

Exodus 20:13
The Sixth Commandment, Pt. 4
"You shall not murder."

We turn now from that which is forbidden in the sixth commandment to that which is required in the commandment.

The Priest and the Levite in Christ's parable of the good Samaritan might have said in defending their decision to pass by on the other side of the road. "Look, we didn't rob him or beat him, neither of us is guilty of doing anything harmful to this man. So why are we in the wrong?" The answer is of course, because by seeing a man in dire need of assistance and not stopping to do that which was in their power to help him, the Priest and the Levite were guilty of breaking the Seventh Commandment, for the positive duties implied in this commandment *are that we that we should do all the good we can to ourselves and others.*

You do this by preserving the lives and the souls of ourselves and others. Because of our fallen human nature, we will find these tasks very difficult to do, in fact I'm not exaggerating when I say that you will probably have more difficulty keeping the positive requirements of the commandment than the negative. Why is that? Well, because it is one thing to work on not hating your enemy and not cursing him – that may for many be a difficult thing to do, but it is even more difficult to obey the command to "love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you." (Matt. 5:44)

It is also all too easy to repeat the sin of the Priest and Levite without any effort at all. To see someone in need, or to know that there is a way that we might do good to ourselves and others and yet not do it, and yet to not react at all is almost second nature.

This is especially the case when we perceive that the only persons who will be aware of our sins of omission are ourselves and God. **Often it will not be necessary to endeavor to willfully ignore something like when you are the first one to discover that the Dog has thrown up in the living room and simply omit to notice (kids are very good at that one) parents are usually more sophisticated as when you and your spouse are both secretly playing "I don't smell that dirty diaper" or "It's 3:00 AM and I don't hear the baby crying, I wonder when she is going to get up and do something about that?"**

Oftentimes you will in fact say to yourself, boy so and so really needs my help, support, and encouragement I will do something for them, *tomorrow*, or the next day. You may even go so far as to compliment yourself for having an intention to help, but let me tell you, when it comes to helping yourself and others, it is *not* the thought that counts, it is the action. The old proverb does not say that it is the road to *heaven* that is paved with good intentions.

Just as we saw that in order to avoid breaking the prohibition of the sixth commandment it was necessary to avoid certain sinful attitudes of the heart: anger, hatred, envy and revenge in order to actually perform the positive requirements of the sixth commandment we will need to cultivate several positive attitudes of the heart.

- 1) **The first of these excellent qualities is meekness.** Please do not fall into the common error of assuming that meekness is a synonym of weakness, far from it meekness is true strength As AW

Pink points out "**So far from being weakness (as the world supposes), meekness is the strength of the man who can rule his own spirit under provocation, subduing his resentment of wrong, and refusing to retaliate.**" Meekness is the opposite of pride, impatience, irritability. This meek person so far from being arrogant and self-willed not only says in his heart to God "Not my will but yours be done" and is willing to submit but cares nothing for their own aggrandizement. Think about this, the two greatest characters in the bible, Moses and Christ, were also the meekest whereas the most terrible embodiment of all that is opposed to meekness is undoubtedly Satan. If you refuse to be meek, in a very real sense you are refusing to be Christian and you will not be numbered in the end amongst those who inherit the earth.

- 2) The second of these attitudes is *love*. You should be so far from hating your neighbor as to rejoice in his life and his prosperity. In fact you are commanded to *love your neighbor as yourself*. But how will you know whether you truly love others? That is an important question for it is in our nature to be self-deceived. So in answering that question, you would be well served to look at Paul's list in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

4 Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;
 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;
 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;
 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

- 3) **Thirdly there must be a spirit of Compassion or Kindness**, when you see someone in difficulty or trouble, if your heart is not moved towards them, then something is seriously wrong. You should be willing and indeed eager to put your shoulder under their own burdens and help them to carry it. Romans 12:15 "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep" If you do not have this ability to empathize with the sufferings of others, then it is highly probable that this is because your thoughts seldom if ever transcend your own self-concern.

You have all probably met the individual who when they hear of your suffering responds, "you think you have it bad, let me tell you about my pain" but brothers and sisters, the true Christian attitude is better embodied in the actions of Betsie Ten Boom, who though she herself was starving in Ravensbruck Concentration Camp did not hesitate to share what little she had with others. Though the world said, "you must look out for yourself" her concern was ever for both the life and soul of others.

- 4) **There must be a spirit of forbearance:** so that when others wrong us, there must be no inclination toward retribution. It ought to be overlooked, as not having been committed, while maintaining a quiet and calm disposition toward him in love. This will be most difficult of all, and yet it is an explicit biblical command:

12 Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*.

- 4) **Finally, there must be an attitude of friendliness:** You should be the very opposite of gruff, brusque, impolite, arrogant, and stand-offish towards others. Friendliness is the manifestation of a loving heart, revealing itself in one's countenance and words: "2 Tim. 2:24 "And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,"

Believe it or not it is my opinion that this is the most lacking of all the heart attitudes in the modern church. We have become an increasingly unfriendly and unneighborly society. We see that even in the way our neighborhoods and houses are structured. [Talk about the lack of side-walks and porches, how houses have become people containers] Civility is gradually disappearing from all of our discourse, and it is friendly people who are unusual rather than the unfriendly. As the culture goes, the church usually follows. **[Story of how Joy and I travelled to 13 PCA churches in the Philly area before we finally found one that was genuinely friendly and welcoming.]**

Now if these attitudes of the heart are genuinely held they will not fail to produce a longer list of good works than I can mention this morning, here are but a few:

I. We are to preserve the life of ourselves and others.

With ourselves: **We must use all means of diet, exercise, and lawful recreation, which, like oil, preserves the lamp of life from going out.**

With others:

- 1) We should comfort them in their sorrows,
- 2) **relieve them in their wants:** Works of charity

To communicate to the necessities of others is not left to our choice, but is an incumbent duty.

Peter uses the strongest possible language in this respect in 1 Peter 2:17 Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.

18 *Let them* do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share,
19 storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

3) and like the good Samaritan, pour wine and oil into their wounds.

4) Obviously when it is within our capacity we must defend the lives of others from those who would seek to take them and can in no other way be turned from that end, but we have discussed that earlier under the necessity for self defense.

II. We will also do all we can to preserve the souls of ourselves and others

It is implied that we should endeavor to preserve the souls of others: counsel them about their souls; set life and death before them; help them to heaven. In the law, if one met his neighbor's ox or ass going astray, he must bring him back again. [Exod. 23:4](#). Much more, if we see our neighbor's soul going astray, we should use all means to bring him back to God by repentance.

This commandment requires that we should also endeavor to preserve our own souls. [Though you lose all else, remember to save your soul].

26 "For **what** profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own **soul**? Or **what** will a man give in exchange for his **soul**?"

Christ kept the requirements of the sixth commandment perfectly, and it is good news for us that he did so, not only that we might by his keeping of the law obtain a more perfect righteousness. But also because he set the example for how we should be willing to serve others:

1 Peter 2:21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

22 "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth";

23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;

24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness -- by whose stripes you were healed.

25 For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

There was no requirement for Jesus to leave heaven to help us in our time of greatest need, other than that if he had not done so, we would have remained in our sins and surely all gone down to a righteous judgment.

21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.