

Bloodless Murder

We live in the age of social media. That has allowed us to be anonymous and allowed us to share our thoughts to the world seemingly without any repercussions. People feel free to voice their opinions on everything, and that has inevitably led to major polarisations on everything. “Discussions” devolve into name-calling, and many have tended to demonise the other side for disagreeing with them. Political discourse has turned into mud-slinging matches, and unfortunately the case seems to be the same for Christians in the arena of social media. This has spilled into the real world where each Christian views those who disagree with them with suspicion.

What does Jesus have to say about this? Our passage today deals with the 6th commandment – “You shall not murder.” Many of us can happily announce that we have not broken this commandment. However, Jesus looks deeper into the heart of the commandment. Let us take a look at Jesus’ teaching on this commandment and how it can apply to us today.

Launch

- 1) How much antagonism do you see in our world today, either through traditional media or social media?

BLOODLESS MURDER

Read Matthew 5:21-26

- 2) Who was Jesus talking to in this passage? (v21) (cf. Matt 5:1)
 - a. Where have they heard the statement given by Jesus? (cf. Ex 20:13, 21:12, Deut. 5:17)
 - b. What do you think the original intent was behind those commandments?
- 3) Instead of following how it was popularly interpreted in his days, how did Jesus read that commandment of God? (v22)
 - a. Instead of following the “letter” of the command, what was Jesus focusing on?
- 4) What does Jesus say that we should do before we offer gifts to God at the altar? (v23-24)
 - a. What does this show about our “service” to God today in church?



- b. What is more important to Jesus than our “acts” of worship?
- 5) What else does Jesus ask us to do? (v25)
- a. Why do you think he asks us to do that?
- 6) What relationship do you think Jesus has in focus in our Bible passage today?
- 7) Do you find it easy or hard to be angry with other people? Why is that?
- 8) How easy or hard is it for you to be reconciled with people with whom you have had conflict?
- a. Why do you think that is the case?
- 9) What can we do to help us in that area? (cf. Matt 6:9-13)

Conclusion

Almost every Jew in Jesus’ days would have known about the sixth commandment – You shall not murder. Many of them would happily admit that they have not broken that law. However, they are only reading the letter of the law, but not the “spirit” of the law. Jesus does not allow them off the hook. He goes back to the original intent of the commandment, that of personal animosity and hatred. It is less about the “act” of murder itself, but the intent and the attitude behind that. For many of us, we will readily admit that we will never commit or never be able to commit murder. However, if we are honest with ourselves, there are many times when we have a “murderous” attitude towards another – an attitude of resentment or hatred.

That is the original intent behind the sixth commandment – that we do not harbour these feelings towards another. In fact, it is so important that even before we come before God to perform our “acts” of worship, we need to be reconciled to one another. We are to be willing to settle matters with our adversary before it goes too far into the court, because once we are there in the courts, it might be too late to settle matters, and we will have to bear the full consequence of our attitude. Ultimately, our example is Jesus himself. Even though he was unjustly persecuted, he never harboured any resentful thoughts towards his persecutors. Instead, he prays for their forgiveness. May we learn from Jesus himself!