

# *First Century Fellowship Ministry*

## **A Biblical Church of God**

### **The Sixth Commandment**

You shall not murder.

(Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17)

The sixth commandment is the only commandment that shows the effect of sin immediately. When a person is murdered the loss of life and that persons loss to family and friends is almost instantaneous.

Let's go back to the beginning. The first recorded murder in the Bible was committed by Cain, the eldest son of Adam and Eve. In Genesis 4 we learn that Cain was a tiller of the ground and his younger brother Abel was a keeper of sheep. "It came to pass that Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground. And Abel also brought of the firstlings of his flock and the fat of it. And the Lord had regard unto Abel and his offering. But He did not have regard unto Cain and his offering. And Cain was extremely angry and his countenance fell. And the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you so angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, shall you not be accepted? But if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it." (Genesis 4:3-7). God tried to show Cain there was no reason to be angry. If he felt Abel had presented a better offering which the Lord accepted he should continue to strive to do better. The Lord counselled Cain and told him if he did not do well sin was waiting to overtake him. Did Cain follow the Lord's advice? "And Cain talked with his brother

Abel. And it came to pass that when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him." (Genesis 4:8).

From these passages we learn sin existed long before the commandments were actually spoken, and then written by the finger of God onto tablets at Mt Sinai. This also means that the commandments of God were in force from the beginning of creation. There could be no sin where there was no law. (Adam and Eve also sinned against God when they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Genesis 2:16-17.) God taught Adam and Eve a full understanding of His Laws and Commandments before being tempted by the serpent in Genesis 3.

The Creator God is the giver of life, "Then the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." (Genesis 2:7). He made man in His image. "And God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness; ...And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him. He created them male and female." (Genesis 1:26-27). To God Who made us in His image and likeness, all human life is precious.

When we read this sixth commandment what is it that stands out? "**You** shall not murder." It tells us with the first word, YOU. You are not to deliberately take the life of another. It has not been given to us to decide. God does not allow us to choose to take another person's life. He wants us to choose to be merciful to one another.

As the Creator only He has the right to end any life if and when He chooses, no one else has that supreme authority unless it is granted to him by God. An example of this is found in 1 Samuel.

"And Samuel said to Saul, "The Lord sent me to anoint you to be king over His people, over Israel. And now listen to the voice of the words of the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'I will punish Amalek for that which he did to Israel, how he set against him in the way when he came up from Egypt. Now go and strike Amalek, and completely

destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and donkey." (1 Samuel 15:1-3). God ordered the destruction of Amalek because of his attacks on the mostly defenseless children of Israel when they were fleeing Egypt. He had no mercy on them for they were judged by God to be an evil people. None the less, God takes no delight or pleasure in killing even the wicked and sinful. "Say to them, 'As I live,' says the Lord God, 'I have no delight in the death of the wicked, except that the wicked turn from his way, and live. Turn you, turn you from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?" (Ezekiel 33:11). This is what He truly wants, that we turn from our evil ways, to seek Him, to ask for forgiveness, to repent of our sins and then be baptized. "Then Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38).

The written, spiritual law of God is contained within the Ten Commandments. In the Original (Old) Covenant between the children of Israel and God, keeping only the letter of the law was what was required. Intentional killing or murder was forbidden. When Jesus started His ministry one of the first things He said was, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law until everything is fulfilled." (Matthew 5:17-18).

Many today think the New Covenant is simply, "We are now under Grace so we are saved if we just accept Jesus as Lord and that He died for our sins." Or "Once saved, always saved." Pretty appealing BUT it's wrong. Jesus did not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. What He did do was to magnify the Law by bringing out its spiritual intent. This expanded the requirements of the Law and essentially made them more demanding than what we saw in the Old Covenant. He expanded the intent and

meaning so we may grow and become more in the image and likeness of our Savior Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:12-13). His original intent.

"You have heard that it was said to those in ancient times, 'You shall not commit murder; but whoever shall be subject to judgement.' But I say to you, everyone who is angry with his brother without cause shall be subject to judgement. Now you have heard it said, 'Whoever said to his brother, "Raca," shall be subject to the judgement of the council.' But I say to you, whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be subject to the fire of Gehenna. (Matthew 5:21-22). Jesus amplified the meaning of murder to include contempt or hostility towards another. He is addressing the intent within our heart which is the core of our character. Having these evil intents in our hearts, anger, hatred, competition and aggression, we are harboring the spirit of murder. Action follows thought. Sin is generated in the heart. We need to fight sin at the spiritual level. Paul tells us, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:21). This goes along with Jesus' teaching regarding the two greatest commandments, "Master, which commandment is the great commandment in the Law." And Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment; And the second one is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:36-40).

As we have grown in scientific and technical knowledge it seems we have lost the wisdom we once had. We are on smart phones and tablets constantly. We interact with others less and less. Games and movies have dulled our senses and made violence and murder so common place we seem to be indifferent about it, unless it affects us personally.

We play video war games, kill cops, and steal cars all in the name of entertainment. Life, the precious gift of our Creator God has lessened in importance. We are becoming spiritually dead.

Two of the greatest instruments of murder ever devised by man are wars and abortion. (This is not to diminish the 16-17,000 people murdered each year by other means in the U.S. but these two have center stage.) As we have progressed scientifically it seems our shining accomplishment is we have become more efficient at killing one another.

We take the most innocent and helpless of all and pull them from the safety of the womb. The number of these murdered babies worldwide is almost unfathomable. In the United States there are approximately 1,370,000 abortions annually. Worldwide they total about 126,000 each day. This works out to approximately 46,000,000 or about one every 1.5 seconds. It's okay though, it's sanctioned by government and it's to promote women's health we are told. Really! When Jesus returns there is going to be a severe and deadly accounting for this genocide. We are destroying the most innocent and most helpless among us. No matter how you spin it, abortion is murder. "Keep far from a false matter, and do not kill the innocent and righteous; for I will not justify the wicked." (Exodus 23:7).

We go to war to secure peace. We form alliances with other nations, seek to negotiate with others, build up arms to gain an edge of power in an attempt to deflect aggression. Nothing man has devised works. We have weapons that can destroy entire cities and all inhabitants for miles around.

Radical ideologies are sending terrorists throughout the world to kill innocent people to promote their distorted agendas. The sanctity of life is a non-existing entity to them.

General Douglas MacArthur stated, "The problem is basically theological. ... Humanity's "last chance" is to repent of the sin of war before human annihilation removes every vestige of life from this planet." He acknowledges that we have a severe spiritual problem. We have tried every humanly devised way to have peace and fail miserably each and every time. Only the coming government of God will end war. The only rule of law that will work to end these disputes is the Law of God.

We as Christians need to separate ourselves and be loyal to the Kingdom of God and of Jesus Christ. Our Lord has set us an example and we need to follow Him. Through His teachings we are taught of the dignity of man made in the image and likeness of God. He is preparing those who will listen and who desire to be part of His spiritual family and receive eternal life. "For to this you were called because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow in His footsteps Who committed no sin; neither was guile found in His mouth; Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when suffering, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him Who judges righteously; Who Himself bore our sins within His own body on the tree, so that we, being dead to sins, may live unto righteousness; by Whose stripes you were healed." (1 Peter 2:24).