 4:22-28. We examined the way in which the Holy Spirit and the power of divine grace are activated in the human will and experience.

Today we're going to continue our examination of this commandment with points three and four:

3) SOME AREAS OF LIFE TOUCHED BY THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT ABOUT STEALING

Let me quickly give some Scriptural cases:

a) *I'm a thief if I profit at another's expense by dishonest means.*

Amos 8:4-5 - "Hear this, you who trample on the needy and bring the poor of the land to an end, [5] saying, 'When will the new moon be over, that we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, that we may offer wheat for sale, that we may make the ephah small and the shekel great and deal deceitfully with false balances....'"

There's nothing wrong with making profit. The Bible nowhere condemns good business and hard work. But this situation was different. The rich knew that even the poor had to eat. They had the poor and needy over a barrel. They upped the prices and gave less food for the buck. The text even says they used crooked scales, tipped in their favor, when they sold their goods. And the poor could do nothing about it. They had to eat!

And God says that's wrong. The Christian's pound of beef has to have a pound in it. If you're selling three coats of paint, you

don't just put on two - even if you can get away with it.

"Well, it's **'buyer beware'**, pastor Don. If you're the consumer, you have to keep your head screwed on straight. That's the way the world works."

And that's the whole point. That statement reveals more than you know about the state of your heart. I know that's the way the **world** works. My question is, **"As a follower of Christ, what in the world is your brain doing there?"** My Bible tells me we're not of this world. We're not even to let it put us into its mold. - **Romans 12:1-2** - **"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. [2] Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."**

b) ***I'm a thief if I borrow with no deep intention to repay.***

Psalm 37:21 - **"The wicked borrows but does not pay back..."**

There are Christian people listening to me right now who are trying to get ahead in their walk with the Lord, but who owe someone money, and are just avoiding paying it back.

It will never work. ***You can't follow Jesus and run from personal debts.*** That's stealing and you need to make it right. If you can't pay someone back what you owe, then go to them right away. Explain your situation. Express your regret. And make some other arrangement. But don't make the lender come after you. You go to them. Make this right before God.

c) ***I'm a thief if I don't give a full day's work for a day's pay.***

In any job where I'm being paid a wage, I'm being paid money in exchange for a certain amount of my time each day. To take the money but not give the time and work is dishonest.

Even if I'm **at** work, I'm stealing if I use that time to day dream, or visit with my friends (texting, emailing, phone calls, etc.), or give less than my best efforts.

d) ***I'm a thief if I rob God.***

There are people here who are perfectly honest with the banker and the grocer, but who rob God to His face. People rob God of His **time** by not dealing properly with the Lord's Day. They use it for their own pleasure. People rob God of His **tithe** - His tenth of their income.

e) ***I am a thief if I don't give God the service due Him.***

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 - "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, [20] for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."

It takes the work of the Holy Spirit for us to own the idea that the bodies we live in aren't ours. It is a very hard concept for us to own that the Holy Spirit lives in these bodies just as much as we do - that, while we can so easily ignore His presence and rights - it is actually the Holy Spirit who claims authority over the redeemed.

This applies to absolutely everything about us. We don't get to define our own **sexual orientation** if we are not our own in the first place. We become traitors to Christ when we position ourselves as **owners** of our own rights to property and possessions rather than seeing ourselves as **stewards** of Another's goods. We dishonor Christ when we take revenge for wrongs suffered rather than committing ourselves to the judge of all mankind:

Romans 12:16-19 - "Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be conceited. [17] Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. [18] If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. [19] Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

1 Peter 2:19-23 - "For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. [20] For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. [21] For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. [22] He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. [23] When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly."

All of these are merely examples of the radical implications of **not being our own**. My time isn't my own to use as I please. This radical text says something else happened when Jesus died for me on the cross. It goes far beyond merely being **forgiven**. The text says I've been **bought** with Christ's shed blood. Either that registers or it doesn't.

Do you see Jesus' death on the cross merely **forgiving** you. Or do you see His death **purchasing** you. Thankfully, we don't live in a world where anyone purchases anyone anymore. But it was very common back in Paul's day. Everyone knew what Paul meant when he said, **we've been purchased by God. We are not our own anymore.**

I wonder how many people heard me say a few minutes ago that if I worked for someone for a day's pay, I was a thief if I didn't give a full day's work. And you felt like shouting "amen!" because you have people who work for you.

Friend, this is exactly the same principle. Only now, you're the servant. If you had a servant who came to your house everyday, but did no actual work. He just came, sat at your table, ate your food, drove your car, watched your TV, played with your dog, but never did any actual work for you - how long would you keep him? And wouldn't you feel cheated?

That's what Paul is talking about in these verses. We are not our own. And the Bible says, it is required of servants that they be found faithful.

4) HOW A GODLY PERSON HEARS WHEN THE LORD SPEAKS

2 Samuel 12:1-7 - "And the Lord sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said to him, "There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. [2] The rich man had very many flocks and herds, [3] but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children. It used to eat of his morsel and drink from his cup and lie in his arms, and it was like a daughter to him. [4] Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the guest who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him." [5] Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die, [6] and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. [7] Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul.'"

This parable spells out exactly what David did. But, because it paints the sin in someone else's life, David suddenly sees how ugly the same sin looks on another. We're all like that. *If you could see yourself the way everybody else sees you, you'd never believe it.*

But eventually, David gets the point. He doesn't have to take this from Nathan. He's the king. He doesn't have to listen to anybody. And notice, Nathan, flat out, *calls David a thief*. And David doesn't even argue. How beautiful! God give me a heart like that. God keep your church full of hearts like that. Help us always to hear your word, *with repentance, but not useless condemnation*.

In all points, keep us clean from the heart of a thief.

Amen.