The Eighth Commandment

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[0:00] Exodus 20, verses 1 to 21. Are we reading this reading again? I think we've got one, two more times we'll read this after this, and then you should all, I'm going to actually get you all to stand up and recite it back to me at the end of the series on the Ten Commandments, right?

I think it's only fair. Exodus 20, verse 1. God spoke all these words. I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt.
Out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.
You shall not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.
You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.
[1:08] Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns.

For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.
Honor your father and your mother so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.
You shall not covet your neighbor's house, you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor. When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear.
They stayed at a distance and said to Moses, speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die. Moses said to the people, do not be afraid.
[2:14] God has come to test you so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning. The people remained at a distance while Moses approached the thick darkness where God was.

This is the word of the Lord. Let's ask for God's help as we study this. Father, this is your word. This is truth. True truth.
True truth that we need to bring our lives into conformity with. And that's not always easy because we are sinful, broken people.
And so we ask for your spirit this morning to help us. That this would not just be an exercise in expanding our knowledge, but this would be an encounter with divine power as you change us and make us like your son.
Help us now, we pray, for Christ's sake. Amen. Amen. So still in the Ten Commandments this week, the Eighth Commandment. In 2001, the two-time Academy Award nominee, Winona Ryder, also of Stranger Things fame, for those of you who are a bit younger, she walked into a department store in Los Angeles and she shoplifted $5,560 worth of merchandise.
[3:43] Now that includes a Marc Jacobs sweater worth $760, hair adornments worth $600, and a pair of $80 Donna Karan cashmere socks.

Why did she do it? Why did she do it? Was she short on cash and had to resort to stealing? Was she on an ego trip?

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Was she, as she claimed, under the influence of incorrectly prescribed medication? Or, did she skip church on the Sunday when the minister preached on the Eighth Commandment?
My money's on that last option. And so, to safeguard you all from discovering cashmere socks in your bag after your next trip to Woolies, I'm going to preach on the Eighth Commandment this morning.
Thou shalt not steal. Now, here's where I want to go in the sermon. I'm going to outline it this way. I'm going to ask a question and then try and answer that question in three ways. So, the question is, how do we steal? And the answer, one answer is, we steal when we steal.
[4:42] So, not very profound, but we'll get to that. We steal when we steal. Number two, we steal when we lack generosity and justice. And then number three, we steal when we steal from God. So, here's the first one.

We steal when we steal. So, if you keep your Bibles open there in Exodus 20, verse 15, you'll see that's where the Eighth Commandment comes. It's just a short verse. It says, you shall not steal. It's even shorter in the original Hebrew. It's only two words, no steal. Like, it's pretty clear. Don't do it. Don't take other people's stuff. Now, I suppose our minds, when we hear a command like that, don't steal, go to things like shoplifting or house breakings.
In a country like ours, in the days of state capture and Steinhoff, we probably also think of stealing in terms of white-collar crime. And so, for us, the command's pretty simple.
As Christians, we should have no part whatsoever in the overt theft anywhere along that kind of spectrum from Winona Ryder to Marcus Yerster. That's it.
[5:48] And we could stop there. We could say, well, that's the sermon. That's it. The problem, though, is that we are very, very sophisticated thieves. And we have all sorts of ways of justifying theft to our own consciences and to the people around us.

First, the Westminster divines, the group of ministers and theologians who put together the Westminster standards, they were clearly not naive about the craftiness of sinful human beings. And so, when they scripted the prohibitions of the Eighth Commandment in the Westminster Larger Catechism, they were pretty comprehensive. So, listen to this. This is question 142 in the Larger Catechism. What are the sins forbidden in the Eighth Commandment?
And the answer, the sins forbidden in the Eighth Commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are the following. Theft, robbery, kidnapping and slave catching, and receiving anything that is stolen, fraudulent dealing, false weights and measures, and moving the marks of property boundaries, injustice and unfaithfulness in contracts or in matters of trust, oppression, extortion, taking advantage of the poor by charging them interest on loans, bribery, harassing lawsuits, unjust attainments, and unjust removal of people from their land, hoarding commodities to enhance the price, unlawful callings, and all other unjust or sinful ways of taking or withholding from our neighbor what belongs to him, or enriching ourselves.
Now, it's pretty fascinating to me that this was scripted, middle of the 17th century, at about almost exactly the same time that the predominantly Protestant European nations entered into the transatlantic slave trade.
[7:38] Imagine how different the colonial project would have been if this catechism had been applied consistently. No slave catching.

Did you hear that part? The original wording was, no man stealing. And the divines actually reference 1 Timothy 1 verse 10 that explicitly lists slave trading as an act of divine law-breaking. It's in your Bible. And just in case the person might go, well, what about inherited slaves? I didn't actually go over to West Africa and kidnap anybody. Well, the very next line in the catechism, no receiving of anything that is stolen.
And there the divines cite Proverbs 29 verse 24, which reads, the accomplices of thieves, literally those who partner with or share with thieves, are their own enemies.
Those two lines right there should have made the slave trade unthinkable for Reformed Christians. And did you, as I was reading that list, did you hear the other line lower down?
[8:39] No unjust removal of people from their land. Near the divines, they point to the prophet Micah. Micah chapter 2 verse 1 to 2. Woe to those who plan iniquity, to those who plot evil on their beds.

At morning's light, they carry it out because it is in their power to do it. They covet fields and seize them, and houses and take them. They defraud people of their homes. They rob them of their

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inheritance.
So much, so much of the colonial project was founded upon a violation of the Eighth Commandment and carried out, sadly, by card-carrying Protestant Christians. We are incredibly sophisticated in our thievery.
And so we need to think through theft, then, in a very comprehensive way, like the Bible does. That same section in the larger catechism also has a lot to say about the use of false weights and measures.
You might have seen that. And there's a lot in the Bible about false weights and measures. Here's just one verse, Proverbs 11.1, The Lord detests dishonest scales. You didn't have coins in ancient Israel.
[9:49] You had lumps of silver and gold, basically. And so to establish how much you had, you needed weighted scales. And so one of the ways of cheating people with these kind of ancient transactions was that you would tinker with your scales.

If you can sneak a little bit of extra weight onto your side, it devalues the lump of silver on the other side. I think one of the ways we could maybe apply this to our modern context is the underpaying or the undervaluing of services that are rendered to us.
So we live in a society, for example, that was built on the back of cheap labor. And when apartheid ended, that didn't just suddenly automatically recalibrate and come right.
And so today, you will find many, many, many people who are willing to do some pretty intense labor for peanuts as pay. And I say willing there with inverted commas because the legacy and the present economic climate forces desperate people into that particular situation.
And often, those of us who are affluent are far too happy to just kind of unquestioningly go along with it. Not think about it. Yes, we want the government to take responsibility for the mess that our economy is in, and they should take responsibility.
[11:05] Perhaps they should take the lion's share of responsibility. But many of us here this morning are employers. We have domestic workers and cleaners and gardeners and other casual workers of various types.

How we pay them and value their work says a lot about our commitment to the Eighth Commandment. It says a lot about whether or not we're actually thieves.
Now there's so much more we could say about this. We could say things about tax avoidance, purchasing pirated merchandise, the purchasing of products that entrench forms of kind of functional economic slavery in our country and around the world.
Dishonest marketing. There are so many different ways we could go on this. I can kind of only introduce the topic here, but as Christians, I think what we've got to do is we've got to think broadly and carefully and comprehensively about our economic decisions.
The products we consume, the activities we participate in, we have to do this if we are going to keep the Eighth Commandment. If we're going to avoid being thieves, really.
[12:15] So we steal when we steal. No matter how sophisticated our stealing is, we steal when we steal. Now are there other ways in which we steal?

Well, we steal when we lack generosity and justice. So you'll notice as we've gone through this series, what we've done is we've not only ever looked at the things that the command prohibits, but we've also looked at what positive obedience to the command might be.
In those 17th century catechisms, reformed catechisms, the commands are always discussed in terms of prohibitions, that is, what's being forbidden, and then in terms of duties, what we ought to do positively in light of the command.
In fact, in the catechisms they put the duties first and then the prohibitions afterwards. And that's not because the 17th century theologians were all a bunch of grumpy, miserable legalists. They put forward the duties of each command because that's the pattern they saw in Jesus himself.
Whenever they saw Jesus talk about the commands, they saw the same pattern. So consider this interaction between Jesus and a particularly wealthy individual that comes in Mark's Gospel, chapter 10. As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him.
[13:32] Good teacher, he asked, what must I do to inherit eternal life? Why do you call me good? Jesus answered, no one is good except God alone. You know the commandments, you shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.

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Teacher, he declared, all these I have kept and it was a boy. Jesus looked at him and loved him. One thing you lack, he said, go sell everything you have and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven and then come follow me.
At this, the man's face fell, he went away sad because he had great wealth. So you notice there, Jesus lists all the commands from the second half of the Ten Commandments, all the moral law of God there and included in that list is don't steal.
And the guy says, look, I've kept this command since I was a kid. And he's not being funny, he's saying, I've kept this command since I was a kid. On the prohibition side, he's good, there are no cashmere socks in his backpack.
But then Jesus says, oh, but you lack something, something missing. Sell what you have and give generously to the poor. And that completely shuts down and kills the conversation because the man is exceedingly wealthy and unwilling to part with his money.
[14:52] Now, there are a bunch of different things we can learn from that particular interaction. One of the things we learn, though, is that for Jesus, keeping the commandment, thou shalt not steal, also has a positive expression in giving generously to the poor.

You see that? It's a positive side there. There's a duty attached to the command. love. And that duty, again, it's not there because Jesus is a legalist and he wants a whole bunch of self-righteous moralists following him.
That's not what he wants. The duty is there actually because of love. The text says, did you see that Jesus looked at him and loved him and then explained the duty of the command to him?
The duties of the commandments are invitations to you and me to step into love, love for neighbor, love for our fellow human being. If we just focus on the prohibitions, then Christians would be relatively good at keeping the peace, right?
We'd be good at that. We wouldn't murder anybody. We wouldn't take people's spouses. We wouldn't take their stuff. We'd keep the peace. But we wouldn't be proactive in our love ethic towards other people.
[16:05] We'd be a little bit like that neighbor who keeps his house neat and tidy. The verge is trimmed. The walls are painted. He never plays loud music. He never parks in front of your driveway.

His guests never park in front of your driveway. His dog miraculously never barks. He keeps the peace. But he doesn't keep an eye on your house when you're away.
He's never going to talk to you over the fence or invite you to a briar. He is just not the kind of neighbor who's going to go out of his way to assist you when you're in that moment of need. If we only focus on the prohibitions of the law, then we become that neighbor.
We keep the peace but nothing more. And for the Christian stopping short at keeping the peace is not enough. And the reason it is not enough is because our Lord and our Savior doesn't stop there. In that same chapter, Mark chapter 10, a few paragraphs down, Jesus says this to his disciples. He says, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.
[17:08] For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. So in the gospel, in the central message of our faith, Jesus goes out of his way to serve us, to give us forgiveness, to give us forgiveness from sins and eternal life in relationship with the Father.

He is proactive towards us and you say, well, how does he serve us? He gives his life, he says, as a ransom. That is, he pays. This is economic language.
He pays. He pays a price to serve us. He incurs cost to serve us. So you can keep the commandments and you can say, I don't do this and I don't do this and I don't do this, but the way of Christ is, I do do this and I do do this and I do do this.
Why? Well, because Christ did this for me. I can now serve other people at cost to myself, great cost to myself, because of Christ's costly service to me.
And so here's how our friends the Westminster Divines then go about this particular question, question 41 in the Lodger Catechism. What are the duties required in the Eighth Commandment?
[18:21] The answer, the duties required in the Eighth Commandment are the following, truth, faithfulness and justice in contracts and commerce between people, paying everyone what they are due, restitution of goods unlawfully detained from the right owners of it, giving and lending freely according to our abilities and the necessities of others, moderation in our judgments, wills and

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affections concerning worldly goods, a prudent care and effort to get, keep, use and dispose those things which are necessary and convenient for our physical needs and suitable to our condition, a lawful calling and diligence in it, frugality, avoiding unnecessary lawsuits, pledges of security or other similar legal entanglements, and an effort by all just and lawful means to procure, preserve, and further the wealth and outward estate of others as much as our own.

I think we can summarize all that stuff under two words, generosity and justice. Generosity and justice. Christianity, this faith that we are a part of, has within it this constant impulse to improve the estate of others.
It's built into the fabric of who we are. It's like Jesus says, love your neighbor as yourself. That's the second commandment. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, rather in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests, but each of you to the interests of others.
That's the apostle Paul. That's the default position of the Christian. That's what you signed up for when you became a Christian. And so in a world then of injustice, in a world of people ruthlessly building their own personal empires, the Christian comes in and he or she asks not how do I multiply and make the most out of my material wealth for my own benefit.
The Christian asks how do I make the most out of my material wealth for the benefit of others? It's a radically different way to approach life. And I think you violate the eighth commandment when you don't have that disposition towards your own personal material wealth and means.
[20:31] God owns everything. He owns everything. Psalm 50, I have no need of a bull from your stall or a goat from your pens, for every animal in the forest is mine and the cattle on a thousand hills.

God owns everything. And yet in his providence he gives you a little corner of his wealth to steward. What the eighth commandment then does is the eighth commandment safeguards how you steward what you've been allotted by directing you to use that wealth in the interests of generosity and justice towards others.
My friends, we live right now in the most economically unequal society in the world. That's not hyperbole. There is poverty and there is injustice around us all of the time.
And I know when you look at the scale of it, when you look at how entrenched it is, when you look at the state of our government, when you look at our SOEs, when you look at our infrastructure, it can overwhelm you.
It can overwhelm you to the point of despair. But I wonder if us Christians, and particularly those of us who are more affluent, and I take that to be most of the people in this congregation, I wonder if we need to put a different spin on it.
[21:59] I wonder if we should respond not with a sense of despair, but rather with a sense of privilege, almost a sense of excitement at the opportunity that lies in front of us to share the justice and generosity of God with other people.

We should put that spin on it. One of the most controversial and heated and debated terms in recent years has been this term privilege. White privilege, male privilege, class privilege.
Before I even say what I think, you've already got views in your mind right now. I'm on this team, I'm on this team. I have no desire to add to that controversy.
But here's one way to think about privilege. This comes from Dr. Anthony Bradley, he's a Presbyterian, he's an African-American professor of theology and ethics in New York City. He says this, he says whatever cultural privileges we have been given, either by race or class, what matters is whether or not we use our privileges to help those who do not have them.
Our economic, genetic, or socially conditioned privileges are not for the purpose of protecting and conserving said privileges for ourselves, but rather to pass on the benefits to others who are on the margins.
[23:20] Our privileges are bestowed upon us by God so that we may use them to love our neighbors well. It is by embracing God's providence in this way that we are protected from the poison of envy or a sense of entitlement.

Privilege is an opportunity to honor God through reciprocity and charity. What if we took that rather toxic debate about privilege and we turned it into an opportunity to honor God by displaying His justice and His generosity to a desperate world?

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One of the reasons why the conversation about privilege is so toxic is because privilege is so tied up with guilt and shame.
But the Christian has no guilt or shame. Why? Because our guilt and shame is nailed. It's nailed to a cross 2,000 years ago.
There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. How much guilt and shame did you hear in that sentence? There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. That means that any conversation that we as Christians have about privilege is not a conversation about doing something good for your fellow human being because you feel a little bit guilty and complicit in past injustices.
[24:42] Listen very, very carefully. We are all, all of us, every single person sitting here this morning, we are also very, very, very complicit in all sorts of injustices right now. Right now.

If we could see the different lines linking our daily practices, our purchases, our consumption to radically unjust institutions and systems and people that are all propped up by exploiting vulnerable humans, if we could see clearly those lines right now, we'd all be crushed by the guilt of our complicity.
And if you don't think that you're being incredibly naive about this world that we live in, for the Christian guilt and shame can never be a driver, can never be a driver.
We must look at our privilege now, what we have, and we must say look at this opportunity. Look at this opportunity the Lord has afforded me to be radically generous and seek justice of my fellow human being, my neighbor.
That's what we do. That is the duty of the Eighth Commandment. Now that is different outworkings for us, based on your station in life.
[25:53] Some of you are in industries and fields where you have significant power. You have power to effect greater justice in those industries. Fairness for the people who are involved in those industries.

Some of you have opportunities to make significant amounts of money through your qualifications and your skills. And then to use that money generously for the care of the poor and for Christian ministry. For some of you it's just about responsible choices in what you consume.
Avoiding consuming products or services in ways that hurt other people. And we don't always get to see that. There's sometimes layers. And so we've got to be careful. We've got to be intelligent about some of these things.
Using your wealth only for your own benefit doesn't bring you life. I know you think it does but it doesn't. It doesn't bring you life. Paul has this word for the rich people in 1 Timothy chapter 6 verse 17 and to 19.
And by the way if you sit in a congregation like this in a country like this and you hear oh Paul's got a word for the rich people and you think oh well that's for somebody else. Listen to this. Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth which is so uncertain.
[27:06] but to put their hope in God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good. To be rich in good deeds and to be generous and willing to share.

In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life. Notice he doesn't say that it's a sin to be rich.
The Bible never says that. It is not a sin to be rich. In fact he says you should enjoy the good things that God gives you by his providence. But our material riches must translate to a richness of good deeds and generosity.
He says. That's where real treasure is. He says. That's where real life is lived. We think that if we're kind of stockpiling and hoarding and keeping all this money and all these toys and these big houses and these big cars that we're living real life.
That is not real life. It's not. This is real life. As we look at our impoverished city. There's an opportunity.
[28:13] Stands in front of you. To go and to live real life. Secure in the grip of our very, very generous God. We are thieves when we are not living lives of generosity and justice.

The last one. We steal when we steal from God. The very end of your Old Testament. And the nation of Israel return from exile. And they come back and they start rebuilding the land that God had promised in a covenant to them.

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Violating that covenant is what got them into exile in the first place. Continually breaking the covenant. So now they come back and they get a second chance. But if you read the Bible a lot you know this is coming. Sadly they go back to their covenant breaking ways.
Again. Nothing's changed. So in Malachi the very last prophetic book in the Old Testament. God turns to these repetitive covenant breakers. And he says.
You stole from me. He says you stole from me. And the people protest. They say how did we steal from you? Show us. Show it.
[29:23] Prove. Where's the slips? How did we steal from you? Here's what God says. Malachi chapter 3. In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse.

Your whole nation because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse that there may be food in my house. Test me in this says the Lord almighty and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be enough room to store it.
So God says to them as they protest his accusation. God says to them you know how I know that you're stealing from me? You know how I know that you're all a bunch of robbers? Tithes and offerings.
You're not bringing your whole tithe to me. Now you read that and you go what is going on here? Is God like pedantic about the details? You didn't bring your entire 10%.
You brought 8.72%. Bring the entire 10%. Surely that's not what God is about. Doesn't he want all of life devotion that comes from the heart?
[30:27] Not a mere 10%. The answer is yes. God does. He wants you all. He wants everything from you. He could care less about percentages.

He wants all of your worship. He wants all of your devotion. So then why this demand for a tithe? Well think about our previous point. that we ought to be generous and pursue justice in obedience to the 8th commandment.
I can try and I hope you did a good job of it but paint a compelling picture for you of what it would be like to give yourself to a life of generosity and justice. But how do you quantify your performance in that area?
You got a special yardstick somewhere that tells you how you're doing in generosity and justice? A formula? How do you know if you're giving, if you're being generous enough? How do you know if you're giving significant attention to being just?
There's no line, there's no marker that you can kind of look and say, well if I get to that line then I know I've done my weekly duty, right, in this area. There's so many variables as well. Like I suck at math and so you add in more variables, it's just, it's done for me.
[31:31] Your means, your skills, your health and energy, your life circumstances. It would be impossible to create a formula from all of that and to calculate your faithfulness to the 8th commandment. But a tithe is very different.

It's very precise. 10% of your income. There's no kind of gray around that. 10% of your income. 10% of your income goes to God.
And by the way, Jesus and the apostles never seem to overturn the tithe principle in the New Testament like they seem to do with other ceremonial and civil laws. In fact, they seem to add to the basic principle of a tithe, the idea of giving sacrificially and joyously in response to Christ's sacrificial giving of his life for us.
So the New Testament actually comes along and it pushes Christians and says, hey, don't just kind of look for that bottom number, that tithe and peg your giving there and then say, okay, I'm done. Dust your hands. I'm done.
I've done my 10%, my duty. Instead, start there. Start at the 10% and ask, how can I be even more generous and sacrificial with what the Lord has given me?
[32:38] But the tithe is a litmus test. It's a very defined marker. It's a sample of the whole. And that is exactly what God is on about in the book of Malachi.

He's saying to Israel, if you can't even give me 10%, how are you ever going to give your whole life to me? How? If you can't put the 10% in the storeroom, how are you ever going to worship me with everything you've got?
It is precisely because you're not giving me the 10% that I know that you are robbing me. I made you. I breathed life into you.

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I created this world for you to live in. On top of that, I redeemed you when you made a mess of this world. I bought you. I bought you. At an unimaginable price, and yet through your sin, through your continual covenant breaking, you steal from me over and over and over again.
And I know this because you can't even take your selfish pause off that 10%. Friends, we're thieves. Since the garden, we have been thieves.
[33:50] There's Adam and Eve. In paradise, they have everything that they need, everything that they need for blissful contentment. That is why it is called paradise.

But they take the one thing that God keeps for himself, the knowledge of good and evil, and they steal it. Eve reaches out. She steals the fruit from the tree and Adam, her accomplice.
He doesn't stop her. He joins right in. And their thievery destroys paradise. Our ongoing thievery perpetuates that original sin over and over again, and we continue to destroy paradise.
We are thieves. And so what hope is there for thieves like you and me? I'll tell you what my hope is. Luke 23, we find Jesus having a conversation with a man.
He's a broken man. He's a man at the very end of himself. And to this very broken and very desperate man, Jesus speaks these words of comfort. He says, truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.
[35:04] You know who that man was, right? A thief. You know where that conversation took place, right? Took place on the cross.

Moments before Christ's death. After a life of stealing, the thief hanging there in agony looks over at the man who's hanging next to him, and he realizes that there's something abnormal going on here. He thinks in his mind, he thinks, I am paying for my sins. I'm getting what I deserve. But this man, he's done nothing wrong. This man is not a thief. He is not a criminal.
This man is a king. And so he turns to Jesus, and with the final little bit of strength that he has left, he says, Jesus, remember me. Remember me when you come into your kingdom.
And the king, bleeding, broken, suffering king, turns to the thief and he says, truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise. Friends, we've decimated the paradise.
[36:10] We've stripped every last little bit of fruit off of the trees in our greed, in our hunger for power, in our selfishness. We've stolen from God again and again and again.

And yet, in his incalculable mercy and grace, at immense cost to himself, the death of his son, he turns to us and he says, come back in.
Come back into paradise. How do you, sitting here this morning, how do you overcome the greed and selfishness in your own life? How do you overcome, how do you give generously, sacrificially? How do you keep the eighth commandment in a full, thoughtful, comprehensive way? How do you gaze upon the crucified king, who momentarily gives up his treasure in order to make you his treasure?
this is the bottom line we don't have to steal because we have it all already all if you're not giving generously and sacrificially it's probably because deep down you don't really believe that you have everything in Jesus Christ that's the honest truth if you're cold and apathetic towards seeking justice for others it's probably because you don't really believe that in God's in that moment on the cross God's perfect justice was satisfied in that sacrifice friends run to Jesus run to him be like that thief realize that if you're honest you're at the end of yourself turn to him and say remember me Lord remember me and he will he will he will save you and he will fill you with riches beyond anything you can think of or imagine both in this life and in the life to come let us look to that cross and be empowered to keep the eighth commandment let's pray our father and our king we want to we want to repent this morning for our thievery we want to confess that we steal from you our loving and generous God you have poured out to us more than we can think of or imagine in Jesus Christ and yet we keep back parts of ourself in devotion to you one of the places that is most evident is what we do with our material wealth with our money with our bank accounts father
[39:15] I pray for us as individuals and us as a church that when people encounter us they will see people who use their material wealth in a way that is shaped and formed by the gospel of the the king who gives up his treasure to make them his treasure let that be evident in how we spend how we give to church ministry to the poor to people in need around us make us generous make us just in the face of mounting injustice Lord that will cost us in places if we stand up in our firms our companies and we go against unjust practices it will cost us give us the conviction to do that Lord and father I pray for any person who is sitting here this morning who has never been in that situation that the thief found himself in where they've realized they don't actually have anything they

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might have material wealth but they don't actually have anything underneath that and that they need to turn something bigger

I pray that you'd help them see that this morning that Jesus Christ is where true life is found that they would repent of their sin and trust in Christ help us Lord to keep the eighth commandment we pray and we ask this in Jesus name amen we're going to confess our sins together there's a confession prayer on the screen we will say this out loud these confession prayers are template confession prayers they help us get into the rhythm and the practice of confessing our sins not in kind of an act of whipping ourselves over the back to feel miserable but in a way of clearing out the dirt so that we can embrace the love of Jesus Christ that stands before us won't you confess your sins before almighty God Lord God our rock of ages we confess that often we are oblivious to the battle we are in we grow complacent weak and lazy in our walk with you awaken us to the reality of our enemy and our sin remind us of the cross of Christ remind us of the blood that cleanses us and secures our hope may we be a people of strong faith and deep devotion to you embolden us and grant us the confidence that the living God is on our side show us
Jesus that we may fully trust and live in the light of your promises in Jesus name Amen Amen

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