

“How the Thief Changes”

Exodus 20:15

Who is the thief? It is easy for us to point fingers at those who have blatantly robbed us, but we must not fail to see how we have broken the eighth commandment ourselves. For example, we steal from the poor when we have the means to meet a real need and do nothing. Also, we rob God when we fail to give generously to Him!

Why do we steal? Reasons to steal are many, but clearly theft of any sort demonstrates that we do not trust God to provide for us or that we want things to make us happy rather than finding our joy in God.

A new way to live... Jesus sheds light on the eighth command by radically redefining our relationship to worldly possessions. He says that we are no longer to anxiously pursue wealth, but rather to seek His kingdom first (Matthew 6). The Apostle Paul not only reiterates the command to not steal in Ephesians 4:28 but also commands that the thief work hard so that he will have something to **share** with those in need. Our new life is no longer to be one of selfish materialism but instead a life of radical generosity.

How selfish hearts become generous... We are set free to live this radical new life by experiencing God’s generous grace in Christ. Through this grace we come to know that God loves us and will provide for us (Philippians 4:19), and we come to know that He alone is the treasure that satisfies our hearts (Philippians 3:8). With such security and joy there is no need to steal!

***Questions for Discussion:**

1. Why are we tempted to steal?
2. What is the remedy for stealing and selfishness? How have you seen change in your life?
3. How is God calling you to be more generous?

(Meditation Assignment: Exodus 20:16 & Mtt 5:33-37)