

The Fifth Commandment

You shall not murder.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and befriend him in every bodily need.



Dear People who have your life in Christ,

It was reported on August 22 by the *Press Harold* of the state of Maine that a truck overturned. Its contents were spewed on the road, 4500 lobsters. It was a total loss for a seafood company. There has been an initiative or proposition by some people who are animal rights activists to have the state spend money on a five foot grave stone mourning the loss of these creatures. This is a true story. It seems, at times, people are more concerned with the lives of the creatures on land and sea, than they are concerned with human life.

You and I, as Christians, should be especially concerned about human life. There are stories in our own communities about our children going to school under-fed and under-prepared. The abortion or murder of unborn infants goes on. There are stories in the media daily of abuse and of the senseless loss of life.

God is concerned. We will hear that today. God's concern for life, spurs us on to care about human life. We can't do that unless, **Christian Faith Sees God Given Life Is Precious!** This is what we are reminded of in God's word which surrounds the Fifth Commandment.

1. God gives and protects human life.

Who is God to tells us about our life? That answer he is the author of life, both physical and spiritual. Because he cares he provides the Fifth Commandment to protect life.

A. How do we know human life comes from God?

1. In the Bible which is God's word, God speaks about the creation of human life in chapters 1 & 2. God formed man from the dust of the ground. He formed woman from the man's rib. He blew into their nostrils the breath of

life and they became a living human being. We should be in awe. Almost everyone has played with *Play-Doh* clay as a kid. You may have made a little clay person with arms and legs. You can breathe on the figure all you want, it doesn't move. God breathed on Adam began to breath and move.

2. In chapter one God said, **"Let's make mankind in our image."** (26) God gave every human a soul. God's image is not his body, since he is a spirit. God shared with us his ability to be loving, gentle, patient and kind. Jesus says of our soul in the Gospel of Matthew, **"What good is it if a man gains the whole world and loses his soul."** (16:26) Our soul and spiritual life is our greatest treasure.

B. This gift of life is precious.

1. However, mankind chose death. God told the first couple in Genesis, chapter 2, that the day they disobeyed him they would die. They would be choosing death instead of life. They disobeyed and chose death. Israel Deuteronomy 30:19,20, **"This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live 20 and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life..."** Many Israelites chose sin and death. The history of the Old Testament is littered with the violence of brother against brother, etc.

The Fifth Commandment tells you and I are not to hurt, harm or hate our neighbor. We heard in the New Testament lesson from St. John that anyone who hates his brother is a murderer. How often have you and I borne a grudge. We are angry at someone because they hurt us or took something from us. We may not have lifted a hand against them, but we hated them. That hate and any words and actions that flowed from that is a sin that condemns under God's righteous anger and judgement.

2. God did not want to condemn us. But how would he rescue us from eternal death? He sent his Son, Jesus, to rescue us from death to life. In John 14 Jesus say, **"I am the way and the truth and the life."** The truth is that he died at the cross to pay for our hate. In John 14:19 Jesus promises, **"Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live."** Jesus proved this on Easter Sunday by rising from the dead. He offers life to you and me. In John 11 Jesus said, **"I am the resurrection and the life."** Jesus gives his disciples real and lasting life.

C. When it comes to our view of the world and life, you and I believe what the Bible says. God has given us physical life and in Jesus he has given us spiritual life. We can never look at things the way the world does. I am not just living for myself for the here and now. I am living my life giving thanks to God for his incredible gift. When things aren't going well, I don't look to end life or abuse my body with sugar, alcohol or anything else. Instead I look to Jesus as the answer to all of life's problems.

I also care about my neighbor and that starts with those closest to me. Are they getting to hear the Word? Are they growing in their life in Jesus? And what about my friends and neighbors? Have they heard about Jesus, the Lord of life? I will want to pray for such people and ask God to bring the Word of Life to them.

2. The Christian works to protect human life.

Some years ago a member told about a neighbor boy who would come over to their house. He didn't get much to eat at home, so they invited him to stay and eat with their family. When they went out to buy their son a pair of shoes, they did the same for the neighbor boy who needed shoes. Why did they do it? Christian love. The Christian, moved by God's love, works to improve and protect human life.

A. Loving others through the Fifth Commandment starts with our attitude.

1. St. Paul says in Ephesians 4, **“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.”** (31) The way we get rid of that bitterness, rage and anger is by listening to God. God's word moves us to repent of our sins. We don't want anymore to do with those angry emotions.

2. St. Paul also says, **“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”** (32) Our compassion and a forgiving attitude flows from the fact that God has been compassionate and forgiving toward us. Remember how in Genesis 50 Joseph forgave his brothers for selling him into slavery. Instead of revenge, he was kind and generous toward them.

B. After experiencing Christ's forgiving love, it will show in real actions.

1. In Luke 10 we hear of the Good Samaritan helping a man who was not like him. He was wounded and the Samaritan was able to fix his wounds and provide shelter by renting a room at an inn. The Samaritan showed real love that flowed from a Godly heart. (Luke 10)

Someone might say, *“I’m not a doctor. I haven’t had medical training.”* We have to do what we can. In many situations a cell phone will enable us to call for qualified help. Giving someone a ride to the doctor or the hospital maybe exactly what is needed. God is asking you to do what you are able to do.

I would also warn that sometimes it's not big actions such as helping someone in an emergency, but the little things we do day to day that have a big impact. Like spending time with a senior who is lonely. Spending time on the phone listening to someone who needs to talk. We may not consider them to be big, but God does. Such actions also uphold the sanctity of human life.

2. As long as I am mentioning the sanctity of life, I want to tell you that in Psalm 51 David lets us know that life begins at conception. Therefore, taking that baby out of the womb before its time is normally wrong, except when it is necessary for the safety of the mother or the child. Witnessing about our life-giving Savior includes witnessing that the unborn are precious to him.

C. There are many other life issues, we could discuss. What is the difference between sacrifice and suicide? Is it ever right to turn off a ventilator when someone seems to be dying? What about Capital punishment? What about taking a life in self-defense? We don't have time in a sermon to cover all these topics. Please ask me if you have a particular question. Please make time for Bible class where we address these and other issues. The Bible does help us to understand.

Conclusion: We believe that God has declared human life to be precious. So we adopt the attitude of St. Paul in Colossians 3:12,13, **“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone.**

Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” Amen.