

Dear Friends, this week we will be delving into the 6th Commandment found in the book of Exodus.

¹³You shall not murder.

This commandment for followers of Jesus may seem unnecessary. We, like Jesus, see life as precious and of great value, so the physical act of willfully taking a human life goes against everything we stand for.

When this commandment was first given to Moses, he must have felt so much guilt as he remembered the Egyptian he had killed in defense of one of his own people. We know he felt guilty at the time it happened because he looked around to see if anyone had seen him and then he buried him in the sand. As we look at this story, we find a gentle man killing because of anger at the abuse of one of his own people. This act caused Moses to flee and become a shepherd who learned how to survive in the wilderness. He eventually became a shepherd of the Israelites as they left the bondage of Egypt.

What does Jesus say about murder? He looks at the subject in a broader view than we tend to, as we will see in the book of Matthew.

Matthew 5:21-22

Murder

²¹ “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ ²² But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.

Earlier I stated that Moses killed out of anger. Here we see Jesus explaining where the thought of murder comes from. Unrighteous anger comes from the heart, causing us to say and do unrighteous things. When we feel we have been insulted or harmed, this is a natural reaction. In the next set of scriptures Jesus tells us how reconcile our differences with our brothers and sisters:

²³ “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

Jesus tells us we cannot come to God in worship until we have attempted to resolve our differences with one another. We must try to bring peace with those we have grievances with. Reconciliation might not come quickly, but we must continue to try before we come to God and offer gifts of worship.

What gifts of worship do we offer God? Repentance, confession, asking for forgiveness and ultimately reconciliation with Him. These gifts of worship are not from ourselves; they are brought to life by the Spirit of God. But we must have the right heart. The Holy Spirit directs us in the knowledge of what our responsibilities to be right with God are.

Our relationships with others must go beyond the physical and into the spiritual. This means to love others through the eyes of our Creator. Otherwise, we become stumbling blocks to others as they search for the truth. These stumbling blocks have a way of killing the mind, soul and spirit.

Jesus gives us such wonderful counsel concerning our relationships with believers and non-believers, also in Matthew 5:

²Then He began to teach them by saying:

³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

⁵ Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

⁷ Blessed are the merciful,



for they will be shown mercy.

⁸ *Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.*

⁹ *Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.*

¹⁰ *Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

¹¹ *“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

I realize the Beatitudes are personal promises of spiritual comfort from God as He reveals what a life in Jesus looks like. But as believers, are we not one of the means God uses to be the blessing? If we take these examples of situations as places where we can be servants in our relationships, we will never be a stumbling block but rather a path of grace and love.

By the grace of God we are light in a dark world.

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