

be Christians not negatively misrepresent Him through violence and hatred, but that we actually positively represent Him by showing His forgiveness and love to all those around us.

This law of God is so searching, when you think about it. Even if you and I would and could always live outwardly conforming to this law and inwardly transforming to this law, if we are not also positively living by this law, we are still guilty of so much transgression of the sixth commandment. We don't only break the law of God by sins of commission but also by sins of omission! You shall not kill or murder is positively a call to love our neighbour, indeed, even our enemies. To show how positively this commandment is obeyed, and what blessing that brings by God's grace can best be made clear with this illustration. "A rough soldier attended church for the first time in his life. When introduced to the pastor and asked what led him to church, he told the following story. 'There is a man in our barracks who is a Christian. I and others have teased and mocked him terribly. We gave him a hard time in every way imaginable. But, no more! Last week Wednesday we went on a night march in the rain. We got back late and I dropped onto my bed in exhaustion. When I finally got up to undress, I noticed that other soldier, [the Christian] praying on his knees at his bedside. Quietly I got the attention of the others, and taking off a wet boot, I threw it at him across the room. It hit him in the back and we all snickered, but he continued praying. I threw the second boot which hit him square in the head, and we all roared with laughter, but he continued [praying]. The next morning I found both of my boots at my bedside, perfectly polished! There must be something to religion to give a fellow such strength and nobleness as that!'"

Indeed, when you by God's grace live by the sixth commandment, not doing what it forbids and doing what it calls, you show the power of true religion and become such a force and influence of love.

Are you living as a Christian in accordance with the sixth commandment, outwardly conforming to this law, inwardly transforming to this law, and positively performing in line with this law? That is the challenge of our study of the sixth commandment. Does it lead you in the way of true repentance from sin, and true faith in Jesus, the only Saviour from sin, and will it guide you in the way of true and loving obedience before God and mankind? Will you truly live trusting in Jesus and following after Him, and so also by God's grace, be a humble hearty lover of all humanity from conception to the grave, in loving Christian obedience also to God's sixth commandment?! Amen.

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BANNER OF TRUTH RADIO BROADCAST

Radio Ministry of the FREE REFORMED CHURCHES of North America

Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee that it may be displayed because of the truth. (Psalm 60:4)



THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT [2]

Thou shalt not kill. This is God's sixth holy commandment and the second half of our message on this relevant and most loving law of God. The fact that we need this law from God by itself so brings out the depths of sin not only but the destructiveness of sin. But God is merciful, giving us His law and gospel, and by the law leading us to the gospel and through the gospel guiding us by His law. As I quoted in the last message, rightly did someone say, "The sixth commandment, 'You shall not kill or murder', is a profound word of grace because it is a call to be a great lover of all humanity from conception to the grave." This for sure is what a Christian comes to understand, and so we have as our theme now, "What living as a Christian by the sixth commandment means".

Living as a Christian in accordance with the sixth commandment means that then you live and seek to live in a way that is outwardly conforming to the law, inwardly transforming to the law, and positively performing by the law. Last time we spoke about outwardly conforming to the sixth commandment and what that all means, as the Heidelberg Catechism puts it so well, "that neither in thoughts, or words, nor gestures, much less in deeds, I dishonour, hate, wound, or kill my neighbour, by myself, or by another, but that I lay aside all desire of revenge; also that I hurt not myself, nor willingly expose myself to any danger." Does your life outwardly conform to the rule of this commandment as thus described?

Still speaking of our life being outwardly conformed to this law of God, beside all the matters mentioned already that we must stay clear of, there is also the matter of not being revengeful towards others, but laying aside all desire of revenge. Listen to what Paul says in Romans 12:19. "Dearly beloved, *avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath, for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord.*" We live in such a revengeful world. But if we are Christians, whoever may hurt us in any way, we should leave it to God to deal with such, and not fight back ever in a revengeful way. Can we not trust the Lord to make all things right, if not in this life then in the life to come? Does that mean we should just allow ourselves to be stepped on in life? "No" and "yes", would be the Bible's response. No, in the sense that we may stand up for our God-given rights and defend ourselves where that is legitimate, but that is different from

taking action to step on those who somehow may have stepped on us. The spirit, "Buddy, I'm going to make you pay for what you did to me; I'll get you back and have you go through some of your same treatment to me and worse, just you wait and see" should not once be found among us. Paul says in Romans 12:21, "*Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*" And surely if we know and experienced anything of the merciful love of God toward us in Christ Jesus over against our vile sins and trespasses before Him, how can we show then an unforgiving spirit towards others who, no matter what they may have done, can still never have mistreated us as badly as we have mistreated the Lord. Jesus says if we can't and won't be forgiving towards others, we can't and don't know of His forgiveness either. Just read Matthew 18:21-35.

Outwardly conforming to God's sixth commandment - is that what you are doing, really and increasingly? It is what the life of a Christian is about, agreeing with the rule, you shall not murder, not in thought, word, or deed. Can I come back yet to the matter of murdering perhaps by another? David was guilty of the murder of Uriah, though he did it by others. Do we not become guilty also of disobeying the sixth commandment and actually approving murder when allowing ourselves to watch violence on television and in videos, and participating in violent computer games? Also here we should, as confessing Christians, stay away from these things, or not? If there isn't really selective and guarded watching of TV, without question you are feeding yourself with all kinds of iniquity, especially also violation of the sixth and seventh commandment. No one who is honest would dare to deny that. Do you obey the sixth commandment with your television and computer and video machine, outwardly conforming to all this holy law of God?

It is true isn't it, what this murderous age needs first and foremost are Christians who truly love God and the rest of mankind, Christians who are a royal priesthood, and holy people reflecting in all areas of life with all people of this world, holy conformity to God's law, without inconsistency. Is that how you desire to live, so in honour and praise to our God and His wondrous healing life-restoring love in and through Jesus Christ?

Then, for sure, you will not only agree to the rule of outward conformity to the sixth commandment but you will acknowledge and admit the root of this commandment being a heart issue first and most of all. You accept that living by the sixth commandment as a Christian doesn't only mean outwardly conforming to it, but inwardly transforming to it. For it is true, you know then not just from God's Word but from your own experience too, in forbidding murder God will have us actually do away with and give up altogether all the causes thereof, as the Catechism puts it, such as envy, hatred, anger, and desire of revenge. God counts all these as murder for they feed a murderous activity in thought, word, and deed. A true Christian doesn't only want to keep from unlawful ungodly behaviour, but also all that

contributes to it. Is that true in your life too? Even so, will you not also be inwardly transformed in accordance with God's law? A true believer doesn't want to be guilty of inwardly transgressing the sixth commandment just as much as he doesn't want to be guilty of outwardly sinning against this holy law of God.

How then do we get rid of those causes of sin against this commandment? Is it not by repeatedly going to and thinking on the crucified and risen Saviour of sinners, Jesus Christ? See Jesus in His loving and self-sacrificing response to all who opposed Him and hurt Him and crucified Him, and will not we think twice about hitting back and being hateful and murderous towards others in our thoughts, word, and deeds? Think on His gracious gentleness towards us in and through Christ Jesus, and will that not melt your and my heart in Christ-like love in turn? It is in looking to Christ and feeding on Him and His Word, so drawing from Him time and again, and asking also for His Spirit's life-renewing and sanctifying work in us, that we become more and more inwardly transformed in accordance to the law of God and the likeness of Christ.

The true believer knows that obedience to the sixth commandment is not just a matter of outward life but the inward life too. Are you careful to guard your heart from a murderous attitude towards anyone at all? How many there are in this world who smugly think they have never murdered anyone when before God they are guilty of murder of many people? Is your heart filled only with love and a loving Christ-like attitude towards all, or do you allow some corner to be filled with explosive anger and bitter hatred and stored up revenge that you will not give up? The Heidelberg Catechism was written during a time of fierce and unjust persecution against Christians, but the writers knew as confessing believers, their calling was outwardly and inwardly to live by God's law of love in and through Christ Jesus. Do we know that too and show that as well in our day, even towards those who misjudge us and mistreat us and misrepresent us?

Oh, then it will show also in another clear way, namely, in positively performing or living out the law of love as expressed in the sixth commandment. True obedience to all God's commandments doesn't only mean not doing what it forbids but actually doing what it positively requires. Then you know and show in your life that living in accordance with the sixth commandment as God intends means not just not killing anyone, but really loving everyone instead. Even so, hear the Bible-based piercing question and answer 107 of the Heidelberg Catechism, "But is it not enough that we do not kill any man in the manner mentioned above? No, for when God forbids envy, hatred, and anger, He commands us to love our neighbour as ourselves, to show patience, peace, meekness, mercy, and all kindness towards him, and prevent his hurt as much as in us lies; and that we do good even to our enemies." What God is after is not just that we who confess to