

## Ten Commandments: The Eighth Word

*"You shall not steal." (Exodus 20:15)*

Question: What is stealing?

### **What stealing does**

- Undermines community
- It attacks the character of God
- It reveals our discontent

### **The eighth commandment in context**

Given to the Israelites while they are on the way to the Promised Land. The land is an inheritance from the Lord.

Because he loved your fathers and chose their offspring after them and brought you out of Egypt with his own presence, by his great power, driving out before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land for an inheritance... (Deuteronomy 4:37-38)

<sup>10</sup> And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. <sup>11</sup> "Take care lest you forget the LORD your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today, <sup>12</sup> lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, <sup>13</sup> and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, <sup>14</sup> then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, <sup>15</sup> who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock, <sup>16</sup> who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end. <sup>17</sup> Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' <sup>18</sup> You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day. (Deuteronomy 8:10-18)

"You shall count seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the time of the seven weeks of years shall give you forty-nine years....And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to his property and each of you shall return to his clan...(Leviticus 25:8, 10)

The Promised Land represents Israel's inheritance. It is their portion; everything they would ever want or need.

### **Principles of ownership and property**

#### **Everything belongs to God**

Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine... (Exodus 19:5)

"If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine. (Psalm 50:12)

#### **It is man's privilege to steward what belongs to God**

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. (Genesis 2:15)

What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet... (Psalm 8:4-6)

## **God distributes resources according to his wisdom**

The rich and the poor meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all. (Proverbs 22:2)

What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? (1 Corinthians 4:7)

## **We are obligated to give to those who are in need. Not doing so is stealing. Stealing is not only wrongful taking, but also wrongful keeping**

Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions. (Malachi 3:8)

"O Lord, who is like you, delivering the poor from him who is too strong for him, the poor and needy from him who robs him?" (Psalm 35:10)

Woe to those who decree iniquitous decrees, and the writers who keep writing oppression, to turn aside the needy from justice and to rob the poor of my people of their right... (Isaiah 10:1-2)

## **God is our portion**

"You shall have no inheritance in their land, neither shall you have any portion among them. I am your portion and your inheritance among the people of Israel." (Numbers 18:20)

The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot... You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:5,11)

## **Jesus leads us to the true Promised Land**

So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God... (Hebrews 4:9)

In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. (John 14:2-3)

## **The Gospel frees us from the desire to steal**

If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. (1 Corinthians 15:19)

But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. (Hebrews 10:32-34)

Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. (Ephesians 4:28)

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. (2 Corinthians 8:9)