

# You Shall Not Steal

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Preacher: Nathan Rambeck

[ 0 : 00 ] So, we are in the book of Exodus. We're looking at the Ten Commandments.! We're getting pretty far through the Ten Commandments here.

! We're on the Eighth Commandment, You Shall Not Steal.! I had a few messages on in the very beginning of this series on the Ten Commandments.

But I want to set up each of the commandments that we go through with this perspective. You know, we just had that memory verse. Let me pull it up and make sure I get it right. The memory verse says this. This is from Romans 10.4.

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. The Ten Commandments is the law that is being talked about there.

Paul was a Jew, and for the Jewish people, the law of Moses was one of the most important things in their life. It was a big part of their covenant with God.

[ 1 : 08 ] And the Ten Commandments really is a representation of the whole law. But here, Paul is saying, hey, the...

Sorry, let me read it again. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. Jesus died for the sins of the world.

And for those who put their faith and trust in Him, their righteousness is not based on what they do, or what they don't do, or fail to do. Our righteousness, our standing before God, is based on what Jesus did for us, and just our simple faith and trust in that.

But does that mean that the law doesn't matter, that we can just totally ignore it, that it doesn't have any relevance to us? Well, that's not the case either.

So, our perspective is this. Two things. One, we're not under the law, which means that we're not under the guilt and condemnation, the judgment of the law.

[ 2 : 12 ] As Christians, we are not under judgment. The Bible says we have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, we shouldn't look to the law as a way to make us more righteous than God has already made us through Christ.

And we shouldn't look to the law as something that has any power to condemn us. But at the same time, Paul himself also says that the law is holy and righteous and good.

And we can look to the law as a set of rules that are boundaries for our lives, things that will protect us and protect others. It teaches us right from wrong.

So, we shouldn't ignore the law. We shouldn't diminish it. But we need to make sure that we come to it with the right perspective. And all of that, by the way, applies to the Eighth Commandment.

And here's the Eighth Commandment. This is another short one. Here it goes. Exodus 20, verse 15. You shall not steal. Now, sometimes when I come to these messages, this is a verse that's four words long.

[ 3 : 23 ] And just like I said with the last two commandments, in the Hebrew, this is only two words. Basically this. Don't steal. And I'm kind of tempted to just come up here on a Sunday morning and say, all right, guys, don't steal.

Any questions? Right? It seems like, you know, it's just as simple as that. Don't take people's stuff. Don't take stuff that doesn't belong to you. But really, there's a lot more to it than that.

And one of the things I think that's important, you know, when we looked at the commandment, you shall not murder, one of the things that we talked about is that that command provides a foundation for something. A foundation based on God's created order, how he created things, a foundation for a human right, what we call today the right to life.

That all of us, every single human being created in the image of God, because we're created in the image of God, we have rights. And one of those is the right to life. And the command, you shall not

murder, sets a boundary around that right.

And in the same way, this law, you shall not steal, does the same thing. It establishes for us as human beings, we have the right to property. We have the right to own things.

[ 4 : 34 ] And God has set a boundary around that right to say, hey, don't take other people's stuff. There are things that belong to individuals or sometimes families, and God intends to protect those rights.

In the book of Deuteronomy, there is a passage, because when we talk about property, property can mean many things, right? A lot of times, the first thing we think about is land, right?

And the Bible specifically protects people's right to own their own land. In Deuteronomy 19, verse 14, it says this, You shall not remove your neighbor's landmark, which the men of old have set, in your inheritance, which you will inherit in the land of the Lord your God, the land the Lord your God is giving you to possess.

This was specifically to the Jews, and he gave them a land in which they could inhabit, but each tribe was given their own land, and then each family had their own land. And the land was allotted, but then you needed to have some kind of marker, right, to determine the lots, you know, what your lot looked like, what the boundaries were.

And a lot of times, especially in the ancient past, you would take these big boulders, these big rocks, and put them at the corner of your lot to determine what was your land and what was your neighbor's land.

[ 6 : 05 ] And one of the ways that people would try to cheat or steal somebody else's property is they would move that boulder in the middle of the night, right, the neighbor, you might move that boulder closer to your neighbor's house, and that would extend your lot, your parcel.

And this commandment right here says, don't do that. Don't steal your neighbor's land. You know, God designed the world in such a way that he wants individuals and families to own things.

You know, I think a lot of times we, as Christians, we make a lot about how basically God owns everything, and is that true? Yes, I mean, God's the one who created everything, right?

And so we are stewards of those things, but God created us to take ownership of things in this world, whether it's land or other types of property, material goods, animals, things like that.

You know, and the idea that God created people to own things, to some people that may sound like glaringly obvious, but for much of the history of the world, it has not been.

[ 7 : 21 ] For much of human history, the right to own property, specifically land I'm thinking about, has been disputed. I think about the feudal system. If you've ever studied history, the feudal system, only the king was allowed to own land, and he would designate certain parcels to these feudal lords, and then if you wanted to make a living as a farmer, you basically were just a servant.

You didn't own your own land to be able to raise your own crops on your own land. You did it on somebody else's land. You were not allowed, as an individual, to, unless you were the king or one of his lords, you were not allowed to own land.

And then today, we still have this specter of Marxism, of communism, of socialism. By the way, communism and socialism are in the same family. They're just cousins with one another.

In which it's disputed about whether people should be able to own things. A lot of people think, oh, only the government should own things. And a lot of countries, right, have tried that out.

And over and over and over and over again, it ends up in failure. It ends up in despair many times. Poverty, starvation.

[ 8 : 41 ] Even today, in many parts of the world, there are countries in which you are not allowed to own your own land. You just have to rent it from the government. And you know what? Even in this country, the United States of America, America, we have this system where even if you've paid off your entire mortgage, you still have to pay a rental fee to the government in order to keep your land.

We call it property taxes. And is that just? Is that fair? No. Not at all. Well, so we talked about just one form of property.

That's land. But the Bible talks about so many other things. In Exodus chapter 2, if you turn there, this is basically just one chapter or two chapters past the Ten Commandments here.

But Exodus chapter 22, there's a whole series of laws regarding stealing and property rights. You know, usually when we think about stealing, we think about stealing in a very direct manner.

Where maybe you're in a dark alley, right, and somebody says, your money or your life, right? Or somebody picks your pocket, you know, when you're in the city.

[ 9 : 57 ] Or maybe you wake up in the morning, you go into your garage, and all your power tools are gone. And somebody broke into your garage and stole all your tools. But, you know, stealing actually comes in many different forms, not always in those direct ways.

And the Bible actually addresses many of them. Let's look at a few. Exodus chapter 22. Let's look at verse 5. We're going to kind of jump around here in the book of Exodus, or excuse me, in this chapter primarily.

Let's look at verse 5. It says this, Here is a commandment about not allowing your animals to graze somebody else's field.

Now, on the surface, we might not consider that stealing. But that's not your grass. That's your neighbor's grass or grain or whatever is being grazed.

What we find in the Old Testament laws is what we call case law, where very specific examples are given. But the idea is that those examples should be used as principles to cover all kinds of other things.

[ 11 : 22 ] And so it's not just farming and stealing when it comes to farming that God is concerned about. He's concerned about property rights in every area of life. But farming, right, provides a good example for principles.

And so what are some maybe other examples we can think about when it comes to consuming someone else's resources? Well, maybe along the same lines, you have your neighbor, and your neighbor has spent so much time building a beautiful flower garden in their front yard.

And you let your dog, or maybe it's your kids, just run around, and they go and they trample your neighbor's flowers. Hey, that's a violation of that neighbor's property rights.

Maybe you're at work, and your work has a really nice color copier, and you're going to do some birthday invitations, and you don't have any kind of color copier or printer at home.

And so you're just going to use that for your personal use, and you're not going to really ask for permission, because somebody might say no. That's also consuming someone else's resources for your own benefit.

[ 12 : 31 ] Or maybe using a company car to run personal errands without permission. And I think about this when it comes to children, right?

Children need to learn at an early age property rights. That's why I actually think it's really important. You know, we should teach our children to share, right? But I think that it can be counterproductive to force our children to share their things, right?

Because if they're forced to share, right, just like the government does to us, they forces us to share our wages with others, then that's not really sharing, right?

It's not really us giving. That's something being forced away from us. And so I think from an early age, we can teach our children that, hey, there's stuff that's yours. Maybe you got something for your birthday, or you earned something through working.

And, hey, that belongs to you. And if you want to share it, it's good to share, but not necessarily forcing children to share. But I think about, you know, you might have a child that builds up a nice stash of candy from Halloween.

[ 13 : 45 ] And they've got that in their own little spot, in their own little marked bag with their name on it in the pantry. And one of their brothers or one of their sisters goes in and decides, hey, I need a snack right now.

And I'm just going to ignore the name on that bag and just take some for myself. Hey, that belongs to somebody else. Another form of stealing is being cheated.

Being cheated. Here's what it says in Leviticus 19.11. And we're going to look at a couple of verses from Leviticus 19, so you can turn there if you'd like. But Leviticus 19.11 says this, You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another.

So in Leviticus, this passage here, it's equating stealing with lying, with deceiving, with cheating, with dealing falsely. Some examples here are, I think a lot of us think about the used car salesman. Now, there can be great used car salesmen out there. But there's enough of a problem that we kind of have this picture of somebody selling you a lemon for not a fair price.

[ 15 : 00 ] We were pitching a movie from the Kendrick Brothers a few weeks ago. What was the name of that? The Flywheel. Flywheel. We have it in the library if anyone wants to check it out on DVD.

They're actually making a new version of it in Portuguese, of all things, which I think is really neat. But the kind of core plot in that movie is the guy's a used car salesman, and he's cheating people all the time, selling cars, not telling the people he's selling to about the problems with the vehicles. And that's what is being talked about here in Leviticus. Selling a house when you know there's major problems with the house, but you're not disclosing it to the buyers. One of the things I've seen, so I've seen this, is you have a store and it has this huge sign, going out of business sale, fire sale.

And I'm like, oh, wow, maybe we can find some really great deals there. And then a month later, they're still going out of business, and then two months later, they're still going out of business, and like three years later, they're still going out of business.

It's like, what's going on here? I don't think that they're being truthful about their going out of business. Some other ways that you can, you know, there are so many examples I can come up with, but maybe a few that are closer to home.

[16:16] When you're applying for a job, and hey, you just kind of make a few little lies about what your experience or skills are on your job application. Or another one.

A lot of times we think about stealing as, you know, it's the big corporations, you know, that take advantage of people or things like that. But a lot of times, right, it's the customers that are taking advantage of the business, whether it's a small business or a big one.

Is stealing okay as long as it's a big business? No. Not at all. A lot of times we have different ways that we can justify the things that we do.

But I've seen this happen where, hey, I've got this school dance coming up, and there's this dress I saw online that I can't really afford, but I really want this dress.

And so I've got an idea. What I'll do is I'll buy the dress. It'll come just in time for the dance. And then after the dance is over, I'll just return it, right?

[17:19] That's cheating, the system, right? That's not what you're supposed to do. This isn't a rental service. Taking advantage of people. Here's another one.

This is from Leviticus 19, verse 13. You shall not cheat your neighbor nor rob him. The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until the morning.

The focus here is on somebody who's an employer. And you have employees, and you owe them a wage at the end of the day. You know, we have different pay periods. Some people, it's day laborers.

Sometimes you pay on a weekly basis. Sometimes it's two weeks or even a month. But usually there's some kind of agreement involved in what the employee expects. And so when somebody works for you based on a specific expectation, if you withhold their wages from them beyond that time frame, that is stealing.

You are taking something that belongs to them. You owe them that wage because of the work that they did for you. And so not paying your employees on time is a form of theft.

[18:34] Just another example, sometimes employees in a business, they will pay for things from out of their own pocket. You know, we have something we call expense reports, right?

You buy something on behalf of the company and then you get reimbursed for it. But sometimes companies don't do a good job of reimbursing those in a timely manner. That fits into this category of stealing.

But on the consumer side, on the other side, we can do the same thing. You know, a lot of times we can take out a loan against our house, a home loan, a car loan. And we owe a monthly payment, monthly mortgage payment or car payment.

And when we fail to meet our commitment to make those contractual payments, that is a form of stealing. Next one.

Here, this is from Deuteronomy chapter 25. Deuteronomy chapter 25. Actually, let's start because if you're already in Leviticus 19, let me start with this one because it's from Leviticus 19.

[19:40] But we're going to actually have three passages on this. This is about weights and measures, dishonest weights and measures. Leviticus 19.35, You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume.

You shall have honest scales, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin. I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt. So back in this day, the marketplace was the place where you did most of your selling.

You would sell grain and all kinds of other goods. But typically, in order to make sure that you were getting a fair portion of whatever it was that you were buying, there was ways to weigh those things to determine how much volume.

We have today all kinds of different weights and measurements where we do the same thing. You have a bushel of, what, apples. You have, you know, sacks of wheat.

And this is how trading happened back during these times and really still does today. But what people would do, and we still find today, is you have a scale, right?

[ 20 : 51 ] And maybe you put some, oh, what's something that's more lightweight? Some string beans, right? I like string beans. And you want a pound of string beans.

And so you have a scale and on one side you have a weight and it weighs one pound. And on the other side, you put your produce, your goods. And you put enough on there so that the scale, right, it goes nice and even.

But if you're a cheat, if you're dishonest, even though you can have that little weight and even though it says right on there, one pound, well, let me just shave off a part of this weight.

I'll make it a little bit lighter. So that even though the purchaser thinks they're getting a pound of whatever it might be, they're actually getting less. And I can take home more money.

Deuteronomy 25, 13 says the same thing. You shall not have in your bag differing weights, a heavy and a light. You shall not have in your house differing measures, a large and a small.

[ 21 : 51 ] You shall have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure that your days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord your God is giving you. For all who do such things, all who behave unrighteously are an abomination to the Lord your God.

Even in Proverbs, it says this, dishonest scales are an abomination to the Lord but a just weight is his delight. God loves it when people deal fairly with one another.

When they work hard and pay and take a fair wage, deal fairly with one another through service to one another. Just some examples on how, you know, maybe in the modern era, how differing weights and measures, we might find that in the modern age here.

I think about false claims, you see on maybe a bottle of goods, 100% natural. And is that actually the case? I know one of the things that's been a really big deal is the marketing of honey.

So much, I guess, of the honey sold in this country is watered down with like high fructose corn syrup or something like that. People are expecting, you know, that they're paying for the actual natural sweetener that those honeys make which is better for you.

[ 23 : 13 ] But in order to make some extra profit, people will dilute it with some high fructose corn syrup which they can make more cheaply. Some other measures.

We measure our time. You might be an employee and you get paid by the hour. And so, sometimes you can clock in and clock out.

And I've seen this where you say, hey, I'm going to take the day off. I'm going to go fishing. And you ask your buddy, hey, can you take my time card and clock it in for me? That is stealing your employer's time and the labor that you said that you would give.

Or maybe I'm just going to round up. You know, hey, I have a time sheet. I'm going to write out my hours that I worked. And I actually left a little bit early but I'm going to put on there that I worked the full eight hours that I'm supposed to.

Here's another one. Another category is when you borrow things. When you borrow things. Back to Exodus chapter 22.

[ 24 : 25 ] Here's a passage. It says this. And if a man borrows anything from his neighbor and it becomes injured or dies. So this is talking about some kind of farm animal probably.

The owner of it not being with it he shall surely make it good. Make it good. You're going to restore what was injured or died.

That animal. If its owner was with it he shall not make it good. If it was hired well it came for its hire. So really there's three different things going on. You are borrowing in this case an animal and if you were negligent and the animal gets hurt in some kind of way because you were not there watching over that animal that you were borrowing right?

That you became responsible for because you were borrowing it. then if something happens to that animal you are responsible to restore that animal back to who you borrowed it from.

But if you borrow this animal and it just kind of falls over dead well that's not anything that you did there was just something wrong with that animal so there's nothing that you owe to your neighbor.

[ 25 : 38 ] And then the last thing if you were actually paying to use that animal a fee and something happens to the animal well hey that's just the risk that comes with hiring things out and so you don't owe anything in that regard either.

And so what are kind of some modern takeaways that we can have from this? Well when you borrow something a lot of times we're not borrowing animals but you might borrow your neighbor's tools or your friend's tools and are you being careful with those?

Are you treating them as you would treat your own things? Are you being sure to add the oil to the chainsaw or the lawnmower that you're using so that the engine doesn't go bad?

And if you do do you just say ah well you know that's his problem? Or are you taking responsibility for the poor care that you took of your neighbor's things?

Or maybe you lose something you borrow something from your friend or your neighbor and you're just like ah oh well sorry I can't find it and that's the end of it. How would you feel if somebody did that to you?

[ 26 : 51 ] So when it comes to borrowing things we should not be negligent. We should be careful when we borrow things. You know when it comes to stealing stealing is actually a criminal matter.

You know we're used to that in our own criminal justice system if you steal something especially something of some kind of significant worth the law gets involved the courts get involved and God has given the state and rulers the power to enforce property rights.

Now unfortunately the state doesn't always do a good job of enforcing those property rights but when they do God has specifically provided in here and we're going to look at a number of passages here in Exodus chapter 22 of in what way do you enforce these property rights?

What is the punishment? What is the consequence for those who steal? Well here are some principles that are laid out here in Exodus chapter 22 and we can think about this from a from a criminal law perspective on like what the laws ought to be.

A lot of times we don't control that even though we can have some kind of influence in our own government but also think about this from just a personal perspective.

[ 28 : 15 ] Hey what should I do if I'm ever guilty of these things? We'll actually talk about that more when we get to the end of this but there are actually when it comes to crimes in the Bible in the Old Testament law there are only three types of punishment.

When we talked about you shall not murder one of the things that we said is the punishment that God designed in the Bible for murder is the death penalty. That if you take someone's life the life of an innocent person then you forfeit your own and the government should be involved in enforcing that to prevent people from taking the life of the innocent.

Well when it comes to stealing when it comes to destroying other people's property when it comes to property rights it's not the death penalty right? If somebody steals something you don't put them to death.

You actually see that sometimes in certain countries but that's not justice. The punishment should fit the crime and we see that in the Bible itself. But the primary the typical punishment for thievery for stealing is restitution.

You have to pay back what you stole and sometimes beyond what you stole. So look at Exodus chapter 22 verse 4 we're going to be in Exodus chapter 22 here.

[ 29 : 36 ] Exodus chapter 22 verse 4 it says this and this is a whole we actually read this passage when we were looking at you shall not murder because it kind of mixes some things in here.

Again these are case laws and sometimes it'll provide a specific case and then show different punishments for different infractions in that one case. But in Exodus chapter 22 it's mostly talking about stealing.

verse 4 if the theft is certainly found alive in his hand so somebody steals something and they're found out and the thing that they stole they've got in their possession it's in their hand now that's a euphemism that's a euphemism or a metaphor it doesn't necessarily mean it's right directly in their hand but they've got it in their possession it's in their house in their car or whatever whether it is an ox or a donkey or a sheep the consequence is he shall restore double so if you steal something and you've still got it you've got found out and you still have it you have to restore that sheep that you stole and on top of it provide another sheep on top of it now in some ways that might not really make sense well that doesn't seem fair you only stole one why do I owe two what if I don't have another sheep well we'll get to that in a second well the reason is because there needs to be a

deterrent right to crimes if the only deterrent to stealing is that you have to give back what you stole then a lot of people are going to take that risk right because the worst case the best case right when I say best case in air quotes here the best case is you steal and you don't get found out so you get to keep that sheep the worst case is well

I just got to give it back hey I'll do that all day long a criminal will think that way anyway right but if I steal something and I get found out and I have to pay back double I'm going to think twice about doing this so if you're found out and that thing is found in your hand you have to pay back twice what you stole go back to verse one Exodus 22 verse one says this if a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep so there are some cases some scenarios in which it's not double it's quadruple it's five times now theologians have looked at this and tried to discern well why five times for an ox and why four times for a sheep and I was talking to I can't remember one of my kids about this and we were trying to come up with ideas and maybe it's because it's easier to replace a sheep than it is an ox I don't know but in any regard if the thing that you stole has been destroyed in some kind of way in this case animals slaughtered and eaten or maybe sold off in a farm market then the stakes go up the stakes go up and you have to restore four to five fold for that which you both stole but also lost destroyed or sold the next thing is in verse 6 Exodus 22 verse 6 if a fire breaks out and catches in thorns so that stacked grain standing grain or the field is consumed he who kindled the fire shall surely make restitution it sounds like this is really an accident but it's an accident through some kind of negligence you start a fire you're not careful and you destroy somebody else's crop and so in that case there's no double restitution or anything beyond that you just need to restore it was an accident you didn't intentionally try to destroy somebody's things but through some kind of negligence you just need to restore what was lost one to one and think about these are things that we can apply in our own lives if we lose something that somebody else or if we accidentally destroy somebody else's property hey we should restore it we shouldn't just say hey tough luck it was an accident it wasn't my fault

[ 34 : 02 ] I didn't mean to do it well does that mean that you shouldn't pay back go back to verse three talking about making full restitution what happens if you can't what happens if you're poor and you can't make that restitution well it says this verse three he should make full restitution if he has nothing then he shall be sold for his theft whoa and so you might think somebody might think well hey I don't have anything I'm gonna just steal this sheep and if they catch me then I guess they'll get the sheep back but I don't have another sheep that they can take you know so hey I'm gonna do this all day long no no no no no that's not how this works you still have to pay back and if you don't have the wherewithal if you don't have the money or the resources to pay it back well we are going to take your physical labor and we are gonna force you into physical labor until you can restore back what it was that you stole through some kind of slavery you know we have a form of slavery today we call it jail right where we put somebody in jail but a lot of times those people in jail are not paying back what they stole a lot of times they're just lifting weights and watching cable television now I think in it's in

Georgia that I've seen this in Georgia you'll go driving down the road and you'll see these chain yangs anybody ever seen this I'm sure there's other states where they do this and they're picking up trash on the side of the road or digging ditches now I don't know that they're earning any money to pay back some restitution but they should be if they've stolen anything and then there are other things we won't go into all the other things but some other things covered is when you borrow goods that are we actually talked about that borrowed goods that are broken or destroyed hired goods that are broken destroyed and then there's laws in here about disputed claims when you're disputing well who actually owns this and then a judge needs to get involved but there are the same kind of restitution principles involved in all of those cases and like I said you know the law should address these things properly but doesn't always but regardless of whether the law is enforcing the right thing we as Christians really whether you're a Christian or not should do the right thing if we steal something or we accidentally destroy somebody else's property we should pay back we should take our own personal responsibility we actually see this in the gospels with Jesus remember back then there was tax collectors and tax collectors would a lot of times be crooks and it's not much different today but the tax collectors you know they would collect tax for the government but they would collect more than the government was requiring and they would pocket that extra amount that they would take and there was a man named Zacchaeus right and he

had this experience with the Lord and he he came under conviction and realized that he was a cheat and he was a crook and at the end of Jesus coming to his house he said you know what I'm going to make good on these things that I've stolen Luke 19 verse 8 says this then Zacchaeus stood and he said to the Lord look Lord I give half of my goods to the poor and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation I restore fourfold it's actually a reference back to the law of Moses that's what the law of Moses required fourfold restoration when you steal somebody else's goods and so if we you know whether it's come under conviction or conviction or find you know for whatever reason hey I've actually done something that

I shouldn't have done here let's do what we can to make it right to make it good now I want to kind of finish up with this in just the next few minutes you know God created this commandment and all the commandments to provide a boundary around the rights that God has given to us to be enforced by law or even just enforced by our own moral convictions which is good too and these laws protect the rights of the innocent and they avoid a lot of the pain and misery and even death that comes with breaking these laws but but just having the law just avoiding crossing these boundaries is not sufficient it's not good for living the kind of life that God really wants from us we looked at this passage last week Romans chapter 13 verse 8 it says this oh no one anything except to love one another for he who loves another has fulfilled the law there's the law the law provides boundaries about what not to do but it doesn't tell you what you can or should do necessarily on the other side continues on for the commandments you shall not commit adultery you shall not murder you shall not steal you shall not bear false witness you shall not covet and if there is any other commandment are all summed up in this saying namely you shall love your neighbor as yourself love does no harm to a neighbor therefore love is the fulfillment of the law so the law is good but you know what's better you know what's greater that Paul says talks about right here it's love and this is what the life of grace is all about God wants more from us than just honoring or respecting certain boundaries he wants us to grow in our love the law says don't take what belongs to you love says that we can freely give of what we have for the benefit of others you know Paul addressed the topic of stealing this is in

Ephesians chapter 4 verse 28 he says to those who were who had become Christians who are looking to live the Christian life the way it was meant to be lived he says this let him who stole steal no longer but he didn't end there right now that would be a perfectly acceptable place to end hey if you've been a thief stop it don't steal from people anymore that's bad but he doesn't stop there he says this but rather let him labor hey go to work earn your wage working with his hands what is good not what is evil not exploiting people but working with your hands serving others which is the way that God intended that we would grow our wealth that we would earn money by serving others so working with his hands what is good and he ends with this that he may have something to give him who has need this is the life of love that God wants from us to where it's not just that we're not stealing from our neighbor but we're looking for opportunities every day to be generous to give to help those in need and isn't this what God did for us you know we looked at the noble repentance of Zacchaeus he restored fourfold what he had stolen from others at least that's what he said he was going to do but you know we have an even greater example than

[ 41 : 43 ] Zacchaeus the Bible says that God demonstrated his love towards us and that while we were sinners Christ died for us he gave us a gift and you know what he wasn't restoring something to us that he stole something that he owed us he didn't owe us anything he never took anything from us in fact God has only ever given to us good things he gave us our very lives the bodies that we inhabit the air that we breathe the food that we enjoy and even the relationships that we cherish are all because God has given us so much and even though we have taken those good things and in many ways have spoiled our own lives and we spoiled the lives of others by through our own selfishness our lack of respect of other people's rights their dignity a lack of respect for the goodness good of others and our respect for the boundaries that God has set in place even through all that God was still willing to give that famous passage John 3 16 for God so loved the world that he gave he gave his life not something that was of no value but something that was of tremendous value the

Bible says the just for the unjust the righteous for the unrighteous you know we needed something we needed forgiveness we needed mercy we needed cleansing from our sins and God was willing to provide you know when we look at the death of Christ on the surface it looks as if his life was stolen from him right he was an innocent man and you know when an innocent man is killed

something we sometimes use that term his life was stolen from him but you know that Jesus denies that explicitly in John chapter 10 verse 18 Jesus says this no one takes my life from me but I lay it down of myself it might look like other people are taking my life from me and you know from their perspective really they are but Jesus didn't have to let that happen Jesus was giving up his life as a gift his life was not stolen from him he was giving of his life to us he says I have the power to lay it down and also by the way I have the power to take it up again through the resurrection this morning we're going to take some time and we are going to celebrate this gift of love that God gave to us by through the Lord's Supper tell you what I'm going to close in a word of prayer the message here but I'm going to have the elders come up while I'm doing that and then we're going to prepare here to take the Lord's Supper Father thank you for your word for your commandments you want us to own things you want us to respect the property rights of others these all these things were your idea and you set boundaries in place but you also gave us something even greater than that you demonstrated your love towards us in giving beyond what any of us can really even imagine that you would give up your life so that we could have forgiveness and peace with God even for us who have stolen and broken all kinds of commandments even those who's unfortunately may continue to do so through our failure to live the Christian life the way we ought to we thank you for your forgiveness for your mercy for the peace that you provide to us through the cross that our righteousness is found in Christ regardless of how much we succeed or fail at living life the way that we ought to and we thank you for that in Jesus name amen all right well we're going to finish up here with remembering the Lord in his death this is something that the Bible teaches that Christians ought to do on a regular basis it doesn't say how often I'm going to give a few instructions here every church does this differently so I just want to make sure everybody's kind of in the loop here on how we do it here at Grace Bible Church we're going to pass out the two elements we have the the bread and the juice and we're going to pass them out one at a time we'll do the I'm trying to remember now what do we got yeah the bread first and then we'll do the juice by the way it's juice not wine just in case you were wondering some churches you know do one or the other or sometimes both but we just have the juice here today in case that was a curiosity or a concern we're going to all take it together so we're going to pass these out so we would pass it out just hold on to it until everybody's got it and then I'm going to give some instruction and we'll all take it together who is this for if you are a believer if you're trusting in Jesus Christ this is for you doesn't matter if you're a part of our church if you're a visitor if you're a believer if you're a Christian then please you're welcome to join us today what about age you know can kids do this we leave that up to the parents this is a time of memorial a time of memory and so from my perspective you can remember what the Lord did for us at any age what is this for now in some churches this is something in which you're receiving God's grace maybe you're receiving some kind of forgiveness no the Bible says that when we trust in Christ we are complete in him everything is finished it's done there's nothing that that adds to our salvation or to our relationship with God by taking these things this is just an opportunity for us to remember what he did for us so let's go ahead let's go ahead and do this so we'll start here with the bread and we'll pass these out and remember just just hold on to these as they come by and we'll all take this together now one thing you'll notice as we're passing these out that we're not charging for the bread and the juice if you go to a restaurant right they're going to charge you here at church we don't charge for the bread and the juice and you know I don't think I've ever seen a church that does that but if you did right that would mess up the symbolism right because what do these things symbolize it's the body and the blood of Jesus that is given to us freely there's no charge sometimes I think we forget that when we're taking the Lord's Supper we a lot of times think about our sins and well we need to try to do this or that to try to get us closer to God or to make up for the sins that we've committed and you know it's good to be sorry for your sins but this morning we are celebrating the fact that our sins are completely taken care of because we trust in Christ it's a free gift Jesus gave freely of his blood and of his body for us okay everybody gets them you got it okay okay here we go so there's a passage here in first Corinthians where Paul gives some instruction on how believers are ought to do this and it's remembering when Jesus did this with his own disciples on that night before his death and Paul says this for I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which he was betrayed he took the bread and when he had given thanks he broke it and he said take eat this is my body which is broken for you do this in remembrance of me let's do that together all right and likewise we'll do the cup here you know I mentioned that the Bible says that we are complete in him when we become Christians taking these

elements doesn't do anything to add to our salvation to our relationship with God to our peace with God the work that is done in us is finished it's complete when we put our faith and trust in him but that idea comes from the book of Colossians where it says that we are complete in him and it says something else and this is related to the law we've been studying the ten commandments and the ten commandments like I said in the law itself is good holy righteous but it's not sufficient it wasn't good to make us righteous it wasn't good enough to bring us to God only Jesus through the cross could do that but it says this in Colossians 2:13 about our state before and our state after becoming Christians and you being dead in your trespasses or sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh so same idea he has made alive together with him having forgiven you all of your trespasses every sin that we've ever committed big or small has been forgiven and then it says this having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us which was contrary to us what is that the handwriting of requirements that was against us that's the law it's been taken out of the way it says and he has taken it out of the way having nailed it to the cross just think about that as a word picture in your mind that through the cross

[53:10] Jesus' death on the cross the law was taken out of the way it's still good it's still something we can reference but as far as it's condemning power to say guilty as charged it no longer has that power all because of what Jesus did through the cross let's finish up with that passage from Paul he says this in the same manner he also took the cup after supper saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood this do as often as you drink it in remembrance of me let's remember the Lord the Bible says that God so loved the world he loved you and me so much that he was willing to give up his life for us are you grateful for that?

amen we're gonna the last thing we're gonna do here is take up that offering that so I'm gonna have the the elders go ahead and pass out that plate and while they're doing that can we finish up with a song this is one of my favorites and I like to do this when we do the Lord's Supper but this is in the hymnal number 349 but most of you probably already know it oh how he loves you and me can we sing that together?

oh how he loves you and me is that too high? is it too high? loves you and me he gave his life what more could he give?

oh how he loves you oh how he loves me oh how he loves you and me amen are you glad the Lord loves you this morning?

well go love him back today and tomorrow and the next day and for the rest of your life and on into eternity we get to love the Lord in return for what he's done for us amen alright everybody stand up on your feet and go in peace go with God you have peace with God to the Lord Jesus Christ amen