

Stealing

By Nick Bibile

The eighth commandment

'Thou shalt not steal.' Exod 20: 15.

Again we see the eight commandment has to do with our neighbor. When we casually look at this commandment we believe this commandment does not apply to me, as I am not a thief. This commandment applies to the thieves, who break homes, banks, involve in armed robbery etc., We see this commandment horizontally from the perspective of man, from man's standard and we believe, thank God I am not like other men, as I am not a thief I am good. Well, by the grace of God we will expose this commandment as we will see the full counsel of this commandment and we are all guilty in breaking this commandment and may our hearts be broken in repentance as we come even closer to our Lord Jesus Christ in confession of sin and embracing his righteousness.

"Thou shall not steal" comes from the lips of the almighty God. It is a commandment. The day you break God's commandment the punishment is death. God is infinitely holy, his words are holy and he is the Judge. God commands that we are to obey all his commandments. Stealing is a sin and it is a horrible sin and deserves death. A thief will not inherit the kingdom of God, the punishment is an everlasting punishment in hell.

1Co 6:10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

A thief is a person who steals another persons property or possessions, he does this knowingly and without the knowledge of the owner.

Since the fall man has made material things his god, the treasures of earth are his desire, Jesus said,

Mt 6:21 "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." And because of sin man tries to get these wealth the easy way, steal someone else wealth, and because of greediness, they lie to get more money, robs, steals and practices usury, he sins against God almighty. We see this in Achan. For a few hundred pieces of silver, a garment and some gold, he brought judgment upon the army of Israel and a curse upon himself. He was stoned to death. And think of Gehazi, who, for a handful of silver brought shame upon the Lord, the God of Israel and upon His servant, God punished him with leprosy. And think also of Judas who for thirty pieces of silver betrayed his Master, and sold his life and his

salvation. This is an important subject for our souls, and for our salvation.

The causes of thefts are internal and external.

Internal sin is that the person who is stealing does not really believe in God. Believing is not trusting in God. Not trusting in God's providence. The Israelites saw how God delivered them from the Egyptians and saw all the miracles of God as they were eyewitnesses, yet there was unbelief in them.

Ps 78:17 And they sinned yet more against him by provoking the most High in the wilderness.

18 And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust.

19 Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?

Unbelief of God's word will cause the thief to do his will. Then unbelief will cause the person to act of stealing, and that is to get someone's possessions. This is covetousness. This is the root of this sin.

The external cause of this sin is Satan's influence. He is the mastermind behind the whole operation.

Joh 10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy:

Satan stole mankind by persuading Adam and Eve with a lie. Satan entered into Judas to betray Jesus. He can come like a roaring lion or like an angel of light to influence us, into stealing and to destroy souls.

The sins that fall into the category of stealing.

1. Stealing from God.

How can a person steal anything from God?

Mal 3:8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

Tithes and offerings were required in the Old Testament for the sanctuary services. In the days of Hezekiah one of the first results of the reformation of religion was the eagerness with which the people brought in their tithes (2 Chr. 31:5, 6). The neglect of this duty was sternly rebuked by the prophets (Amos 4:4; Mal. 3:8-10). The priest did not work as their service was dedicated to God. They were taken care of by tithes and offerings. In the New Testament the tithing is not mentioned, but the principle still remains.

1Co 9:13 Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?

14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

Statistics show that Americans are more interested in spiritual matters but not committed. According to statistics of church tithing/offering in the United States reveals that 70 to 80% of church attendees do not have a commitment in giving and financially supporting their local church. 70 to 80% say they are Christians and yet they do not support the local church. This is stealing, robbing God.

The service of God be greater now than in Old Testament times, then Christians ought to go beyond the ancient Hebrew in consecrating both themselves and their substance to God. Our motive should be more liberal in giving to God. We do not own anything, God gave you life, a job, a place to live and all that belongs to God, yes, your money does not belong to you, it belongs to God, as God is the one who gave life and the job for you. You need to give first to your church from your income. And if you are getting convicted of sin, and getting spiritual food from your church and growing in the Lord, you need to give an offering for the service of God. If you don't, then you are robbing God. The ministers of God labor to give you pure spiritual food, and all encouragement should be given to those who labor. The ministers should taste the fruit of their labors. As they sacrifice much time with prayer and diligent study to give you solid spiritual food for your growth. When I was in the Philippines ministering in Toledo area, this is a rural area, I saw people come and give foods to the village pastor, what ever they can afford. When I was ministering in Lutopan, there was a time that we were struggling financially and every week Pastor Lando made sure that I had some money for my expenses and put some money in my pocket, here I was an American living in poor conditions and the poor people in Lutopan, Toledo area gave out of their extreme poverty with overflowing joy.

2. Robbing God of his honor.

Pharaoh did not honor God, he did not listen or obey God, he did not want to give honor that was due to God, instead in his pride he was looking for the honor. The Roman Catholic church gives honor to Mary and the saints, they are stealing the honor that belongs to God and gives to an idol.

Isa 42:8 I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

There are ministers who like to receive honor and praise. They want to be the center of praise, and they will make all kinds of humor and make people laugh, this is not spiritual but from the flesh, as people will like you in your jokes, you need to remember the worldly sales people do the same thing. These ministers love to receive praises from people.

How many times we like to get praise when it belongs to God. Ministers are very vulnerable to this sin. Many times when a sermon is finished someone at the church will tell the minister, "wow, that was a great sermon" Instead of saying thank you, we should immediately give God the glory, as the minister is only the instrument, the clay, it is God who gives the grace to preach a good sermon. One day a woman told John Bunyan, "That was a great sermon you preached." John Bunyan told the woman, "You are too late, the devil told me that before you did." The devil will tell you, you are so good, we need to direct all glory and honor to God alone. If not we are robbing the honor that belongs to God.

3. Robbing God of his due.

'Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day.' Not a part of the day only, but the whole day must be dedicated to God. Therefore, after morning worship, to spend the other part of the Sabbath in vanity and pleasure, is spiritual theft. It robs God of his due. There are many who will go to church on Sunday and as soon as the service is done, they go into their worldly business or spend the rest of the day for the devil in worldliness and pleasure. Those Sabbath breakers who rob God of His day.

4. Stealing Souls.

False teachers and heretics who will come and steal souls from their deceptive false teachings. There are many cults who will come in the name of Jesus, but they will deny the true gospel of Jesus Christ, they have another gospel which they will present, even using scriptures for their benefit, and that gospel is very pleasing to the flesh. They will steal many who are weak and ignorant in the word of God.

Mt 7:15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Ac 20:29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

2Ti 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

5. Ministers stealing money from people.

There are many church thieves today, they make money out of the Bible and from the people. They are smooth talkers, they will use the word of God and may look innocent as they are good actors and they are very good in persuasive talk. They will strip your wallet, and make you convict and guilty if you do not give money to their ministry or church. They seldom preach the truth to the people. They will starve the souls to death while they will fill their stomach and live in luxury.

Eze 34:2 Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?

3 Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock.

Eze 34:8 As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock;

You can see how these ministers live in luxury, yes they use the word of God so they would become rich. They are greedy for money. Their ambition is to gain money for themselves from the church. They are thieves in the sight of God.

Pr 21:6 The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.

1Pe 5:2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

6. Stealing money from the government.

Mr 12:17 And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.

Not paying taxes to the government is cheating. Also there are many who will cheat on taxes, they will not tell the truth. There are many who will use a different name, a different social security number, they will do all kinds of crafty things to get more money that is not really due to them. These people are thieves in the site of God as they are not honest but in reality stealing money from the government.

Le 19:11 Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another.

7. Stealing anything from your neighbor.

If one steals personal things from another person, it could be money, clothes or anything then the person who stole is a thief.

1Pe 4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

Pr 1:13 We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil:
14 Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse:
15 My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path:

8. Taking advantage from your neighbor.

If have a selfish attitude for your gain all the time, cheating your neighbor then you are a thief.

1Th 4:6 That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

Le 19:13 Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour,

Pr 21:10 The soul of the wicked desireth evil: his neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes.

9 .Dishonest Merchants.

They will lie, cheat their customers to gain the extra buck. They will use false weights and measures, and steal from others what is due.

Am 8:5 Saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit?

False weights and balances are an abomination to the Lord. There are many merchants who will deceive the customer by showing it looks right, but there are many hidden costs they will not tell you. This is defrauding the neighbor.

Le 19:13 Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.

9. High Interest.

There are many who will over charge and over price the customers, this is stealing. They cheat the poor and the innocent for their own gain. Remember Zacchaeus, when he was converted, he admitted of his sin, saying that he cheated the poor in their taxes, and took a bag of money where he has hidden and wanted to give to the poor.

Lu 19:8 And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

Ex 22:25 If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury.

Many are reduced to beggary because of high interest.

10. Bribery.

If you are getting rich from the poor, taking money as a bribe then you are stealing.

Ps 15:5 He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

11. Purchasing on credit but cannot pay.

If you are always purchasing things from your credit card and you know that you cannot pay, as I remember when I was an Arminian one lady told, "Every year I go to the Philippines on my credit card, and I know I am old so why not use it and take advantage when I die I am not going to pay anyway." This is a sin as you are selfish and greedy and if you cannot pay then you are a thief.

Ps 37:21 The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.

12. Not paying correct wages for the employees.

If you are not paying your employees the just wages that is due to them and withholding their wages then you are a thief from the site of God.

Jas 5:3 Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

4 Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

Application.

1 We need to enjoy the love, justice and righteousness.

Pr 21:3 To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

Zec 7:8 And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying,
9 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother:

10 And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.

2. We need to be diligent in our work and eat what you have earned.

Eph 4:28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

2Th 3:12 Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

3. Living not luxuriously and rich but moderately.

Tit 2:12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

4. Honoring the poor and not showing favoritism toward the famous and the rich.

Le 19:15 Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.

De 15:7 If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother:

Jas 2:2 For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;

Jas 2:3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:

5. Be content.

1Ti 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

6. The golden rule.

How do you want to be treated?

Mt 7:12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Do not take advantage of your neighbor for your own selfishness and for your profit. The eighth commandment demands that we shall do thus with our neighbors. Do not cheat or defraud of your neighbor. Jacob experienced how Laban took advantage of him. If you were poor how will you like others to treat you? If someone says to you, "I will pray for your brother", then he goes to his nice home and eat good foods and drive his nice car, stay comfortable, how do you feel?

Christ came to teach us, not only what we are to know and believe, but what we ought to do, not only toward God but toward men. This is the golden rule of equity, (equal, fairness, just) is to do to others as we would they should do to us. And this is grounded on the great commandment, "Thou shall love thy neighbor thyself."