**Small Group Sermon Study Guide: 8th Commandment**

 ***The Holy Way: (8) The Lord’s People Honor Personal Property***

1) In the famous novel, ***The Kite Runner,*** Baba, the father of the main character (Amir), has

 A conversation about theft with his son about theft. (For the full quote see the quote

 sheet.) Baba makes the claim that “every other sin is a variation of theft.”

 Do you agree? Why or Why not?

 We learn from Amir that Amir’s grandfather (Baba’s father) was killed by a thief. Baba

 Felt robbed of a father and that sense of violation fueled the way he viewed thieves.

 Has anyone ever stole from you? How violated did you feel by the theft?

2) In the biblical view, our fundamental identity is that we are stewards. We are

accountable to God for how they use their time, talents and treasures. Psalm 24:1 says, “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof.” Every creation belongs to the Creator.

(See J.I. Packer quote.)

 In what areas of your life do you struggle with viewing yourself as a steward?

3) As Christian’s the Holy Spirit prompts us to not simply obey the letter of the law but

 Also to discern the Spirit of the law. As the Catechism says, God “forbids”

 More than just “outright theft.” (See full Catechism treatment on quote sheet)

 What “theft-like” behaviors does God forbid in these passages?

 Deuteronomy 25:13-16--

Psalm 15:5---

Proverbs 11:1—

 Proverbs 12:22—

Luke 6:35---

4) In his book ***Doing Right,*** Christian ethicist David Gill enumerates many ways we can

 Steal. Review that list on the quote sheet. What items do you agree with? What items do you struggle with? Why?

*Quote Sheet: 8th Commandment*

***Every Other Sin is a Variation of Theft***

Baba: “Now no matter what the mullah teaches, there is only one sin, only one. And that is

 Theft. Every other sin is a variation of theft. Do you understand that?

Amir: “No, Baba Jan,” I said, desperately wishing I did….

Baba: “When you kill a man, you steal a life. You steal his wife’s right to a husband, rob his

children of a father. When you tell a lie, you steal someone’s right to the truth. When you cheat, you steal the right to fairness. Do you see?”

I did. When Baba was six, a thief walked into my grandfather’s house in the middle of the night.

My grandfather, a respected judge, confronted him, but the thief stabbed him in the throat, killing him instantly—and robbing Baba of a father. The townspeople caught the killer just before noon the next day…They hanged him from the branch of an oak tree.

--Khaled Hosseini, ***The Kite Runner,*** 17-18

***Ownership is Stewardship***

Behind the commandment lies the Bible view of property; namely, that ownership is stewardship. By human law, my property is that which I own and may dispose of as a I wish, as distinct from that which I am merely allowed to use as borrower or trustee, under conditions which the owner imposes. Bible-believers, however, know that what human law says I own---my money, goods, legal rights, and titles---I actually hold as God’s trustee. In terms of Jesus’ parable, these things are *talents,* lent me by my Lord on a temporary basis to use for him. One day I shall be asked to give account of how I managed those…. resources….

--J.I. Packer, ***Growing in Christ,*** *@92%*

***Heidelberg Catechism: Q&A 110---Answer 110***

 God forbids not only outright theft and robbery, punishable by law.

But in God’s sight theft also includes cheating and swindling our neighbor by schemes made to

 appear legitimate, such as:

inaccurate measurements of weight, size, or volume;

 Fraudulent merchandising; counterfeit money; excessive interest;

or any other means forbidden by God.

In addition he forbids all greed and pointless squandering of his gifts.

--Heidelberg Catechism, Lord’s Day 42, Q&A 110

***How Many Ways We Can Steal***

* Keep the change when the cashier gives us too much
* Remain silent when we are not charged enough on a bill
* Fail to report all our income and pay taxes on it
* Filing insurance claims or accepting settlements we don’t deserve
* Taking office supplies for personal use
* Unauthorized personal use of work phones and computers
* Failing to work during time for which we are being paid
* Replenishing our kitchen supplies with restaurant supplies
* Overcharging customers or providing them with poor service or products
* Overbilling third-party payers (insurance companies)
* Undertipping service personnel at restaurants, hotels, airports, etc
* Presenting someone else’s ideas or creations as our own or failing to give them credit

--David Gill, ***Doing Right,*** p 267