

Alexander Sanders was a former Court of Appeals Chief Judge. In 1992, when his daughter Zoe graduated from the Univ. of S.C., he told a story about her from when she was 3 years old. Sanders came home from work one day to find his home, and especially his young daughter, in a state of turmoil – **Zoe's pet turtle had died**, and she was crying incessantly. Zoe's mother had been dealing with the situation for hours and declared that it was now dad's turn to try and make things better. First, he tried telling Zoe that they could go to the pet store and buy another turtle just like the one that had died. Even at 3 years old, she knew there's really no such thing as getting another one just like the one who died. And so the tears continued.

Desperate to quiet his little girl's tears, he said, "I tell you what, we'll have a funeral for the turtle." Being 3, she didn't know what a funeral was.

Scrambling to come up with an explanation, he said, "A funeral is like a birthday party. We'll have cake & ice cream and lemonade and balloons. All the children in the neighborhood will come over to our house to play. All because the turtle died."

Well, the prospect of a turtle funeral did the trick! Instantly, Zoe was her happy, smiling self again.

The turtle's death was no longer cause for tears, but reason to rejoice! So, with visions of cake and ice cream in their heads the two beamed down at the deceased turtle lying at their feet.

As they did, the turtle moved.

And, a few seconds later, he was crawling away, as lively as, well, as lively as a turtle. But, an undeniably LIVING turtle.

Sanders was speechless.

Zoe had no such problem.

After considering her options, she looked up at her father with her big beautiful eyes and with all the innocence of her tender years, she quietly said, "Daddy, LET'S KILL IT."

Given the choice between a dead turtle and a party -or- a living turtle and no party, **murder** can creep into . even . the heart of a 3 year old.

Title slide

We are talking about the 10 Commandments this summer. Today, we are looking at the 6th Commandment which says:

Deuteronomy 5:17

You shall not murder.

The King James Bible was translated 400 years ago in the year 1611. The translators then translated this passage:

Deuteronomy 5:17

Thou shalt not kill. (King James Version)

To kill and to murder are two very different things that can apply to different things.

So, to help us really *learn this* and *live this* today, we are going to look at three things:

1. What this word and commandment means.
2. What this word and commandment doesn't mean.
3. What Jesus & the NT wants us to know about this commandment.

What is God prohibiting in the 6th Commandment?

1. Homicide

Homicide means to intentionally kill another person.

The original Hebrew word in the commandment is *ratsach*(*rä-tsack*).

Ratsach (*rä-tsack*) means *to murder, assassinate, or kill*.

These are the different ways it is used in the OT.

Criminal intent was implied by the word, unless stated otherwise.

As in, if we say there was a *stabbing* in Pittsburgh last night.

Stabbing is understood as a violent crime.

But, if I add someone was *accidentally* stabbed in the hand.

Accidentally changes the meaning.

Or, if I say there was a shooting, it is understood to be a crime.

Unless I say, Vice President Chaney *unintentionally* shot his friend in the face while duck hunting.

Unintentionally changes shooting from criminal to just very stupid.

Ratsach (*rä-tsack*) means murder or homicide on its own.

But, if you put a modifier on it like *unintentional*, it can mean just a killing.

Numbers 35 is a passage from the OT that shows the distinction.

Number 35

¹⁶ If anyone strikes someone a fatal blow with an iron object, that person is a murderer; the murderer is to be put to death. ¹⁷ Or if anyone is holding a stone and strikes someone a fatal blow with it, that person is a murderer; the murderer is to be put to death.... [same with a wooden object]. If anyone with malice aforethought shoves another or throws something at them intentionally so that they die or if out of enmity one person hits another with their fist so that the other dies, that person is to be put to death; that person is a murderer. The avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death when they meet ²² But if without enmity someone suddenly pushes another or throws something at them unintentionally ²³ or, without seeing them, drops on them a stone heavy enough to kill them, and they die, then since that other person was not an enemy and no harm was intended, ²⁴ the assembly must judge between the accused and the avenger of blood according to these regulations.

So the word at its root means what we think of in murder.

But it can also simply mean killing in some contexts.

What is God prohibiting in the 6th Commandment? Homicide and

2. Manslaughter

Manslaughter is an unintentional killing.

An unintentional *ratsach* (*rä-tsack*)

Even though the Bible makes a distinction between intentional and unintentional killing, this word and commandment includes unintentional killing that comes by accident, neglect, indirect action or indifference.

The only thing that changes is the consequences depending on intent, malice, and responsibility.

What is God prohibiting in the 6th Commandment?

3. Infanticide

Infanticide is killing a baby or unborn child.

There are many places in the Bible that God denounces killing children as some did for sacrifices then.

Ezekiel 20:31

When you offer your gifts - the sacrifice of your children in the fire - you continue to defile yourselves with all your idols to this day.

He also opposes killing unborn children in a way that happened then.

Amos 1:13

This is what the Lord says: “For three sins of Ammon, even for four, I will not relent. Because he ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead in order to extend his borders.”

In battle or conquest they would rip open a pregnant woman’s belly.

God said he was not going to relent, not going to change his mind about punishing the Ammonites, because they did this.

God was protecting unborn children from murder.

God says he forms us and knows us in our mother’s womb.

Jeremiah 1:5

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

If you or your partner have an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy, no matter what the consequences, the Bible would direct that abortion is not a choice for you.

Thou shall not kill certainly applies to infants, to viable unborn fetuses, and arguably to any conceived and developing fetus, ... even if keeping it might prevent you from having your party.

What is God prohibiting in the 6th Commandment?

Homicide, manslaughter, infanticide and

4. Suicide

Suicide is reasonably understood as self-murder.

Job is speaking to God in the OT and he says,

Job 14:5

A person's days are determined; You have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.

God is the author and finisher of life.

It is His to number our days and to say when that number is ended.

What is God prohibiting in the 6th Commandment?

Last one,

5. Euthanasia

When I was a teenager, Saturday Night Live had a great comedienne named Gilda Radner.

Gilda had a recurring character on Weekend Update called Rosanne Rosannadanna.

Rosanne Rosannadanna would always rant about something that she misunderstood and then Chevy would correct her and she would say ...? Never mind.

Euthanasia is not the young people who live in China– youth in Asia.

Euthanasia is when we take our very old and sick pet who is near death to the vet and we have the vet put them to sleep.

Euthanasia in people is also known as assisted suicide.

It is helping someone die because due to accident or illness or age, their quality of life is so poor or their pain is so great that they would rather not go on living.

Even though this can be a complex ethical dilemma, great care and caution should be taken by Christians in ending the lives of others even for what seem to be reasonable and merciful reasons.

This is not the same as saying we want no heroic measures done to a terminally ill loved one.

This is not the same as ending artificial life support to someone who would die if the machines were turned off.

Those are perfectly acceptable decisions that are consistent with Christian faith in God.

Now,

What is God NOT prohibiting in the 6th Commandment?

1. War.

To kill as a soldier in battle or war is not murder.

Ratsack does not mean simply *kill* and cannot be said to mean *absolutely all killing*.

There are many places in the OT that God gave commanded war to take back the land of Israel or to defend it from invaders.
And God cannot break his own laws.

What is God NOT prohibiting in the 6th Commandment?

2. Capital punishment.

Capital punishment means ending the life of a criminal. Execution. There are many places in the OT that God's laws allow for or demands an execution as punishment for a major crime.

While one may object to it in our imperfect criminal justice system for other ethical reasons,
it cannot be excluded on the basis of the 6th commandment.

What is God NOT prohibiting in the 6th Commandment?

3. Killing animals.

I am all for the ethical treatment of animals.

But the 6th commandment does not mean all killing of anything.

It means wrongful killing of humans.

It cannot be shown to have anything to do with not killing animals.

Plus, in the OT sacrificial and festival systems, God's worship included the merciful killing, cooking, and eating of animals.

That is why today after 10:45 service, we are perfectly right at our picnic to enjoy beef, chicken, & since we are not OT Jews, pork.

What is God NOT prohibiting in the 6th Commandment?

4. Self-defense.

Exodus 22:2 says

If a thief is found breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there shall be no bloodguilt for him.

So, if someone is perpetrating a crime and is killed in protection of person or property, that is not murder.

I know that Jesus would have his followers turn the other cheek before we fight back & give our shirt to whoever would want our coat, so I wondered if Christians were ever called to self-defense.

I found and remembered that when Jesus was sending out his disciples one time he told them:

Luke 22:36

“But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one.”

Buy a sword to? Defend yourself in this world.

But balance that with, when he was being arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane & Peter drew his sword to defend Jesus, Jesus told him:

Matthew 26:52

“Put your sword back in its place,” Jesus said to him, “for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.

So that’s:

What this word and commandment means.

And what this word and commandment don’t mean.

Lastly, let’s look at what Jesus & the NT wants us to know about this commandment.

What does Jesus say about murder?

The NT calls us to address **the root causes of murder within us...**

Jesus says we murder because of

1. Anger.

Jesus said,

Matthew 5:21-22

“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.’ 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.”

Jesus knows that one of the causes of murder is anger.

We kill out of anger.

But murder is a relatively limited problem,
while anger’s damaging effects are widespread.

**So, Jesus calls us to deal with the anger in our heart,
not just the murder in our hands.**

Ron a 9 year old boy was being raised by his mother who didn’t know how to cope with his uncontrollable temper.

She knew he was angry that his father had abandoned him and she tried professional counseling, but nothing seemed to work.

So she sent Ron to spend the summer on his grandparent's farm.

When he came home, he was a changed boy.

His mom asked him what happened & he told her that every time he got mad or said anything unkind, Grandpa made him go outside and hammer a big 2 inch nail into a 2 by 4.

After about 20 trips to the shed to get the tools, he decided it was easier to control his temper than hammer those long nails.

"Did you change because you hated the consequences so much?" she asked.

"Well, that was part of it," he said.

"After I'd nailed in all the nails and was behaving better,
Grandma took me outside and made me pull them out.
That was even harder. When I was done, she gave me this note."

He showed it to her, and this is what she read:

"Pulling out the nails is like saying you're sorry;
but the holes still remain in the board.
You can't fix everything by being sorry,
but you can stop making new holes.
Remember, every time you do something hurtful in anger,
you're making a hole somewhere in someone.
That's what your dad did to you.
Please don't do it to anyone else. You're better than that."

I know that some of us live with unresolved anger and resentment.
Jesus would tell us to let go of that in forgiveness.
Some of us have problems controlling that anger and we use
contemptuous and slanderous words to hurt others.

Jesus calls us to turn from that anger
as much as we would turn from murder.

The New Testament calls us to address the root causes of murder
within us...

We murder because of

2. Hatred.

In 1 John 3:11-15 we read

We should love one another. Do not be like Cain, who belonged to
the evil one and **murdered** his brother. And why did he **murder**
him? Because his own actions were evil and his brothers were
righteous. Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you.
We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our
brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. **Anyone who
hates his brother is a murderer**, and you know that no murderer has
eternal life in him." (NKJV)

Hate leads to murder.

Therefore, anyone who hates a fellow human is a murderer.

A woman got bit by a raccoon while she was trying to rescue her cat
from a fight with the raccoon.

She went to the doctor and he said she tested positive for rabies.

They would give her a series of shots that might cure her, or might not.

She could die.

She began writing on a piece of paper frantically.

He asked, "Is that your will?"

She said, "No, it's a list of people I'm going to bite!"

Murder comes from hate.

We can hate an individual for their actions or

we can hate a person because of their skin color, ancestry, or ideology.

Jesus calls us to love, not hate.

He says anyone who hates is a murderer.

And murderers do not inherit eternal life.

Last one,

We have anger, hatred, and murder in our hearts because

3. We don't do God's word.

James 1:19-25

But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak *and* slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. ²² But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. ²⁵ But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does. (NASB)

Murder comes from anger.

To deal with the anger and the hate, we must be doers of the word, not just hearers of the word.

We must learn this and then go and live it.

Even when it is hard.

Even when it is easier to be angry.

Even when it is easier to have a party.

God's word says here that The law of God brings liberty

The 10 Commandments are the essence of God's law.

They are the distilled essentials.

Keeping God's commandments in his Bible brings liberty.

Liberty means freedom.

Keeping God's commandments brings freedom.

Freedom from sin.

Freedom from the pain sin causes.

Freedom from the power sin can have over your mind and heart.

Freedom from the consequences sin can cause in your life.

Freedom to love others unencumbered.

Freedom to love God without barrier.

Freedom to love yourself in integrity.

The only freedom the law couldn't guarantee is what happens when we break the law and don't keep the law?

Then we put ourselves under the curse of the law.

The law meant to give freedom, brings a kind of bondage
to the curse of the punishment when we break the law –
and that curse is? Death.

For the wages of sin, of breaking the law, is death.

God said the soul that sins shall die.

And we all break Gods' law.

So, the perfect law that brings freedom meets imperfect humans
and brings bondage to death.

Oh what shall become of us?

[Black slide]

Thanks be to God that Jesus Christ by the law of grace
set us free from the law of sin and death.

Jesus died on the cross to pay our penalty – our curse.

We were murderers with our hands. Jesus died for us.

We were murderers in our hearts. Jesus died for us.

Moses – David – Paul ... what do these 3 greats of the Bible have in
common?

They were all murderers who were saved, forgiven and are in
heaven today.

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers,
and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall
have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which
is the second death.

We're all murderers, and that's bad news unless you're a forgiven
murderer...a pardoned murderer.

Are you forgiven?

Four little words: You shall not murder.

Jesus often spoke 4 other little words: Your sins are forgiven!

Make it right between you and God.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins
and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Turn from your anger as much as you would turn from murder.

Instead of harboring hate, let God fill you with his love.

Then, the turtle can live and you can have your party.