

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

THROUGH THE EYES OF JESUS

SERMON NOTES

Week 8 October 8, 2023

"Do Not Steal"

Exodus 20:15, 23:4-5, 25:42-43; Matthew 6:19-21, 7:12, 19:16-22; Deuteronomy 24:7; James 5:1-5; Proverbs 22:9; Luke 12:15

I. The Eighth Commandment

- A. The eighth commandment: "Do not _____."
- B. God has given each of us distinct and _____ ownership of created things for which we are individually accountable.
- C. In Israelite society, "_____, keepers" amounted to taking what wasn't yours.

II. The Eighth Commandment in the 21st Century

- A. When we look at the eighth commandment in its proper context we realize that we are all _____.
- B. Many scholars believe that the prohibition against stealing was largely about stealing _____.
- C. The eighth commandment applies to _____ workers by withholding wages or paying employees a substandard wage.

III. Jesus and the Eighth Commandment

- A. Jesus' Golden Rule in Matthew 7:12 is an _____ to our struggle with stealing.
- B. _____ is the second antidote to our struggle with stealing.
- C. Like the thief on the cross, Jesus offers us _____ when we have violated the eighth commandment.

Things I Would Like to Remember About This Message



ASBURY DAILY STUDY GUIDE October 9-14, 2023

INTRODUCTION

The eighth commandment, like several of the other commandments, might seem so irrelevant to us. Most of us would agree that stealing is wrong and we would never do it. But most of our images of stealing are related to shoplifting or somehow taking someone's material possessions. But when properly understood, we have all violated the eighth commandment; and God is calling us to stop stealing.

Monday: Exodus 20:15, Jeremiah 7:4-11 (Stealing is wrong – period)

The prophet Jeremiah spoke with an invading Babylonian army close to Jerusalem. He said, “if you steal” (no qualifiers) you shouldn't think even faithful Temple (church) worship will keep you safe. Are you ever still tempted to think that some past blessing from God guarantees continual safety, whether you've upheld your covenant with God or not?

Tuesday: Proverbs 22:22-23, 30:7-9 (Rich or poor, don't steal)

Proverbs 30, attributed to an otherwise unknown person named Agur, challenged a belief that may have been as common in Biblical times as it remains today. It's the idea that stealing is okay if a poor person steals from a person or company richer than they are. Agur didn't see it that way. He said that even if he stole because he was poor, that would dishonor God's name. Do you agree or disagree? Think through your reasons.

Wednesday: Isaiah 10:1-2 (Sometimes “legal” is still stealing)

The prophet Isaiah used the words “rob” and “steal” to describe pronouncing wicked decrees and writing harmful laws. Some Israelites justified unjust acts toward needy people, widows and orphans by saying, “It's not wrong - it's legal.” Powerful people still sometimes draw up laws, not to foster equal justice, but to try to legitimize injustice. What legal practices that burden today's needy do you think Isaiah might challenge as “harmful laws”?

Thursday: Matthew 19:16-22, Luke 19:1-10 (not stealing means being generous)

These stories show that in Jesus' mind, “do not steal” included “do not hoard resources beyond what you need instead of using them to help others.” (They didn't give us a detailed formula for defining “need.”) That makes sense, because “stealing” is the opposite of “love your neighbor as you love yourself” (see also Matthew 25:31-40). Who have you seen live out the kind of broadly generous spirit Jesus said his kingdom calls for? Do you live that way?

Friday: Ephesians 4:20-28 (Thieves: work so as to have “something to share”)

Scholar N. T. Wright paraphrased Paul's thought in verse 28, writing that thieves “should say to themselves that they have a duty to help those in need, and they should work to make it possible.”* Whatever work you do, have you ever thought of it as a way to help make it possible for you to help those in need?

MOVING FORWARD

Violating the eighth commandment may look like not telling the server in a restaurant they forgot to charge you for drinks. It may be using someone else's Netflix account to watch your favorite shows. It may be exaggerating your deductions on a tax return. It may be selling a car or other property and not being honest with the buyer about the condition of the item. It also includes stealing someone's time when you are late for an appointment. This among many other examples is a violation of the eighth commandment. So let's rethink what stealing is and change our behavior.

Answers to the sermon notes: IA) steal, B) personal, C) finders. IIA) thieves, B) people, IIC) exploiting. IIIA) antidote, B) generosity, C) forgiveness.

*N. T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004, p. 56.