

Exodus 20:13 The 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment: Protect Life!

Pentecost 9 August 2, 2009 Children's talk to VBS students - second service: A time-out chair!

Grace and peace are yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior...

God's Word to help us value and defend human life is written in Exodus 20:13

This is the Word of our God. We pray: If we will trust in God to guide us, and hope in Him through all our ways, He'll give us strength whatever betides us, and carry us through evil days; Who trusts in God's unchanging love builds on the Rock that naught can move. Amen. (ELH #205 v.1)

Dear Friends, in Christ,

I've been watching the local news since I moved to the Milwaukee area. It seems like almost every day there has been reports of shootings and deaths, including a young man at a custard stand in Kenosha. Why does it seem that so many people have a low value of human life? It isn't just criminals who disregard life, countries are at war with the only object of people killing people. According to the Bible our country has a right to fight wars, but still we must ask, what have we solved with all the killing? There is even more loss of life in America through suicides, and abortions end the lives of over a million babies each year. Do people think that God doesn't care about what is going on in our country? It is so important for us to see human life as God sees it and express our value of it according to the 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment so that more people will not just think to value life, but

### **Protect Life!**

**First, what does God expect of us regarding human life?** He wants us to know how important life is. Human life is different than any other creature on earth. The false teachings of evolution blur the distinctions between human life and animals. But the Bible makes it clear that animals were formed only from the ground at creation, while it states of Adam, "*God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. (Genesis 2:7)* Animals have a good purpose on earth. Humans were made by God to live forever as His children. God wants us to understand how precious each human life is, no matter how young or old. If something is valuable, we protect it, we insure it, and we care for it. Since God created each precious human life, we are not to personally take matters into our own hands and decide when to end it.

Recall the Bible lesson of Job, who lost his health, his wealth, and most of his family. He grieved bitterly and his faith in God wavered. Yet, he said, "*The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.*" (*Job 1:21*) God gave life. Only God has the right to take it away.

In this commandment God especially forbids murder, hurting or harming someone. There is a difference between killing and murder. Killing might mean ending life by an accident or unintentionally. Killing may also take place when a person defends himself from an attack. Killing may happen when police have to use deadly force to stop a criminal. The Bible states of the government, "*It does not bear the sword for nothing.*" (*Romans 13:4*)

Murder, on the other hand, is the willful destruction of a human being by another. It is Cain murdering his innocent brother Abel. Murder can also be when people do something to shorten the life of another, like Joseph's brothers when they sold him as a slave. God forbids in this commandment when people hurt their own bodies by harmful eating or drinking, or by abuse of alcohol or drugs. God warns of such abuse in Proverbs 23. Also, people need time to rest. Some people ruin their health trying to gain wealth. Once they have it, they spend all their wealth trying to regain their health! Also, God wants us to know that He forbids suicide. The Bible warns, Do not destroy the temple of the Holy Spirit. "*You are that temple.*" (*1 Corinthians 3:17*)

But God doesn't stop with just the action of murder, He forbids using words to harm others. The Bible states, *"You must rid yourselves of ... anger, filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other..." (Colossians 3:8-9)* Jesus said, *"Anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.... But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell."* (Matthew 5:22)

God knows where it all begins for people. It's in the heart. All people are oppressed by the power of sin in their lives. People naturally want to put themselves first. So, if they get hurt, their nature wants to get even and to harm others. Hurt leads to anger. Anger can lead to bitterness and eventually to hatred. And hatred takes us out of the loving hands of God and puts us into the hands of the devil. He will do everything that he can to cause us to harm others and at the same time harm our own faith. We must avoid it. Paul *"In your anger do not sin."* (Ephesians 4:26)

**Second, what does God do to protect human life?** The Bible states that God empowered the government to protect people. It is to punish the wrong-doer and to protect the innocent. What if the government isn't doing it's job? What if a law is passed that promotes and pays for the killing of unborn children? What if a health care law devalues the lives of the elderly or those who can't care for themselves so that their lives end prematurely? God has given us the right as citizens to protest such injustice. If we don't speak against immoral laws, God will!

Along with the government, God protects life by giving us His Word so we see when we lack true love for our neighbor. The Bible warns, *"The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition... . I warn you... that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:21)*

God has done more than give us His Word to warn us. He calls us to turn from our sins to Christ so that we have full forgiveness. The Bible states, *"The Lord is ... patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."* (2 Peter 3:9) We know that God is serious about saving us because He sent Jesus in our place. Jesus was tempted to be selfish, but He always put the needs of others first. Jesus was tempted to get back at others who hurt Him. Yet the Bible states, *"[Jesus] committed no sin.... When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to God who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds we have been healed."* (1 Peter 2:22-24) Despite our sins and lack of concern for God's gift of life, in Christ we are forgiven. Through faith by God's grace, we are given a gift of life that will be eternal and will be full of the goodness that God intended for people. So, we can entrust to God each situation and temptation by those who hurt us!

As forgiven sinners who have received Christ's love, we are to have a new outlook on life! Jesus told His followers that instead of wishing enemies harm, they were to love them, hoping that they will repent and receive Christ's forgiveness before they die. We are to give of ourselves to help others. The Bible states, *"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."* (Colossians 3:12-13) Remember the Good Samaritan, who rescued an enemy that had been beaten, robbed, and left for dead? God calls us to help people, to speak for those who cannot speak, to provide for those who cannot provide for themselves, and to show kindness to people who desperately need our friendship.

The world says, Let the weak die, so the rest of the people get stronger. God says, "The meek shall inherit the earth." The world says that death is the way that brings change and advancement. God's Word says that death is a result of sin in the world. But, because of God's grace in Christ, when God calls, death becomes a way to enter eternal life in heaven. So, when we are hurt by others and we are tempted to get even or angry, remember Christ, who was grieved by our offenses. He died to forgive them and rose from death to make us His friends, His loving family forever. Amen.