

SOVEREIGN GRACE CHURCH

Sermon Outline: *Thou Shalt Not Steal*

March 26, 2017

Exodus 20: 15; HC 110

As we return to our consideration of the Heidelberg Catechism we are looking at God's command not to steal. This is one of the first commands that we learn as children. Property rights seem to occur naturally to kids. Someone who takes another kids candy bar is soon made aware of it!

It is important for us to instill two truths in our children simultaneously. First, that children have a right to their own property and that it is wrong to take it away. Second, that this property cannot be used any old way they want. They are stewards.....not actual owners. The actual owner is God.

However, we live in a day in which knowledge of God and his law is not allowed entry to the public sphere. This leaves the state in the place of God. We will see this morning that it is not just individual's who can break God's law. The collective (state) can break it as well....and it begins to break it by not recognizing it!

1. Distinctions and Questions

Is there is a difference between Legal and Moral?

- What is the authoritative base for modern law?

- What is “settled law”?

2. How can it be wrong to neglect our OWN wealth?! I Tim 5:8

3. Examples of “legal theft.”

- False weights/measures Deut 25: 13-16

- **Usury/Interest** Lev 25: 35-38; Psm 15:5; Gal 6:10

- **Unjust taxes** I Sam 8: 10-18, 7

4. Starting Point for theft is Covetousness. Matt 6:33

Questions for Conversation

How do you honor another person's property? If you borrow a tool from a neighbor...in what condition should it be returned? If you see it outside of its normal location can you utilize that old fallen standard, “finders keepers”?

How should we steward our own property? How can we possess our possessions in such a way that we acknowledge God's ultimate ownership? How does caring for our possessions and keeping them in good repair honor God? How does allowing care for our possessions to come to a point of impeding our service to those in need dishonor God? How does Matthew 7: 1-5 apply to discerning these matters?

What is the difference between legal and moral? Give examples of illegal but moral acts. Give examples of legal but immoral laws? Why is God's natural and special law so important for the foundation of a free society? Is God and His revelation a necessary assumption for a free society? Is it a necessary assumption for any society? If it is necessary, is it really an assumption? What does it mean for a truth to be self-attesting? Is this not begging the question? Does knowledge ultimately rest on ignorance? How could this be knowledge?

Give examples of how the state can steal from its people. Is it possible for a Constitutional amendment to curtail a God-given right? If it cannot curtail such a right...what CAN it do? Are property, income, inheritance taxes just? Given that the state is ordained by God isn't it possible for taxes to be just? What kinds of taxes do not infringe upon the right of people to own property? How much tax would be excessive?

