

“Do not steal”

Exodus 20:15

Introduction

- We are taking a few months to go through the 10 Commandments found in Exodus Chapter 20
 - Now why in the world in New Testament age of Grace Times would we want to do that?

Well for one reason on Wednesday Nights we are looking at the Book of Exodus from which the 10 Commandments come in its entirety

- And seeing the context for what we are studying is so important and so I want to connect the two
 - This week.....

Okay, sounds interesting but why are we studying the law with all its weird customs and dietary laws

- Well remember the first five books of the Bible are called the Law, but much of it is what the New Testament calls the Law of Moses
 - the holidays the Jews were supposed to keep
 - the rights of cleanliness that the Jews were to do
 - the Law of Moses was given to the Jewish people for that time
- The 10 commandments are different – they are given to all people for all time
 - Why???

Why are the 10 Commandments Important?

#1 – The Law Drives us to Christ

- We wonder why don't people see their need for Christ. Why do people walk away from Jesus?

Why are the 10 Commandments Important?

#1 – The Law Drives us to Christ

#2 – The Law Directs us in Christ

- The Law shows our duty to God and to our fellow man – this is how you love God and love people
 - And in a day and age where so many including Christians do whatever is right in their own eyes, because we have lost the standard
- We live in the age of Grace which I am thankful for, we could not be saved without grace
 - But we sometimes think well then it doesn't matter how I live, grace brother – no friend there is a standard

Why are the 10 Commandments Important?

#1 – The Law Drives us to Christ

#2 – The Law Directs us in Christ

#3 – The Law helps us Discover Christ

- You learn something about the Law giver from the laws

Some of the laws on the books in our city governments let us know that at one time someone making laws was dumb

- Until I started this study I had no idea how much in danger whales were
 - Last week I told you that in Nebraska Whaling within state lines is illegal
 - **Put up the United States map from last week**

- But that is also illegal in Oklahoma and Utah
 - Now in Tennessee it is illegal to shoot any animal from an automobile except a whale – again the map
 - I didn't know this was such an issue
- In Washington State it is illegal to harass big foot

And my favorite, also in Washington state there is a law to reduce crime that states: "It is mandatory for a motorist with criminal intentions to stop at the city limits and telephone the chief of police as he is entering the town." – Yeah that will work

But those laws tell you something about the lawgivers

- well the 10 Commandments are the same
 - and what we primarily will discover about God from His law is that He is love

"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome" - I John 5:3

- As we keep His commandments
 - Not to save us, not to qualify us for His love
 - But just as we are directed in Christ - I experience His love for me
- And this is obviously true as we get to commandment number eight...

The eighth commandment is straightforward and simple

- it declares "thou shall not steal"
 - in the Hebrew is it even more simple
 - "Steal not"
- To steal simply means "to take that which does not belong to you"
 - Simple – we understand that

Simple - But you know me

- I will still take the next ½ hour to look at all that must mean in our lives

"Thou shall not steal"

- We agree with this one whole heartily
 - we have all had things ripped from us

We have been cheated and so we know the effects of this personally

- and so we agree with this

Yet our culture seems to move away from this common understanding

- I'm sure you remember the pictures of the aftermath in Katrina, people in the streets not just taking food, or water, but TV and clothes
 - That was the case when LA broke out into riots after the Rodney King Verdict

I read a story in USA today of a man who lived in New York City and he had extra garbage to get rid off – so as a joke and to see what would happen, He wrapped up the trash in a box, left it on the front seat of his car, with the car unlocked – but something to protect the car – and every day for two weeks the package was stolen out of his car

- Funny story – but a sad reality of our day

We understand this is to true

- and so we teach our kids not to steal

My wife decided that the day after Thanksgiving is a good day to shop. Now let me educate you on this – it is not a good day to shop, when I was a little kid, I went to play golf on the day after Thanksgiving. That is also not a good idea, I waited 4 hours for an opening. So I have never since then did that – all the men in the world play golf on the day after Thanksgiving – Now I know what their wives, girlfriends and sisters do – they go shopping

And we were in this store, we did not belong in – oh it was a children's store, but apparently a store for children who have very wealthy parents – We are looking for new beds for the kids, and the cheapest one in that store was 1,000 dollars for a kid's bed, my bed mattress in all doesn't

sniff 1,000 dollars. Now they had a little play area for the kids and Jonathan was playing with this little wooden giraffe, which he clearly wanted, I glanced at the price 30 bucks – oh we have giraffes at home, I swung around to get Haley and Jonathan is making a B-line for the door – but as I catch up to him, I realize he had stuffed this little giraffe in his mouth, and out of his mouth is this neck and legs, and so I pull it out, bring it back in the store, nice little giraffe, you will dry

- And I know he didn't really know at 17 months what he was doing, maybe he did, but I used that moment for an opportunity to teach – Jonathan when we take things that don't belong to us that is stealing and we are not to steal

We teach our children this very important truth

- Now Paul in Romans 2:21 says something very interesting, he says, **“You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? (Then he gives an example and notice the first one) “You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal?” – Romans 2:21**
 - We teach our kids not to steal especially 30 dollar wooden giraffes, but do we steal????

No – Jason I don't – I don't stuff wooden giraffes in my mouth, I don't hide candy in my pocket anymore like a I did when I was a kid – no I don't steal

- Now I know, I believe that you don't, hope you don't stuff toys and make-up into your pockets while you shop
 - But remember the simple definition of stealing is to take that which does not belong to you
 - And friends we can steal in many other ways
- And so know, yes I am going to meddle – not because I want to upset you – but because John says, **“This is the love of God – that we keep His commandments – that life will be blessed as we walk in His ways”**
 - So – what are some ways – we take what is not ours – in our lives, in our grown up world

How do we steal?

#1 – With our Work

Most of us have jobs, meaning people pay us for our time - What about at work, do you, do I, do we take something that does not belong to us

- What, are you going to lecture us about pens and paper clips?
 - no – but what about your time – what you are paid to do, your time is not yours at work
- do you spend your day doing it
 - or do you find yourself at two hour lunches – when you're only allotted one????

Do find yourself telling the boss you're doing this, out here at this place, when really you are doing something totally different, when really you aren't there at all

- Even when you are at the job, are you working?
 - When I was a youth pastor – I'll tell you this story, because I don't just want to pick on you, I want you to know the Lord gets me with these things too, and I need to learn this as much as anyone – when I was a youth pastor

All of our computers were linked to a network, and I don't remember how it started, one of us with a few minutes left in the day, opening up Tetris – that's a game – and seeing how good we could do – someone else seeing Jason Duff the High school pastor with the high score, knowing I can do better than him, and so He does and I saw that He beat me and then the secretaries oh man – it became a war – it became so bad that I would be counseling on the phone and playing Tetris, I would be listening to study tapes, but not engaging my mind, I was playing Tetris. One day it was 4:50, and I had finished my study, honestly, but someone had just overtaken my high

score, so I sat down to redo that wrong, well a few minutes later. Pastor Rob, that would be my boss, walks into my office. Not normal, in a church of that size, I was lucky if I saw him once a week except in staff meetings or while he was teaching. He never just dropped by the office, but this day he did, and though his entire staff was involved, he walked in on me. “Is this what I pay you to do, he asked.” And I let out my little excuse “I just finished my study and couldn’t start anything else, it’s 2 minutes to go home time, blah, blah, blah...” – and he went on about whatever he came to talk to me about, excepting my explanation, truthful explanation of that time. But then I began to remember all the other times, it wasn’t time to go, my work wasn’t finished, and the conviction of the Lord came to me. You are stealing – you are being paid to minister and study, not to have the high score in Tetris. You are taking something – your time, which does not belong to you to do whatever you want while you are here, and you are stealing it

- I now have an office right across from his and I originally thought it was a kind of status thing to have an office back with the big man, but now I’m wondering if he just keeps me close to watch me

How do we steal?

#1 – With our Work

#2 – With our Taxes

What about at tax time???

- oh don’t go there –sorry I have to – I prayed about it
 - are we honest about what we have earned according to the laws that have been established, I’m not taking about taking deductions that are lawful and right
 - but we can get around even those and go beyond, and hide certain things
- But Jason, Jason, young pastor Jason – you know the government misuses our money and they have enough
 - Listen – what did Jesus say????

What did Jesus say when asked about taxes?

- a man asked Jesus should we pay taxes to Caesar
 - now you think our government is corrupt and evil – the Roman empire was not a bunch of redeemed saints, no quite the contrary – and believe me – they did have enough
- But Jesus when asked that question said, whose image is on this coin – well they responded– Caesar – well then, give to Caesar the things that are his
 - What are you saying – Give Caesar...
- who is on our dollar bill – this is not a trick
 - Washington
 - Right – so give to Washington what is Washington’s

I read an article and I don’t remember if it was in Newsweek or which magazine, and it was from a few years ago, but it made the statement – that considering the national debt that our country has -if every citizen and corporation paid the government simply what it was honestly owed - the national debt would be gone in three years – isn’t that amazing - that there is much cheating, no, stealing going on from individuals and corporations, it could eradicate the national debt (what trillions of dollars) in a short amount of time

The IRS actually publishes from time to time stories of things it gets in the mail

- and one I remember reading was from a man who sent a 1,000 dollar check
 - and He said, “years ago I fudged on my taxes and didn’t pay what I rightfully owed and I have been bothered by it ever since, unable to really sleep or eat, so here is a thousand dollars, and if I still can’t sleep I will send you the rest”

- funny, but again horrible as our culture finds it easier and more acceptable all the time to steal

But Jason – the government wants so much and I have a hard time giving to them with their support of so many programs I disagree with, I have trouble sending them so much money – I’m glad you brought that up – (We didn’t bring that up – you did) – okay your right – but it can be troubling with a government that does support so many things contrary to scripture – I don’t want to send them so much

- hey – I have got a solution for that, and it brings me to the final way and maybe the most uncomfortable for tonight, way we can steal
 - not putting candy in our pockets, not putting the shirt in the bag without paying
 - maybe not stealing time at work or money from the government
 - but maybe... well turn to [Malachi chapter 3, verse 6](#)

How do we steal?

#1 – With our Work

#2 – With our Taxes

#3 – With our God

How do we rob God??? – At the risk of sounding like a normal preacher – I need to speak honestly

- in withholding tithes
 - God declares the tithe is His – not yours
 - Remember - Stealing is taking that which is not yours

This is huge to understand – and so different from so many Christians

- The Tithe is His, not yours
 - It is not that you are giving God some of your money – it is that in not giving the Lord the tithe you are stealing what is His

Now in reality it is all His – [Psalm 24:1](#) – the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof”

- We acknowledge that truth by giving to God what He says is His, not ours
 - The reality is, the first 10th is the Lord’s, then if you give above that – that is offering, that is saying to the Lord, here is some of what is mine going to you
 - Do you get it???

But the sad reality is – many Christians don’t

- In 2007 Barna Group took the average income of church goers in the United States and the average tithe and concluding that 139 billion dollars was missing, not given, stolen from the Lord – 139 billion

Many, many of you get it

- some don’t
 - do you know – December and January are the hardest months for church financially
- Why – because Jason, people are buying presents in December and then paying them off in January and.. – yeah in celebration of Jesus’ birth day many give to others and take a month or two off giving to the Lord – seems sad doesn’t it

Listen – you might question my motives, just another pastor taking about money

- I don’t care – because that is not the case – and it’s time that we address money, not in the TV evangelist way that makes God sound broke, but also not in the normal way is to excuse and explain away what God is clearly stating in scripture – there is only one thing God says to “Test me in” and it is concerning tithing

- And I don't care if you question my motives because I firmly believe it is my job to tell you the truth– I'm not going to gain from it..
- My income is not on a sliding scale – I don't make more when the tithe is up

I don't benefit if you tithe, but you do

- John says, **“This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments”**
 - And I believe many Christians are butting their heads financially because they are not walking in this truth

But God loves a cheerful giver

- Absolutely – I certainly want my children to keep my commandments cheerfully
 - But when did we get into our thinking that if I can't keep God's commandments cheerfully that I am off the hook concerning them
 - We don't find it in scripture

The 2 Corinthians chapter 9, verse 7 passage that people quote, oh it says, give what you purpose in your heart, and give cheerfully

- but friends read the context, Paul is speaking about an offering
 - not the tithe – there is a difference

And certainly – you are not bound by 10 percent, you can give cheerfully to the Lord all you want – and you can and should pray about what that amount should be

- But that is not the tithe – the Lord says, the tithe is mine, not yours
 - And if you get that, walk in that – it is you that will be blessed
 - I am not anywhere near rich, but I lack for nothing, and this church is not wealthy, but we have everything we need
- I believe there is spiritual reason for that, a principal of giving to the Lord what is His
 - And as your pastor I want that for each of you

I encourage you as you look at your budget for the next year, listen to what the Lord says

- With each of the commandments – we need to realize that it is God's best for us
 - And God is not mad – His heart is simply... **“Let him who stole, steal no more – Ephesians 4:28** - He just wants you and me to repent – to turn and to go in the opposite direction