

# Fred's Thoughts for January 2023

## Stealing – can it ever be justified?

How often have we heard the thief complain that he needed what he stole more than the person who owned it. They did not have enough food so they took what they needed from the rich guy who lived down the road. The employee who helps himself to the goods in his boss's factory. Well, he justifies it by saying his boss can afford it. What about the person who hoards goods he does not need? Perhaps the thief has a point? Are those who do not have enough money to live justified in stealing what they need from those who have far more than they need? Was Robin hood justified in stealing from the rich to pay to the poor. History would seem to justify his actions. Perhaps as in many things there is no right or wrong in anything. Both sides are to blame. It is always wrong to take what is not yours but it is also wrong to hoard what you do not need to the detriment of your fellow man.

Perhaps this is why in the bible Jesus is reported to say

*Matthew 19:23*

*The Rich and the Kingdom of God*

16 *Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?"*

17 *"Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments."*

18 *"Which ones?" he inquired.*

*Jesus replied, " 'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony,*

*19honor your father and mother,' <sup>c</sup> and 'love your neighbour as yourself.' <sup>d</sup> "*

20 *"All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?"*

21 *Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."*

22 *When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.*

23 *Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven.*

24 *Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”*

Jesus makes it clear it is wrong to steal but he also makes it clear that we should not hold more than we need. The thief is not justified ever in taking what is not his. He will not enter the kingdom of God as a thief. Neither may the rich man who accumulates wealth for the sake of it be guaranteed the right to enter heaven unless he is willing to give up his earthly possessions for God.

Surely Jesus is telling us that we must share our love with all our neighbours. We must not steal from them, and we must not deny them our help or comfort when it is needed. But above all we must all give our love to God because in the end that is all that truly matters.