

You Shall Not Murder

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- [0 : 00] Looking at verse 13, this one and the following, a few following commandments, we're going to see some of the shortest passages I think I've ever preached on. Hebrew, just two words here, but you can look there with me.
- By the time I read it, you'll probably have this memorized if you don't already, but you shall not murder. That's our text today. You shall not murder. That's this 2013. Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word and pray that you would open it to us now.
- We come to a short text that we, Lord, probably believe simple to understand and that we've not broken.
- Lord, help us to rightly understand your word. Help us to go to Christ. May he get the glory in the preaching today. We pray this in his name. Amen. As I've already said, this is a very short commandment.
- So are the next few that we're going to look at. Because it's very short, we may think it's easy to obey, but the shortness doesn't make it any easier to obey than the others we've looked at.
- [1 : 14] Of all the commandments, I think this is the one that people still like. Right? It's the favorite one of the Ten Commandments. Why is that? It is the default one that people look to to show that they're going to heaven and that they're righteous.
- You may ask someone, I've done this several times. You know, are you a Christian? Are you going to heaven when you die? Oh yeah. Well, how do you know that? Well, I'm a good person. Well, how do you know you're a good person?
- I've never killed anybody. Right? Isn't that what... I don't know. I hear this all the time. I've never killed anybody. This is the one commandment we love because we think we can keep it. This also addresses the subject to the sanctity of human life.
- What is special about human life? What's different about it? What makes it sanctified or holy even to the Lord? This is pertinent as well because we live in a society where violence is rampant and really increasing in our society.
- We hear in the news regularly of mass shootings, terrorist attacks, even in town, road rage. Just on our way home yesterday, we heard of another shooting here in Hazleton and someone dying just a block from us in the movie theater parking lot.
- [2 : 40] We see it in movies. We see it in video games. More and more, we're becoming desensitized to violence. So let's consider this commandment.
- What does this commandment teach us? Reverse the order a little bit today. I want to look at what it tells us not to do first.
- So the sins that are forbidden first. And then we'll look at what does it call us to do? What are the duties required? And then thirdly, I want to look at some exceptions to the rule.
- Are there any times where this is okay? And we're going to talk about that. But first point after the introduction, do not take life. Pretty simple. Do not take life.
- What is murder? How would we define murder? Well, one commentator, John McKay, I thought did a good job. He writes, Life is the gift of God and is not at human disposal.

[3 : 43] The verb used refers to the killing of persons. It is never used of animals. It is not the most general word for the taking of human life and does not include slaughter in war or the judicial imposition of the death penalty.

All in all, the rendering murder reflects its range of meaning very well. The frequent use of the word in Numbers 35 shows that it covers accidental as well as premeditated acts of manslaughter.

So as we think about defining this, some of you may be familiar with King James Version. Maybe you memorized the King James years ago. I believe the King James says, You shall not kill.

And I think he's pointing to here that the ESV, I think, has taken a much better translation of this. In my studies, and I apologize I'm going to write it down, but I believe it's seven different Hebrew words are used for killing in one form or another.

And the one that's chosen here is specifically what we might think of more of manslaughter or murder. Just as we have several, I mean, we've already said killing, murder, manslaughter, homicide. We have different words that mean different things.

[4 : 50] Murder is probably a better rendition of it than just simply killing. And he mentions, and we'll talk a little bit about this, but that even includes accidental as well as premeditated murder in several places in the Bible.

Before we get further into that, though, what about murder in the Old Testament? Do we see that? And what I want to point out to you is that we see it before Sinai, right?

We're familiar with murder a long time before we get to receiving the Ten Commandments. Perhaps the earliest evidence of the fall, shortly after Adam and Eve's sin, we hear the report in Genesis 4a.

Cain spoke to Abel, his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother, Abel, and killed him. And Cain is judged for this. So, as far as we know, no outward giving of the law, God having written the law in their hearts, they knew murder was wrong.

And Cain murdered anyway. And really, this again shows that these laws that are being given here in the Ten Commandments are not just arbitrary laws for them as a people coming into a nation or becoming a nation.

[6 : 12] These laws that are being given are a part of the character of who God is. There is something inherently wrong with murder. And what's funny, I said earlier, this is the commandment we think we keep.

This is also the one I think that's probably the easiest for us to understand what is inherently wrong about murder. Taking a life is not the right of any of us. And so, we understand that and we get the idea of it, but we also need to see that this is something that's part of God's character.

This is why God is opposed to this. So, the law is a reflection of the character of God. Maybe a summary even for this point would be to say that human life, as we think about it, is to be valued because humans are uniquely made in the image of God.

So, what is it that makes murder inherently wrong? Why is murder bad? And I think even as we come to Mount Sinai, you may remember that the firstborn in Egypt were being killed.

Murder was there. It was happening. And so, that's probably fresh on their mind as they come to Mount Sinai. But, why is murder wrong? And the answer is because we are made in the image of God.

[7 : 26] We are uniquely, as human beings, made in the image of God. And therefore, human life is to be valued. Listen to Genesis 1, 26 through 27.

Then God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

So, God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created him. Male and female, he created them. And so, there is something unique about being a human that separates us from the animals.

And, this ought to be obvious. But, you know it's not in our culture. I think even the pushing and the teaching of evolution has called us to think of humans are just another animal.

of all the creation, human beings alone are made in the image of God. And, along with that, we see that they are given the responsibility, the duty, to have dominion over all the other creatures.

[8 : 41] So, it's not just that we're made in the image of God. God has also given us this status, this responsibility, where we have authority over the creation. That can be said of nothing else.

And so, when we get to God actually addressing murder in the word, again, long before Mount Sinai, we see after the flood, God speaks, whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed.

For, God made man in his own image. So, the reason that God states that murder is wrong is because you've been made in the image of God.

God. Now, why does that matter? There's something about murdering one who's made in the image of God that is, in some form or another, an attack on God and who God is.

It's almost as if it were saying it's blasphemous. You are made in God's image. Who are we to attack the image of God? But, what makes Sin wrong is that we're made in God's image.

[9 : 51] John Calvin talks about how precious life is. He says, our neighbor bears the image of God. To use him, abuse, or misuse him is to do violence to the person of God who images himself in every human soul.

So, to do violence to the person of God is how he stated it. God is to do the person of God. I mentioned before that evolution has, I think, lowered the understanding of who man is in our society.

I would say as well that we have also been inundated with teaching that not all human life is equal. Not all human life is equal. Well, where do we see that?

Well, I think we see numerous displays of people who we believe don't have a right to life. Probably the most obvious one of those is abortion.

And, I think it's pretty clear, but I'll state it anyway, that this commandment obviously rules out abortion. Listen to Psalm 139, 13 through 16.

[11 : 04] For you formed my inward parts. You knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you for I'm fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your words, my soul knows it very well.

My frame was not hidden from you when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance. In your book were written every one of them the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

Our God sovereignly gives life. And we see that is in the womb. He forms the child in the womb. He gives it life. He set forth the number of days and what that life will entail.

And so, to, again, attack, to put to death one like this is to, it's murder. It's a violation of the commandment. But it's also attacking both the sovereignty of God, which I'll get to more later, but also the image of God in that newly formed creation.

Along with abortion, I'm going to tie these together a little bit because the categories overlap some, but euthanasia has also been something that has been more and more promoted in our society, other countries even.

[12 : 21] There's, I don't want to say euthanasia, tourism. You fly to another country, they'll put you to death over there. And we see this, again, being promoted, I think, specifically for people who may be disabled in one form or another, or even the elderly.

We talked about, last week, about respect for the elderly and how the honoring your father and mother extends to those who are in authority over us, even in age, who have experience beyond ours.

But in our culture, we view often the elderly or the disabled as a burden on society or a burden on families. And so, to put them to death in one form or another seems like a way to do that.

Along with that, I would say abortion falls in that same category. I said there's some overlap because they want parents to screen their children and find out is there any chance they're going to have a disability?

If so, go ahead and kill them now so they don't have to live that way. Guys, that is not what God would desire for us. God has made human life. He's made it precious. And so, we're to honor that life.

[13 : 33] We live in a fallen world. Let me just say disabilities of various forms, disease, should not be a part of the creation. But because of the fall, this is the world we live in.

Someone who's born with these disabilities is no less in the image of God. They're still fully in the image of God, but we understand as well that the fall has borne its effects on all of us.

None of us measure up to the image of God that we should, and yet we know that we're in the image of God. And so all life, all human life is precious and is to be protected. I'll just add suicide, not an option.

Taking your own life is still murdering someone or something made in the image of God. God. I said earlier, I think in our society it's part of the outworking of evolution.

It's a systematic attack on our understanding of what it means to be made in the image of God. If we're all just animals, what does it really matter? I would go even beyond that and say in our society, animals are oftentimes better protected than human beings.

[14 : 40] I think the same crime that if it's done to an animal, people are up in arms about this. But if it's a human being, well, I think all of this is a reflection of our heart condition.

We've been going back and looking at Matthew 5-7, the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus really expounds the law. Let's look there again. This is Matthew 5-21. It may be too small for you.

If it is, you're welcome to flip there. I'm going to read six verses there. Matthew 5-21.

You have heard that it was said to those of old, you shall not murder. And whoever murders will be liable to judgment. So where have we heard this before?

It's the sixth commandment Jesus is speaking of. He says, but I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment. Whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council and whoever says you fool will be liable to the hell of fire.

[15 : 51] So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift.

Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court. Lest your accuser hand you over to the judge and the judge to the guard and you be put in prison.

Truly I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny. So in this passage we see Jesus, again, not expanding the commandment but expositing.

He's preaching. He's teaching. What is this commandment about? Well, you heard it said, do not murder and if you do murder you'll be judged. As with all the Ten Commandments we want to simplify it to the easiest possible thing for us to obey.

If we think of it only as committing the act of murder, most of us in this room, I just can't say universal because I don't know what you've done in your past, most of us in this room could say I've kept this commandment.

[16 : 59] But Jesus says, you heard that say but I say, anyone who is angry with his brother, he says, who insults his brother, or who calls him you fool.

So then the question gets expanded and we might think who's my brother here? He's not saying I think just within the church, he's saying other human beings. Have any of you ever been angry with another human being?

Some of you apparently are doing really well at keeping this commandment. No, all of us, I believe, and we can talk later, all of us have been angry at some point with someone. I think it's possible that many of us have broken the commandment weekly, maybe daily we're angry with someone.

How about have you ever insulted someone? Not even to their face. It may have been a whisper to your spouse. thoughts. Jesus even makes clear it's the inner thoughts as well.

Have we thought bad things towards someone?

[18 : 38] murder and you do not have so you murder.

And so that's even tied there a little bit with coveting. We want what someone else has. We don't have what they have and so we hate them for having it. Or at times even murder them to get it.

So what are the sins communicated? I feel like I've tried to expand what this means but let's talk a little bit about what are the sins that are forbidden.

Again I'm using the Westminster Larger Catechism. They give quite a list and I'll just touch on these briefly. And again I know the language can be difficult but it says neglecting or withdrawing the lawful and necessary means of the preservation of life.

So murder isn't necessarily killing the person but removing their ability to live. And so what are examples of that? Well I believe even the failure to help someone who is dying.

[20 : 08] There is a I'm getting into the positive a little bit but there's a positive obligation for us to look out for those who could be dying. Those who are in need were to care for them.

of all people I think Christians that come across a car accident stop. Try to help them. I thought of another example might be neglecting parental duties.

Failure to feed your kids or give them the proper shelter they need. Secondly the catechism says sinful anger hatred envy and desire for revenge.

We've talked about I think already anger hatred envy revenge revenge is the Lord's alone. We have no right to that. God will judge. And it's always interesting that we want revenge on people who wrong us and we always want people to forgive us when we wrong them.

God judges rightly. All excessive passions and distracting cares. I think what they're getting at here is making too much of something so that we're willing to murder to get that which we so greatly desire.

[21 : 28] All right here comes this one so prepare yourselves. Immoderate use of food drink labor and recreations. Now I wasn't pleased that they went there with this but I think it's a good application.

What are they saying here? Gluttony is a form of murder is what they're saying. Overindulging in food and drink is a form of murder. Why? Because we're not taking care of our bodies that God's given us.

We're shortening our life. I thought about it's not just the quantity though. I think it's also the quality. Now as your pastor I'm not telling you where you have to eat but I think we know that there's certain places that serve food that are almost guaranteed to shorten life.

do we take into account when we make our decisions regarding dinner am I breaking God's commandments here?

I was so moved one time by Jonathan Edwards one of his resolutions to so eat and drink and I forget exactly the wording but so that it benefits my constitution that I'll be in the best state to study the word of God and to worship God.

[22 : 48] That probably means he's not eating the buffalo wings on Saturday night. You come into church you've got indigestion it's distracting but are we mindful of even how we eat and how that affects our worship of God and honoring him?

Immoderate use of labor and recreation so overworking or being lazy are both ways in which we're not taking care of ourselves. Working a desk job I mean I'm often sitting at a desk studying God's word.

I understand what it's saying there. You've got to get up you've got to do a little exercise or what happens to your body? At the same time what happens if we overwork ourselves and how we can work ourselves to death?

Along with that I think we could include things like drug use. We think of the immaterate use of drink or using substances that we know can damage or harm our body.

And then finally they say provoking words, oppression, quarreling, striking, wounding, and whatever else tends to destruction of the life of anyone.

[23 : 56] So our words and our treatment of others, unlawful violence against someone. I want you to say again, this comes from our heart.

What Jesus was getting at is murder isn't just the outward behavior. We're really good at hiding our inner thoughts in our heart. we try to behave ourselves and maybe murder is one that we feel like, I've got to handle this.

I'm not going to kill anyone. But all of us struggle in our heart. Now positively, what are we to do?

And positively, I just summed this up in saying, instead we are to preserve life. Instead, preserve life. the Baptist Catechism, question and answer 73, it says, the sixth commandment requires all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life and the life of others.

And so again, we see that the concept, the principle we're getting at is preservation of life. We are made in the image of God. We have a responsibility to preserve life as we're able to.

[25 : 17] 1 Kings 18. 4, it says, and when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the land, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave and fed them with bread and water.

Jezebel's trying to kill all the prophets. What does Obadiah do? He gathers up a hundred of them and he hides them in various places and he takes some food and makes sure they're able to live. He's stopping the murder of these prophets.

And he's feeding them that their life might be preserved. So again, the Westminster Larger Catechism lays out for us some things, ways that we are to preserve life that include the following.

First, the just defense of lives against violence. So protecting people when other people are trying to kill them or harm them in some way.

secondly, patiently bearing the hand of God with quietness of mind and cheerfulness of spirit. How do we respond to the providence of God?

[26 : 21] I think they're even getting at the idea of we have a responsibility to receive what God has given us without anger at God or hatred at the one who might bring it our way.

Sober use of food, drink, medicine, sleep, labor, and recreations. And again, that's just a corresponding one to what we saw earlier, but it included here even sleep.

How we go about how we live our lives. Are we positively doing it in a way to preserve our life? Fourthly, charitable thoughts, love, compassion, meekness, gentleness, and kindness.

Charitable thoughts. Is our response to others that we always give them the benefit of the doubt? Do we always assume the best of others? We have a responsibility to assume the best about another person.

Give them charitable thoughts, love, compassion, meekness, gentleness, and kindness. Whether or not they deserve it. Part of the idea of they're deserving it is because they're image bearers of God.

[27 : 32] They deserve it whether we think they do or not. God's saying they do. And then peaceable, mild, and courteous speech and behavior.

Forbearance, forgiving, readiness to be reconciled, patient, bearing, and forgiving of injuries, and returning good for evil. So being ready and willing to forgive others and be reconciled with them, and doing good to those even who do evil towards us.

And then finally, in comforting and supporting the distressed and protecting and defending the innocent. So caring for all people in their safety.

The innocent, those who are being wrongly treated, standing up for them. So what might that include? Well, I think if we think of the murder that we've already seen, that would include opposing abortion.

So positive responsibility that we are obligated by God, positively to oppose murder, opposing abortion, opposing suicide. If we think someone is considering that, to talk to them and try to help them through that and prevent it, if at all possible.

[28 : 49] Opposing euthanasia. I want to talk really practically here. When I speak of euthanasia, hopefully you understand that is assisted suicide or physician assisted suicide.

What about nitty gritty here? We live in an age where medically life is being preserved long beyond what was ever possible before. I've been with some of you who have had maybe parents or family members who are on life support in the hospital.

Is it ever okay to remove life support in that way? Are we obligated to preserve life as long as possible with the technology that God has granted us? I want to answer the question and I'll just read someone else who does.

This is Pastor Phil Reich and I think he gives a good answer and I want us to look at that. It's in two parts. the difficulty to the need to keep a body functioning long after that time has come.

This raises many more ethical questions than we can address here. But briefly, although we always have a duty to provide basic nourishment, we do not always have a duty to provide extraordinary measures like artificial respiration.

[30 : 16] there is a legitimate moral distinction between killing and allowing someone who is terminally ill to die. In other words, there is a difference between terminating life, which is never permissible, and terminating treatment, which can be a way of turning life, and thus also death, back over to God.

I know that this is a difficult ethical question. I think he gives a good answer. I would be willing to talk more about this with any of you. But what he's saying is that we now have the ability to preserve life beyond what should be physically possible.

We can have machines keeping people alive when by all outward means they would have died. And he's saying we're not obligated to use these extraordinary means.

And at the same time we want to balance that with as Christians, life is precious in God's sight. But we also understand that some people are never going to recover and keeping them alive by machine knowing that there's going to be no recovery is not a gracious act either.

And so I want to balance that and be careful. We're not allowed to put people to death because we think their condition's sad. And yet we're also I think not obligated to maintain life when naturally humanly speaking they would die.

[31 : 35] Now I want to again we can talk more about that if you'd like but I want to go into any other exceptions. Are there other exceptions we might have to this? This is the Westminster Larger Catechism question and answer 136 and they mention some of these exceptions.

All taking away of the life of ourselves or others, this is what's forbidden, except in cases of public justice, lawful war, or necessary defense.

I'm going to take a little time to talk about each of these. But what I want you to see is there's a principle that should guide us and that principle is preservation of life as much as is possible to us.

We want to preserve life. Now bear with me. At times I think we all understand there's a necessity to take life to preserve life.

This complicates it. I know this makes it difficult. I think this is some of the nuance even when we say murder versus why I think calling it just you shall not kill is a bad definition. So let me give some biblical examples and talk about this and we can see if you agree if you see those examples as sufficient to be exceptions to this rule.

[32 : 57] So first would be it said public justice. Public justice. And here I think they have in mind what we would call the death penalty or capital punishment.

is it ever lawful? Is it ever allowed that a society, a government can put its citizens to death? Now going back to what we saw before, remember Genesis 9, 6, God's words, whoever sheds the blood of man, by man his blood shall be shed.

For God made man in his own image. So I want to be careful. I would argue that this is a positive command even. I think at the very least you have to acknowledge that God's saying that there is a cause-effect relationship.

You kill someone, you're going to be put to death. Why and how is that going to happen? I think God's calling there to be justice in this situation. To take someone's life results in you forfeiting your own life.

And so there is a societal responsibility to uphold the image of God in the sanctity of human life. if you're taking this, if you're breaking this, you no longer have a right to your own life.

[34 : 13] Let me give you another example that we've looked at a little bit already in our series. But that the ruler is given authority. We looked at obedience and honoring our rulers, but the ruler is given authority by God to bear the sword.

Romans 13, 4. But if you do wrong, be afraid. for he, that's the ruler of the government in this situation, does not bear the sword in vain.

For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrong doer. I said last time, and I'll say again, what is a sword for? You don't discipline with a sword.

A sword is for killing. And so he says the government, our rulers have the authority to bear the sword as God's avenger on the wrong doer. And so I believe God has given the right of government to execute capital punishment for those who at least have murdered others.

And let me say, that doesn't mean that just any person can execute this judgment. You can't say, well, you killed somebody, I'm going to kill you. No. It is a place of government, and I'm thankful that we live in a society where there should be at least a fair trial and a chance to be delivered from that if you're innocent.

[35 : 41] We'll talk a little bit about this next week and probably in the upcoming weeks, but murder is not the only instance in the Bible of there being capital punishment. And we want to distinguish it again.

God has set the law that we're not to murder, and yet we see also the civil law. How was Israel to live as a country? Well, they were to execute people for certain crimes.

We are not obligated to execute people for every crime that they say. That was their law as a country. We are a different country. But there are principles in play there. At the very least, the basic principle is God not only allowed that, he commanded it for his people.

And so I think for us as Christians, at the very least, I think we need to be okay living in a society where this is executed and knowing that it may be done wrongly or poorly.

And we should oppose that when it is. We should protect life as we're able to. But at the very least, we can understand why that occurs in our society. At the most, we may even argue that God is calling us to do this as a model of the sanctity of human life made in the image of God.

[36 : 56] It is so wrong to take human life that you forfeit your own life. And then another one they said was necessary defense.

What about defense of one's home? Etz 22.2 If a thief is found breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there shall be no blood guilt for him.

here we have a positive example of an instance in which God permitted the taking of life. Why is that? There's a preservation principle at play here.

It wasn't just that we're worried about them robbing us, but there is a threat any time someone enters your own home to your person. It may be death, it may be other forms of murder that don't go all the way to the fact of taking life.

We've seen murder goes beyond that. I think even the possibility of sexual abuse, kidnapping, any harm to your child, the very fact that you entered into my stronghold, my safety, you're in my house, you're not guilty.

[38 : 09] Now, again, I don't think God's saying you're obligated to kill everyone who enters your house uninvited, we should say. But, if it happens, if you strike them and they die, God says there's no guilt.

And, thankfully, we live in a society that upholds that idea of self-defense in your own home. Now, if we expand that further, what I want you to see is that there's a principle that you have a right to preserve human life whenever you're able to.

Now, we can debate the specifics of this. I want to say more than right, you have a responsibility to preserve your life and the life of others because you're made in the image of God. So, at any point, and I think that goes even beyond being in your home, you have the ability to defend yourself or your family or a stranger if you see them being put to death.

And that may even be with lethal force. Now, that being said, remember last week we talked a little bit about martyrdom. And there is something good and glorious that God praises for the Christian who is put to death or suffers for their faith.

And so, in other words, if someone's going against you because you're of faith, don't shoot them. Okay? Suffer for Christ. But if you see others being wrongly treated, stand up for them and seek to preserve life.

[39 : 37] Deuteronomy 19.5 deals with acts of mental deaths. It says, as when someone goes into the forest with his neighbor to cut wood, I know this is an example that most of you were thinking of as well, and his hand swings the axe to cut down a tree, and the head slips from the handle and strikes his neighbor so that he dies, he may flee to one of these cities and live.

So they had cities of refuge for accidental death so that they would not be immediately put to death, and basically their trial could be heard. And when it was discovered that it was accidental, then they were not to be put to death.

They could live. And so, again, that's probably not our most common one. When we swing an axe, the axe head falls off. But living in a different age there.

Are there ways in which we could, I think even a car accident? Is a person guilty in that instance? Again, if it's accidental, it was an intended homicide, then it's not breaking this commandment.

At the same time, there are other accidental deaths that God does judge, we see, in the Old Testament. And so I'd say, where might that be the case? Well, I think when we're breaking this commandment and we're doing things that might lead to other people's lives, even accidentally, then we could be guilty of this.

[40 : 55] But maybe intention goes in this. Unintentional, accidental deaths? Is there such thing as an intentional accidental? But we want to be mindful of this and be careful. One last exception, lawful war?

It mentions here, that's the wording of the catechism. Lawful war. What is lawful war? This, again, could be another sermon and discussion.

I'll defer to Phil Reichen and discuss it a little bit, but Pastor Reichen, he says, the Bible teaches that it is not unlawful to kill enemies in wartime, provided that the war is just.

Christians have long believed that a war is just only if it is waged by a legitimate government for a worthy cause with force proportional to the attack against men who are soldiers, not civilians.

So that qualifies it a little bit for us. When is war lawful? It's basically when you're not the aggressor, when you are defending yourself much like if we took this on an individual level, now we're expanding it to a national level when the force is proportionate, it's equal, when we're killing those who are fighting and not civilians.

[42 : 09] So there are principles that might guide this, but I just want to say that that would not be murder, but even then we want to be careful. I mean, right now we see, I think, wrongful war in the sense of Russia invasion of Ukraine.

Ukraine, do they have a right to defend themselves including murdering people who are coming to their land to take their land? I think absolutely. And so we have one war that on one side I would say is unlawful, one that's lawful.

I'm not trying to get into the politics of all that, just using that as an example. There may be many chances or opportunities like that where we have to distinguish, is it right for us? Maybe even if you're going to serve in the military, when is it okay for me to die and when is it not?

All right, finally, just a few points of application. I think a major point that we want to drive home is that all of us, all human beings are made in the image and likeness of God.

We're all made in the image and likeness of God. And because of that, all life, all human life is to be preserved.

[43 : 16] No life is to be disposed of. All people are precious in the sight of God. That's the overarching principle we want to have in our mind. Secondly, the question of, who is my neighbor?

Jesus was asked, who is my neighbor in Luke 10, 30-37? Here's what Jesus replied.

A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and he fell among robbers who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Just pause.

Are they breaking the commandment? Is that murder? Oh, good. Some of you paid attention. Yes, that's breaking the commandment. Why? Well, they stripped him, they beat him, and they left him half dead.

It's the physical attack, it's the hatred, the anger that's involved. Okay, it says, now by chance, a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Is that breaking the commandment?

[44 : 19] I'm saying it is. So likewise, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion.

He went to him and bound and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to the inn and took care of him.

And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper saying, take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back. Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?

He said, the one who showed him mercy. And Jesus said to him, you go and do likewise. So, let's get beyond the question of even who's the neighbor.

Who's obeyed this commandment? Well, considering the innkeeper to be a neutral party in this, the only one who obeyed the commandment was the Samaritan.

[45 : 23] All the rest of them, including, in Jesus' example, the priest and the Levite, which both would have served in the temple and been very religious, did not obey the commandment because they left the man there to die.

So, everyone in this parable breaks the commandment except the Samaritan. What that means then is, I know this is hard for us to think about, but we can break this commandment and probably any of the commandments by doing nothing.

Doing nothing is a choice that may well break the commandment. There is a positive obligation for us to care for others, to love our neighbor, which means all of us have broken this commandment.

There is not one of us who have kept this commandment, and I know we probably came here thinking, oh good, Sixth Commandment got this one covered. All of us have broken this commandment. Revelation 21.8 says, But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.

So just to be clear, anyone who's a murderer deserves hell, and all of us have broken this commandment. I'm the bearer of good news today.

[46 : 48] We all deserve hell. Moving right along, we'll come back to that a little bit. Fourthly, I want you to see that God is sovereign over human life and death.

God is sovereign over human life and death. He alone is the giver of life, and he alone is the taker of life. And so as we think about the principle that we've seen here, it's not just that we preserve life because we're made in the image of God, but it's presumptuous.

For us to take life, or not preserve life, is if we had the authority instead of God, is if we were sovereign over our own lives even. I think again, suicide, we're not sovereign over our lives, God sets a time of death.

Who are we to presume in this way? Romans 12, 9, Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.

And so God's the one who's going to repay. And when we take it upon ourselves, even if it's just anger in our hearts against someone, that we wish the worst for them, we're secretly praying imprecatory prayers against them.

[47 : 58] Maybe we don't even voice them to God, but we're hoping the worst happens to them. are we taking upon ourselves that which belongs only to God? Or, let me say this another way, is our anger and our violence a reflection of, or an expression of, our doubting either the sovereignty of God or the goodness of God?

Do we doubt the sovereignty of God or the goodness of God? What I mean by that is, if we believe that God is good and he's sovereign, then we can leave it all to him. He'll take care of it.

I don't have to get vengeance, do I? I don't have to be angry about this. God will judge justly and rightly, but if God's good, but impotent, he doesn't have the power to execute the judgment, then I have to be concerned.

He wants to help, but he just can't, so I'll do it myself. Or, if God's powerful to do it, but he doesn't really care, he's not loving, then I've got to do it, because he's not going to do it for me.

But if we rightly understand that God is sovereign and good, then we can leave it in his hands. And so we see how great the offense is, not just in taking from someone the image of God, but also in denying who God is, his character, his attributes, doubt, lack of faith.

[49 : 23] faith. Let me give you a positive example in the person of Jesus, which I'm really moving into Jesus as the fulfillment. It's going to be our next point, but listen to this.

1 Peter 2, 22-23, he, Jesus, committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return.

When he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. Here is a positive example of what we ought to do, Christian. When someone wrongs us, what do we do?

We continue, we keep on. It's an ongoing process. We entrust ourselves to God who judges justly. Because let's be honest, even when we're upset because we think someone wronged us, we don't judge justly.

You want to see your pastor not judge justly? Just allow me to watch a soccer game with you. My team is always fouled, but my team never commits fouls.

[50 : 26] I can see it so biased. It seems absolute, but I know when I'm involved, I don't judge justly. I give myself and my people the benefit of the doubt.

And if you're up against me, boy, it's got to be evil intentions all the time. Because we don't judge justly. We've got to acknowledge that and leave it to God who does.

God sovereign, we've seen we have all broken this commandment. Now what you see, that Jesus fulfills this commandment for us. Again, that doesn't remove the responsibility for us to obey it, but it does allow us to enter into the presence of God as sinners, now redeemed in Christ, righteous and holy.

So Jesus as the fulfillment of the sixth commandment. First, I think there's a positive example in Jesus caring for the sick, the diseased, the helpless, those who were dying, those who were dead, Lazarus.

If we think of Jesus positively fulfilling this command, he sought to preserve life when and where possible. Secondly, though, I think probably the one that may come to our mind foremost is that he laid down his life to redeem us or redeem your life from spiritual death.

[51 : 52] he allowed himself to be put to death that you might have spiritual life, that you might not go to hell as we rightly deserve for the sins that we've committed.

Romans 6, 23, for the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord. One commentator, Tim Chester, he writes, even as his enemies nailed him to the cross, Christ's heart was not filled with hatred.

Instead, he prayed, Father, forgive. He didn't take life. His plans were dominated by his desire to give his own life in order to give others life.

Jesus said in John 10, 11, I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the life of the sheep. What is the cost for him to preserve our lives, spiritually speaking, that we would not face the death that we earned for ourselves in our being murderers, that he would lay down his life, that he would die for us.

Consider for a moment how you respond to offenses against you. When someone wrongs you, how do you respond? Now, listen to a passage, I know it's probably pretty familiar to many of you, but Isaiah 53, 7-9.

[53 : 18] He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

By oppression and judgment he was taken away, and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off, out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?

And they made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. There's the example of our Savior. That's what Christ did.

And so one day, we're going to stand before God as judge, and whose righteousness, whose obedience are you going to trust in?

Are you going to pull with God the thing you pull with other people? I'm a good person, I've never killed anyone. It's not going to work. Our only hope is that we look to Christ who has fulfilled the law for us.

[54 : 20] And so, I want to encourage you, if you know yourself to be a breaker of this commandment, which I hope you do, if you follow along, and if it's been clear enough from God's word, we've all broken the commandment, if you know yourself to be a breaker of this commandment, a murderer, then go to Christ for forgiveness.

Our only hope is found in Jesus Christ. He asked God to forgive those who killed him. He died that you might know that forgiveness.

And so, as we think of maybe the obligation to obey the commandment, God's word tells us that apart from him, we are spiritually dead. And I want to encourage you to obey the commandment and preserve your life today.

Save your life spiritually by trusting in Christ who died that we might have life. Let's pray together. Lord, dear heavenly father, we thank you for your word and how it does instruct us and teach us.

And Lord, we pray that you would help us to see that we all have sinned and fallen short of your glory. That all of us here have broken this commandment along with all the other commandments.

[55 : 26] And Lord, that we would look to Christ for forgiveness. Lord, we pray that for those who have trust in Jesus Christ, Lord, that you would by your spirit enable us to keep or seek to obey this commandment in all of our life, that you might be honored.

Not that we might gain salvation, but because you've saved us, that we would love and care for our neighbor. That we would seek your honor, that your image might be upheld and glorified.

Lord, we pray this all in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Our closing hymn is number 706. It reminds us that Jesus died for him and in his death we have life.

Number 706. Please stand. Amen. Jesus lives and so shall I and my sin is gone forever.

He who gave for me to die his glad hands of death to share world.

[56 : 51] He shall raise thee from the dust Jesus is my hope and trust.

Jesus lives and reigns to free and his kingdoms will remain. I shall also be with him ever living ever may be God has promised me in trust Jesus is my hope and trust Christ Jesus lived and by his grace victory or my passions giving I could fence my heart and ways ever to his glory living me he he erases from the dust

Jesus is my hope and trust Jesus lives my hope well God Wan Him twenty ones came band him Feld atau BellITY is his god his kingdom is righteousness none is my hope and trust.

Jesus lives and death is now what my entrance gives to glory.

Courage then my soul for now as the crown of life before thee.

[59 : 24] Thou shalt find thy hopes for just. Jesus is our Christian's trust.

Finally, brothers, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you all.

Amen. Amen.