

No Murder

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[0 : 00] To punish the evildoer and to praise those who do right. First Peter to. Romans 13, Paul makes plain that it's God himself who has put the sword, the instrument of death into the hands of government and that God expects government to use it as an agent of his wrath to bring punishment upon the evildoer.

This kind of killing. Capital punishment for the murderer. Is not forbidden by the sixth commandment. It rather upholds the sixth commandment.

And the same could be said for governments going to war to defend their people from the threat of death and unjust violence. And neither is the sixth commandment broken when taking a life while defending others or oneself from the real threat of death.

These are cases that God himself approves of in his word. But he everywhere shows his hatred for those who wrongfully take life. Perhaps some of you children have memorized those verses in Proverbs 6.

I remember Judy Rogers had a tape that we listened to in our house about this section from Proverbs 6.16-19. There are six things that the Lord hates.

[1 : 21] Seven things that are detestable to him. And the third on the list is hands that shed innocent blood. That is an abomination to the Lord.

Detestable. Revelation 21.8 says of murderers that their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.

God punishes murder with hellfire. That is the ultimate death penalty. The second death. So though murderers may escape the death sentence here, they will not escape the second death.

God hates murder and is serious about avenging these attacks upon his glory. He will enforce his own law even if nations refuse to.

So that's the serious reality. Because life, human life is in his image, because he has the right alone to terminate life, God hates when man assumes the place of God and takes it unjustly from another.

[2 : 29] Thirdly this morning, what does the sixth commandment forbid and require? And I hope by now we're seeing that if the commandment is stated in the negative, the positive is always inferred.

If I am to have no other gods besides God, that not only rules out other gods, but it means I am to have this God as my God. There's always the, what he forbids always has a corresponding what he requires.

And that is true of our commandment here. The sixth commandment forbids any action that takes away life unjustly. But the opposite is also required.

And this is what is too often missed. It requires us to promote the well-being of life in others and ourselves in all possible ways. It calls us to positively preserve and defend life and to not neglect the means to do so.

Treating all life, all human life, as the special gift of God that it is. Now let me give some specifics of what's forbidden. First of all, out and out murder. Every night in our major cities, people are murdering people for all sorts of reasons.

[3 : 49] Nationwide, one in three murders go unsolved. In our bigger cities, it's up to one out of two murders that go unsolved in this life. There's too many to deal with, to get to the bottom of.

But shooting and stabbing and strangling to death are the obvious violations of the sixth commandment. That's where we begin. But there's a whole lot of wrongful taking of life that does not go by the name of murder in our day.

And is still a breaking of the sixth commandment. Abortion is the murder of human life within the safety of a mother's womb.

And our nation kills over 3,000 unborn babies every day. And that means it's still around a million every year.

Abortion is the leading cause of death in America. Equal to the number killed by heart disease and cancer combined. It's no longer considered murder by many.

[4 : 55] It's considered a woman's right. Sometimes it's done just to avoid the shame of sexual immorality. Or to avoid the inconvenience of a baby at this time in her career.

Maybe she just doesn't want the responsibilities and sacrifices needed to raise a baby. Maybe she's too poor to do it. But a woman's so-called rights over her body never extend to taking the life within her.

It's tearing the precious human being off of God's loom as he's knitting it together in its mother's womb. That place of God-given safety.

And so abortion remains the greatest injustice we face in our land. I wonder, is it that big of a deal to us?

Or have we grown accustomed to it? Because it's just been so common since 1973 when our Supreme Court said that abortion is legal.

[5 : 58] It's not legal in God's court. It's one of the most grievous forms of murder. To kill a baby in its God-given sanctuary of protection.

And again, this command not only forbids us in the sense of, well, we shouldn't have abortions.

Yes, it does do that. But at the same time, it requires us to positively seek the life and health of our neighbor. To positively seek the well-being of the lives of the unborn.

To preserve their lives. And we can do that by speaking up for the unborn. By voting. By giving. By further involvement. In two weeks, we'll be receiving as a church a pro-life offering.

Which we do every year as a special offering for two local organizations. That are urging pregnant mothers to carry their babies to term. To keep their babies.

[7 : 07] And just reading the literature is amazing. To hear how they come in for a meeting and they're determined to have an abortion. Again, it's interesting to read the reasons.

They're treating that child in their womb as if it's just some abscess to remove. Just to have it removed because it causes this or that trouble in my life. But the game changer is when mom looks on the ultrasound screen and sees a living heartbeat within her.

And so that's been very effective. To change the minds of mothers. To keep. But it's expensive. And so we can help toward the saving of human life in the womb by their offerings.

God help us not to stand by idle and silent while this scourge upon our land is happening. Abortion breaks the sixth commandment.

Suicide breaks the sixth commandment. It is self-murder. Each year there are more suicides than homicides. That just means more people kill themselves than kill others. Not counting abortions.

[8 : 24] It's the second leading cause of death among teenagers. How do teenagers die? Well, they die in accidents in the road. And secondly, they die by taking their own lives. Isn't that sad?

Young people with life to live yet? Have found life so full of pain and stress and depression? That they would believe the devil's lie.

That the answer is to take their own life. When in truth the answer is to find their life in Christ. For whom that life was first given in the first place. Now we need to remember that the sixth commandment then applies as much to our own life as it does to the life of others.

All life is life in God's image. And it's God's to give and take. And we have no more right to take our own life than we do in others. And that brings us to doctor-assisted suicide.

When terminally ill patients ask a doctor to administer drugs that will end their lives. Some of you can still remember in the 90s when Dr. Death, Jack Kevorkian of Michigan, assisted some hundred patients in the taking of their own lives.

[9 : 44] It was to a great outcry. This should not be. And he carried the name Dr. Death. The outcry has been reduced and almost down to a whisper in our day.

In our post-Christian, post-truth culture. Oregon, Washington, Vermont, Montana, New Mexico, and more and more states are signing on. And advocates don't like to use the term assisted suicide.

They've chosen better sounding names like euthanasia. Which means good death.

Or the Oregon State's law. Death with dignity law. Dying with dignity. Yeah, we like that. The world clamors after dignity.

Dying on your own terms. Should be a basic human right. The Bible answers no. Terminating life is God's right alone.

[10:57] Not man's. In August, I read an article on the internet of a double suicide in Netherlands of an old couple in their 90s. Here they are.

Getting to the end. And the author of the article was just going on and on, gushing of how wonderful. How wonderful. To go out together on their own terms.

You know, that's a joke. On their own terms. Do you know why people die? It's God's terms of the covenant of works.

And the day that you eat of it, you will surely die. Death is the wages of sin. Death is the terms of God's covenant broken. And nobody in that sense dies on their own terms.

We die because we've broken God's terms. God's commandments. But we would like to even put a good face on our own death.

[11:55] There's perhaps no bolder way for men to say to God, I'm in charge here. I'm the master of my fate. I'm the captain of my soul. I did it my way.

And it's so slick. They call it mercy killing. I mean, who can be against mercy, right? You for mercy? Yeah, I'm for mercy. Well, that's all it is. It's just mercy.

It's a kindness. So we're watching a movie. And a guy and girl fall in love. Meet and fall in love. And the guy is a quadriplegic. And wants to commit suicide to end a very difficult life.

His girlfriend is death against it. She is against suicide. And then the movie follows this struggle between them. And in the end, she gives in to him and his view as she comes to realize that it was just her selfishness that wanted to hold on to him.

And so she then supports him in his decision and goes with him to the fancy private resort where he takes the lethal injection, ending his own life. And I find my heart pulled in.

[13:07] It's such an emotional thing. It's done so slick. It's done so well. But you know what it is? It's the world calling evil good. And calling good evil.

Oh, that's just your selfishness. That good principle within you that says it's wrong to take life, to take our own life. Oh, that's just your selfishness.

And if we live on our emotions, brothers and sisters, we will end up agreeing with the writer of the movie in the end. If we listen to our hearts instead of our heads as we're being preached to do in our day, we will be just where many of the world are today on this matter of self-murder.

But the sixth commandment cuts through all this emotion with words in black and white that say, no murder. No murder. Man who bears God's image is not to be put down like old sick dogs.

Now again, this command not only forbids us ending our lives or ending the lives of elderly, sick, and weak people, but it requires us to positively seek the welfare of their lives.

[14:23] So let's not ignore the elderly. Let's not just throw them out of sight and forget about them, but minister to them even at their weakest conditions, treating them with dignity at the end of their lives.

Yes, caring for their needs physically, emotionally, and spiritually as we have opportunity. Now, we all have different ministries. And so I'm not saying that you all ought to be going down to the nursing home each Sunday as our team does.

But I do want to encourage you to visit down there. You've got other ministries? Fine. Pick a year this Sunday, a Sunday this year, and visit the Bremen Healthcare Center with our team.

And give an hour of your time or whatever it takes to go and to treat these folks with the dignity of being human beings made in the image of God and to show them the love that God has put in your heart and the respect for human life, however weak and infirm it may be.

Go to some of the other places, the Whitlock, other places, shut-ins related to the church here who aren't able to get out. Yes, you see, there's a positive side to this command.

[15:49] We're not to take the life of the elder, but we are to actually work for the preservation and minister to their lives in every way. There are many today who think the elderly just need to get out of the way and make room for the next generation.

Sounds very new, doesn't it? But I assure you, it's very old. The ancient Spartans took their unwanted babies and left them exposed to the birds.

The ancient Romans took the elderly to the bridge over the Tiber and threw them in. Isn't it interesting that the very youngest and the very oldest are the ones who are most vulnerable to the erosion of the sixth commandment.

Let us be the strongest where the world is the weakest. Let Christians lead the way in showing respect and love and care for the elderly and the unborn.

I thrill to see you ladies rejoicing with new moms who are pregnant with their first child. And see you gather together and give gifts and share the word of God and just fellowship and rejoicing together.

[17 : 04] Wouldn't it be good to seek out some unwed mother in one of our local pro-life ministries and find out if we could maybe throw a shower for her and get together and heap gifts upon her and rejoice in her decision to keep this child and to bring it into the world.

And to share why it is that life is valuable. You see, we need to be thinking, what can we do positively? And you ladies could be our spies and find out if there's things that we men could do to help around the house or to do something for them.

To support life from, yes, the nine months preceding birth, but then to support the mother afterwards as well.

Let's seize the day in our increasing culture of death and demonstrate the difference that knowing God makes in these very areas.

Well, so far I'm just preaching to the choir. We all agree on these things, don't we? So let me press a bit further. You may not have killed anyone, but you may be in the process of killing yourself by what you are eating and drinking and taking into your body.

[18 : 27] 400 years ago, Thomas Watson wrote, many dig their grave with their teeth. I find that interesting, that even 400 years ago, with the limited knowledge they had of the human body and the decisions that men make and what they eat and take into their body, they knew this much, that it was killing many of them.

This, too, is taking God-given life, even if slowly, rather than preserving it.

Our nation's health protection agency, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, is more and more connecting the dots for us, aren't they? Between poor health habits and early death. Abusing your body by poor health habits is forbidden by the Sixth Commandment.

It's taking your life, albeit slowly, rather than preserving the gift that God has given you. Do you know that taking care of your body is a spiritual matter in the Bible?

It's included in the Sixth Commandment. Not to take life, but to preserve it. Issues of diet and exercise and sleep, and not working too much, and all these things, you see.

[19 : 40] It's a spiritual matter to God. And we can be breaking the Sixth Commandment if we pay no heed to it.

Don't be your own murderer. There are other ways we can break the Sixth Commandment. There's reckless homicide. There was no intention of killing anyone, but reckless or careless behavior caused someone to die, like driving under the influence of alcohol.

People are being killed by such reckless behavior. Driving buzzed. It turns a car into a deadly weapon. Driving too fast.

Putting others in danger. That's not preserving life. It's endangering it. Let me ask you a question, and I'll leave it to you and your conscience to work it out. What about texting and driving?

Ah, preacher, now you've gone to meddling. Perhaps. Perhaps not. Why is it wrong to drive buzzed or drunk?

[20 : 52] If it's because you are endangering people on the road, then we need to ask, is this, while driving, endangering people on the road?

Some states have already weighed in and says, yes, too many lives have been lost. It's going to be illegal here. I've had oncoming cars drifting over the middle line only to see the horrified driver look up at the last minute and go back into his lane.

What about eating and driving? Oh, boy. I suppose there's a way to eat and drive that's not dangerous.

But when you've got the steering wheel in your knees and a bowl in one hand and a spoon in the other, that's dangerous. Not just to your own life, but to the lives of others.

Yes. These last six commandments of the ten are all talking about how to love your neighbor as yourself.

[22 : 03] It's teaching us how to do to them what we would want them to do to us. And I wonder, would you like the drivers coming to you at 55 miles an hour, just some four feet away from you, to be approaching with no hands on the wheel and both eyes on their phone?

If not, then do to others as you would have them do to you. Don't do to others what you wouldn't want them to do to you. Negligent homicide is another category of killing recognized by our courts and was recognized in the Bible before our courts.

When a human life is lost due to criminal negligence, something that was not done to preserve life. So in Deuteronomy 22, 8, we're given an example.

When you build a new house, make a railing, a parapet around your roof so that you may not bring the guilt of bloodshed on your house if someone falls off the roof.

You get it? So you built your house and there's a nice place where people will come and view the sunset on top of your house and you don't put any railing or protective safety around it and somebody falls off to their death and it brings blood guilt upon that house.

[23 : 30] Not because of something you did, but because of something you didn't do. Negligence. Negligent homicide.

It's possible to be guilty of bloodshed by doing nothing when you should have done something to preserve life. Exodus 21, 29 speaks of owning an animal that is known to be dangerous but not doing enough to keep it penned in and so that bull that was known to gore gets loose and kills someone.

That brings blood guilt through negligence. So again, we can literally break the sixth commandment by doing nothing. Doing nothing.

You see, it's emphasizing to us there is a positive side to the sixth commandment. Not only are we not to take life, we are positively to preserve and protect human life.

And we need to think about that side of the sixth commandment as we're thinking about what we owe to God in this commandment and what we owe to our neighbor.

[24 : 36] So this commandment calls us to be pro-life in every area. Yes, in abortion. But in every area. Are you pro-life?

We live in a culture of death. Careless, negligence. Don't care about anybody but me. Are you pro-life enough to think about your neighbor and what would be best for them?

That's what the commandment calls us to do. Well, it's easy to come to the sixth commandment and think that we have finally found a commandment that we can handle.

At last, I found one that I've measured up to. I have never killed anyone. You know, that was the prevailing religious conviction in Jesus' day.

That's why the rich young ruler could meet Jesus and have Jesus quote to him five out of the six of the last ten commandments. And say, all these have I kept since I was a youth.

[25 : 48] I've never broken the sixth commandment. And perhaps that's how you have thought of the sixth commandment. That's the way Israel was interpreting the sixth commandment.

The common man on the street the scribes and Pharisees. We don't have time to go there this morning. We'll have to reserve it for next week, God willing. But when Jesus Christ weighs in on the sixth commandment, we find out that even here we have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

because he will tell us that anger and malice and bitterness and envy and hatred is murder enacted in our hearts.

Murder on the stage of our hearts. And it too breaks the sixth commandment. So I have to come to a commandment like this and say, well, I'm guilty here too, Lord.

I'm going to challenge you to, I thought we'd get further this morning, I'm not going to go further, I'm going to challenge you to think about the positive side of the sixth commandment.

[27 : 16] Talk about it over your meal. Talk about it together. What are we to be doing with regard to life on the big scale in order to be preserving it and doing those things that tend toward its health and betterment?

And then next week, Lord willing, we'll come and we'll look at Jesus' words and we'll see what he says this sixth commandment means and we'll find that that indeed we are under the capital punishment of death for this commandment broken.

It's not just those thugs out walking the alleys of our big cities at night. it's the likes of you and me, the likes of a holy King David that in just the right circumstances with all the right buttons pushed finds himself taking the life of another by proxy, by a letter that's written.

So what do we do? What do we do with our sins, our deservingness of death? Well, I trust we run to the Savior. How is it that blood guilt is removed?

Isn't it interesting? It's removed by blood, the Savior's blood. He takes the death penalty upon himself. His life is taken because we deserve that.

[29 : 00] That's what our sins and may I say my sins against the sixth commandment deserve. and Jesus, God's son, takes our place. And so the law of God ever is sending us back to the cross, back to Jesus, where we find the answer.

Isaiah chapter 1, God has a charge against his people. He says, your hands are full of blood. They're full of blood.

And two verses later, he says, come now and let's reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins are as scarlet, scarlet as blood is scarlet.

Though they are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Where do you get rid of your blood guilt?

Well, from the Lord Jesus shedding his blood. on behalf of every sinner that trusts in him. Yes. Pardon for sins and crimes of deepest dye.

[30 : 16] A pardon bought with Jesus' blood. Well, let's glory in Jesus Christ as we conclude and put our faith in what he has done for us sinners in number 465.

Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Come to this Savior for whatever your sin. The sin against the Sixth Commandment murder is not the unforgivable sin.

It rather is one of those sins for which Jesus died. For the blood of Jesus, God's Son cleanses from all sin. Let's stand and sing together. 465.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[32 : 24] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Yes. Yes. Yes. Let's pray.

Lord, you have searched us and you have tried us and once again you have shown us to be guilty, sinners, defiled, condemned, whose only hope of salvation is in Jesus Christ shedding his blood in our behalf, him dying in our stead, and how thankful we are for such gospel promises already announced through Isaiah and that coming suffering servant who would receive the punishment that would bring us peace and how we rejoice in that Savior come and who has already laid down his life in our place.

And now would plead the merits of his blood before your throne for all who trust in him. Thank you for such a great Savior and such a great salvation.

Send us on our way rejoicing in him and come and write upon our hearts this commandment that we would not only be those who refrain from taking the lives of others but that we would be a people who are marked with the heart of Jesus that do what we can to preserve life and to help it forward.

[35 : 05] that because we recognize you as the giver of it and the life is being dignified because it's in your image.

Help us in these things. Forgive us of our selfishness and give us more of the Savior's self-giving love. We ask in his name. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen.