

18th Week After Pentecost – Monday

A higher standard; The Christian standard.

Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth (Ephesians 4:28)

The Christian standard for morality is Jesus Christ; it is perfection. We are to become "...a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph 4:13)

It has been said that virtue is simple, but vice is complex. See how the Apostle teaches those who steal. He does not merely tell them to not steal, but he equates their sin with other sins – laziness, and selfishness, and even lack of compassion for our neighbor. He urges the thief to labor, and change his state of mind, which was formerly centered upon his own selfish desires, and to think of others. He is not only to cease taking; he is to begin giving with more liberality to those who need.

The Apostle's admonition shows that one sin brings about many related sins. The thief is lazy (he does not labor for that which he takes) and self-centered. Even if he does not take from those who are in want, he does not think of those in want. All of our sins are like this; they are a tangled web of vices.

Ephesians 4:25-32 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another. 26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil. 28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. 29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Daily readings and reflections, available at <http://www.orthodox.net/scripture>

These reflections & others are also posted on the blog: <http://www.orthodox.net/redeemingthetime>