

13 - The Sixth Commandment - Exodus 20:13 - 2014-04-20

Call to Worship: John 6:35

Scripture Reading: John 6:37-40

Sermon: "The Sixth Commandment" Exodus 20:13

Benediction: John 6:47

I. See what we learn about this commandment from the days of Adam and Eve

God is. He always has been. He lives. He has life; life not derived from anyone or anything, but life in and of Himself. The bible begins by telling us, "In the beginning God . . ."

The Lord made us, the first one of us, and breathed into our nostrils the breath of life. God made a garden to grow, with all kinds of plants that were beautiful to look at, and whose fruit was good food for us, to the sustaining of our life. God even planted in the middle of the garden the tree of life. He told us we were free to eat of all of that good food. But the Lord God told us also not to eat of one certain tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He warned us, saying, "in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

The devil was a murderer from the beginning. He deceived the woman, who ate the forbidden fruit. The man also ate. And so our whole race became subject to death.

In that dark hour, when we stood guilty of sin against God, when we cowered in shame at our nakedness, God made clothing of animal skins for Adam and Eve. This showed them that God would some day, somehow, through the death of someone innocent, provide a righteousness in which we could stand unashamed before God.

APPLICATION: As we study the sixth commandment today, we can also learn from God's gracious gesture that although it is wrong to murder a person, it is not wrong to kill an animal and make use of its skin for clothing.

II. See what we learn about this commandment from the days of Cain and Abel

There are two ways to deal with this death we have brought upon ourselves: the way of Abel, and the way of Cain

-The way of Abel is to repent of our rebellion; to turn away from the murderous way of the devil; the way of Abel is to believe in the promises God makes about forgiveness in the one who would give His life, shed His blood, to cover our shame; the way of Abel is the way of faith in Christ, by which faith we are counted to be not murderous, but righteous in the sight of God.

-The way of Cain is to continue in rebellion; to embrace the murderous ways of the serpent; the way of Cain is to make a show of religion, but without true faith; the way of Cain is to hate your brother and even to murder him

III. See what we learn about this commandment from the days of Noah

As our race chose the way of Cain, the way of murder, the whole world came to be filled with our violence; so much so that God destroyed our race, along with the animals, by the great flood, except for one righteous man, who found grace in the eyes of the Lord---Noah, and those people and animals who were with him in the ark.

When God brought Noah and his family and the animals off of the ark, God graciously made provisions for us in that new beginning:

-He gave us His permission to kill the animals and eat their meat for our food. But because He is the giver of life, and because even the life of animals belongs to Him and not to us, He commanded that we not eat the blood. We could eat the meat, but we could not eat the animal with its life still in it.

APPLICATION: As we study the sixth commandment, we can be sure that it is no prohibition against killing animals in order to eat them. God specifically told our whole human race that we may do so.

-He gave us the charge to kill any man who had murdered his fellow man. Whoever would sin against his fellow man so severely as to take his life, God would require from him his life, because man is created in God's image, and because the life of man does not belong to man, to be taken away by man, but to God, to be given or taken away by Him only, and by us only at His command.

IV. See what we learn about this commandment from the days of from the days of Abraham

When God had brought Abraham to live in the land of Canaan, the murderous nature of sinful man came to bear on Abraham: An invading army came through Abraham's region. Although he himself was not harmed, the kings' army was defeated, and Abraham's closest relatives were taken captive. Abraham gathered the men of his household and of his neighbors' households and led them as a small army. They made a surprise attack on the conquerors, and with God's help defeated them, rescuing Abraham's nephew and the stolen possessions. This history can be read in Genesis chapter 14.

APPLICATION: As we study the sixth commandment, we can know that it is no prohibition against taking up arms in defense of our own people when the violent attack us. This may rightly be done individually, every person defending himself or herself, or as a community banding together into a military force in extreme cases. Every man capable of bearing arms is part of what America used to call the militia. At grave necessity, namely, violence against our own people, the righteous may kill their enemies as necessary in defense of ourselves and other people. Built into us by our Creator is the right to own and carry weapons for this purpose, to keep and bear arms, which truth is

rightly expressed in the founding documents of our own state and of the United States of America.

V. See what we learn about this commandment from the days of Moses

When the Lord God brought His chosen nation, Israel, out of their slavery in Egypt, He brought them to Mount Sinai and spoke to them these Ten Commandments we are studying together on the Lord's Day these several weeks. With His own voice, He spoke, and with His own finger He carved into stone this commandment: "You shall not murder." This is an eminently good law. How perfect it is, how good, how just! As God revealed to Moses the rest of the Old Covenant law, He made clear that actual willful murder is not the only offense prohibited in this commandment. In the other provisions of the Old Covenant civil code, we find that negligence is forbidden. That is, you may not leave something undone that will be a danger to other people.

-For example, if you build a balcony on your house, you may not leave it without some kind of railing, so that no one can easily fall from it.

-Or if you have a hole of some kind, such as a cistern, you may not leave it without a covering, so that no person or animal can easily fall into it.

-Or if you have an animal that is known for attacking people or other animals, you may not leave it loose, but must pen it up, so that it cannot attack anyone.

But the Israelites, as all people, would be tempted to obey this law outwardly and think themselves righteous, while ignoring the spiritual implications of such a law. So God did not leave them without witness that the commandment, "You shall not murder," does not command regarding merely the what man does or leaves undone with his hands, but what he thinks in his mind and feels in his heart. See what the Lord caused Moses to command the people, Leviticus 19:17-18

Leviticus 19:17-18 'You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. (18) You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

It is from verses like this, and from the Lord Jesus' own words, that we understand how deeply God's Ten Commandments pierce us, how sharp a sword the word of God is, laying open our hearts to inspection by God Almighty. Of course you haven't actually murdered anyone lately, but have you ever failed to love your neighbor as you love yourself? Have you ever had any hatred in your heart toward another person? Have you ever held a grudge against anyone? If so, then the Law of God reveals that you are not a law keeper but a law breaker.

APPLICATION: What is needed, then? If I am a breaker of God's law in my heart, how can I be saved from the anger and judgment of God? Near the end of Moses' life, he told the law of God to the new generation, those who had been born in the wilderness, or who had been children when God brought them out of Egypt. Moses knew that they were sinners, and so that they

would sin, breaking God's law of love. He knew that they would murder, at least in their hearts, even if not with their hands. So even in those days of the Old Testament, the Old Covenant, he prophesied to them about the days of the New Testament, the New Covenant.

-You need the Lord God to send His Holy Spirit to work on your heart

Deuteronomy 30:6 And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

He must change your heart so much that it is as if it were circumcised; it is given a new birth, born again from above; it is given a new creation, so that from the heart you can love the Lord your God and love your fellow men.

-You need to repent, turning from following your own desires to serve the living God

Deuteronomy 30:10 if you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, and if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

-You need to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for your law keeping, your righteousness, instead of believing in yourself; this is not some mysterious thing that is hard to grasp; it is simple enough for children to understand; it is not highly academic; you don't have to be a gifted student to understand; all of you can understand this.

Deuteronomy 30:11-14 "For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off. (12) It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' (13) Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' (14) But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.

VI. See what we learn about this commandment from the days of the Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles

The Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ inspired the apostle Paul to write about this very thing in one of his letters. He quoted from the very words of Moses we just read in Deuteronomy. *Romans 10:6-9 But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, 'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?' " (that is, to bring Christ down from above) (7) or, " 'WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?' " (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). (8) But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): (9) that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*

Think about this for just a moment, and you will see that what Moses and Paul were talking about is not hard to understand.

-Some people---maybe even the very educated professors at the colleges; maybe even the brilliant scientists and the mathematicians---will say it is nonsense to think the Son of God came down here from heaven. Such people do not even take seriously the idea that the Son of God came down here from heaven to live a life of obedience to God's law, then die to take the punishment of sinners upon Himself. But such people, who think these things foolish, are actually themselves fools. For the idea that God would send His Son down here to save us is the simplest thing in the world. What is so strange about that?

-If your mother reached for her cell phone and it wasn't in her purse, would she go looking for it?

-If you had five twenty-dollar bills, but when you pulled them out of your pocket there were only four, would you go looking for that other one?

-If the Kennedy girls went out to milk the cow one morning, and they didn't see it anywhere, and it wouldn't come when they called for it, would they or Mr. Kennedy walk down to the other end of the pasture to look for it, to bring it up to the barn?

-Those things are obvious, aren't they? Doesn't every one of you understand this, even you children?

-Then think of this: If God created us, people, human beings, in His own image, and breathed life into us, and then we all went astray, making ourselves murderers in our hearts, wouldn't the Son of God come down here to save us?

Some people, even people who have done well in school, even school teachers, even college professors, laugh at the idea of Jesus rising from the dead. They don't even think about it most of the time, and if they do, it's just to make fun of the idea as silly or ignorant. But such people, who think the resurrection of Christ is foolish, are actually themselves fools. Because the idea that the Son of God, if killed, would rise from the dead, is the most obvious thing in the world. What is so strange about it?

-If God promised something to His own Son, would He keep His promise?

-What if God promised to His own Son, "You die for the sins of the people I have given you; when you have been dead three days, I will raise you back to life"? Would God keep that promise? Can God do that---raise someone dead back to life?

-What if that Son of God promised His friends---"When I am killed, I will not stay dead, but on the third day will rise again"? Would the Son of God keep that promise?

-What if the Son of God made you this promise, "No matter how bad a murderer you have been in your heart, if you trust in me, I will raise you from the dead"? What if he made you that promise, would he keep it?

-The Son of God rising from the dead on the third day was a promise made by God the Father to the Son, and by the Son to His disciples. Doesn't every here understand that such a promise was sure to be kept?

-If you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to save you from the punishment your murderous heart deserves, He will raise you from the dead to everlasting life, just as He was raised from the dead.

The bible teaches us, in the words of Moses as well as of Paul, that what we need is not hard to understand. God has commanded you not to murder, even by anger and hatred in your heart. But you have done it! You are guilty. But Jesus has come down from heaven and lived without any murder in His heart. His heart was full of love instead of hatred. He died on the cross for our sins; He was buried; but on the third day He rose from the dead. Now if you repent, you turn away from your hatred and anger and murder, believing in Jesus, crucified but now resurrected, you will be saved!

You, who have given your heart's devotion to other things instead of to God, repent and believe in Jesus Christ, crucified for you!

You, who have worshiped God in ways of your own invention, which God did not command, turn from your idols to serve the living God!

You, who have taken the name of the Lord your God in vain, repent, trust in Jesus Christ, resurrected from the dead!

You, who have profaned the holy day of the Lord by going about your own work on His holy day, turn your foot away from doing your own pleasure, and become a follower of Jesus Christ, who was dead, but, behold, is alive forevermore!

You, who have taken your parents lightly, who have disobeyed them, who have dishonored your father and your mother, repent; have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for your righteousness.

You, who have failed to love your neighbor, who have been angry with other people just because didn't please you, who have held a grudge, who have hated your fellow man, whom God created, you murderers in your hearts, turn away from your sins; believe in your heart that God raised the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and you shall be saved.

Genesis 2:16-17 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; (17) but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

John 8:44a You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning

Acts 2:22-24 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know-- (23) Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; (24) whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

1 John 3:14-16 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. (15) Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him. (16) This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

KILLING OF MEN THAT IS NOT UNLAWFUL

Henry: "not to be reckoned breaches of this law"

- in lawful war
- in defence of a man's self, when his own life is in danger
- the execution of malefactors by the hands or order of the civil magistrat
- unawares, without any design

SINS OF THIS KIND SHORT OF ACTUAL KILLING

Henry:

- all things tending to or designed for the taking away of life,
- all plots, conspiracies, and contrivances for that purpose,
- all sinful anger, undue wrath and envy, rancour of all mind, all malice in thought, word, or deed