

INSIGHT

Today's society places very little value on human life. America is filled with acts of violent crimes and murder. In the mid-1970s, the annual homicide total reached 20,000. In 1980, it reached 23,040. In 1985, the numbers began rising again, reaching 23,760 in 1992. Periodic crime bills passed by state and federal legislatures can't prevent brutality. Erecting more correctional facilities will not reduce the number of violent crimes. This is proof that politics cannot solve what is basically a moral and spiritual problem.

Jesus makes it clear in Matthew 15:18-20 "...the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what make a man 'unclean'..." Without Christ, men are without hope! Crime cannot be obliterated! Only through the message of Christ, the gospel, can men be saved (*Romans 1:16*); and only through the person of Christ can he be raised to walk in newness of life! (*Romans 6:4; Galatians 2:20*)

Contrary to the lack of respect for human life reflected by much of society, the Bible consistently upholds the sacredness of life. It is in this context that the sixth commandment is framed. The sacredness of life is built on the biblical truth that men and women were created in God's image. Genesis 1:26-27 says, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

Everything the Bible says about the worth and dignity of humanity is rooted in the creation story. People are not accidental outcomes or purposeless natural events. People are valuable! Why? Because they were called into being to bear the glory of the God who created them. Genesis 9:6 says, "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man." God's teaching is clear: Anyone who showed such irreverence toward God by taking innocent life was to pay with his own. Murder is opposed to who God is! Life! For "He Himself gives to all life and breath..." (*Acts 17:28*)

Jesus taught the importance of human life in Matthew 16:26 when He said, "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" The soul is of utmost importance and cannot be exchanged for anything in this world! It is priceless! The riches of this world has no worth; but the soul has worth! You are valuable!

The Heart of God: The Sixth Commandment

The Value Of Human Life

Key Text:

Exodus 20:13

"You shall not murder."

Theme:

Apparently, God places human life in highest regard. This importance is expressed at the cross, *for God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life!* (*John 3:16*) Murder is against the principle of the Gospel. Christ came to give life (*John 10:10*), not to destroy life! For this reason, murder has no part in the kingdom of Christ! However, we must be aware that murder is not restricted to the act of taking a life with guns and knives! Jesus taught that any form of anger, rage or malice toward another human being puts one in jeopardy of judgment (*Matthew 5:21-26*). These things not only lead to murder, but are wrong within themselves! The apostle John taught that anyone who hates his brother is a murderer (*1 John 3:15*). Therefore, showing disdain for others by racist attitudes, sexist behavior or any other form of contempt is evil in the eyes of God! And this will brand you a murderer! *You shall not murder.*

Application:

Here are some practical suggestions:

1. **Remember the cross!** Let the sacrifice of God's Son motivate you to respond in a godly manner in all circumstances! Forgive as Christ forgave you! Love as Christ loved you!
2. **Treat one another with kindness.** Christ taught a very important principle in Matthew 25:40, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." Treat your brother as if he were Christ. And love your enemies! (*Matt. 5:44*)!
3. **Be thankful when corrected!** Be angry with sin, not with your brother who is correcting you!

May the Lord richly bless you!

SERMON OUTLINE

"The Value Of Life"

Introduction: Last Week

1. The fifth through tenth commandments deal with loving your neighbor.
2. The Word of God is summed up in two commands: (*Matt 22:37-40*)
 - a. Love God
(the spirit of the 1st through 4th commandments)
 - b. Love your neighbor as yourself
(the spirit of the 5th - 10th commandments)
3. Honor your parents (Honor means *to elevate*)
 - a. Focus was on the children of elderly parents
 - b. Show an attitude of respect (*Prov. 23:22*)
 - c. Help them when they need help (*Mt 15:3-9*)

I. Sixth Commandment: Value of a soul

Exodus 20:13

A. God, the Father, values human life (*John 3:16*)

1. God's focus: LIFE!
 - a. The world needed spiritual life
 - b. He gave us His Only Son
2. God's desire: TO GIVE LIFE!
 - a. Purpose of the gospel is to give LIFE through His Son (*cf. Rom. 1:16*)

B. God, the Son, values human life (*Matt. 16:26*)

1. The soul priceless!
 - a. The riches of this world has no value compared to the soul
 - b. Nothing can be exchanged for the soul

C. God's People must value human life

1. Hatred carries a *murder* sentence (*Mt. 5:21-26*)
 - a. Revilers fall under same judgment as murderers
 - b. Settle matters: be reconciled and promote life!
2. Hating makes us *murderers* (*1 Jn. 3:15-16*)
 - a. Hatred has no purpose in the kingdom for it takes away life: it kills.
 - b. Christ died for us to give life--we should too!
3. Love must go beyond the church: *Mt. 5:44-48*
 - a. Love promotes life, therefore love perfectly:
-do right towards everyone and pray for them in love

Conclusion: *Matthew 25:40*--treat others rightly

Have you ever felt such strong anger or hatred towards someone or something? Share with us an incident that made you very hostile and explain the thoughts that went through your head.

See To It

Matthew 5:21-26

1. Why did Christ bring up the sixth commandment? Weren't the Jews familiar with "*Thou shalt not murder*"? Share your insight.
2. How was Jesus' teaching on the sixth commandment different from that which was taught by the Jewish religious teachers of the day?
3. **Read verse 22.** YAHWEH gets angry (*Ps. 106:40*); Jesus was angry when He drove the sellers out of the Temple (*John 2:14-16*). Yet, in their anger, they did not sin. Where is the difference? When is anger sinful?

4. What does "*Raca*" and "*fool*" mean? Explain the difference? Why is the term "*you fool!*" more serious than "*Raca!*"?

Seeing It Closer

1. If anger were a crime, would you be convicted? What would you be classified as according to Christ?
2. What must be the Christian's goal in the kingdom? Why is this goal important? *cf. Romans 14:17*.
3. How can we glorify God's name in our anger? What should we immediately do when we are upset with our brother or sister?
4. If you have no righteous cause to be angry with your brother, what is the solution?

Getting To It:

Never allow your anger to get the best of you. Instead, pray for wisdom in dealing with your anger. Don't give Satan a foothold, instead seek peace and resolution with your offender! For man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. *James 1:20*

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Warm-up: