

LIFE AND DEATH MATTERS

Genesis 9:1-17; Matthew 5:21-32 / Psalm 51:1-19

I. God Demands Respect for Life

A. Life matters to God. “*Thou shalt not kill.*” (EXODUS 20:13)

B. Human life comes from God. “And the LORD **God formed man of the dust** of the ground, **and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life**; and man became a living soul.” (GENESIS 2:7)

C. Jesus made life personal. “Jesus saith unto him, ***I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.***” (JOHN 14:6)

D. Scripture makes the preservation of human life a moral duty, giving His own example of love for the church as the pattern to follow. “***So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies.*** He that loveth his wife loveth himself. **For *no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:***” (EPHESIANS 5:28-29)

E. Neglecting to preserve life is a sin just like taking life unjustly; God does not permit excuses. “***If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it?*** and he that keepeth thy soul, doth *not* he know *it?* and ***shall not he render to every man according to his works?***” (PROVERBS 24:11-12)

II. The Problem Is as Old as Humanity

A. Murder was a problem from the start; even then people were making excuses. “And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that ***Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.*** And the LORD said unto Cain, Where *is* Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: ***Am I my brother’s keeper?***” (GENESIS 4:8-9)

B. Murder cannot be excused; the assault is actually on God. “And surely ***your blood of your lives will I require***; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man’s brother will I require the life of man. ***Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.***” (GENESIS 9:5-6) “***He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death.***” (EXODUS 21:12)

C. Legislation does not change reality; it only shifts the burden. “Moreover ye ***shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death***: but ***he shall be surely put to death.*** And ye shall take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest. So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for ***blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that***

shed it.” (NUMBERS 35:31-33)

D. Society must take responsibility for murder. “*If one be found slain* in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it, lying in the field, **and it be not known who hath slain him:** Then thy elders and thy judges shall come forth, and they shall measure unto the cities which *are* round about him that is slain: And it shall be, **that the city which is next unto the slain man, even the elders of that city shall take an heifer,** which hath not been wrought with, *and* which hath not drawn in the yoke; And the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto a rough valley, which is neither eared nor sown, and shall strike off the heifer’s neck there in the valley: And the priests the sons of Levi shall come near; for them the LORD thy God hath chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in the name of the LORD; and by their word shall every controversy and every stroke be *tried:* And all the elders of that city, *that are* next unto the slain *man,* shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley: And they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen *it.* **Be merciful, O LORD, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel’s charge. And the blood shall be forgiven them. So shalt thou put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you,** when thou shalt do *that which* is right in the sight of the LORD.” (DEUTERONOMY 21:1-9)

III. Pursue Life

A. Change the conditions which lead to death; Christians are forbidden to enter into the sins of their oppressors. “**Recompense to no man evil for evil.** Provide things honest in the sight of all men.” (ROMANS 12:17) “Therefore **if thine enemy hunger, feed him;** if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. **Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.**” (ROMANS 12:20-21)

B. Conventional wisdom accomplishes little compared with the Providence of God; turn the passion of pain into confidence in God. “**Ye have heard that it was said** by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That **whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment:** and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.” (MATTHEW 5:21-22) “Dearly beloved, **avenge not yourselves,** but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, **Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.**” (ROMANS 12:19)

C. Christianity compels the love of life and the promotion of what makes it better. “And the second *is* like unto it, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.**” (MATTHEW 22:39) “Therefore all things **whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.**” (MATTHEW 7:12)

D. Jesus drew a great contrast in motivation; the Savior came to produce abundant life. “The **thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.**” (JOHN 10:10)