

“Don’t Murder”

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Exodus 20:13

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Any of you know what the sixth commandment is? Thou shalt not murder. Right? So it depends on how many of you have a King James Bible? Any of you King James folks? You have New King James or Regular King James? Regular King James. Well, your Bible's wrong. The Old King James, it doesn't say Thou shalt not murder. It says Thou shalt not kill. But the King James society realized that that was translated wrong. So the New King James version says Thou shalt not murder, because there's a difference between murder and killing.

So if I go out and I'm really hungry and I go out and find a cow and I shoot it and then I start eating it, I didn't murder. I killed a cow. I didn't violate the sixth commandment because I wanted a cheeseburger. Right? That wasn't a violation.

If you were to go, the word that's used in the Hebrew for murder is a word, it's *rasah*. That's the Hebrew word. The word for kill is a word *harag*. Okay? And so murder is this premeditated, unlawful killing of a human being. We're going to get into kind of what that is specifically. But if you were to go to Ecclesiastes, maybe some of you even remember the old song, there is a turn turn turn. You know that one?

No, it was a, there is a place, there is a time for everything. It comes from Ecclesiastes 1.3. Listen to what Ecclesiastes 1.3 it says.

“there is a time for everything and a season for every activity under the heavens. A time to be born, a time to die, a time to plant, a time to uproot, a time to kill, and a time to heal, a time to tear down, and a time to build.”

There's a time to *harag*. There's a time, there are times when killing is something that has to do. That's not murder. I mean, how could God be saying through Solomon that there's a time to kill if what he just said this time is forbidden by the 6th commandment? It can't be. It's, there's more to this than that.

Now, if you were to go and look at like our different laws in the country. So, different things happen depending on how you killed somebody. So, even in the justice system, our country's justice system is based on, it's based on scripture and how God said to deal with certain types of people losing their life. So, some killing is under the authority of God, and God has the authority to give and take life away. But because our country has laws that are rooted in scripture, we have different kinds of punishment.

We have what's called premeditative murder, first degree murder. And the punishment for that can in some states be the death penalty. Right? But that's different than involuntary manslaughter. Because involuntary manslaughter would mean I didn't really mean to do it. I didn't premeditate it. I accidentally did that.

So, for instance, I'm driving my car and I'm just wasted out of my mind. And I'm driving around and I, I, I'm not in control of myself. I'm not driving with the intent of killing anybody, but I slam right into a preschool and I kill a bunch of kids. Now, that wasn't premeditative murder, but I am responsible, even under the biblical law, I'm responsible for killing all those kids because my carelessness and my neglect caused it to happen. However, biblically, it would be dealt differently.

Instead of, instead of you killed somebody, therefore you will die. That's how the Bible deals with it. You take a life in murder against God, you get the death penalty. That's the way it was dealt with in Old Testament scripture. They dealt with it differently if it was an accident, even if it was careless. In that situation, what they

would do is they set up what was called, God allowed there to be what's called, they were kind of like sanctuary cities. They didn't call them that. They didn't call them sanctuary cities. They called them cities of refuge.

What would happen is people would be protected in those towns. Let's say somebody, there were no cars, no cars back then, but somebody accidentally killed somebody. It wasn't premeditative, but the family is still ready to go after them, right? Somebody kills somebody in your family. They want vengeance, right? They go into the court and they say, that person should die because they took my family member. But the way God dealt with it, he said, yes, that person is responsible, but because it was involuntary and they didn't mean to, we're going to allow them to leave and take refuge in a city and the people in that city will protect this person from the vengeance of the family member that is designated to kill that person.

Because each family member, I mean, each family that had somebody that was involuntary manslaughter, had one person in their family that was the person who could go avenge that death. They had the right to do that. And so the person who had committed the crime, they would go to a sanctuary city that would stay there. But if they ever left that city, Bob over here who wants to avenge his sister's death, Bob over here can be waiting there until he comes out. And if he comes out, he can kill him and he's completely okay with doing it. That's what it was in the Bible. It's really kind of different.

If you go to chapter 21 of, this is just a chapter after where we are. It says in chapter 20 verse 1, verse 12,

Anyone who strikes a person with a fatal blow is to be put to death. However, if it is not done intentionally, but God lets it happen there to flee to a place, I will designate. But if anyone schemes and kills someone deliberately, that person is to be taken from my altar and put to death.

So, there's a difference in the way God deals with this. So not all killing is the same. Not all taking of life is the same. Like I said, we have first degree murder. We have premeditated murder. We have involuntary manslaughter.

It's also why PETA is wrong when it says you can't kill animals. I can now, since Genesis nine after the flood, God said you can eat animals now. We were all vegetarians until then. I don't know if you knew that. And then after the flood, he says, all right, now I'm giving you all the animals. So now I can go eat a cheeseburger with a clear conscience and in Jesus' name just right, totally fine. I'm not violating the sixth commandment when I do that. It's why when you're in war and you're battling in war, that's not killing, that's not murder. You're killing under the authority of the government that is that is placed over you. So, God says to submit to the government authorities.

And so it's not murder, but it is killing. It's why it's why if somebody breaks into your house, guys, if somebody breaks into your house and they are a threat to the life of your family, according to scripture, now I'm not saying what the law says. I'm saying according to scripture, you have the right to defend yourself and to kill that person. And that's not murder that is killing. That's not a violation of the sixth commandment. There are exceptions, just like involuntary manslaughter would not be murder that would be that would be killing. It's the reason why the government has the right if somebody is convicted under their laws and somebody is convicted of murder to then turn around and execute the death penalty upon them because the government has the right to do that because they have been given the authority to do that.

And he said, well, man, this is kind of confusing. Why is that? What's the deal? Here's why it's okay because murder, when you murder somebody, when you premeditatively murder somebody, it's an assault on the image of God. That's the problem with murder. It's an assault on the image of God. Now, if I kill a hamburger, I get a

hamburger, I kill a cow. I didn't kill the image of God. I killed the image of, you know, a sirloin or something. I didn't kill the image of God.

God gives human life. God takes human life away. You die because God takes your life back. You live because God gave you life. God is in control of all of that. And so, why is murder wrong? You say, well, well, duh, it's just wrong. I can't just walk around killing folk because, you know, that's a good pragmatic answer. Right?

Everybody be afraid, you know, if everybody was just going around killing it and it was okay. And you start to see that in some cities now where they're just allowing lawlessness. Can't allow lawlessness. You just can't allow that. But the thing with murder is this. Somebody might say, well, the reason is because you're supposed to love your neighbor and it's not very neighborly to kill your neighbor. Right?

So, if I go over to my neighbor and I kill him, say, well, that was a very neighborly. Mr. Rogers would say, please don't kill your neighbor. Human beings are made in the image of God. That's the point. You're made in his image. And so if you remember the second commandment, you shall not make a graven image. Why was that bad? It was bad to make a graven image because you're going to make something that distorts and completely misrepresent who God really is. And God says, you don't make the image. I will create the image that reflects who I am. And he gives us Jesus Christ as that image.

But another reflection, it's flawed, is God created people in their own image. And so we are reflective of that. And so you say, well, then how come it's okay for us sometimes, like to take a life if somebody murdered somebody? Because that's the point. God is saying that human life is so important. The sanctity of life is so important that we can't allow people to be going out and killing somebody by taking a life of somebody who did, we are reinforcing the idea that that life you took was so valuable and such an image bearer of God that you went after the image, you can't do that.

You can't go after the image of God. When somebody breaks into your house and you in self defense defend the precious sanctity of life within your house, right? You're defending the image of God. That's what's happening. It's not the same thing as you in saying, well, I'm going to decide whether that person lives or that person dies. And so, I'm going to go kill them. It's not the same thing. It's not the same thing at all.

And so the first reason murder is wrong, if you got your notes, you can look at this, the first reason murder is wrong is that it is an assault on the image of God. **It's an assault on God's image.** The second reason that it's wrong is that **murder usurps the authority over life and death away from God alone.** So, God is the only one who has power over life and death.

Murder usurps it's saying I'm in authority over life and death. I'm going, you know what, God, you don't have the right to, I'm just as good as far as knowing what's what who should live and who should die. I'm as good a judge. I'm a better judge than you are of when a person should live. I'm a better judge than you are on when somebody should die. God, you obviously don't know what you're doing. And so, I'm going to, I'm going to get in here and I'm going to usurp your authority and kick you off the throne. And so you know what? Now you can die.

All right. Oh, no, then you should die. You know, I have a feeling it would be better for me if you was dead. So here you go. That's you usurping the authority of God. And God says right off the bat, no, you can't do that. And so, what does that mean practically in our lives? Well, what does it mean?

And I'm not trying to be a political cat. I'm not a super political cat, but I'm just going to be straight up with what that means in real life. It means that suicide, you don't have the right to take your own life. God didn't give you, you didn't give yourself life. And so you can't take it.

That doesn't mean that you're really old and you're really sick. And you're in a lot of pain. And they say, Hey, we've got this little pill that you can take and you'll suffer for another 10 years, but it'll keep you alive. And you're like, Okay, well, I'll do that because I don't want to, I don't, I'm going to want to murder my, that's not what I'm saying.

Refusing treatment. That's a total different story. You're saying, you know what, I'm not taking my own life, but I'm not going to try to do things. I'm not going to seek after staying alive as long as I possibly can. God, if you want to take me, you can. God, I'm just leaving this to you because you're in control of life and you're in control of death. There's nothing wrong with trying to preserve your life. Nothing wrong with that because God can take your life whenever he wants.

But it's the reason why to take your own life is wrong. We're not supposed to do that. It also means that euthanasia is murder. When we find somebody and we say, you know what? Grandpa says, you know what? I've had enough. You know what? Just go out and find Dr. Kevorkian here and we're just going to kind of take care of some business. And now, we don't have the right to do that.

Now, that's not to say that there's anything wrong again with refusing treatment. Choosing not to do chemo or something like that. But to make a decision, I'm going to end my own life right now. Or to help somebody end their own life and assisted suicide, that's murder. That's wrong.

You say, but what about the pain? Go ahead and take the drugs. Take them. Do what you have to do to deal with the pain. But your life is valued by God. As long as he wants you to have life, he has the power to take it away at any moment. So, wait for Him to exercise his authority over your life.

What about abortion? Oh, Dustin, not now. Wait a second. We're going to kick you off the stage. Abortion is murder. There's no way around it. There's no way around it. God didn't have, he didn't have to allow that child, regardless of what happened to cause that child to be there. Doesn't matter what that is. God didn't have to allow a woman to conceive. You conceive because God allows you to conceive. You don't conceive because it was all your choice. God causes something.

We tried six years to have a baby. Couldn't conceive. We was trying to conceive. We thought we were in control of conceiving. Couldn't have a baby. Couldn't have a baby. And then out of nowhere, God said, all right, I'll give you a baby. I didn't do anything different. Everything was the same. God knows us. He chooses us to be born. He chooses us to be there. And he knows us before we're ever born. It's only God who has authority over that baby's life.

Now, if you want to abort a cow, a different story. That's not a human being. If you want to abort a spider in your room, do that in Jesus' name. Right? Over and over. I got an amen. But not a person. Human life, even the smallest human life, is made in the image of God. And God creates it.

John Calvin. I'm not even a Calvinist, but John Calvin, this is back in the... during the Reformers.

Listen to what John Calvin says.

John Calvin says... he wrote a commentary on Exodus chapter 21, and he wrote in it, it says,

“It is almost a monstrous crime to rob it of the life which it has not yet begun to enjoy. If it seemed more horrible to kill a man in his own house than in a field, because a man's house is his place of most secure refuge, it ought to surely be deemed more atrocious to destroy a fetus in the womb before it can come to light.”

Murder of a baby is the opposite of health care. It's the opposite of that. It's the opposite of a woman's role in child's life. Women are supposed to protect their child, not kill it. Okay?

And so, you might say, well, this doesn't apply to me, because I never murdered nobody. So, I'm all good, right? I never aborted any baby. I never killed myself. Obviously, I've never helped anybody kill anybody. So I go down my list of all the things that qualify me for following this commandment, and I go, check, I'm good.

I don't have to worry about this one. Uh-oh. Jesus showed up. Jesus transforms these commandments, doesn't he?

So, the religious people, they believe that if they don't commit the actual act, this is how religious people think. If I don't commit the actual act, if I don't pull the trigger, if I don't swing the knife, if I don't do that, and I don't take the life, then I'm innocent. I haven't broken the sixth commandment, right? I'm a lawkeeper. I'm not a lawbreaker.

But take a look at Matthew chapter 5, verse 21 to 24. It says,

“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago. It says, You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment. But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, raca is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, “You fool” will be in danger of the fire of hell.”

Here's what Jesus is saying. That murdering is more than just not physically outwardly taking somebody's life. Murder is the outpouring, actually, of anger, like there's a root cause of killing somebody. There's a root cause, there's a root within it, that you're angry with somebody. Right? Why did Cain kill Abel? He was angry. It rose up within him.

You grab that knife. Why? Because of the anger. You grab that gun because of the anger. And so, you are murdering them into your heart way before you ever murder them in real life. And God says, Let's cut to the source. You're just as guilty when you have the motive. You're just as guilty because you've already murdered in your heart. You're just acting it out. You still have committed murder.

In other words, you are still a lawbreaker. You have still broken the sixth commandment, even if you haven't physically killed the person because you had within you the anger that caused you, that would cause you to do that if it ever got to that place.

The anger is the source. The anger is the place where it all begins. And so it says, and anyone who says you fool will be in danger of the fire of hell. He's saying, Why the fire of hell? Because we desire, are we deserve hell because we break the commandments. We break God's law.

Causes us to deserve hell. And what's remarkable is that most people aren't too concerned with your heart being angry. But with the people's anger that we may have caught. Watch this. Verse 23, it says, Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar, this is just very bizarre. Because this is in the same passage. This is the very same passage. He said, Listen, it's murder if you are angering your heart. And then at the very end of it, watch what he says.

He says, *“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and then remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar, go first and be reconciled to them, and then come and offer your gift.”*

It didn't say if you, it doesn't say here, if you are up there and you recognize, I'm angry with somebody. Man, I'm so ticked off at Randy. It doesn't say that. It says that if I'm at the altar, I come to the altar, I'm offering my gift to God. And I remember there, you know what?

Randy has a problem with me. Randy's mad at me about something. Randy has anger in his heart toward me. That I have a responsibility, even a greater responsibility than me just dealing with myself. I need to make sure that I take care of my brother and say, Listen, man, I know you have a problem with me. What's the problem? How can we resolve this? Because I don't want you to be angry at me anymore. And I can't always fix that, right? Because Randy's going to, I don't know what's going to happen with Randy.

But usually we will. That's the way it is. Most of the time we're going to be able to figure that out. That's how it works, right? We're supposed to be concerned with other people. We don't want other people within our midst to violate this commandment.

So, if you haven't figured it out yet, let me point out the obvious. That **you have broken the sixth commandment**. I hate to break it to you. But you have all broken the sixth commandment of Thou shall not murder. Because you have all been angry. So, what's that mean?

What do you deserve for breaking the sixth commandment? You deserve to die. You deserve to lose your life. That's what we deserve for breaking this commandment. And here's the good news is that Jesus never broke the sixth commandment. Jesus never broke it. He never murdered anybody. He never stabbed nobody. That's even funny to think about. Jesus like swinging and stabbin'. Jesus didn't do that. Jesus never even got angry in that sense against people in a sinful way. He never shot or poisoned anybody. And when people hated him and they accused him, when they flogged him, when they beat him, when they crucified him, he didn't succumb to hate.

He didn't get angry and seek revenge. Luke 23 says in verse 33, *“when they came to a place called the Skull, they crucified him there along with the criminals. One on his right and the other on his left, Jesus said, Father, forgive them. For they do not know what they are doing.”*

You say, well, why is that important? I'll tell you why that's important. Because for Jesus' death to be a substitute for you and make any change at all, he can't be like you and me. He can't be somebody that broke any of these commandments. If he broke any of these commandments, it would be the same as if I found somebody else that broke the commandments. Randy, will you die for me? Sure, I'll die for you. It doesn't make any difference, though, because he's a sinner as bad as I am. He broke all the commandments, too. We need somebody to substitute for us who hasn't broke any of the commandments, who has lived perfectly holy life so that that person can pay for our sin of breaking this commandment, but that person can also impute to us, give to us the righteous life that he lived.

So, when I stand before God and God says, and God looks at me and he's going to judge me on how I obeyed the law, he's going to look and say, you know what? You obeyed this law perfectly. You never committed murder.

Why? Because I'm not looking at you. You're standing behind your big brother Jesus. When I look at you, I see a perfectly holy life. I see somebody who, when they were crucified on the cross, said forgive them for they

know not what they do. When I look at you, I don't see someone that ever committed sexual sin. I don't see anybody that ever didn't love the Lord, their God with all their heart and all their soul and all their mind. I don't see somebody that, I see perfection because the righteousness of God has been given to my account and God doesn't judge my sins. He judges God's righteousness. That's why this is important.

And here's how we respond. We'll finish up because I'm out of time. Here's how we respond to the sixth commandment in light of Jesus. No longer are we to be takers of life. Jesus came that we may have life and that we may have it abundantly. Jesus has given you life and commissioned you to take the life that he's given to you and to take it out to the dead around you. You live in an Atkinson and a Geneseo and a Moline and a Heritage Square full of dead people. I remember probably 20 years ago, I remember preaching a sermon and I used this video clip of the little kid from the sixth sense and he says, I see dead people.

Remember that movie? Anybody remember that? I see dead people. And I remember looking at that and saying, I go out into Edmunds and into Seattle and I see dead people. I see people that aren't alive with Christ. They're dead in their sins. Everywhere I look, nobody else knows they're dead. People don't even know they're dead. They're walking around, they don't know they're dead. They think they're alive just like in the movie.

And he calls us and says, go to the dead people and give them life. I have given you life. Don't take life, give it. Take the Gospel of Christ. Take Jesus with you and tell them you're dead in your sins. But God doesn't want to take you. God wants you to have life. We're not about taking life. We're about giving life. God is all about giving life.

Let's pray. God, thank you. Thank you. Will we give life? Will we be bold enough to tell the dead walking among us that they need Jesus? That they too can have life and that they may have it more abundantly? God that we would share with those who don't have the eternal life that we have. God, God give us power. We can't do this on our own because we're sinners. We are people that are weak. We're redeemed by you, but we don't have the kind of God-sized power necessary to make the eternal difference that you're asking us to do, God. But you've given us the Holy Spirit. God, to give us courage, to give us power, to give us words, to give us strength, to be your ambassadors into this world. God, send us out to proclaim the gospel. To proclaim life everlasting. In Jesus' name, amen.