

Exodus: Journey of Revelation - Week 9

Sermon Date 11/13/2016

QUICK REVIEW

- 1) Looking back at your notes from Sunday's teaching, was there anything that caught your attention?

The Goal

This week we are unpacking Commandments Eight and Nine. Both of these commandments revolve around the idea of taking something that does not belong to you. One is the theft of material possessions, and the other is essentially the theft of a person's reputation. Please remember the backdrop of how God gave these commandments to the Israelites. They were being called out to live differently than they had in Egypt.

MY STORY

- 1) Looking back at last week, what did you learn about guarding your heart?
- 2) Is there something you needed to shift to guard your heart better?
- 3) What was your takeaway from last week's study?

DIGGING DEEPER

Exodus 20:15

¹⁵ "You must not steal."

From The New American Commentary

Stealing is taking something that does not belong to you without permission. Legal possession and personal ownership of things are permitted implicitly by this commandment, which assumes that stealing is possible, something that would technically not be possible in a completely communal society. There are, of course, no completely communal societies; ownership of things exists in all families and neighborhoods and entire societies, no matter what their economic organizational structure. But with ownership comes responsibility, and respect for ownership is a responsibility in itself as well. This command is reinforced by a variety of individual laws on stealing in Exodus (22:1–16), Leviticus (Lev 6:2–5; 19:11, 13), and Deuteronomy (24:7). Stealing threatens the social order and causes pain to others by

undermining the ability to possess with sure access things that are useful and needful. The food thief makes others go hungry; the work animal thief interrupts farming; the kidnapper tears apart a family; the clothing thief makes another suffer from the sun or the cold. ⁱ

- 4) In the slavery environment the Israelites came from, their mindset was doing whatever they had to do to survive. At the base of Mount Sinai, God is giving them new guidelines for a healthy community. How does this commandment help them function?
- 5) Have you ever had something stolen from you, and if so, how did it make you feel?

Theft is a huge robber of personal security. Not only does a person lose the items taken, but it has a psychological impact on the person in the way of insecurity.

- 6) How does stealing or theft of property affect the feeling of security people have in a community?

Exodus 20:16

¹⁶“You must not testify falsely against your neighbor.”ⁱⁱ

From *The Bible Guide*

This is again about stealing. This time the theft is of someone’s reputation. With so many laws carrying the death penalty, a lie may cause a person to be executed for something they didn’t do. Even gossip can be lethal and result in a living death for someone who can’t prove the truth.ⁱⁱⁱ

- 7) What do verses 15 and 16 have in common?
- 8) Why is false testimony about someone stealing?
- 9) While this commandment centers around the judicial system, there are other places in the Bible that speak to this issue. What other words do we use to describe giving false testimony about another person?

Gossip and slander

TAKING IT HOME

Proverbs 11:14 (ESV)

"Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing covered."

10) Referring to this verse in Proverbs, what do gossip and slander do? Why is it important for a person to keep a secret?

11) What are some ways Christians unknowingly gossip in the church?

Below are some examples:

What about asking for prayer for someone and giving too many details, which then cause them to be cast in a bad light.

A low-grade grumbling about the following: how a pastor did something in a manner or style that you disagreed with; a specific song was played that you didn't like or wasn't played that you love; or a decision was made to not do a specific event because of no one willing to step up and lead.

Philippians 2:14-15 (ESV) teaches us this:

" Do all things without grumbling or disputing, ¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world."

12) According to the verse from Philippians, what is the result of us doing everything without grumbling and complaining?

Looking back to last week, we discussed Proverbs 4:23 and the thought of guarding our hearts because life flows from it. In the following verses Jesus is again speaking about our hearts.

Matthew 15:18-19 (NLT)

"¹⁸ But the words you speak come from the heart—that's what defiles you. ¹⁹ For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander." ^{iv}

13) If our behaviors flow out from our hearts, does this imply that what we put into our hearts matters? If so, is there anything we need to stop filling our hearts with?

14) Why are gossip and slander so devastating to the people they affect?

CHAIR TIME TOOLS

Do Not Steal

"Thou shall not steal" seems like an easy commandment to follow, and I am sure most of us would say we are honest people in this area. As we review the Scriptures below, think about times in our lives when we may take advantage of a situation: using or taking something at the office that we really shouldn't; exaggerating on an expense report; maybe something regarding our taxes or shopping—we know the right thing to do but want to save a few dollars. How do these Scriptures impact you?

Job 20:19-22

"For they oppressed the poor and left them destitute. They foreclosed on their homes. They were always greedy and never satisfied. Nothing remains of all the things they dreamed about. Nothing is left after they finish gorging themselves. Therefore, their prosperity will not endure. In the midst of plenty, they will run into trouble and be overcome by misery."

Proverbs 11:1

"The Lord detests the use of dishonest scales, but he delights in accurate weights."

Ephesians 4:28

"If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need."

Do Not Bear False Witness

We are charged not to bear false witness against our neighbors. Christ challenges us to love and honor our neighbor. The people we interact with are our neighbors: friends, co-workers, etc. As you reflect on the Scriptures below in your Chair Time, how do you feel God speaking to you about interactions with those around you?

Proverbs 10:18

"Hiding hatred makes you a liar; slandering others makes you a fool."

Ephesians 4:31

"Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior."

James 4:11

"Don't speak evil against each other, dear brothers and sisters. If you criticize and judge each other, then you are criticizing and judging God's law. But your job is to obey the law, not to judge whether it applies to you."

ⁱ Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus, Vol. 2, The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006), 465.

ⁱⁱ Tyndale House Publishers. *Holy Bible: New Living Translation*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2013. Print.

ⁱⁱⁱ Andrew Knowles, *The Bible Guide*, 1st Augsburg books ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2001), 53–54.

^{iv} Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2013), Mt 15:18–20.