

# The Sin of STEALING

This message was delivered over THE WORD OF TRUTH RADIO NETWORK.

We come into your home today with a message on one of the sins that is bringing our nation to eternal damnation and judgment: the sin of STEALING. Because it is God's holy law in the hands of the Holy Spirit that convicts and convinces men of sin, I want to lay out before you these truths on the law of God as it exposes this sin, trusting that the Holy Spirit will be pleased to direct His Word home to our hearts in mighty convicting power.

The apostle Paul said in Romans 7:8-9, that without the law sin was dead, but when the commandment came, sin revived and he died; and in v. 13 he further states: "...but sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good: [by the holy law of God] that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." Did it work? He said it did in v. 14 when he confessed that the law of God was spiritual, but he was carnal, sold under sin. It was the law of God in the hands of the Holy Spirit that showed him he was a sinner; and it was the same law in the hands of the Holy Spirit that brought him to Christ that he might be justified by faith in Christ according to Galatians 3:24—"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."

In our message today, I desire to bring before our hearts the thundering word from Mt. Sinai found in Exodus 20:15: "THOU SHALT NOT STEAL." People think this is a small thing—a light thing—but it is GOD'S WORD AND GOD'S LAW; and woe be unto the man, woman, boy or girl who breaks this commandment!

Dear friend, there are many curses found in the Bible against those who break God's holy law. One of them is found in Gal. 3:10, where we read: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," and stealing is one of those laws. Also we read in James 2:10: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and YET OFFEND IN ONE POINT, HE IS GUILTY OF ALL." So we see that this 8<sup>th</sup> commandment, "Thou shalt not steal" is one in a chain which, if broken, makes you guilty of breaking them all, and brings you under the righteous wrath and judgment of God.

*Many a time this past week I have asked myself, "Where would one start to unfold the many ramifications of this sin which has so overrun our nation today, blighting our society with such running sores of dishonesty that it calls unto God for vengeance?"*

*First of all*, the root of this sin is an **EVIL HEART OF UNBELIEF**, for a man who steals just simply distrusts the providence of God. He says in his heart that God cannot prepare a table for him in the wilderness (Ps 78:19), so he spreads one for himself at the expense of his neighbor's goods. You see, a heart that trusts God will not steal, but will wait upon God to provide his every need. He will cry like the wise man in Proverbs 30:8-9: "...give me neither poverty nor riches...lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain."

*Second*, the root of this sin is an **EVIL HEART OF COVETOUSNESS**, a desire to get that which belongs to another by any means available. I said, covetousness—an immoderate desire for getting—makes a man a thief! You see, covetousness, which leads to stealing, was the first sin committed by the human race when Eve took of or *stole* the forbidden fruit. Also, the first recorded sin against Israel after they entered into the promised land was that of theft when Achan stole from among the spoils (Josh. 7:10-21).

But let us deal in particulars and see how this sin is one that is against God, against man and against ourselves. We break this commandment **WHEN WE ROB GOD OF THE GLORY, HONOR AND PRAISE DUE HIM**; because He is the Lord our God, and if we give this honor to ourselves, we are robbing Him of His glory by ascribing all that has been achieved to science, to education and to men's minds instead of unto the power, might and wisdom of the Almighty.

We are great offenders to God and to this commandment **WHEN WE ASCRIBE OUR SALVATION TO FREE WILL**, because the word of God says it is produced in us only by free grace (Rom. 11:5-6), and in I John 4:10: “Herein is love, *not* that we loved God, but that He loved us...” Romans 9:16 also reads: “So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.”

We break this commandment, “Thou shalt not steal,” **WHEN WE COMMIT SACRILEGE**, that is, when we **STEAL FROM GOD**. In Malachi 3:8-9, God charged Israel with this crime when He stated: “Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.” You see, this is a sin laid at the door of most of the so-called Christians of our day because they have refused to financially support the maintenance of God’s cause on earth. Yes, God’s work goes begging today because church members have spent their money on pleasure—things that are not necessary and vanity; they have spent it on self rather than having honored God with the firstfruits of their increase, their tithes and offerings. My friend, are you stealing from God that which honors Him as the Giver of all things?

Listen again! **IDLENESS IS A FORM OF STEALING!** It is playing the part of the drone, compelling the rest of the hive to support him. This one sin is slowly but surely bringing our nation to economic ruin. All of our social give-away programs to people who are able to work but who are just plain lazy and will not work is making them thieves before God. They are stealing from the people! The Bible says, “Six days shalt thou labour” (Ex. 20:9); and again in II Thessalonians 3:10: “...if any would not work, neither should he eat .”

This is one of the most awful running sores of our government: stealing from people and giving to those who do not or will not work. This sin runs our nation deeper and deeper into deficit spending, thereby causing inflation; so they can sponsor women’s lib, killing of unborn babies and all sorts of programs that lead the people deeper and deeper into sin. And my friend, this is nothing more than the breaking of this 8<sup>th</sup> commandment: “Thou shalt not steal,” and thereby sinning against God.

I’ll go further. Our elected senators and congressmen, whether on a state or national level, are stealing from the people when they take our tax money and make thieves out of lazy people who will not work. My friend, God does not think lightly of this sin!

Brother, this goes on and on! **LYING ADVERTISEMENTS** break this 8<sup>th</sup> commandment. Profiteering is another form of theft, for we read in I Thess. 4:6: “That no man go beyond and defraud his brother *in any matter*. “ Therefore, to make an *enormous profit* on a person is stealing, which brings down the wrath of God. A person becomes a thief and breaks this commandment when he borrows and does not return what is borrowed. Ps. 37:21 says: “The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again...” Again, a man who transfers property to his wife or someone else just before he goes bankrupt is a thief in the sight of God. Also a man who has declared bankruptcy and later prospers financially but fails to pay his creditors to the full is stealing in the sight of God. Tenants steal from their landowners when they needlessly damage their property and furnishings; those who evade their income tax also break this 8<sup>th</sup> commandment. All of this brings down the wrath of God!

Another form of stealing and the breaking of this 8<sup>th</sup> commandment is **GAMBLING**. Did you know that billions of dollars change hands in our country every year by gambling? God calls this stealing; a man who gambles is a thief because he is obtaining money for which he has done no honest work!

Stealing is usually one of the first sins children commit: stealing in the home from father or mother, from the grocery store, or playmates in school. My little children, I warn you that this is the breaking of God’s holy law, and unless it is repented of, it will send you to hell.

The list goes on: men take tools off the job that don’t belong to them, justifying themselves by saying: “The company is big enough to afford them,” or “Other men are doing it, why shouldn’t I?” This is stealing; and brother, it is stealing when you rob your company of an honest day’s work, or when you lie about an injury to collect workman’s compensation!

Lawyers steal when they take advantage of a client and deal falsely with him. Judges steal when they award enormous amounts of money to people just because the insurance companies have the money. Then they steal from us because our insurance policies go up!

EXTORTION is another form of stealing which brings down the judgment of God: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?...nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor *extortioners*... (I Cor. 6:9-10). People or companies who charge high interest on loans are thieves in the sight of God because they are stealing from the people, as those who bought and sold in the temple (Matt. 21:12-13).

Those who receive stolen goods knowingly are acting as thieves before God because they are accessories to the theft. And dear friend, whether a man steals with his gun in a bank robbery or with his pen in forging a check, his stealing breaks this 8<sup>th</sup> commandment and he is under the judgment of God.

Our whole nation today is caught up in the sin of stealing by trying to get something for nothing. Our newspapers are filled with stories of white collar crimes of stealing. Our insurance rates have gone out of sight because of the plague of this sin. Prices are raised in most stores to compensate for the billions of dollars lost every year through stealing. Children are taught to steal by their parents, and our jails are filled with criminals whose crime is stealing in one form or another.

This running sore of the sin of stealing today is that which is done by so-called gospel **MINISTERS WHO ROB THE PEOPLE OF THE TRUTH OF GOD'S WORD!** The man who claims to be a shepherd but never feeds his people with the true Word of God is a thief and a robber, and stands guilty before God of breaking this 8<sup>th</sup> commandment. When a man preaches that salvation is by some form of works which we do, he is robbing precious souls of the truth of God's Word, which says it is "*not by works of righteousness* which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5).

When a man preaches that salvation is *only by believing*, leaving out repentance, he is a thief because he is robbing precious souls of the truth of God's Word which says that unless a man repents, he will perish! (Luke 13:3,5). You see, there *must be* a turning to God from sin; there *must be* a hatred for sin as being against God; and there *shall be* fruits suitable for repentance, which is a changed life and walking in righteousness and true holiness.

A man is a thief who preaches the Savior-ship of Christ without His Lordship, telling poor souls that all they have to do is believe on him as Savior and then later on—if they so desire—they can commit themselves a little more and make Him Lord, but will miss a few rewards in heaven. But this, dear friend, is *robbing* precious souls of the truth of God's Word which reads: "...at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things of earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10-11).

You see, Rom. 10:9 tells us that to be saved you must confess with the mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead. Dear friend, to say Jesus is Lord means that you have surrendered your whole being to Him, spirit, soul and body. It means you are no longer your own. It means you have changed masters; self has been crucified, you have died, and Christ has become your all in all. It means you are finished with sin and the world, because you have been crucified to the world. It means you are not just seeking an "insurance policy" against hell's fire, but that you have fallen in LOVE with the lovely Lord Jesus and that you want to follow Him all the days of your life.

Again, when a man preaches that salvation brings you into a life of success, an abundance of this world's goods, an overflowing life of bubbly joy, a continuous "high" and a getting all you can from God with no sickness or problems, he is robbing precious souls of the truth of God's Word; because he has made them believe that godliness is a means to financial, physical and worldly gain. But God's Word says in Acts 14:22, that we "*must* through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God," and in Phil. 1:29: "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to *suffer* for his sake." I Peter 4:12

also tells us: “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you;” for this is the lot of all of God’s people.

So we see then that out of this 8<sup>th</sup> commandment—“*Thou shalt not steal*, “ comes many, many sins. A MAN CAN EVEN STEAL FROM HIMSELF when he will not take time—the time that God has given him—to seek Christ and His salvation, His precious blood, in repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Oh, my prayer is that the Holy Spirit will convict of this *sin of stealing*, causing each heart to be broken before God in repentance, for then and only then will it be evident that the precious blood of Christ has cleansed you from this sin. Your only hope, my dear friend, lies in the shed blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ; but, praise God, *He has given us this hope!* We have His promise in His Word that if we confess and forsake this sin of stealing, He will forgive us for Christ’s sake. For “if we confess our sins, *He is faithful and just* to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (I John 1:9). “He that covereth his sins *shall not prosper*: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy” (Pro. 28:13). The LORD invites: “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1:18).