

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

“For God so Loved . . .”

Part II

Rom 13:9-10

9 The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule:

"Love your neighbor as yourself."

10 Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. (NIV)

We have already seen from Exodus 20:15 that we should not steal. If we love our neighbor as ourselves, we will not steal from them. For us to be thieves would be a shame.

1 Peter 4:15-17

15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters.

16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? (NKJ)

We are not to suffer as thieves. This answers the letter of the law, thou shalt not steal. How to overcome stealing we will look at in more depth later.

Last week, we look at the parable of the Good Samaritan. This parable shows us the attitude we are to have toward those who have been stolen from or robbed.

I) How are we to behave towards victims of robbery? With compassion.

II) How are we to behave when stolen from? Two responses: physical and spiritual.

Physical:

Matt 5:38-40

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.'

39 But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40 And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. (NIV)

Luke 6:27-36

27 "But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

29 If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic.

30 Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.

31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.

- 32 "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them.
- 33 And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that.
- 34 And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full.
- 35 But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.
- 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. (NIV)

Our response in the physical realm is opposite to that which we should do in the spiritual. The Lord teaches us that if someone takes your coat, give him your shirt as well. We are to love those who hate us. We are not to resist an evil person.

1 Cor 6:7-8

7 The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?

8 Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers. (NIV)

Here, Paul tells us it is better to suffer wrong from a brother than that both go to court before unbelievers and slug it out. The message is the same: in the natural realm we are not to seek our own defense or vengeance. Why?

Eph 6:12

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (NIV)

We do not fight against flesh and blood! Evil people aren't the problem, the problem is the evil one!

John 10:10

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. (NIV)

The devil is a thief. Since we do wrestle against principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places, it is correct and just to take back that which was stolen and demand sevenfold restitution.

Gen 14:11-20

11 The four kings seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food; then they went away.

12 They also carried off Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions, since he was living in Sodom.

- 13 One who had escaped came and reported this to Abram the Hebrew. Now Abram was living near the great trees of Mamre the Amorite, a brother of Eshcol and Aner, all of whom were allied with Abram.
- 14 When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan.
- 15 During the night Abram divided his men to attack them and he routed them, pursuing them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus.
- 16 He recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the other people.
- 17 After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).
- 18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High,
- 19 and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth.
- 20 And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything. (NIV)

It's like the song, "I went to the enemies' camp and I took back what he stole from me . . ." What occurred to them in the natural realm was for our spiritual enlightenment. The theft of Lot (kidnapping) gave Abram a valid reason for aggression. He recovered all that was taken and gave Melchizedek a tenth of everything.

Part of the devil's plan in stealing our finances is to make it difficult for us to fund the church through our tithes and offerings. Being able to give should be one of the major reasons for recapturing that which has been stolen from us.

III) Jesus, thieves, and robbers-

Mal 3:8-11 (NKJ)

8 "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings.

9 You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation.

10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it.

11 "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field," Says the LORD of hosts;

In Malachi's day, the priests were treating the offerings with contempt and the people were not bringing in the tithes and offerings as they should have. This, God called robbery.

Matt 21:12-14

12 Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves.

13 "It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'"

14 The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. (NIV)

Luke 19:47

Every day he was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him. (NIV)

The Lord exposed the corruptness of the Temple offering system as it was being practiced in his day. Exorbitant exchange rates and highly priced animals were used to profiteer from the poor and the pious alike. His confrontation of their economic system caused the leaders to want to kill Him all the more. But they had find a way to do it. They needed an accomplice.

John 12:2-8

2 Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him.

3 Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

4 But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected,

5 "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages."

6 He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

7 "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "[It was intended] that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial.

8 You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me." (NIV)

Judas is now the proverbial betrayer. It is interesting to note that one of the sins that led up to his betrayal of the Innocent Blood was thievery! Psalm 109 is prophetic with regard to the curse that befell Judas for not repenting. Note the financial consequences that his descendants would suffer for his sin.

Ps 109:10-11

10 May his children be wandering beggars; may they be driven from their ruined homes.

11 May a creditor seize all he has; may strangers plunder the fruits of his labor. (NIV)

It was Judas, a thief, who led the Jews to a place where they could arrest Jesus away from the crowds of Jerusalem. Note the irony in his comment to them when they come.

Matt 26:55-56

55 In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me.

56 But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.(NKJ)

He who righteously accused them of robbery makes it clear to them that He did what was right in the Temple, yet they came after Him as after a robber. Not only that, but it was a robber's place that He took at the cross.

John 18:40 (KJV)

Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

Not only was He crucified in the place of Barabbas, but He was crucified with robbers.

Matt 27:38

“Two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left.” (NIV)

Jesus was numbered with the transgressors. Taking the place of a robber at the cross and being crucified with robbers, He shows us that He paid the price for all of our thievery.

Isa 53:12

Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. (NIV)

Jesus took the reproach of the locust upon Himself.

Ps 109:21-27

21 But you, O Sovereign LORD, deal well with me for your name's sake; out of the goodness of your love, deliver me.

22 For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me.

23 I fade away like an evening shadow; I am shaken off like a locust.

24 My knees give way from fasting; my body is thin and gaunt.

25 I am an object of scorn to my accusers; when they see me, they shake their heads.

26 Help me, O LORD my God; save me in accordance with your love.

27 Let them know that it is your hand, that you, O LORD, have done it. (NIV)

IV) God so Loved that He Gave-

To pay your own fine is restitution. To pay somebody else's fine is redemption. Jesus suffered as a robber for us to redeem us from the curse which results from stealing, from breaking the eighth commandment. As citizens of Zion, how do we go the extra mile? How are we to counteract the theft we experience in life? We need to be imitators of God.

John 3:16

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (NIV)

John 10:7-18

7 Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep.

8 All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.

9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture.

10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

- 11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.
 12 The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it.
 13 The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.
 14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me-
 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father-and I lay down my life for the sheep.
 16 I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.
 17 The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life-only to take it up again.
 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father." (NIV)

The price that Jesus paid as the Good Shepherd to save His flock from the thief was the sacrifice of His own life.

Eph 5:1-2

- 1 Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children
 2 and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (NIV)

*Giving is a manifestation of love. If you want to see if you are loving in **deed** and not just word, check you giving level. When we have a giving heart, it cuts covetousness and greed off of the knees (see vs. 3).*

1 John 3:16-18

- 16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.
 17 If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?
 18 Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. (NIV)

Eph 4:28

He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. (NIV)

If we had a struggle over stealing, God's program is simple: STOP the sin, REPENT by working instead of stealing, DO RIGHT by giving to those in need.

V) The Thief in the Night- [To be developed in next teaching]

In many respects, material possessions, ours or others, should be the least of our concerns. We have been blessed in other areas of life by God where it would not be good to be stolen from; for instance, your health, peace, marriage, family, eternal inheritance, etc.

Bearing in mind all we have examined about not stealing and Jesus being betrayed by a thief to die a robbers death, His words to the church on the book of Revelation should arrest our attention.

Rev 16:15

"Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed." (NIV)

He comes like a thief! Why would Jesus, the One who saved us from the thief in the garden, the one who died a robber's death for our sins of thievery, describe His second advent as coming like a thief in the night?

I believe that as we look at this concept, we will learn what makes us susceptible to theft and what we can do to not get caught by the thief. Amen!