

The Gift of Life

Կեանքի Նուէրը

Exodus 20: 13

We move on to the Sixth Word or Commandment.

It is shortest of all. In Hebrew, two words are used *Lo Ratsakh*. “**Don’t kill**” or better “**Don’t murder.**”

-Why is killing wrong? (Ask the congregation).

-When is last time you killed or murdered someone?

I don’t think we have a group of murderers gathered this morning in this church.

Well, don’t run to conclusions.

So far, we have covered **five Words**. The world around us would object to most of those Words. Starting from the first one that we **should not have other gods**, many would disagree. Why should the Judeo-Christian God be the only God? Why not be open to other gods? “Why you Christians are narrow minded?” How about the Sabbath? Why do we need a day to worship and honor God?

We can say this a commandment that we all agree about. (*People in the church or outside the church*).

The sixth Word is universally accepted. All cultures and religions accept that killing or murder is wrong. Law enforcement protects us from murderers. Courts will put murderers on trial. Not only trials, but there is also punishment for the acts of killing. Homicide is a criminal act.

Let us read the Sixth Word:

“**You shall not murder.**” (Exodus 20:13 ESV)

King James translated “**You shall not kill.**” Hebrew language has many words for the word “killing.” Here *ratsakh* is used.

“The word *ratsakh* is never used in the legal system or in the military. There are other Hebrew words for the execution of a death sentence or for the kind of killing a soldier does in mortal combat. Nor is the word *ratsakh* ever used for hunting and killing animals... Therefore, this word means **unlawful killing of a human being.**”¹

The Sixth Word or Commandment basically talks about not murdering someone, such as the premeditated ending of an innocent life, deliberate killing, or the cold blood killing of a person who is created in the image of God.

Questions arise about issues we face daily in our lives. I'll try to give my interpretation the way I see it in the Bible:

-Going to war:

I personally hate war. For most of my life, I experienced the tragedy of war. We should avoid war as much as possible. War should be last thing to resolve something. We have seen that sometimes we go to war to stop the bigger evil that is caused by those who desire to dominate and conquer, such as World War I and II.

There should be a legitimate cause, a justifiable one to go to war. According to the Just War Theory, not only going to war should be justified, but also how we conduct the war. There are international rules about how nations should go to war.

The problem occurs when Just War theory is used for political gain. Often that is the case for most nations.

-Abortion:

It is the murder of a living being who does not have a voice. Unfortunately, it has become a political matter instead of ethical. Every fetus is a living being. Even science tells us that. I will not go in debate when life starts. I believe life starts at conception. Killing a fetus is wrong. I think abortion is only permissible only when the life of the mother is in jeopardy.

-Self-defense killing:

We should avoid killing as much possible. Unfortunately, sometimes we need to stop the killer, or murderer, by killing that person.

-Suicide and Euthanasia:

Life is a gift from God. He gives it, and He takes it. It is sinful to take those things in our hand. I sometimes meet people who are suffering and ask me to pray that they die. I say to them, "I pray for healing, I pray for life, and I pray that God's will be done." Again, let us be careful how we approach those issues. I have seen how medical people prolong life of the elderly people so that they get insurance to pay them. On the other hand, I have seen also how insurance denies coverage to those who need it to survive. So, these are some of the issues we face when it comes to life and death.

-Why does God not want us to murder someone? Why is killing sin? (ask people)

If we love God, we love our neighbor as well. If we honor God, we honor our neighbor as well. If we believe that God created us in his image, our neighbor is created in his image as well.

God is the Giver of life to his image-bearing people. Who are we to decide to end the life of that person?

On previous Sundays we learned about honoring God, honoring our parents, and honoring authorities. How about honoring each other?

-The first homicide

Cain and Abel, two brothers who are created in God's image. Cain was a farmer in the land, Abel was a shepherd. Both brought their offering to God.

Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, ⁴ and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, ⁵ but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. (Gen 4:3,5 ESV)

This created a problem. Why did God accept Abel's offering and not Cain's?

We read in two places in the Bible about these brothers.

By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, (Heb 11:4)

We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. (1 John 3:12 ESV)

I can understand that Cain was upset. The question is, "Then what?"

Cain was angry with God. He could not kill God but could murder his brother who was created in God's image.

We can think, "Well, at least when we are upset and angry, we don't go and murder someone."

Cain did not murder his brother by taking him to the field. He killed him in his mind when **he was angry**. It all started within the person.

-What did Jesus say about this:

"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' ²² But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire. ²³ So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. (Matthew 5:21-24 ESV)

What is going on?

Why is anger an issue?

Let me open here some parenthesis. **“Be angry and don’t sin.”** (Ephesians 4:26) Paul knew we are sinners, and anger can lead us to sin. There is something called righteous-anger. When we see violation of biblical principles, we get angry. But honestly let me ask you this question, “How much of your anger is based on a righteous reason?”

Anger that is not dealt with can lead us to catastrophes. Maybe the society does not consider us murderers because we don’t kill people from the outside (bodily harm). However, **we can kill people inwardly** when we become full of rage, revenge, and anger. We become toxic and bitter. “We are not to do anything that demeans a person’s dignity.”²

Have you ever become like this? Do you remember how you “killed” that person in your heart?

Anger is an emotion, and it is created by God in us. It is not sinful by itself. “But they [emotions] can quickly progress to being sinful if we do not manage them properly. Genesis 4 does not say that Cain's anger was sinful, but we can guess that it was because of where it led him. Cain’s problem was not mere anger, but anger nursed, anger indulged, anger gratified.”³

-What do you do when you get angry?

-Do you nurse your anger?

-What is Jesus teaching about this law (the Sixth Word) or any law?

Look beyond the law. Pharisees kept the law, but not the spirit of the law, the intention of the law. We can fall in the same trap. Jesus is dealing with inward sin that is the main problem of anger, rage, killing, murdering....

We all can be hurt by someone. That hurt makes us angry. Then our imagination works very fast questioning the character of that person. Oh, then hatred and rage settle in our heart.... Can you see how nursing our anger will lead us to other places?

We studied James some years ago.

¹⁹ Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰ for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. ²¹ Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. (James 1:19-21 ESV)

Slow to speak and slow to anger...Oh Lord how much we need this....

“Is Jesus adding to the law by broadening our attention from murder to anger and contempt? By no means. He is pointing out the seedling that grows into the thorny vine that chokes out life. He is appealing to us to fastidiously (carefully) weed the garden of personal holiness. He is teaching that if every person dealt with anger quickly and rightly, there would be no need for the sixth word at all.”⁴

-Jesus is not just dealing with the problem of the anger, he also demands from us to seek reconciliation.⁵

leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Oh I really believe in this. And let me tell you, sometimes I have seen the other side is not ready for reconciliation. I leave it there to God. I continue praying for the person. I leave it God.

Pro-life Samaritan

We are familiar with the parable of the Good Samaritan. The people who robbed the man were murderers, and thus broke the Sixth Commandment or Word. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. Two people, good citizens passed by and did nothing. Like the robbers, they broke the Sixth Word. Seeing a need and ignoring it as bad as the robbers who almost killed the man. The shocking part of the story was that the “enemy” Samaritan did something. He is a pro-life man. He was practical, too, and he did his best to have the wounded person find healing and restoration.

Application:

1. Work on your heart. Anger starts from your heart and mind. **“Quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.”**
2. Like the Good Samaritan, be pro-life. Here are some practical ways: Pray for the peace of the world; know about missions who serve in tough areas; get involved; intercede of behalf of the unborn, the disabled and the elderly; help save children who need foster care; take care of sick and dying people; encourage officials who pass laws that promote justice and life.⁶
3. I need Jesus; we need Jesus; He only can understand how to love the enemy. He is the one who forgave his murderers on the cross. (Luke 23:34) The day before, Jesus drank from the cup that liberated me (us) from the wrath of God, the wages of sin. We deserved that cup, but he took it.

“The only one who never violated any of the commandments or committed murders in the least degree in his heart was murdered for angry murderers

like us. We have all poured out the cup of wrath on one another, but only Jesus drank from that cup for us.”⁷

We need Jesus to come and rule on our heart, mind and soul. Surrender your anger and accumulated sin to Him. Let Him give you peace in your heart.

1. Philip Graham Ryken, *Written in the Stone*, p 136
2. Michael J. Wilkins, *NIV Commentary the Gospel of Matthew* P 261
3. Jen Wilkin, *Ten Words to Live By*, p 92
4. *ibid*, p 94
5. Kevin DeYoung, *The 10 Commandments*, p 103
6. Philip Graham Ryken, *Written in the Stone*, p 144
7. Kevin DeYoung, *The 10 Commandments*, p 105

C. S. Lewis referred to this as the “weight of glory” in one of his most profound sermons, calling for us to pattern our lives so that we promote our neighbor’s glory. “The load, or weight, or burden of my neighbor’s glory should be laid daily on my back, a load so heavy that only humility can carry it, and the backs of the proud will be broken.”

C. S. Lewis, The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses, repr. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 14–15.