

## THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

### “Like a Thief in the Night”

*We have been studying the eighth commandment, “Thou shalt not steal.” We’ve seen that to walk in the spirit of that law, it is necessary to live generously toward those who are in need. We are to be imitators of God, who so loved that He gave His only begotten Son, and we are to follow the Lord Jesus who loved the church and gave Himself up for us.*

*Indeed, self-sacrifice is the hallmark of the Good Shepherd.*

John 10:17 “The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life-only to take it up again.”

John 10:1-3, 7-10

1 "I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber.

2 The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep.

3 The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

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. (NIV)

*Clearly, Jesus is the Good Shepherd and no thief. But look at Rev. 16:15*

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)

*Why would Jesus, the One who saved us from the thief of Eden, the One who was betrayed by a thief to die a robber’s death for our sins of stealing, describe His second coming as being “like a thief in the night?”*

*I believe that the comparison has more to do with the visited than it does with the visitor. The Lord is not a thief, but He can appear that way to the unprepared. From His analogy, we can learn how to be prepared for His appearance while guarding against the thief.*

Luke 12:32-34

32 "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 not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.

34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (NIV)

*We need to see this verse in its context, which we will do shortly. In this admonishment, we are given one major practical key to guarding our finances from thievery. It doesn't involve an IRA or a 401K, or even a bank. God's way of guarding riches is to give them away to the poor and sowing it into the kingdom.*

Matt 6:19-21

- 19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.  
20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.  
21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (NIV)

Luke 12:35-37

- 35 "Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning,  
36 like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him.  
37 It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. (NIV)

*We are to be dressed ready for service (or as the KJV says, "loins girded about") with our lights burning. The righteous acts of today [white linen is the righteous acts of the saints- Rev. 19:8] prepare us for our service in eternity, our eternal ministry (see Matt. 25:19-23). For, as Luke 16:10 states:*

Luke 16:10

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. (KJV)

*In other words, serving today makes us ready to serve Him when he comes. And if we are ready when He comes, He Himself will serve us (see John 13:1-17)*

Matt 20:25-28

- 25 Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.  
26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,  
27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave-  
28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (NIV)

*In His earthly ministry, Jesus came to serve, not to be served. Does this mean that we don't need to serve the Lord? No! We were created to serve Him. What we need to understand is that He doesn't exist to be served. He was before all. He lives to give. And even as He washed the disciples' feet, He ministers to us. And if He finds us serving when He comes, He will serve us for:*

Heb 13:8 “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” (NIV)

Luke 12:38-40

38 It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night.

39 But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into.

40 You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.” (NIV)

*Like a thief, the Lord comes unexpectedly. If we live a life of expectancy, always supposing His immanent return, we will not be caught unaware.*

Matt 24:42-44

42 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.

43 But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into.

44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. (NIV)

*We are to keep watch against the unexpected hour. As we shall see, keeping watch is prayer [Matt. 26:40-42].*

- The main correlation between the Lord’s return and the thief in the night is that those who are unprepared suffer loss.

*When a thief comes into our house, we lose. If the Lord returns and we are not ready and waiting, we lose.*

Matt 24:45-51

45 "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time?

46 It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.

47 I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

48 But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,'

49 and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards.

50 The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of.

51 He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (NIV)

*If we no longer have hope in the return of our Lord (wickedly believing that he has been long away and will be longer still [temporal mind set at work- after all, from an eternal view, 2000 years is like a couple of days!]), we will be caught unaware and be cut in pieces.*

1 Cor 3:11-15

- 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.  
12 If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw,  
13 his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work.  
14 If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward.  
15 If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames. (NIV)

*A thief's success is largely determined by the victim's vigilance or lack thereof. We can let our guard down and be plundered or prepare ourselves and be protected. By avoiding activities that make us vulnerable while being vigilant at the same time, we can avoid suffering loss.*

*The general analogy of the vulnerable vs. the vigilance is that of sleep vs. wakefulness. As the Lord said in Matt. 24:43, if the householder had known when the thief was coming, he would have kept watch. This means he would have staid awake.*

Matt 26:40-42

- 40 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter.  
41 "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."  
42 He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done." (NIV)

*Keeping watch is wakeful prayer!*

Rom 13:9-14

- 9 For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."  
10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.  
11 And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.  
12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.  
13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.  
14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. (NKJ)

*Romans 13 lists for us some moral sedatives:*

- *orgies*
- *drunkenness*
- *sexual immorality*
- *debauchery*

- *dissension*
- *jealousy*
- *mental preparation for sin (fantasize) – 2 Cor. 10:5*

2 Cor 10:5

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (NIV)

1 Thess 5:2-11

2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

3 While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

4 But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.

5 You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.

6 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.

7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night.

8 But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

10 He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.

11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. (NIV)

*Wakefulness and soberness are tied together in Scripture. We cannot be drunk on alcohol and be spiritually awake at the same time.*

Eph 5:18

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. (NIV)

*Again, we are admonished to live in the light, not darkness. Dark deeds put us to sleep. But Thessalonians give us another area to be guarded in: prophecy. Paul wrote that while people were saying, "peace and safety" destruction would come, for the day of the Lord will come like "a thief in the night."*

*People proclaiming peace and safety when danger is immanent is a reference to what happened in the Old Testament when the prophets of God were contending with false prophets.*

Jer 6:13-15

13 "From the least to the greatest, all are greedy for gain; prophets and priests alike, all practice deceit.

14 They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. 'Peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace.

15 Are they ashamed of their loathsome conduct? No, they have no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush. So they will fall among the fallen; they will be brought down when I punish them," says the LORD. (NIV)

*Go to Jeremiah 23.*

Jer 23:9

Concerning the prophets: My heart is broken within me; all my bones tremble. I am like a drunken man, like a man overcome by wine, because of the LORD and his holy words. (NIV)

Jer 23:16-18

16 This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you; they fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD.

17 They keep saying to those who despise me, 'The LORD says: You will have peace.' And to all who follow the stubbornness of their hearts they say, 'No harm will come to you.'

18 But which of them has stood in the council of the LORD to see or to hear his word? Who has listened and heard his word? (NIV)

Jer 23:21-22

21 I did not send these prophets, yet they have run with their message; I did not speak to them, yet they have prophesied.

22 But if they had stood in my council, they would have proclaimed my words to my people and would have turned them from their evil ways and from their evil deeds. (NIV)

Jer 23:26-27

26 How long will this continue in the hearts of these lying prophets, who prophesy the delusions of their own minds?

27 They think the dreams they tell one another will make my people forget my name, just as their fathers forgot my name through Baal worship. (NIV)

Jer 23:28-32

28 Let the prophet who has a dream tell his dream, but let the one who has my word speak it faithfully. For what has straw to do with grain?" declares the LORD.

29 "Is not my word like fire," declares the LORD, "and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?"

30 "Therefore," declares the LORD, "I am against the prophets who steal from one another words supposedly from me.

31 Yes," declares the LORD, "I am against the prophets who wag their own tongues and yet declare, 'The LORD declares.'

32 Indeed, I am against those who prophesy false dreams," declares the LORD. "They tell them and lead my people astray with their reckless lies, yet I did not send or appoint them. They do not benefit these people in the least," declares the LORD. (NIV)

*When it comes to speaking for God, we should own it. If we have His word, we should speak it faithfully. We should not get in prophetic presbyteries, hear a word we think is good and then run with our own mouth.*

*We need to let His word abide in our hearts before it comes out of our mouths. We don't want to take others' words into our minds to be repeated by us as if they came from God!*

*False prophecy puts us to sleep! We want to be filled with the Spirit!*

Luke 12:45-48

- 45 But suppose the servant says to himself, 'My master is taking a long time in coming,' and he then begins to beat the menservants and maidservants and to eat and drink and get drunk.
- 46 The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers.
- 47 "That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows.
- 48 But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked. (NIV)

*Lack of temperance (eat and drink with drunkards) exhibited by licentiousness follows on the heels of abuse of authority.*

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|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. "My master is not coming soon"    | - | loss of hope                   |
| 2. beat fellowservants (Matt. 24:29) | - | abuse of authority             |
| 3. Eat and drink with drunkards      | - | loss of temperance             |
| 4. Beaten with blows/cut in pieces   | - | punishment and loss of reward. |

*Sin puts us to sleep. Sexual immorality, drunkenness, abuse of authority, and false prophecy all put us in the dark like the unaware householder who is about to be stolen from. How do we guard against the thief and stay awake to be rewarded by the Lord?*

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|---|---|---------------------------|
| 1. Put our treasures in a safe place.                                 | - | Matt. 6:19-21             |
| 2. Keep hope alive by prayer (Matt. 24:43-44) and service (vs. 45-47) |   |                           |
| 3. Be temperate, putting on faith, love and hope.                     | - | 1 Thes. 5:8; 1 Cor. 13:13 |
| 4. We need to complete our assignment.                                |   |                           |

Rev 3:1-7

- 1 "To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.
- 2 Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God.
- 3 Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.
- 4 Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy.
- 5 He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.
- 6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.
- 7 "To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. (NIV)

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)

*Amen!*