

Standing, we sing: Psalm 52:3,4 beforehand

*-3- But God will break you down forever
And tear you from your tent.
He will uproot all your endeavour;
Your cloak of lies He'll rend.
Alive He'll snatch you from the land
For all the ill you planned.*

*-4-The just shall see it and respect it,
And they shall laugh and say,
"So this is he who has rejected
God as his strength and stay.
In vain he sought in wealth a hold
And trusted in his gold!"*

Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth¹. Beloved, grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ². By the powerful operation of God the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Psalm 5-3:4

Prayer

- *Doxology:*
- *Worship:*
- *Confession:*

Supplication (for pardon of sins):

- *Thanksgiving:*
- *Intercession (for the need of the congregation, the church, authorities, sinful world and appeal to the promises of God)*
- *General supplication:*
- *Illumination of the Holy Spirit (necessary for the ministry of the Word):*

Amen.

Psalm 62:6

*-6-Do in extortion not confide;
In stolen goods do not take pride;
Set no vain hopes on theft and plunder.
Put not in growing wealth your trust;
The greatest riches are but dust;
Set not your heart on earthly splendour.*

Scripture reading: Proverbs 30³

Scripture text: Proverbs 30:7-9; Catechism Lord's Day 42.

**⁷Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die:
⁸Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches;
feed me with food convenient for me: ⁹Lest I be full, and deny thee, and
say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my
God in vain. (Proverbs 30: 7-9 KJV)**

¹ Psalm 124:8

² 1 Corinthians 1:3

³ <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs%2030&version=KJV>

This is a very short, yet striking prayer.

- By someone drenched with the gravity wrought by God the Holy Spirit, and who prays in all humility (verse 2-4)
- This prayer is also by someone who loves the Word of God (verse 5-6)

This is also a sensible prayer, as it asks for grace to be shown to the soul and for sustenance for the body.

- The person prays for his daily bread – but it is a meek request
 - He wants neither too much, nor too little
 - He asks for only enough

From the person's prayer it is evident that his contentment does not depend on his desire to possess a lot (of stuff).

- It lies in the fact that he covets⁴ precious little!
- It is a very strong principle that the prohibition on coveting must be addressed first, and before one tries to exorcise one's other sins
- The sin of coveting usually precedes our transgression of all the other commandments / it precedes all other sin.

We pay attention to two matters annexed to the eighth commandment - namely that you may not steal.

1. **What does this commandment forbid (prohibit)**
2. **What is here commanded (prescribed)**

1. What does this commandment forbid?

- The commandment teaches that God has disposed of things in such a manner that there are certain ways in which we may not gain possession of things
- Which also dictates how that we may not manage our possessions!

Which ways are:

- Theft
 - Theft is when you obtain things illegally. One takes something, which belongs to another, to keep it for yourself.
 - Or you obtain things unlawfully – by means of lies and deceit (trickery)
- Avarice⁵ (Greed)
 - When one accumulates things inappropriately
 - One's possessions must do its work in God's kingdom – it must serve the honour of the Lord and the welfare of one's neighbour.
 - The moment that one amasses wealth and possessions in your own honour, one errs
 - It is also wrong to want more and even more money and possessions, just for the sake of having it.
 - *God places us in charge of possessions so that we may be His stewards*
- Waste and squandering
 - When one is incapable of being responsible and respectful when disposing of one's possessions, but wastes it aimlessly.

These are the things, which God expressly forbids.

- The reason is apparent: when obtaining possessions in this manner, one contributes to disaster.
- Which disaster will surely be visited on you, when in the Last Judgement, you stand before God.

Agur knew life, and himself very well.

- Which is why he asks the Lord to keep falseness and lies far from him.
- With that, he asks the Lord to give him neither wealth nor poverty.

⁴ To covet is to long to possess (something belonging to someone else)

⁵ Avarice is extreme greed for wealth or material things

- Life has taught him that all these things have the ability to seduce people to sin – will the Lord therefore please keep it far from him!

Where does one hear that someone prays that he wishes to not be rich?

- This deeply religious man prays thus, because he realizes that material wealth could alienate him from God.
- What would it help if one were to have a substantial bank account, many investments and lots of possessions, but one had become alienated from God?
- It truly is the case that wealth estranges many people from God.

Agur equally knows that also poverty brings many miseries. It is a heavy burden.

- Often times people lie and steal to be rid of it.
- Others deceive and commit fraud.
- Theft is contrary to God's governance.
- Such conduct is revolt against God's sovereignty according to which He gives to each one as He pleases (according to His knowledge of what each one of us is capable of managing to His honour!)

These things are an injury to the image of God within us. When we violate God's image in us, we also sully His honour.

- True faith asks of us, that we will be content with that which He has given us to be stewards of.
- It also asks of us to manage such possessions with the utmost responsibility and dignity, to His honour.

2. What is commanded (prescribed)

Three things are commanded.

- I must promote my neighbour's interests
- I must do my work diligently and honestly
- I must assist people who are in need

Communion with the saints is necessary in order to know the needs of my neighbour.

- Which means that I must have an interest in the people around me, so that I may be aware of what would foster their best interests as well as what would cause harm to come to them.
- Where I am able and permitted, I must do the things that will be to their advantage – in accordance with what the Word of the Lord requires of me.
- Hereby my conduct will profit God's honour.

Such a commandment naturally involves the commandment to love my neighbour! One can tend to one's neighbour's interest only if one knows and understands the Lord's love – and if one has the ability to reach out to other people!

One will also know another's need and pain only when one knows how to love. A person, who does not know how to love, will not be bothered by another's pain and hunger.

Notice the contrast built into the eighth commandment

- I must not rob my neighbour – I must protect and build his interests
- I may not be wasteful – I must work diligently
- I may not be greedy – I must lend a hand to those in need

What we sow here, we will reap in eternity.

- It is exactly through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ that we have gained contentment in our lives.
- By His Spirit He teaches us that our greatest possession is in eternity when He clothes us with eternal blessedness.
- We will have home and work on the New Earth – in perfection.
- Perfection means that it will be without blemish and want, and without richness – it will be filled with glory.

Let us then manage our income and possessions with discernment.

- These things are not our highest good
- Nor is it our goal
- These are merely the means by which we are prepared for the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Question 110. *What does God forbid in the eighth commandment?*

Answer: *God forbids not only those thefts, (a) and robberies, (b) which are punishable by the magistrate; but he comprehends under the name of theft all wicked tricks and devices, whereby we design to appropriate to ourselves the goods which belong to our neighbour: (c) whether it be by force, or under the appearance of right, as by unjust weights, ells, measures, fraudulent merchandise, (d) false coins, usury, (e) or by any other way forbidden by God; as also all covetousness, (f) all abuse and waste of his gifts. (g)ⁱ*

Question 111. *But what does God require in this commandment?*

Answer: *That I promote the advantage of my neighbour in every instance I can or may; and deal with him as I desire to be dealt with by others: (a) further also that I faithfully labour, so that I may be able to relieve the needy. (b)ⁱⁱ*

Amen.

Prayer.

Psalm 73:4 & 8

-4-

*Such are the wicked: they're secure;
Their wealth increases evermore.
Surely in vain I've been pure hearted
And have not from God's laws departed,
And I in vain have washed my hands
In purity and innocence.
For all day long I suffer here,
And with new grief each dawn draws near.*

-8-

*Whom do I have in heav'n but Thee?
Who shall on earth my refuge be?
Since I have Thee as rock and Saviour,
I seek no further wealth or favour.
Although my flesh and heart may fail,
God is my strength, I shall prevail,
For He, whose steadfast love is sure,
Will be my portion evermore.*

¹⁴The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.⁶

Amen.

⁶ 2 Corinthians 13:14

ⁱ (a) 1 Cor.6:10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

(b) 1 Cor.5:10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. Isa.33:1 Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; and when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee.

(c) Luke 3:14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages. 1 Thess.4:6 That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

(d) Prov.11:1 A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight. Prov.16:11 A just weight and balance are the LORD'S: all the weights of the bag are his work. Ezek.45:9 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Let it suffice you, O princes of Israel: remove violence and spoil, and execute judgment and justice, take away your exactions from my people, saith the Lord GOD. Ezek.45:10 Ye shall have just balances, and a just ephah, and a just bath. Ezek.45:11 The ephah and the bath shall be of one measure, that the bath may contain the tenth part of an homer, and the ephah the tenth part of an homer: the measure thereof shall be after the homer. Ezek.45:12 And the shekel shall be twenty gerahs: twenty shekels, five and twenty shekels, fifteen shekels, shall be your maneh. Deut.25:13 Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small. Deut.25:14 Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small. Deut.25:15 But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. Deut.25:16 For all that do such things, and all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto the LORD thy God.

(e) Ps.15:5 He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved. Luke 6:35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

(f) 1 Cor.6:10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

(g) Prov.23:20 Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: Prov.23:21 For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags. Prov.21:20 There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up.

ⁱⁱ (a) Matt.7:12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

(b) Eph.4:28 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.