

Eighth River -- Stealing the Eighth Commandment

by Martin Knapp

The eighth commandment, 'Thou shalt not steal,' is a fearful sin in God's sight that leads to a life of sin and ultimately to death.

Scripture: Proverbs 21:7

Topics: "Theft And Consequences", "Gods Wrath"

Description

Martin Knapp preaches on the eighth commandment 'Thou shalt not steal,' emphasizing the seriousness of theft in God's eyes and the consequences it brings, including self-destruction, curses, God's wrath, and exclusion from heaven. He delves into various forms of stealing, rooted in selfishness, and highlights the importance of loving others and avoiding all forms of theft. Knapp warns against Satan's deceitful tactics to lead people into the River of Death through theft, urging listeners to examine their hearts and actions to ensure they are not drifting towards certain doom.

Transcript

"Thou shalt not steal." -- Ex. xx, 15.

The eighth River down which Satan is drifting multitudes of young and old into the River of Death is Theft.

This sin, like the others which have been named, is so fearful in God's sight that he declares that they who are guilty of it "destroy themselves" (Prov. xxi, 7); that it brings a curse upon all who commit it (Hosea iv, 2, 3); that it brings the wrath of God upon them (Ezek. xxii, 29-31); and that it excludes from heaven (I Cor. vi, 10).

Would you like to know how people were treated who stole under the Mosaic law? The following verses explain:

"If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall pay five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. If the thief be found breaking in, and be smitten that he die, there shall be no bloodguiltiness for him. If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be bloodguiltiness for him: he should make restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. If the theft be found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep; he shall pay double." -- Ex. xxii, 1-4.

Stealing, like all other sins, has its root in selfishness. If we love others as we do ourselves we surely will never steal anything away from them.

Satan is very artful in his efforts to entice people to the perilous banks of the River of Death.

When you have been tempted to take something that did not belong to you, like an apple or a lump of sugar, have you not heard Satan whisper, "No one will see you or find it out?" He would have you forget that God sees you all the while, knows everything you do, and that nothing can be hid from Him, and that He says, "Be sure your sin will find you out."

Then sometimes he tries to make folks believe that it is not very wrong to steal little things, because he knows if he can get them to steal little things first it will not be long before they will steal more largely.

When I was a little boy I read in a paper the following lines:

"It is a sin to steal a pin,

But 't is greater to steal a 'tater;

He who steals a copper

Is guilty of a whopper."

Now these lines are as black a lie as Satan ever told, for the person who really steals a pin is just as really a thief as the one who steals a million dollars.

No matter how little it may be, if you take things that belong to other people, which you would not have taken had they been looking, that is stealing, and remember, it is written down as with "a pen of iron and the point of a diamond," and will sink your soul into the awful River of Death unless it be forgiven.

It is an awful thing for a soul to be drifting in this Stream, and still more awful to be drifting there if it feels it is safe.

Are you willing to look into this matter carefully and prayerfully, as you will wish you had at the Day of Judgment, and see whether or no you are in this River?

There are, no doubt, multitudes of people who are in it who think they are not. Are we among that number? Let us see.

All who are guilty of the following are there:

Taking property from others which you would not had they known it.

Cheating in any way, such as giving short weights and measures.

By adulterating goods.

By pretending goods sold are better than they really are.

Many are guilty of this crime, not only in selling goods, but in selling horses, cattle, fruit, etc.

By needlessly taking the time of others. If other people are very busy, and you are idle, and compel them to leave their work and let it suffer to visit with you, you are taking their time. This is robbery as really as breaking into a bank.

All forgery.

Telling lies about a person to hurt his reputation.

Needlessly injuring the reputation of another is robbery of the basest sort; for, as the poet says:

Who steals my purse steals trash;

But he who robs me of my good name,

Takes from me that which not enriches him,

But leaves me poor indeed."

Writing or telling things that have been written or said by other people, and pretending they are original. Jeremiah refers to this when he says:

"I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal My words every one from his neighbor." -- Jer. xxiii, 30.

Preachers, editors, and all who thus appropriate the words of others, are thieves.

Going in debt without the probability of paying is a very mean kind of stealing.

Using money for yourself that others have intrusted to you in business transactions.

Suppose one of your playmates sells you one dollar's worth of peanuts with the understanding that you would have twenty-five cents of the dollar to pay for selling them and pay him the other seventy-five cents. If you spend any of the seventy-five cents which belongs to him for yourself, you are stealing, the same as if you took it from his pocket-book.

The same is true in selling anything else on commission. It is stealing for you to use money which should be returned to the person who intrusted you with the goods.

It is stealing to take time that belongs to another. If you agree for certain wages to work a certain number of hours per day every day, and then begin late or idle away the time, or stop before the hours are gone, you have stolen just so much time from the person who employs you, and are just as really a thief as if you had stolen his money.

Compelling employees to work overtime without extra pay. Oppressing the hireling in his wages. (Mal. iii, 5.)

Refusing to do unto others as you would be done by;

Using other people's money without their knowledge;

Cheating employers out of time by tardiness, or short hours, or indolence;

Cheating in playing marbles and other games;

Gambling and Church lotteries;

Deceiving people, and then taking advantage of them to get their property, or injure or ruin them.

Now I want to ask one question:

Is it not just as wrong for a child to steal from parents as from brothers and sisters?

You say, Certainly it is.

THEN IT MUST BE JUST AS WRONG TO STEAL FROM GOD AS FROM OUR FELLOW-MAN, OR EVEN MORE SO; yet many people who would disdain to steal from others are all the while stealing from God.

All who do the following are stealing from God, and are now in the Death-boat of Robbery and sweeping down this awful River to certain death. God owns everything. This earth is His, and all the fullness of it. The cattle upon a thousand hills. He who claims to hold property in his own right instead of holding it as the steward of God, is a thief.

If you refuse to use the influence which God has given you over those around you;

If you break the holy Sabbath-day instead of keeping it as He commands;

Spending money for tobacco or whisky or other harmful things instead of using it as He directs;

If you waste the physical strength He has given you in idleness or harmful pleasures or secret vices;

To neglect to give, as God prospers you, for the support of the Gospel.

When His people refused to give their tenth He sent a prophet to them who said they had robbed Him in tithes and offerings, and told them to restore, and He would open the windows of heaven and pour them out a blessing that there would not be room to receive it.

If you seek salvation by some other way than by the way of the cross, you are guilty of this sin, for Jesus declares:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." -- John x, 1.

Whether that "other way" be by your good works or self-righteousness, or because you say you are not very bad, or because you have been baptized and belong to the Church; no matter what it may be, if it is not by Jesus, the Door, He says "you are a thief and a robber."

If you refuse to work in God's vineyard, then you rob yourself and God's cause of all the blessed results which would have followed such obedience.

It is an awful thing thus to rob Him. Beloved, are you guilty? If so, does it awaken you and lead you to cry out to God for help, or has Satan so drugged your soul with the chloroform of indifference that it does not alarm you or bring grief over such a sin?

Did you ever before realize that, while you are thinking you are being good, really in God's sight you are a thief and a robber, and instead of your being borne heavenward you are being bornedown the River of Robbery toward your certain doom?

Yet remember, even such may be forgiven. Though our sins may have surpassed those of the thief upon the cross, the fact that Jesus heard his cry and saved his soul brings hope to us.

This sin is a hot coal that must be laid aside, or it will burn the soul forever.

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

Florence M. Gwinn

"O, mamma, what do you think Miss Douglas is going to talk about at our meeting next Saturday afternoon?" said little Fay Leighton, as she came running into the sitting-room, where Mrs. Leighton was taking a rest after a busy forenoon's work.

"I am sure I can not guess, Deane," answered her mother, as she tenderly brushed the bright golden curls off the little, flushed face.

"Why, about 'Thou shalt not steal.' I am very sure we girls would never think of doing such a wicked thing as that," said Fay.

"Miss Douglas is always very careful to choose a subject which will benefit you, and no doubt she has some wise plan in view, my dear. If you like, I will tell you a true story."

"O yes, please' do, mamma," begged Fay.

"Well, bring your chair here beside me.

"Many years ago a little girl went with her mother one day to visit a neighbor. The country where Lilly lived, for that was the little girl's name, was very new, and she had no nice toys like you to play with; not even a rag doll, for her mamma was always too busy to find time to make one. It was impossible to buy such a thing as a toy at the country store where her papa did his dealing, even if they had had the money to spare. Thus you see, dearie, Lilly had to be contented to play with flowers, mosses, and the little acorn-cups which she found in the woods. Sometimes she would play for hours in the sand, and it was great fun to build a mountain, or scoop out a well, or make a wide desert, or a little, crooked furrow for a brook. There was no end of things she could do with the sand.

"Well, on this day of which I speak, Mrs. Beach, at whose house they were visiting, gave Lilly a little sugar-bowl to play with. Lilly thought she had never seen anything quite so pretty. How she longed to have it for her very own, and after awhile the wish to possess it became so very strong that Lilly thought to herself, 'Now, if I put this little bowl into my pocket and take it home with me, Mrs. Beach will never miss it; and, if she does, she will think that it has been mislaid.' But a small, still voice, which we call conscience, and which is God's voice in the heart, whispered softly to Lilly: 'If you take the bowl it will be stealing, and how can you say your prayers tonight? Then you will not enjoy playing with it, for it will remind you of your sin.' For along time Lilly hesitated, but at last determined to obey the voice of conscience. She put the bowl up on the cupboard, and soon after was playing merrily with the baby. Our hearts are always light when we do what is right. As they were getting ready to go home, Mrs. Beach, taking the cup in her

hand, said: 'You can have this, Lilly. It belonged to a little 'set of dishes mother gave me when a child.' You can imagine how thankful Lilly was then that she had not stolen the little bowl. It was a lesson that she never forgot."

"Did you know that little girl, mamma?" asked Fay.

"Very well indeed, for it was myself."

"O, mamma, I never thought of your name being Lilly!" cried Fay.

"And, Deane, there are things we can steal more valuable than gold or silver. If we wrongfully injure the good name of our playmates, we steal their good character from them. No doubt Miss Douglas will tell you all about it at your meeting."

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