



Sunday, March 2, 2014

## **The Eighth Commandment: Thou Shalt Not Steal**

**Speaker:** Joe Boot

**Scripture:** Exodus 20:15; Luke 19:1-10

### **Sermon Notes:**

1. Satan's purpose is to steal, kill, and destroy; but Christ has come that we might have life abundantly.
2. God's law is a gift of grace. It is a gracious covenant from the greater (God) to the lesser (us).
3. When we reject God's law we rob ourselves, we reject life.
4. Theft is still recognized as being wrong because nobody wants to be robbed.
5. However, Western culture is fraught with petty theft, fraud, office theft, insider trading, extortion, burglary, etc.
6. Theft is an expression of fallen man's will to have dominion.
7. Thieves express a self-centred will to prosper lawlessly.
8. Dominion in life and over the earth comes only to the meek, who will inherit the earth (Matthew 5:5).
9. Obedience to the dominion task must be in terms of the law of God.
10. The dominion mandate starts with dominion over self (self-control) which leads to dominion over all the earth.
11. God's law is the God-appointed path to dominion and inheritance.
12. When God's people are not called to obedience in seeking the purposes of the kingdom of God, the ministry of the church becomes distracted in trifling details.
13. God is sovereign Lord so He determines title to the earth.
14. Property is an important aspect of God's dominion task.
15. When individuals are denied the right to property, property is transferred lawlessly to the state.
16. God, however, has given the right to property to the family.
17. Communist nations are slowly eroding because they have denied property rights.
18. We need to understand theft in terms of God as absolute owner, and His temporal plan for ownership of the earth.
19. Theft includes vandalism, stimulus packages, inflation, etc.
20. Discontent and coveting lead to theft. To avoid theft in our lives, we need to cultivate contentment.
21. Envy and covetousness are preached widely today.
22. The first and most important form of theft is theft from God.
23. All theft is a violation of God's order and thus it is first an offense against God.
24. When we think about theft, we must consider that property is a form of power. To use property lawlessly is to deny God's power and goodness.
25. It is an insult to God's name to withhold tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:6-15).
26. God is a very gracious landlord. He requires that we pay His tax for the extension of His kingdom.
27. A consequence of theft from God is that we rob ourselves.
28. If we do not tithe, the state takes the place of God, and we pay much higher taxes to the state.
29. Taxes become a threat to our life and freedom. In seizing property the state prevents the family and the church from being independent of the state.
30. To steal from God is to deny His goodness. It is to say we know the way to blessing and prosperity better than God.
31. In God's world, we never benefit from disobedience.
32. Stealing is a form of blasphemy (Proverbs 30:8).
33. Stealing from our neighbour may involve robbing an individual directly, or a group robbing individuals, or systemic theft which destroys the property value of many individuals.

34. Denying the right to own property by inheritance taxes is a form of institutionalized robbery.
35. The command against theft presupposes private property.
36. God is not hostile to property or wealth, nor was Jesus against wealth or prosperity. In fact, wealthy persons supported Jesus' ministry and anointed Him with expensive perfume.
37. The eighth commandment forbids shoplifting, burglary, embezzlement, willful fraud, lying about value, etc.
38. Commonly accepted forms of theft include theft from employers: fake sick days, time wasting, walk-outs, poor productivity and performance, etc.
39. Theft against employees includes: delaying payment of wages, underpaying, expecting work on the Sabbath, etc..
40. Idleness is a form of theft. One should be in a position to provide for one's own and to share with those in need (2Thessalonians 3:6-12).
41. It is theft to steal someone's good reputation; or to borrow and not return; or to fail to meet commitments; or to fail to make restitution; or to do creative accounting; etc.
42. We may combat theft by cultivating contentment, combating selfish tendencies, engaging in honest labour, and giving generously.
43. We must remind ourselves that God in Christ has given us everything, so we do not want to shame Him by stealing.
44. There is the Godward aspect and the social aspect of making restitution for theft. God requires death for sin; and God requires restitution for theft. As Christians, in Christ we have died and in Christ we live (Galatians 2:20).
45. As a manifestation of our forgiveness, we confess our sins and make restitution to those we have sinned against.
46. Required restitution was double for simple goods, and four-fold for goods that bring economic returns over time.
47. As new creatures in Christ, we are working for the restitution of all things in Christ.
48. We must not sponsor evil by insisting on forgiveness of all criminals regardless of the seriousness of their crimes.

49. We are all guilty of theft in some form ("such were some of us"). But we were washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).
50. Let us go out and live as those participating in the restitution of all things in Christ. That is how we will honour His name.

### **Application Questions**

1. How does God's sovereign ownership of all things provide the basis to understand property ownership?
2. What is God's plan for property ownership, and how does this fit into His kingdom purposes and the dominion mandate?
3. How is private property ownership basic to individual freedoms and protection of life?
4. What are some ways that we can steal from God?
5. List a variety of actions that are forbidden by the sixth commandment.
6. How can we cultivate a life free from desire to steal?
7. Identify the penalty for theft, both Godward and socially.
8. Think of ways that you have stolen from others. How would God require you to make restitution?