

Delighting in Love

Heidelberg Catechism #50

Exodus 20:13 | Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 105-107

“**A**LL you need is love.” The Beatles certainly thought they had solved all of the world’s problems with their feel-good song, “All You Need is Love.” And it sounds so biblical, doesn’t it? After all, don’t the Ten Commandments call us to love God and to love our neighbors? Like I said this morning with John 3:16, we have to define love.

But what does love have to do with the commandment, **you shall not murder**? Whenever God tells us to *do* something, he’s telling us what *not* to do; whenever he gives us an example one way, he implies its opposite. That’s why we pray, “we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done.”

So the prohibition **you shall not murder** is commanding love. For example, we see these polar opposites in 1 John 2 where John says, “Whoever says he is in the **light** and *hates* his brother is still in **darkness**. Whoever *loves* his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling” (vv. 9-10). And then in 1 John 3 he says, “this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should **love** one another.” And

then he gives the opposite example: “We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and **murdered** his brother” (vv. 11, 12).

What is love? If murder is the taking of life, love is giving life. Look at 1 John 3 again: “By this we know love, that he [Jesus] laid down his life for us.” The application for us is that “we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers” (v. 16) One concrete way is in verse 17: “if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him?”

We are to called to delight in love, brothers and sisters. We are to delight in loving our neighbors because God’s love has been demonstrated in the life and death of Jesus for us and by sending the Spirit into our hearts.

BY PUTTING OFF HATRED

The first way to delight in love is BY PUTTING OFF HATRED. **You shall not murder** means just that: you shall not murder! All of Scripture condemns this *fruit or action of murder*. The first murder was Cain’s murder of his brother Abel in Genesis 4 and it’s put before us as an example of the hatred of the heart after the Fall. Later in Genesis 9 God instituted capital punishment, “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be

shed, for God made man in his own image,” because murder had to be justly punished. It’s that serious! The Old Covenant abounds in laws about murder and its punishment and the New Covenant repeats this command. What’s clear is that murder is a serious sin in God’s sight. Whether it’s abortion in the womb or unjust wars, murder is murder.

Scripture also condemns *the root of murder*: hatred. Our Catechism, in fact, focuses on this. It’s not just the action God forbids but the attitude; it’s not just the outward fruit, but the hidden root. Q&A 105 says God’s will for me and you in this commandment is that “I am not to belittle, hate, insult, or kill my neighbor—not by my thoughts, my words, my look or gesture, and certainly not by actual deeds” and that “I am to put away all desire for revenge.” And then Q&A 106 says “by forbidding murder God teaches us that he hates the root of murder: envy, hatred, anger, vengefulness. In God’s sight all such are disguised forms of murder.”

Where do we see this taught in Scripture? Of course the first place we ought to think of is our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount. Let’s turn to Matthew 5: “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not **murder**; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that

everyone who is **angry** with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever **insults** his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire” (Matt. 5:21–22). The people of God had become so focused on external conformity to the Law that Jesus preached the Law to them, saying, “You think you have kept the sixth commandment? You’ve not! You are just as guilty because you have hatred in your heart.” If you’ve ever been angry with someone, made fun of someone to tear them down, or cursed at someone, you’ve murdered. What’s interesting is that our Lord did not give a new commandment. The Old Testament law itself made this clear but the Israelites had become so concerned with the external law that they forgot their own law. Look at Leviticus 19:17–18:

You shall not hate your brother *in your heart*, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance or *bear a grudge* against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

God speaks to you and me tonight to say delight in me more than yourself and your petty revenge BY PUTTING OFF HATRED.

BY PUTTING ON LOVE

We are also to delight in love BY PUTTING ON LOVE. We know that when Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment in the law was he said to

love God and love neighbor (Matt. 22:39). This is why Paul calls love “the fulfillment of the law” (Rom. 13:10). “All you need is love,” right? I want you to see that Paul’s words about love being the fulfillment of the law come at the end of an extended argument in Romans 12:9–13:10. And in it he says love is concrete. What does this love look like and how is tangibly expressed? Turn to Romans 12–13 for a few moments. He says, “Let love be genuine,” that is, not fake (12:9). He says, “Love one another with brotherly affection,” that is, like you would your family (12:10). How? One way is “outdo one another in showing honor” (12:10), meaning, honoring those in authority over you. Another way is in verse 13: “Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.” Another way concerns love outside the community: “Bless those who persecute you” (13:14). Love is concrete in different times of life: “Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep” (12:15). Love means to “live in harmony with one another” (12:16). Love is concrete in whom we associate with: “Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly” (12:16). Love is concrete in what we don’t do: “Repay no one evil for evil...never avenge yourselves” (12:17, 19). And then in chapter 13 we show love by honoring the civil authorities. Are you praying for this love to be stirred up in your heart? Are demonstrating this love?