

Sermon on Stealing

I. Introduction

- a. Introduction to the series – The Law of God and its impact on our lives today
 - i. Recap on previous commands – Don't take someone's life, their wife, or their stuff
- b. Identify new command - Exodus 20:15 – “You shall not steal.”
- c. Layout for the rest of the morning

II. Do Not Steal

- a. **Stealing: To take something without permission or legal right and without intending to return it.**
 - i. Examples: Taking something from a store or person (Car, gum, etc.)
 - ii. We often separate our stealing from ‘real stealing’... meaning the kind you can get arrested for
- b. What is ALSO considered stealing? (Clarifying what we mean by stealing)
 - i. Kevin DeYoung citing the Heidelberg Catechism – *“He (God) forbids not only outright theft and robbery, punishably by law. But in God's sight theft also includes cheating and swindling our neighbor by schemes made to appear legitimate, such as: inaccurate measurements of weight, size, or volume; fraudulent merchandising; counterfeit money; excessive interest; or any other means forbidden by God. In addition, he forbids all greed and pointless squandering of his gifts.”*
 - ii. Examples: Cheating your boss or an employee, abusing time, taking advantage of someone else's time or efforts (after hours)
 - iii. **“The scariest instances of stealing are the ones we think are victimless” - Jen Wilkin**
 - 1. Most common form of stealing comes in the workplace, because we can justify it in that the corporation does not have feelings. (Scrolling on social media, taking sick time when you're not sick, and stealing office supplies)
 - 2. We steal from hotels because it too feels victimless, and because we can swipe a towel and be miles away by the time they realize its gone.
 - 3. However, when we stay in someone's home we are careful to fold the towel and care for the bed for two primary reasons: **Relationship + Likelihood of getting caught**
- c. Whatever form stealing takes, God forbids this in Exodus 20:15. Here is why...

III. The Law for Israel

- a. God wants to guard the covenant community being established (He is setting his people apart to look like Himself)
 - i. God recognizes what can happen in a society that steals from one another, and he desires for his people to be different for their sake
- b. **Passages highlighting the offense of stealing and punishment**

Sermon on Stealing

- i. Exodus 22:1 – “Whoever steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it must pay back five head of cattle for the ox and four sheep for the sheep.”
- ii. Exodus 22:7 - “If anyone gives a neighbor silver or goods for safekeeping and they are stolen from the neighbor’s house, the thief, if caught, must pay back double.”
- iii. Deut. 24:14-15 – “Do not take advantage of a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether that worker is a fellow Israelite or a foreigner residing in one of your towns. ¹⁵ Pay them their wages each day before sunset, because they are poor and are counting on it. Otherwise they may cry to the Lord against you, and you will be guilty of sin.”
- c. Do not steal... or else
- d. The appeal of stealing is that we can gain something for nothing
 - i. Yahweh seeks to help the Israelites understand that it is always at someone else’s expense. (It is not for *nothing*)
 - ii. Yahweh seeks to move Israel from the mindset of gaining for nothing, to stealing doesn’t **actually** pay out in the end (Exodus 20-23)
 - iii. Don’t take someone’s life, their wife, or their stuff
 - iv. God takes stealing very seriously with the Israelites; Does this still apply to us today?

IV. The Law for us; Stealing Redefined

- a. When Jesus arrives, he takes the laws that they once knew and redefines them.
 - i. What he actually does is helps them to realize that their actions are not where the battle starts, it’s in the heart.
 - ii. For Adultery he identifies the heart issue of lusting; for stealing he addresses the problem of where our treasure happens to be
- b. Matthew 6:19-21 - “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”
 - i. Jesus takes stealing a step further and identifies that there is a heart issue behind why we steal. It is because we are treasuring the things of this world.
 - 1. It diminishes our neighbor, and it makes idols of what we can possess without earning it
 - ii. We believe what we have and what God provides is not enough.
 - 1. Comparison breeds discontentment

Sermon on Stealing

- iii. Our treasure should be in Jesus; Matthew 13:44 – “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

- a. parable of the kingdom of heaven is the greatest treasure, that we should be willing to sell everything for it

- c. Jesus takes the law further to the point of calling his disciples to not only refrain from the offense, but to do the opposite.

- i. Luke 6:30 – “Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back.” **BE GENEROUS**
 - ii. Proverbs 11:24-25 – “One gives freely yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.”
 - iii. We are called to live generously considering our heavenly treasure
 - 1. When Jesus is our treasure, it causes us to view our worldly possessions and the people around us through a new lens

V. Conclusion

- a. Church, where is your treasure?
- b. Stealing is gaining at someone else’s expense. That is not the love we see in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We see a generosity that was willing to see someone else’s gain at his own expense.
- c. Are we willing to love like that?
- d. Let’s Pray

VI. Benediction

- a. Do not steal
- b. Is Jesus our treasure? Are we seeking to live generously in light of this?
- c. In the garden Adam and Eve were tempted because the serpent made them believe God was holding out on them. When this same feeling rises in our flesh, remind ourselves of Luke 12:32-33
 - i. “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.”