

Exodus 20:13

“Thou shalt not kill.”

Good evening everyone,

I'm delighted to see each one of you here today. Your presence is a testament to your commitment to understanding and living out God's word in your daily lives. Today, we're going to explore a commandment that, at first glance, may seem straightforward, but upon closer examination, reveals a profound depth - the 6th commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill,' found in Exodus 20:13.

This commandment, one of the Ten Commandments given to Moses on Mount Sinai, forms the bedrock of moral law for not only Christians, but also for many other faiths and cultures around the world. It's a universal principle that upholds the sanctity and value of human life.

At its most basic level, this commandment prohibits the act of taking another person's life. But as followers of Christ, we know that Jesus expanded on this commandment in His Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 5:21-22, Jesus teaches us that even being angry with a brother or sister is subject to judgment. This shows us that God's law extends beyond our actions to our hearts and minds. It's not just about our deeds, but also about our attitudes and emotions.

In our discussion today, we'll delve deeper into the implications of this commandment. We'll explore questions like: How does this commandment apply to our daily lives? How do we deal with anger and resentment in a godly way?

Moreover, we'll also look at the broader implications of this commandment. In a world where life is often undervalued, how do we, as followers of Christ, uphold the sanctity of life?

Let's approach this lesson with open hearts and minds, ready to be challenged, ready to grow, and ready to be transformed by God's word. As we embark on this journey of discovery, let's remember the words of **Proverbs 4:23**, 'Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.'

Let's begin with a prayer, inviting the Holy Spirit to guide our discussion and open our hearts to God's truth..."

Dear Heavenly Father,

We come before You today with humble hearts, ready to dive into Your word and understand Your commandments more deeply. As we explore the 6th commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," we ask for Your wisdom and guidance.

Open our hearts to Your truth, and help us to apply these teachings in our daily lives. May our study not just increase our knowledge, but also transform our hearts and minds, bringing us closer to You.

We thank You for Your word, which is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Guide us through our study today, and may everything we say and do be pleasing to You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

A JOURNEY FROM THE HEART

The 6th commandment, "Thou shalt not kill", is often understood at a surface level as a prohibition against physically taking another

person's life¹. However, there's much more depth to this commandment.

The 6th commandment is not just about physical murder. It also encompasses actions and attitudes that devalue or harm human life². This includes hatred, anger, and abusive language, which Jesus equates with murder. In **Matthew 5:21-22 Jesus says** **“²¹Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment.²² But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.”**

The commandment underscores the sanctity and value of human life³. Humans are created in the image of God, and taking a human life is a sin against the Creator¹.

The commandment has implications for contemporary issues such as abortion, capital punishment, war, and self-defense¹. It challenges us to respect and uphold the sanctity of every human life².

It encourages personal reflection and self-examination. Are there ways in which we harbor anger or hatred towards others? Are there ways in which we devalue or harm others with our words or actions¹?

In summary, the 6th commandment calls us to value all human life and to treat others with the love, respect, and dignity they deserve as bearers of God's image². It's a call to not only refrain from physical violence but also to guard our hearts and tongues against anger, hatred, and harmful speech¹. So, while most people might think they're innocent because they haven't physically taken

someone's life, this commandment challenges us to examine our attitudes and actions in a deeper way¹

In the ancient Near East, life was often cheap, and violence was common². The 6th commandment underscored the value of human life and established a high moral standard². It served as a counter-cultural statement in a world where life could be easily disregarded².

The commandment was necessary to maintain order and respect for life in the Israelite society¹. It helped to prevent feuds, vendettas, and cycles of violence that could tear the community apart¹. It also set the Israelites apart from their neighbors, whose laws and practices did not always value human life to the same extent².

The Israelites would have understood this commandment in its literal sense – a prohibition against unlawfully taking another person's life². However, over time, Jewish interpretation recognized that this commandment also prohibited other forms of violence and harm². For instance, it was extended to include causing emotional harm, such as through insulting or cursing someone.

In summary, the 6th commandment played a crucial role in the formation and preservation of the Israelite society. It established the sanctity of human life as a fundamental principle and served as a guide for interpersonal relationships¹. It continues to be relevant today, reminding us of the inherent value of every human life. Let's dive deeper into Matthew 5:21-22, where Jesus expands the understanding of murder to include anger and insulting language.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus interprets the law in a way that goes beyond the literal act of murder¹. He says that even being angry with someone or insulting them is akin to murder¹. This is

because these actions and emotions can harm others, not physically, but emotionally and spiritually¹.

Jesus identifies anger and insults as the root causes of murder². A cursory reading of Matthew 5:21-22 shows that He is speaking not so much about murder but of the steps that lead to it². He traces the roots of murder and war to three major sources: 1) anger, 2) hatred, and 3) the spirit of competition and aggression—in short, the self-centeredness of passionate carnality².

Anger and insults devalue and harm life by damaging relationships, causing emotional pain, and creating discord³. They violate the principle of love and respect for others, which is at the heart of the commandments³. By equating these emotions and actions with murder, Jesus is emphasizing the importance of treating others with kindness, respect, and love³.

Jesus says that righteousness is a matter of both outwardly following the Law and inwardly reflecting the spirit behind the law¹. Acting in violence and harboring violent attitudes results in disharmony (unrighteousness)¹. Therefore, it's not enough to just refrain from the act of murder; one must also eliminate anger and insulting language from their hearts.

In summary, Jesus' interpretation of the 6th commandment challenges us to examine our attitudes and emotions. It calls us to cultivate a spirit of love and respect for others, and to avoid not only physical violence but also emotional and verbal harm.

Now I want to dive deeper into the implications of the expanded understanding of the 6th commandment in today's world.

1. **Abortion:** The 6th commandment's emphasis on the sanctity of life has significant implications for the issue of abortion¹. If

every life is sacred and created in the image of God, then this includes unborn lives as well¹. This perspective challenges us to consider the rights and value of the unborn, and it forms the basis for many pro-life arguments¹.

2. **Capital Punishment:** The commandment also has implications for capital punishment¹. If life is sacred, then the taking of a life as a form of punishment becomes a complex issue¹. Some argue that capital punishment is a violation of the sanctity of life, while others argue that it is a just consequence for those who have violated the sanctity of another's life¹.
3. **War:** In times of war, the commandment challenges us to consider the value of every human life, even those deemed "enemies"¹. It raises questions about the morality of war and the taking of life in the context of conflict¹.
4. **Self-Defense:** The commandment also applies to situations of self-defense¹. While it is generally accepted that individuals have a right to defend themselves when their lives are threatened, the commandment challenges us to consider the value of the aggressor's life as well¹.
5. **Attitudes Towards Others:** The expanded understanding of the 6th commandment challenges our attitudes towards others, especially those we find difficult to love or forgive¹. It calls us to respect the inherent dignity and worth of every person, regardless of their actions or attitudes¹. This can be particularly challenging in situations of conflict or when dealing with individuals who have caused us harm¹.

The expanded understanding of the 6th commandment has far-reaching implications in today's world¹. It challenges us to uphold the sanctity of life in all circumstances and to treat every

individual with the love, respect, and dignity they deserve as bearers of God's image¹

Jesus' interpretation of the 6th commandment goes beyond the act of physical murder to include anger and insulting language (Matthew 5:21-22)¹. This expanded understanding encourages us to reflect on our own lives and examine our attitudes and behaviors¹. Have we harbored anger or resentment towards someone? Have we used words that were hurtful or insulting? If so, according to Jesus' interpretation, we have broken the 6th commandment¹.

It's important to note that breaking the 6th commandment isn't limited to physical acts of violence¹. It also includes behaviors and attitudes that devalue or harm life¹. This can include harboring bitterness, animosity, contempt, or hateful hostility towards others². Even if these feelings don't lead to physical harm, they still violate the intent of the 6th commandment².

If we recognize that we've broken the 6th commandment in this way, the next step is to seek reconciliation¹. This involves acknowledging our wrongs, asking for forgiveness from those we've hurt, and making amends where possible¹. It also involves asking for God's forgiveness and seeking His help to change our attitudes and behaviors¹.

Making amends can take many forms, depending on the situation¹. It might involve apologizing to the person we've hurt, trying to right a wrong we've committed, or working to repair a damaged relationship¹. The goal is to restore peace and harmony, in line with the spirit of the 6th commandment¹.

Jesus' interpretation of the 6th commandment challenges us to examine our own hearts and actions¹. It calls us to uphold the sanctity of life not only in our actions but also in our attitudes and

words¹. And when we fall short, it points us towards the path of reconciliation and restoration.

In summarizing today's lesson:

The 6th commandment, “Thou shalt not kill” is found in Exodus 20:13¹. This commandment protects the sanctity of human life¹.

God originally brought life out of his life and created Adam and Eve (Genesis 2:7). From then on, through today, God hand-created every single person in the womb of his or her mother¹.

Jesus expanded on this commandment in Matthew 5:21-22, teaching that anger with one's brother is also subject to judgment¹. This shows that the commandment extends beyond physical murder to include harmful attitudes and emotions.

The commandment has many applications to current issues such as envy, hatred, and even abortion¹. It's important to discuss these topics in the context of the 6th commandment.

Jesus' teachings reveal that even our envy and hatred are considered murder because they are the root cause of murderous intentions¹.

Hatred takes different forms. It may be anger and resentment and desire for revenge, or it may be something much cooler and distant. A man who kills during an armed robbery doesn't necessarily have any strong feelings against his victim. He just wants what the other person has, and he couldn't care less about that person's life.

A company which saves money by exposing workers to great risk rather than paying for a safer working environment isn't angry at its workers. It just doesn't care about them. A tobacco company

isn't trying to get revenge on the smokers it helps kill. It just cares more about profit than about people. A woman who aborts her baby doesn't have a grudge against the baby. She just cares less about that baby's future than her own.

The use of hateful words and labels is damaging enough to the spirit, but it also helps to make the physical act of killing easier. For a religious terrorist, which is easier to blow up: a fellow human, or an "infidel"? Labels make killing easier. When doctors and nurses are giving advice on prenatal care to pregnant women, they always speak of "your baby," but if they are about to perform an abortion, they refer only to "the fetus." Words that depersonalize and degrade are expressions of a killer instinct.

Me First

Hatred, whether in its hot and angry form or in its cool and uncaring form, is the essence of the killer instinct, and it all boils down to this: *I matter more than you*. I would rather you didn't exist at all than change my own priorities, and I would rather fight to get what I want than learn to trust in God's care and love. In *James 4:1-2*, the Bible says, "***What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God.***"

Apart from God, the only rule is hatred. Even in supposedly good relationships, the underlying rule is the killer instinct that says, "I matter more than you. My life matters more than yours."

This killer instinct asks, "Am I my brother's keeper? If push comes to shove, my life matters more than his." This is the mind of death. It means that we are already murderers in the way we think, and

that under certain circumstances, we could become murderers in deed as well. This killer instinct brings death to relationships, death to other persons, and ultimately, eternal death to every person who remains in it. As the Bible says, *“Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him”*.

The sixth commandment, “Thou shalt not kill,” helps us to see murder for what it is, and it helps us to understand the deadly attitudes that lie behind it. The commandment shows us the ugly truth about ourselves, and then it drives us to seek a better way. It drives us to the foot of the cross of Christ.

Here are some practical ways to apply the 6th commandment, “Thou shalt not kill,” in daily life:

1. **Respect Life:** Value and respect all forms of life. This includes not only refraining from physical harm, but also from emotional or psychological harm.
2. **Control Anger:** As Jesus taught, even anger can be a form of murder in the heart. Practice patience and understanding to manage anger effectively.
3. **Promote Peace:** Strive to be a peacemaker in your relationships and your community. Encourage dialogue and understanding to resolve conflicts.
4. **Support Life-Affirming Causes:** Support organizations and causes that promote the sanctity of life. This could include charities, non-profits, or movements that work to end violence, poverty, or injustice.

5. **Forgiveness:** Holding onto grudges can lead to hatred and anger. Practice forgiveness to let go of these negative emotions.
6. **Healthy Relationships:** Maintain healthy relationships with everyone around you. Avoid toxic relationships that can lead to negative emotions or actions.
7. **Self-care:** Taking care of your own physical, emotional, and mental health is also a way of respecting life.

Remember, the 6th commandment is not just about refraining from killing, but promoting a culture of life, love, and respect for all.

CLOSING

As we conclude our study of the Sixth Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," we find ourselves standing on the precipice of a chilling abyss. This commandment, etched in stone by the finger of God, serves as a stark reminder of the sanctity of life and the profound darkness that engulfs us when it is violated.

The echoes of violence and bloodshed throughout history bear testament to the grim reality of this transgression. Each act of murder, each life unjustly extinguished, casts a long, dark shadow that stretches across the canvas of human history. The pain, the suffering, the irreparable damage inflicted upon families and communities, are all stark reminders of the cost of disregarding this commandment.

Yet, amidst this darkness, there is a glimmer of hope. The Sixth Commandment is not merely a prohibition against killing; it is a call to affirm life, to protect it, to value it in all its forms. It is a call to step away from the path of violence and destruction, and to walk instead on the path of peace and love.

As we leave this place, let us carry with us the weight of this commandment. Let it serve as a constant reminder of the darkness that lies in wait, should we stray from the path. But let it also inspire us to uphold the sanctity of life, to strive for peace, and to extend our hands in love and compassion to all.

In the face of the grim realities of this world, let us be beacons of hope, shining brightly in the darkness.

Let's pray...

Dear Heavenly Father, as we conclude our discussion today, we are humbled by the depth and breadth of Your 6th commandment. We recognize that it calls us not only to refrain from physical harm but also to guard our hearts and tongues against anger and harmful speech.

We ask for Your help in living out this commandment in our daily lives. Give us the strength to resist anger, the grace to forgive those who have wronged us, and the wisdom to uphold the sanctity of life in all that we do. Help us to see others as You see them, made in Your image and deserving of love and respect. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

