

Loving Life

Text : **Exodus 20: 1-17** (Esp. 13)

INTRODUCTION :

A. READ ... I Tim. 6:13-16 (Only sovereign .. King of Kings)

1. God / Christ rules over all of the kings of the earth.
2. God chooses who he wants to rule and puts them on the throne. **Dan. 5:21b**
3. What would it be like if God Himself directly ruled the United States ?

The account of God's rule over Israel showed us how He would rule a nation.

B. God ruled as king over the nation of Israel. (Theocracy)

1. He brought them out of Egyptian slavery to be HIS special nation.
2. God chose Israel because of His promise and His relationship with Abraham.
3. The Ten Commandments were the constitution upon which all other laws were based.
 - a. The commandments were based upon two principles :
 - 1) **Deut. 6:5 - You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.**
 - 2) **Lev. 19:18- You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD.**
 - b. There were many other laws, but all were based upon the Ten Commandments.

C. The Ten Commandments are a good pattern for all men, all nations to follow.

1. It was never binding on anyone other than the nation of Israel.
2. It was never intended as a plan of salvation, even for Israel.
3. However, to follow the law God gave is good for all men, of all nations, in all times.

D. The Ten Commandments gave man the keys for success :

1. It starts off telling people how to maintain their most important relationship, with God.
 - a. Worship no other God. (**Be faithful to me.**)
 - b. Never worship an image. (**Don't try to liken me to anything I created.**)
 - c. Do not take my name in vain. (**Give to Me the respect to which I am due.**)
 - d. Keep my rest day Holy. (**Set aside one day each week for me alone.**)
2. It instructs us to keep the family structure strong by honoring our parents.
 - a. The strength of the nation is derived from the strength of the family units.
 - b. The knowledge of and devotion to God is passed on through families.
3. The final five commands instruct us how to maintain a loving relationship with all men.
 - a. Love respects others.
 - b. Love places a higher value on the other person.

- c. Love seeks the good of the other party, never the hurt.

TRANSITION :

The most fundamental of all attitudes in interpersonal relationships is to respect the right of the other person to exist, to live. **Thus, the first command relative to other people is “You shall not murder.”**

I. What does this command mean ?

A. When properly understood, this is a very difficult command to consistently keep.

1. Those who don't fully comprehend react, “*Well, I would never kill anyone!*”
2. There is not one person in this room who has not violated this command.
3. Murder is an act of the heart, not just overt violence perpetrated upon another.

I John 3: 15- Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

B. The word defined : “ratsach “ 1 to murder, slay, kill.

1A (Qal) to murder, slay. 1A1 premeditated.

1. The word can be translated “to kill” and can refer to any means of causing death, but the inference in this context necessitated it be translated premeditated “murder.”
2. The command is not against just any killing, but to kill with malice in one's heart.

C. The scriptures make a clear distinction between “killing” and “murdering.”

1. **READ ... Exod. 21: 12-17**

2. Those who kill unintentionally are not guilty of breaking this commandment. **w/o malice**
 - a. Accidental homicide : **Num. 35:22-28** (cities of refuge provided)
 - b. Justifiable homicide : **Exod. 22:2-4**
 - c. The difference is the heart of the one doing the killing. (**Malice is sin.**)
3. Capital punishment is NOT murder, God requires it.
 - a. The previous text. (**Exod. 21: 12-17**) cf.- **Deut. 19: 11-13**
 - b. Compare ... **Gen. 9: 6- Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.**

D. Some go to extremes violating this command in both directions.

1. There are those who place no value on human life.
 - a. Terrorists who set off bombs in public places (**other peoples have no value**)
 - b. Mafia types, drug dealers, etc. (**only my gain is important**)

- c. People who hate other people for personal reasons ... school shootings, etc.
- d. Doctors who run abortion clinics. (**people have the right to decide life and death**)
- 2. Others feel it is wrong to kill any living creature. (**vegetarians**)
 - a. They won't even kill harmful insects. (**Hindus**)
 - b. They won't kill animals to eat. (**cattle**)
 - 1) God killed animals to make clothes for Adam and Eve.
 - 2) God required animal sacrifices.

* **_ The meaning of this command is do not have malice toward anyone.**

GOD IS THE GIVER OF LIFE ... THE DEVIL IS THE INSTRUMENT OF DEATH

II. Why did God give this command ?

A. It was given because life is holy ... Only man is made in God's own image.

1. **Gen. 1: 26-** Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." **27-** God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

* **When one person kills another, he is killing God in effigy.**

2. This is why God requires capital punishment for murder.

Gen. 9: 6- Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed,
For in the image of God He made man.

* **Even animals who kill men are to be put to death.**

3. Of all the animals, only man has an eternal soul.

- a. Other animals have life, but when they die, their existence ends.
- b. God is a spirit. We are in God's image. **Thus**, we are spiritual creatures.

- 1) Only man has a spirit.

* 2) When a dog dies, there's no spirit to move on.

It's a weak view of God to think we'll need a dog in heaven to be happy.

- c. Man is an eternal being.

- 1) God gives man a spirit at conception and it goes back to him at death. **Eccl. 12: 7**
- 2) Man continues on after death ... eternally.
- 3) When the soul leaves the body, GOD decides where it will go for eternity.

B. God desires all men to be at peace with each other and at peace with Him.

1. That's the reason for **Lev. 19: 18-** "...you shall love your neighbor as yourself;..."

2. Love is the fundamental premise behind Christianity : **patience, forgiveness, love**
3. For one person to kill another breaks the heart of God.

C. Love is at the very heart of Christianity.

1. **Matt. 22: 37-39** ... Love is God's goal for your life and mine.
 2. One must stop loving before he can murder.
 - a. **I Cor. 13: 5-** Love does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,
 - b. **I Pet. 1: 22-** Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls **for** a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,
 - c. You and I were created for love. (**One who cannot love cannot go to Heaven.**)
 - 1) Everything we think, say or do should be rooted in love.
 - 2) All of our goals must be motivated by love. (**God is love, thus, godliness is loving.**)
- * **Anything less than love is to fall short of God's glory and His will for our lives.**

III. How did Israel respond to this command ?

A. They were harsh to the poor and shed innocent blood. (**The strong abused the weak.**)

1. **Read ... Jer. 22: 13-17**
2. God makes a distinction between "innocent blood" and those who are guilty.
3. There are some people who God wants to be killed. (**capital punishment commanded**)
 - a. God uses men to execute His judgments.
 - b. **I Sam. 15: 1-3** ... God wanted Saul to kill every single Amalekite. (**genocide**)
 - c. God uses some wars to bring His judgment on nations.
 - 1) Not all wars are orchestrated by God, but all are allowed.
 - 2) God allows some deaths of which He does not approve. **Exod. 21: 12-13**

B. Violence had become acceptable to the Jews.

1. **Jer. 19:4-** Because they have forsaken Me and have made this an alien place and have burned sacrifices in it to other gods, that neither they nor their forefathers nor the kings of Judah had ever known, and because they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent. (Cf – **Ezek 22: 1-3**)
2. **Hosea 4: 2** - *There is swearing, deception, murder, stealing and adultery. They employ violence, so that bloodshed follows bloodshed.*
3. God has always hated violence.

- a. Violence was one of the reasons for the great flood.

Gen. 6: 13- Then God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.

- b. It is listed among those things which God hates.

Prov. 6: 16- There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: **17-** Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood, **18-** A heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, **19-** A false witness *who utters lies*, And one who spreads strife among brothers.

C. Man’s baser nature draws him toward violence.

1. When there is a fight a crowd immediately gathers to watch it.
2. Extreme fighting grows ever more popular on TV. (**conflict dramas are most popular**)
3. Every great nation turned to increasingly violent entertainment before falling.

IV. What is the New Testament teaching on the subject ?

A. Jesus taught that murder is a matter of the heart, not just actions.

1. **Matt. 5: 21-** You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’ **22-** But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, ‘You good-for-nothing,’ shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty *enough to go into the fiery hell*.
2. **Matt. 5: 20-** For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.
 - a. The Pharisees religion was all externals. (**rituals and observances**)
 - b. Jesus taught that true righteousness emanates from one’s heart.

B. The second thing taught about this in the New Testament is : Don’t ever take your revenge on anyone.

1. The flesh cries out for us to get even when we are wronged.
2. **Rom. 12: 17-21** ... No man has the right to get even.
 - a. To seek revenge is to rebel and to usurp the lordship of the Savior.
 - b. Jesus calls the Christian to a higher calling ... **“Love your enemies and pray for ...”**
3. Some may object, “*You can only take so much !*”

- a. When someone says that, the devil is speaking through him.
- b. Jesus said, “**Turn the other cheek.**”
 * **My High School buddy used to say, “Yeah, but he doesn’t say what to do after that.”**
- c. PRINCIPLE : Jesus taught we must forgive 70 x 7. (**Hebrew idiom for infinity**)
- 4. While on the cross, Jesus set the example for us, “**Forgive them for they ...**”
- C. The N. T. not only says don’t hate (i.e., *murder*), it commands us to love.
 - 1. **Col. 3: 14-** Beyond all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity.
 - 2. **John 13: 34-35** ... Love is what distinguishes us from the world.
 - 3. The kind of love a Christian has will not only prevent him from murdering, it will motivate him to lay down his life for another.

CONCLUSION :

- A. For a person to pursue godliness is to pursue love, for God is love.
- B. Every one of us has murdered ... in our hearts, with our tongues, etc.
 - 1. Anger
 - 2. Jealousy
 - 3. Intolerance
 - 4. Gossip
- C. God knows every time we did it and He will never forget it.
 - 1. **Exod. 34: 7** ... God will by no means leave the guilty unpunished.
 - 2. All murders have their eternal abode in the lake of fire. ... **Rev. 21: 8**
- D. In Judgment :
 - 1. The devil will accuse us. “*I saw him ...*”
 - 2. The Law will condemn us.
- D. Jesus wants to free you from the condemnation of the Law.
 - 1. You have the opportunity to choose Him now and be mercifully judged by His grace.
 - 2. The Law was nailed to the cross with Jesus. **Col. 2: 13-14**

INVITATION

We will all stand before God to give an accounting for the deeds done in the flesh.

We now have the option to choose judgment by His grace rather than our transgressions.

By which standard will you be judged ? The Law or Grace ?
Choose Christ today.