

I.N.I.

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost
July 21, 2019
Exodus 20:13

In Christ Jesus, Who lived and died, not only for those who loved Him, but also for His enemies, thereby also giving us an example to follow, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

“Sticks and stones may break my bones but words can never hurt me.” I’m sure many of you have heard that child’s ditty, maybe even spoke it a time or two in your life. I remember hearing it and saying it in my youth when so called friends would get mad at each other and start calling each other names.

Well our study of the fifth commandment--“You shall not murder”--has something to say about that childhood saying. This is another one of those commandments that many people think they have kept. I’m quite sure that most of us here have never really come close to murdering someone, yet we, as well as all people, have broken this commandment.

Our sermon again is divided into two parts. First we shall study what God forbids us to do regarding the fifth commandment, then what He expects us to do. And finally, see what Jesus has done!

You shall not murder means that God forbids us to hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but God also commands us to help and be a friend to our neighbor in every bodily need.

Do you know that there are three kinds of murder? I don’t mean being shot, strangled and poisoned. In God’s eyes there are three kinds of murder. That is what He tells us in His Word.

- 1) There is killing a person.
- 2) There is hurting a person.
- 3) There is hating a person.

In Gen. 9:6 the LORD says: **"WHOEVER SHEDS MAN'S BLOOD, BY MAN HIS BLOOD SHALL BE SHED; FOR IN THE IMAGE OF GOD HE MADE MAN.** God looks upon murder in such a serious way that He commands what we call capital punishment, the shedding of the blood of the one who shed someone’s blood. So God commands us not to murder anyone.

However, the LORD also says: **BELOVED, DO NOT AVENGE YOURSELVES, BUT RATHER GIVE PLACE TO WRATH; FOR IT IS WRITTEN, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," SAYS THE LORD.** The Lord commands us not to hurt our neighbor or get back at him.

Also the LORD says: **WHOEVER HATES HIS BROTHER IS A MURDERER, AND YOU KNOW THAT NO MURDERER HAS ETERNAL LIFE ABIDING IN HIM.** The Lord commands us not to hate anyone and that hatred in His eyes is the same as murder.

Three forms of murder: *killing, hurting and hating.* All forbidden by God. Who of us can ever say that we have kept this fifth commandment?

Let’s take a closer look at these three forms or kinds of murder. First there is killing. The Bible gives us many examples of people who sinned against God by killing someone. The very first child born into this world was a murderer when he killed his brother Abel as we heard in our first Scripture reading. But there are other ways of killing besides with our own hands.

We can kill through others. King David did that when he had Uriah, Bathsheba’s husband, put in the front of the battle and then called for a retreat hoping for him to be killed by the enemy, and he was. David was guilty of Uriah’s murder even though he did not directly kill him.

King Herod had all the little baby boys 2 years old and under killed in and around Bethlehem in his attempt to kill the baby Jesus. Even though he did not pick up the sword and slaughter the babies he was guilty of their murder.

Another form of killing is suicide. Suicide is a very prevalent form of murder especially in our day and age. This is an especially dangerous sin because when someone in their right mind and in godless despair, knowingly ends his own life, he not only defies God by committing murder, but by that final act terminates his own time of grace. If this act is done in unbelief, there is normally no time for repentance and thus the person dies in unrepentant sin. Not all suicides however occur this way.

Another form of murder today that is so very prevalent and performed even by doctors and nurses, who took an oath to preserve life, is abortion. Abortions have thankfully dropped somewhat in the past few years and yet almost 750,000 babies a year are aborted just in America alone. An estimate is

between 40-50 million unborn babies killed every year around the world. How Satan has worked on the hearts of so many who deny that the fetus is a living human being, or who say that abortion is the lesser of two evils, better not to have a child and abort it than have an unwanted child enter the world and have the possibility of it suffering child abuse. The ultimate child abuse is **ABORTION!** When a government not only condones but makes laws to protect the murdering of its unborn infants, as a woman's right, can a judgment from God be far behind?

Now these are all what we call coarse forms of murder. A finer form of murder is hurting someone. This applies to our "sticks and stones that break my bones" saying. We are not to get involved in fights, brawls, and acts of revenge. It is so easy for our hearts to get so angry at someone for what he or she said or did to us that our first thought is "I'm going to get back at him or her." The Lord tells us instead, **"BUT I SAY TO YOU, LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, BLESS THOSE WHO CURSE YOU, DO GOOD TO THOSE WHO HATE YOU, AND PRAY FOR THOSE WHO SPITEFULLY USE YOU AND PERSECUTE YOU... BUT I SAY TO YOU WHO HEAR: LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, DO GOOD TO THOSE WHO HATE YOU, "BLESS THOSE WHO CURSE YOU, AND PRAY FOR THOSE WHO SPITEFULLY USE YOU. "TO HIM WHO STRIKES YOU ON THE ONE CHEEK, OFFER THE OTHER ALSO. AND FROM HIM WHO TAKES AWAY YOUR CLOAK, DO NOT WITHHOLD YOUR TUNIC EITHER. "GIVE TO EVERYONE WHO ASKS OF YOU. AND FROM HIM WHO TAKES AWAY YOUR GOODS DO NOT ASK THEM BACK.**

We are to have our fellow human being's welfare, interest, happiness and especially spiritual well-being in mind at all times and treat them as we would want to be treated. Jesus concludes this section we just quoted by saying, **DO TO OTHERS AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM DO TO YOU. "IF YOU LOVE THOSE WHO LOVE YOU, WHAT CREDIT IS THAT TO YOU? EVEN 'SINNERS' LOVE THOSE WHO LOVE THEM. AND IF YOU DO GOOD TO THOSE WHO ARE GOOD TO YOU, WHAT CREDIT IS THAT TO YOU? EVEN 'SINNERS' DO THAT. AND IF YOU LEND TO THOSE FROM WHOM YOU EXPECT REPAYMENT, WHAT CREDIT IS THAT TO YOU? EVEN 'SINNERS' LEND TO 'SINNERS,' EXPECTING TO BE REPAID IN FULL. BUT LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, DO GOOD TO THEM, AND LEND TO THEM WITHOUT EXPECTING TO GET ANYTHING BACK. THEN YOUR REWARD WILL BE GREAT, AND YOU WILL BE SONS OF THE MOST HIGH, BECAUSE HE IS KIND TO THE UNGRATEFUL AND WICKED. BE MERCIFUL, JUST AS YOUR FATHER IS MERCIFUL.**

Even if the person we are dealing with hates us, we should never do anything that would hurt or harm him in any way. These are some unusual words to hear. Unusual because we do not hear them enough, unusual because we hear exactly the opposite from so many people and unusual because it is exactly the opposite of what we naturally would do. We are told by the world and by our own flesh that the most important person in our lives is Me, Myself and I. And anything or anyone that hinders my happiness, my fun, my welfare, my good, my advantage, my glory had better watch out—eye for an eye; tooth for a tooth is the motto of the world and of our sinful flesh! You hit me, I hit you back, you do dirt to me, I do even more dirt to you.

That is just the opposite of how Jesus lived and taught. What did He say on the Sermon on the Mount? **BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL, FOR THEY SHALL OBTAIN MERCY... BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS, FOR THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF GOD.** Jesus gives us such directives as "give to the poor, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, warm the cold, visit the sick and dying and minister to the old and the widowed." Put others before you in importance and in your interests. Instead of looking to your own interests look to your family's welfare, whether it be brother or sister; mother or father; son or daughter--and the Lord adds, especially the interests and welfare of the household of saints, the family of believers. BTW: Defending oneself against someone attacking you is a different matter.

The third form of murder that very often causes the first two is hatred--hating a person. That is the emotion that first fills the heart and then is put into action or word. But even if the hate is only in the heart, it is still a sin, a breaking of God's fifth commandment. As we heard God looks upon hatred as murder. George Eliot wrote, "There are glances of hatred that stab and raise no cry of murder." We are not to hate anyone, enemy or friend. "Love your neighbor, love your enemies," the Lord says, "even those who persecute and hate you."

IMPOSSIBLE? Yes, it is for a self-centered heart of sin. A heart which finds that the first thing it wants to do when someone offends us, ridicules us, hurts us or makes fun of us, is to hurt back, ridicule

even more and treat even worse and then defends it by saying “they started it,” or “they deserved it.” That is not the Christ-like way. That is not the Christian way.

Our Lord tells us the Christ-like way. Instead of fighting, hurting, harming and hating we are to **“help and be a friend to him in every bodily need.”** This one sentence lays before us so many opportunities that it would take up the rest of this morning’s worship service to list them all. We are to give to our neighbor advice and comfort, kindness and love and especially forgiveness. We are to help those in need with food and drink, shelter and clothes, medicine and materials. The Lord through Paul says, **AND BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER, TENDERHEARTED, FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER, JUST AS GOD IN CHRIST FORGAVE YOU.**

In our last Scripture reading we heard how the Samaritan, one who was not looked upon as a friend by the Jews, in fact despised and hated by most Jews, ended up being the friend who helped the man who was beaten and robbed. He gave of his time, money and love for the beaten man.

These are some heavy requirements! Requirements which we daily fail to do. And so we see the Fifth Commandment is another link in the chain that we have broken time and time again, because our love for ourselves and our self-centeredness is so strong, because our envy and sometimes outright hatred for others takes hold of our hearts and actions. Our sins against the fifth commandment nailed Jesus to the cross just as surely as the soldiers did with those heavy metal nails.

And so once again with burdened hearts loaded down with sins against this fifth commandment we need to turn to our loving Savior and loving He indeed is. For every failing we have, we look to Him for forgiveness and for the perfection of that failing. Whatever commandment that we are studying we find that Jesus has kept it perfectly. So also the Fifth Commandment. Jesus never killed anyone, never even hurt or harmed anyone. He never even hated anyone, even those enemies who ridiculed Him, mocked Him, spit on Him, beat Him, condemned and nailed Him to the cross. He was humble and meek and even prayed for the forgiveness of His enemies who were killing Him.

He came as the true Good Samaritan, not to be ministered to, but to minister to others. His miracles were always performed for the welfare of others. Above all He died for us and in so doing He paid for the guilt and the punishment we deserved because of our sins against this and all of the commandments. Jesus’ great love for us sinful human beings drove Him, compelled Him to suffer and die for us so that we might live forever in perfect love and peace. That is Christ’s way.

That is also the type of life we as Christians, those who know and believe we have been forgiven by Christ will want to live. John writes: **IN THIS THE LOVE OF GOD WAS MANIFESTED TOWARD US, THAT GOD HAS SENT HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON INTO THE WORLD, THAT WE MIGHT LIVE THROUGH HIM. IN THIS IS LOVE, NOT THAT WE LOVED GOD, BUT THAT HE LOVED US AND SENT HIS SON TO BE THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS. BELOVED, IF GOD SO LOVED US, WE ALSO OUGHT TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER.**

In closing the Lord lays these words of encouragement on our hearts in I Peter 3:8-9 **FINALLY, ALL OF YOU BE OF ONE MIND, HAVING COMPASSION FOR ONE ANOTHER; LOVE AS BROTHERS, BE TENDERHEARTED, BE COURTEOUS; NOT RETURNING EVIL FOR EVIL OR REVILING FOR REVILING, BUT ON THE CONTRARY BLESSING, KNOWING THAT YOU WERE CALLED TO THIS, THAT YOU MAY INHERIT A BLESSING**

and in Colossians 3:12ff **THEREFORE, AS GOD’S CHOSEN PEOPLE, HOLY AND DEARLY LOVED, CLOTHE YOURSELVES WITH COMPASSION, KINDNESS, HUMILITY, GENTLENESS AND PATIENCE. BEAR WITH EACH OTHER AND FORGIVE WHATEVER GRIEVANCES YOU MAY HAVE AGAINST ONE ANOTHER. FORGIVE AS THE LORD FORGAVE YOU. AND OVER ALL THESE VIRTUES PUT ON LOVE, WHICH BINDS THEM ALL TOGETHER IN PERFECT UNITY.**

Amen.

