

THE BOUNDARY of LOVING OUR NEIGHBOR'S PERSON

Intro: -.Sadly, we live in a society that is full of violence and murder, both what the police oppose and what they protect.

- What causes such violence and destruction? It is not the environment or animal ancestry, but a depraved nature.
- How we need grace to love as God loves.

I. THE MEANING OF THE SIXTH COMMAND.

- A. A misunderstanding cleared up:
1. God does not forbid all killing, absolutely.
 - a. This command does not speak at all about the animal world.
 - b. The world has elevated the animal kingdom above human life.
 - c. But this is true also regarding people.
 2. God himself kills people.
 3. God sometimes command us to kill other people.
 - a. In the OT, Israel was commanded to kill all the inhabitants of the land of Canaan.
 - b. In Romans 13, the government is given a sword that must be used.
 - c. This sadly is overlooked and even contradicted in the church.
 - d. To be pro-life does not mean that one is opposed to capital punishment!
- B. Forbidden is to take the life of our neighbor without having the authority to do so.
1. God gave each person their life and he alone has the right to take it away.
 2. The reason for this is that God created man in his image, and even the wicked are this special creation.
 3. By touching another's life, I touch God who alone gave them that life.
 4. To kill is to act like a child of the devil, who is a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44).
- C. Implications of this for our **neighbor**:
1. Our neighbor is that person whom God places on my path, and threatens my position.
 2. To take them out of my path or to wish they were out of my path is to pass critical judgment on God's wisdom.
 3. Killing can be done in many different ways: deeds, words, gestures, bullying, looks.
 4. Killing can be 'accidental' or through negligence. We can kill a soul just as we can kill a body (Ezek.3:18)
- D. Implications of this for **self**:
1. One form of this is willful self-murder: suicide. The child of God may not, and by grace, will not.
 2. But there are other forms of this sin: insufficient or excessive eating or drinking, putting ourselves in dangerous places...

II. THE ROOT

- A. At the root of the violation of this commandment is hatred:
1. Hatred fills the unconverted heart of man: hatred towards God and hatred towards our neighbor.
 2. We all have such a heart after the fall into sin.
 3. Out of the heart proceed all sorts of murder.
 4. Notice, not all hatred is sinful. The antithesis implies a godly hatred.
 5. We are speaking of hatred that leads to murder as an enmity against God. God put that person or me in this position.
- B. That hatred shows itself in many different ways: we are murderers because we can so quickly be angry and hate.
1. Looks that could kill, avoidance of and refusal to speak to,
 2. Envy and jealousy of the person's status or possessions.
 3. The desire for revenge.
 4. Revolution and rebellion.
 5. Verbal abuse.
- C. We must love life: that of others and of self.
1. It is God who has created that life both physical and spiritual.
 2. Therefore we seek to flee from this sin of hatred.
 3. We rejoice in life which is fellowship with God and with one another.

III. THE SOLUTION: We have a duty to preserve and love the life God has given

- A. As believers, we find the pattern for our live in God's love.
1. God's love is first within the Trinity as a bond of perfection, in which he draws his people.
 2. God demonstrated his love by sending his Son into the world and killing him in our place.
 3. God's love is spread abroad in our hearts, which experience moves us to love him and to love one another.
 4. We must love ourselves as God loves us: as redeemed in Christ and as sanctified by his Spirit.
- B. How do we work at doing this will of God?
1. We need to pray for and work at daily conversion (Col.3). It does not just happen!
 2. This is the mortifying of the old man of sin, putting away anger, malice bitterness, wrath, filthy communication...
 3. We must put on therefore as the elect of God: kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance, charity.
 4. Impossible? Yes of ourselves. But possible by the love of God poured into our hearts. Loving with God's love.
 5. We love because we do it unto Christ (Matt. 25:35-40).
- C. Our love is demonstrated concretely:
1. The beautiful love and care and fellowship within the church community.
 2. Doing good to all, especially the household of faith (Gal. 6:10).
 3. This is the wonderful gospel we hear preached each Sabbath day.