

No.8: Cash is King

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[0 : 0 0] Well, if we could, this morning, with the Lord's help, if we could turn to the book of Exodus. Exodus chapter 20. Exodus chapter 20.

Page 73 in the Pew Bible. And this morning, we're looking at verse 15. Exodus chapter 20. And verse 15. For the Lord says, You shall not steal. Four words. You shall not steal. As you know, we've been going through the Ten Commandments. And in our study of the Ten Commandments, we referred to them as house rules. They're house rules not because they teach us and tell us how to be a good person with good morals and good values in life. But they're house rules because they remind us that we're all sinners.

[1 : 1 3] We're all sinners in need of a Savior. But our Heavenly Father, He speaks to us. And He speaks to us, as we know. He speaks to us as a family.

He speaks to us as a church family. And He addresses us as His children. And as His children, as you know, with children, we need rules. We need family rules. We need house rules. Because, as we've said before, without rules, there's recklessness. Without laws, there's lawlessness. Without commandments, there is ultimately chaos. And our Heavenly Father, He has given us these ten house rules, these ten commandments. And they're written for us not to spoil our fun, but to parent us, to protect us from hurt or from harm. They're there because the Lord loves us.

And He wants to look after us. And like any good parent who says no to their children, as we've seen in our study, eight out of ten of these house rules, our Heavenly Father speaks to us and He says no.

[2 : 1 4] He says no to us. They begin with that familiar phrase, thou shalt not or you shall not. They're no's. But as we said before, these concluding no's, there's five of them, these concluding house rules, they're 3D.

They're three-dimensional because they address our head, our heart, and our hands. They address our head, our heart, and our hands.

And that's what we see with house rule number eight, which we're looking at this morning. But it says there in verse 15, these four words, you shall not steal. And this commandment, it addresses, first of all, we'll look at our heart, then our head, and then our hands.

Our heart, our head, our hands, okay? So verse 15, it addresses, first of all, our heart. You shall not steal.

You shall not steal. It's mine. No, it's mine. I had it first. No, I did. You stole it from me. It's mine.

[3 : 1 9] Now, I'm sure if you're a parent, or you're a teacher, or you're a child, then you'll be familiar with that kind of conversation. It's mine. No, it's mine.

It's a conversation that often takes place in the playroom or in the playground. And it takes place almost on a daily basis. And that's because children are obsessed with possessions, obsessed with ownership.

They're obsessed with their possessions. Children are big on belongings. They take pride in their possessions. And truth be told, adults are just the same.

And yet our Heavenly Father, He reminds us and reaffirms to us that all our belongings, all our possessions, all that we own, and all that we have, it's not really ours.

All our belongings, all our possessions, all that we own, and all that we have, it's not really ours because it has all been given and gifted to us by our Heavenly Father. That's what we read there in James chapter 1.

[4 : 23] James, in his New Testament letter, he said that every good and perfect gift is from above. And it comes down to us from the Father of lights, in whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

In other words, all our belongings, all our possessions, all that we own, and all that we have, it's not ours because it has been given and gifted to us by our Heavenly Father, who is, as James says, He is the Father of lights.

He is God the Father Almighty. He is the Maker of heaven and earth. He's our Creator. And as the Father of lights, He's the Creator who spoke into the darkness of this world at its very beginning, at its very Genesis.

He's the Father of lights who said, Let there be light. And as you know, Genesis 1 tells us, And there was light. There was light.

And you know, just as an aside, don't you find it amazing? Now, from the very outset, from the very opening line of our Bible, it just asserts and affirms the existence of God. In the beginning, God.

[5 : 32] In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Our Bible never disputes or discusses or even debates the existence of God. It just declares that God is there.

And God is real. God is fact. God is true. God is sovereign. And the Lord says, It's only the fool who says in his heart that there is no God. My friend, the God of the Bible is our sovereign, superior, and supreme Creator, who made all things out of nothing by the word of His power in the space of six days, and all very good.

Therefore, as our Creator, all our possessions, all our belongings, all that we own, and all that we have, it's not ours.

It all has been given and gifted to us by God, our Heavenly Father, who is the Maker of heaven and earth. And that's why David wrote in Psalm 24, which we were singing in our opening item of praise. David began Psalm 24 by reminding us that the Lord is sovereign. He's our sovereign shepherd. And David said, The earth belongs unto the Lord, and all that it contains, the world that is inhabited, and all that there remains.

[6 : 51] The earth belongs unto the Lord, and everything in it. And you know, as the king of Israel, David confessed that all his belongings, all his possessions, all that he owned, and all that he had, it's not his.

It all belongs to the Lord, who has given and gifted it to him in the first place. The earth belongs, he says, unto the Lord, and all that it contains. And you know, the amazing thing is, when David said, The earth belongs unto the Lord, and all that it contains, that includes you, and it includes me. Even the breath in our lungs, and the blood in our veins, and our heart that beats in our chest, it all belongs to our sovereign God.

It has all been given and gifted to us by our heavenly Father. And you know, that's why we can say this morning, that we are a blessed people. We are a blessed people, because blessing only comes from God.

Blessing only comes from one who has given and gifted it to us. And as I mentioned before, and for the children, the word blessed means to kneel. The word blessed, or bless, literally means to kneel.

[8 : 19] It gives to us the image and the illustration of kneeling before a king. Coming before a king in surrender and submission. Where, in the Bible, God is king.

And we are, God is standing up from his throne. And we are coming before God in humble submission before him. And we come before God with our knee bowed, and our head bowed, and our hand outstretched.

And we are receiving from the gracious, loving, and merciful hand of the king, something that we don't deserve. And when God gives to us, and gifts to us, something that we don't deserve, he blesses us.

He bestows blessing by graciously giving to sinners what we do not deserve. He blesses us. And as you know, there's joy in blessing.

There's joy in acknowledging and appreciating all that the Lord has given and gifted to us. There's joy in blessing that when you wake up in the morning, and you open your curtains, and you see the beauty of the day, and the first thing you do is that you acknowledge the Lord in the day, and see that it's the Lord who has given us this day.

[9 : 36] There's joy in acknowledging and appreciating all that God gives and gifts to us. And you know, that's why we've come to church this morning. We've come here to worship God.

We've come here to acknowledge and appreciate all that God has given to us. All that He has given to us in material things, as well as all that He has given to us in spiritual things through Jesus Christ. because, you know, there's joy in recognizing and realizing that all our belongings, all our possessions, all that we own, and all that we have, it's not ours.

It has all been given and gifted to us by our gracious and loving and merciful Heavenly Father. He has blessed us. Blessed us.

If you're a Christian today, Paul reminds us in his letters that we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ.

[10:38] My friend, there's joy in God's blessing. There's joy in acknowledging and appreciating everything that God has given to us. But as you know, the sad reality is our sinful heart steals our joy in God's blessing.

our sinful heart steals our happiness with all that we have. Our sinful heart steals our satisfaction with all that has been given and gifted to us.

Because the truth is our sinful heart not only wants to rebel against God, our sinful heart resents the gifts of God and even refuses the greatest gift of God, His Son, the Lord Jesus.

In fact, our sinful heart, the Bible describes, our sinful heart is restless. So restless to the point that it starts to seek joy and happiness and satisfaction and fulfillment in all the other areas and avenues of this life.

which is why our Heavenly Father not only warns us about stealing in our heart, He also warns us about stealing in our head, which is what we see secondly.

[12:04] So we see our heart, He addresses, 3D, addressing our heart and secondly, our head. Our head. The Lord says to us, you shall not steal.

You shall not steal. Now, although many of us would claim to be honest and upright citizens in our community who pay our taxes and we don't steal from others even if we find a fiver on the ground, you know, there's a reason why House Rule No. 8 is actually mentioned here.

Because stealing and theft is far more common than we realize. In fact, it's the most common crime in the UK today. The most common crime is shoplifting.

Shoplifting is at a record high. And that's even with so many shops and so many retailers. They have, as you know, security scanners when you walk out it starts beeping.

They have security tags on clothing. They have security cameras on every corner of the shop. They also have some security guards to watch people as they leave. And yet none of it seems to diminish shoplifting or even to deter shoplifters.

[13:18] Because in the past year alone it's said that shoplifting in the UK has increased by nearly 20%. 20% increase in shoplifting costing the UK economy 1.4 billion pounds.

And as you know, some people they shoplift by profession. Other people they shoplift because of poverty. One of the most common causes of shoplifting is an addiction.

Whether it's stealing alcohol to consume it or stealing to fund a drug or a gambling habit. But in the past year a lot of shoplifting in the UK has actually been related to the rise of inflation.

With the rise of inflation people and people struggling to make ends meet lots and lots of people have been caught shoplifting. Sadly, shoplifting is only one of four types of theft that we know about.

There's also fraud, there's robbery and there's embezzlement. Now I'm sure we're all familiar with fraud. If you have an email address or a phone I'm sure you're familiar with all these scam phone calls where they phone you up and they claim to be they talk about a claim that you've made because of an accident at work or you've had an accident with a car and they want you to claim for it or there are these annoying automated phone calls that come from Amazon or even from your bank and they're telling you to make us to pay for your invoice.

[14:55] And I'm sure you've also had all these emails these annoying emails that always end up in your junk sometimes in your inbox. People pretending to be someone you know and they're saying that they're on holiday and they've lost their wallet funnily enough they've lost their wallet and they need a bank transfer.

I got an email a number of years ago from another minister and I had to message him straight away to find out if he was on holiday or not and he had no word of it. And for many people they can spot a scam a mile off but for others especially elderly people they fall foul to fraud and also to financial abuse.

In fact it's estimated that 4 billion pound 4 billion is stolen each year due to fraud. That's just in the UK. 4 billion pound.

Robbery is another type of theft which commonly takes place in the form of burglaries and undoubtedly someone breaking and entering into your home it can be a terrifying and a traumatizing experience.

And boys and girls it's said that in the UK a home is burgled every 106 seconds. A home in the UK is burgled every 106 seconds.

[16 : 15] That's a lot of homes and they're saying that it's on the rise. And I'm sure you remember during the World Cup in Qatar there was an English football player Raheem Sterling.

He returned home during the competition so he had to return home during the competition because his house in Surrey had been burgled. But the home of Raheem Sterling it was only one home in a list of homes of footballers that were being targeted by burglars.

And all these criminal gangs they were trying to target all these football players one after the other. Embezzlement is another type of theft which is often associated with those in positions of trust their secretaries of companies treasurers of charities or even financial assistants in large businesses. And sometimes what happens is that someone embezzling money they create fake invoices and also fake receipts so that they can be reimbursed for all these purchases that didn't actually take place.

And you know it's estimated that each year 40 billion pounds is embezzled and 88 billion pounds is laundered. You know whether it's shoplifting, fraud, gambling or embezzlement it all points to the sad reality that for many people it's not Christ who is king but cash is king.

[17 : 50] For many people it's not Christ who is king but for them cash is king. And cash is king because the desire and the determination for more and more money is what rules and reigns not only in their head but also in their heart.

Cash is king. And cash is king because as we said before our sinful heart it's not only rebelled against God it doesn't want anything to do with God our sinful heart resents the gifts of God. It says that what God has given to us is not enough. And it refuses even the greatest gift of God the gift of salvation and eternal life through Jesus Christ.

It resents that too. Our sinful heart is restless. It wants more. It wants more and more and more and because Christ is not king cash becomes king.

Our heart our sinful heart is restless. You know that's why Augustine Augustine was one of the great minds of the early church in the third century. He wrote this book called His Confessions.

[19 : 01] It was like His Testimony. And Augustine wrote in his Confessions He said, Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds rest in Thee.

Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds rest in Thee. And the thing is our sinful heart, as the Bible describes our heart, it says that our sinful heart is restless because it will seek joy and seek happiness and seek satisfaction and seek fulfillment in all the other areas and avenues of this world when Christ is not king.

And you know, one particular problem area, especially in relation to this commandment, one particular problem area when cash is king is gambling.

That's what this commandment speaks about, speaks about the problem area of gambling. Of course, gambling is nothing new because, as we sang earlier in Psalm 22, a thousand years before Jesus, David wrote that they would be gambling over the garment of Jesus at the foot of the cross. But nowadays, gambling has never been easier. It's been made more attractive and more appealing by all these gambling adverts. I'm sure you're sick of seeing them. They're on every second advert.

[20 : 35] And don't you find it fascinating that advertising cigarettes has now stopped because of the harmful impact of cigarettes to our health? Then there was advertising alcohol.

That stopped too because we have a huge alcohol problem as a nation. And now there's a push to stop. It was on the radio this past week on Radio Scotland. There's a huge push to stop advertising gambling because gambling is a huge problem in our nation.

There was someone on the radio the other day. He lost £27,000 in 10 minutes gambling. And you know, we see it. Every second advert seeks to make gambling more attractive, more appealing. And with so many young people, it begins with a flutter. But then it can very quickly end in financial collapse. And of course, because cash is king, so many people, for them, gambling is just, it's no

longer lottery tickets or scratch cards or putting one bet down on the Grand National once a year. There's now online gambling. You can gamble using your TV or your phone or your iPad. It's never been easier to place a bet and to fulfil your heart's desire and determination for more and more money.

[22 : 00] Because cash is king. Which is why house rule number eight, it actually teaches us that gambling is wrong. House rule number eight teaches us that gambling is wrong.

And gambling is wrong not only because they gambled over the garment of Jesus at the foot of the cross, but also because gambling, gambling is attaining and acquiring wealth that hasn't been earned.

Gambling is attaining and acquiring wealth that hasn't been earned. And this is why work is a creation ordinance.

Work is a creation ordinance. We said before that there are three creation ordinances. Three things that God ordered and ordained right at the beginning in the book of Genesis.

He ordered and ordained three things. The Sabbath, marriage, and work. God ordered and ordained these three creation ordinances. The Sabbath, marriage, and work.

[23 : 07] In house rule number four, which is remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, we saw that the Sabbath is a creation ordinance because God ordered and ordained the Sabbath to be remembered throughout creation.

In house rule number seven, the previous commandment, we saw that marriage is a creation ordinance because God ordered and ordained marriage to be between one man and one woman. And here in house rule number eight, the eighth commandment, we're being highlighted that work is a creation ordinance. ordinance. And work is a creation ordinance because when you read Genesis chapter one and two, we see that God didn't create us to waste our life being lazy.

God didn't create us to waste our life being lazy. No, God ordered and ordained at creation that we are to acquire and to attain our wealth by working.

God ordered and ordained at creation that we are to acquire and attain our wealth by working. But because for many people cash is king, gambling is acquiring and attaining wealth that has not been earned.

[24 : 28] Therefore, according to house rule number eight, gambling is wrong. gambling is wrong. And as we said before, these commandments are parental commandments.

They're from our heavenly Father who wants to parent us and protect us. And the Lord says gambling is wrong in order that we don't flutter our money away, that we don't waste what we have earned.

We don't waste what we have worked for. So according to house rule number eight, gambling is wrong. But you know, just as an aside, before we move on, I don't know about you, but I've never been into a betting shop.

I think there used to be one in Stornome. I think it's closed down now. But I've never been into a betting shop to place a bet. I don't intend to go in, by the way. But if I did, if I did go into a betting shop, personally speaking, I would be very nervous because I've never been in before.

I wouldn't know what to do. I wouldn't know where to stand or where to sit. I don't know what you do in a betting shop. And I wouldn't have a clue how to place a bet. And because I wouldn't know what to do, I would rather not go at all.

[25 : 44] And I say all this because it's often said that going to a betting shop for the first time is like coming to church for the first time.

Going to a betting shop for the first time is like coming to church for the first time. Because like me going into a betting shop, someone coming to our church for the very first time or someone who hasn't been in a long time, they would be very nervous.

And because they haven't been for a while or never been before, they wouldn't know what to do in a service. They wouldn't know when to stand or when to sit or where to sit. They wouldn't know how to find the place in the Bible or even to pick up a Bible or a psalm book.

And because they don't know and because it makes them nervous, they would rather stay at home and not go at all. And I say all this because when you invite someone to come to church for our Back to Church Sunday on the 7th of May, which is next month, we're going to have a Back to Church Sunday to encourage people to come to church.

When you invite them, invite them to come to church with you. Invite them and arrange to pick them up even. Invite them to meet them in the car park so that they'll sit with you and that you'll be a support to them and that you'll show them that church isn't actually a scary place.

[27 : 13] And it should never be a scary place. This should be the best place to come on a Sunday morning. And you know, we should be inviting people from our community to come to church. We should be inviting them because that's our God-given role and responsibility as a congregation in our community.

Our role and responsibility is to invite people to come to church because as our Bible reminds us, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.

And so house rule number eight, it's 3D. It's three dimensional. It addresses our head, our heart, and lastly and very briefly, our hands. Our head, our heart, and our hands.

The Lord says to us in verse 15, you shall not steal. House rule number eight, you shall not steal.

Now if you're caught red-handed for stealing in the UK, it's interesting the phrase that we often use, caught red-handed, it's actually an old Scottish phrase from, I think it's from the 15th century.

You can look it up yourself. But if you're caught red-handed for stealing in the UK, the maximum penalty for theft is seven years in prison. But boys and girls, if you're caught stealing, in many other countries throughout the world, say Iran, if you're caught stealing, the penalty for theft is to cut off your right hand.

[28 : 46] The penalty for theft is to cut off your right hand. And if you keep stealing, they'll cut off your left hand too. And if you keep trying to do things, they'll actually cut off your feet.

And it's actually what Jesus said. He actually said that in Matthew chapter 18. He spoke very graphically. If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off.

It's better that you lose one of your members than your whole body being thrown into hell. It's a serious and solemn warning about sin. But when Jesus was speaking about sin, He wasn't telling us that we should literally cut off our right hand or even allow somebody else to cut off our right hand.

Jesus was taking sin seriously. And He was reminding us that if we are not taking our sin to Jesus, then our sin is going to take us to hell.

And Jesus said it so bluntly, but yet when Jesus speaks about hell, He always speaks so lovingly. Jesus was the most loving man who ever lived.

[29 : 53] And as you know, whenever He spoke about hell, He always spoke so lovingly. And what Jesus was saying there when He said, if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It's better that you lose one of your members than your whole body be thrown into hell.

When Jesus was saying that, He's saying to us, if you do not take your sin to me, your sin is going to take you to hell. If you do not take your sin to me, then your sin is going to take you to hell.

Of course, cutting off your hand is never the solution to sin. The truth is, if we were to cut off our hand, the knife would never go deep enough. It would never get to the heart of the problem, which as my good friend J.C.

Ryle has often said to us, the heart of the problem is the problem of the heart. The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart. And the problem of the heart is that we can't cure our heart problem ourselves.

And that's what all these house rules are showing us. They're showing us with each and every house rule that we're sinners in need of a savior. Savior. We're sinners in need of a savior.

[31 : 08] We need to see that Jesus is the remedy to our ruin. He's the cure to our chaos. He is the solution to all our sin. Jesus is the one.

He is the answer to all our sins. That's why we need to come to him. Because if we don't come to Jesus with our sin, our sin is going to take us to hell.

My friend, the good news of the gospel this morning is that Jesus Christ willingly went to the cross to bear our sin and to endure our hell so that we could come to him.

Come to him just as we are to be forgiven and cleansed from all our sin. Do you know that's the wonder of this? That's the wonder of the gospel, that we are just to come to this Jesus and to come to him on bended knee, just like we were saying earlier to the children, receiving blessing, to come with bended knee, our head bowed and our hand outstretched, to receive from the king what we do not deserve, to receive salvation, a free gift of God, which is eternal life.

And you know, my friend, I look at many of you each and every Sunday morning, and I sometimes wonder, what are you waiting for? What are you waiting for?

[32 : 40] What are you looking for? What are you hoping for? Why are you still in the same position you're in? Because if you do not come to Jesus with your sin, your sin is going to take you to hell.

So what are you waiting for? you come to Christ, you confess your sin to this Jesus, and you commit, you commit your life to him, you commit your head, your heart, and your hands to this Jesus.

You commit it all to him, and the promise is that when you come to him, when you confess your sin, when you commit your life to him, he promises to make you his.

So you come, you come to him, because the gospel reminds you this morning, as Jesus says, he who comes to me, I will in no way cast out.

May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks to thee for thy word this morning, thy word that reminds us that every good and every perfect gift is from above.

[33 : 56] It comes down to us from the Father of lights, and that we are those who have received much. We have received so many material blessings, that all that we have and all that we own, all that we possess, has been given and gifted to us by our loving Heavenly Father.

But even more so, we have received grace upon grace. We have received the gospel. We have received the message of about Jesus Christ, thy Son. And Lord, help us not to refuse it, or to reject it, or to rebel from it, but to come humbly before this Saviour who saves to the uttermost.

Oh Lord, bless thy truth to us, we ask. We ask, Lord, that thou wouldst keep us, keep us ever looking to Jesus, to know him and to love him and to follow him as the author and the finisher of our faith.

Cleanse us and we pray, go before us and do us good for Jesus' sake. Amen. We're going to bring our service to a conclusion this morning.

We're going to sing in Psalm 89. Psalm 89 in the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 89.

[35 : 13] We're singing from verse 15 down to the verse marked 18. Psalm 89, page 345 in the blue psalm book.

Page 345, Psalm 89 at verse 15. But before we sing, I have three questions. The boys and girls remember the answers.

What does the word bless mean? To kneel. Well done. Good job. So the next question is, how often is a home in the UK burgled?

106 seconds. That's not very long, is it? You can count 106 seconds and then think about that. It's quite scary, really. Question 3. What is the penalty for theft in other foreign countries?

Yeah? So don't get caught stealing in these countries. Okay? It's not good to steal. That's why our Heavenly Father says, do not steal. Do not steal.

[36 : 24] But our Heavenly Father has blessed us with much. And that's what we're singing about in this closing psalm. We are a blessed people. He says there in Psalm 89 at verse 15, O greatly blessed the people are, the joyful sound that know, in brightness of thy face, O Lord, they ever on shall go.

They in thy name shall all the day rejoice exceedingly, and in thy righteousness shall they exalted be on high. We're to rejoice because we have received so much from the Lord.

So Psalm 89 verse 15, down to the verse marked 18. You must stand to sing if you're able, to God's praise. O greatly blessed be by the joyful sound at now, in brightness of thy face, O Lord, they ever and all shall go.

In thine is child on the day Since gulfine in Romeo and vas the glory of the of the O the The Lord shall the Lord not have resulted near.

For God is our different sighting, through us does it bring.

[39 : 08] The Holy One of Israel is our Almighty King.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion and fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen.