

Peace in an Age of Rage

10 Ways to a Better Life series

by Chris Famisaran

How we all doing? I'm not gonna lie. I'm feeling a little bit of trepidation as I prepare to share today what I'm gonna talk about. I don't think I've ever researched a sermon more in my life in this one.

Let's begin with prayer.

Lord, thank you for the opportunity to gather together as a church family, or as we talk about a very serious thought. Command issue, heart issue. Leading. Guide us in Jesus name. Amen.

So, as you know, we've been going through the ten Commandments. We talked about how we should have no other gods. God is God. We shouldn't dishonor God's name. We should find rest. And last week we talked about honoring our parents, our elders.

Today we're going to talk about why we should not murder other people. And it sounds kind of flippant, right? I mean, of all the commandments, I'm pretty sure, like, that's the one that I don't have to worry about. Okay, maybe here. I think there's a general consensus, I hope, that we don't have to worry about murder. Or do we?

Let's open our Bibles to Exodus, chapter 20, Exodus 20. I want to look at verse 13. I think you can also find the same commandment in Deuteronomy. I think it's verse 17 of chapter 5, but Exodus 20, verse 13.

Okay, where did my notes go? Oh, good grief. My notes disappeared.

Okay, Exodus 20, verse 13. Now I'm reading from the NIV, and it says, you shall not murder. Pretty simple, right? You look at other verses or other translations. The King James Version actually translated as thou shalt not kill. But the NIV, the new King James, ESV, NASB, NRSV, and the new English

translation all say, you shall not murder. The NIT, or the New Living Translation says, you must not murder. The Christian Standard Bible says, do not murder. And I love The Message, no murder, you shall not murder. Why does God have to say this? Remember, all of these commands are leading to are after what? God has called them together in chapter 19 and said, hey, here is now. Here's a covenant I want to make with you. And this is how I want you to live and to represent me as you go forth. So don't be killing anybody.

Now, you look through Scripture and there are examples, unfortunately, of people taking life. The first example we have is who? Cain and Abel. How were they related? They were brothers. Cain didn't like the response that Abel got from God. And eventually he kills him. I think of Jacob and Esau, How Jacob basically stole the blessing from Esau or the inheritance or the blessing. Yeah. And he was so angry he wanted to go after him. I think of Absalom when his sister was assaulted and he wanted to kill his own brother. I think of Herod when he didn't get the response that he thought he should get and he was worried about his kingdom. He decided to go on a killing spree, unfortunately. Saul tried to kill David multiple times. Jezebel tried to kill Elijah. Haman in the story of Esther, tries to wipe out a whole people group. Simeon and Levi, when their sister is assaulted, they go into the village and kill all the men. And even Jesus disciples, the sons of thunder, James and John, when there was a village or a town that rejected them, what did they say? Let's go scorched earth. All of this starts where? Starts in the heart and the mind.

Now when we look at this as well. Okay, I wanna be very clear now. The King James says, thou shalt not kill. But it's the word that we that is used for murder is *rātsaḥ*. Let's all say that. One, two, three, *rātsaḥ*, okay? It refers to the intentional or the premeditated murder or taking of another person's life rather than just. It's not a general word, it's a specific word. Okay. You have the Hebrew word *hārag*, which means to kill or *hēmîṭ*, which is a judicial execution or *nākhāh* to strike or smite. But these words are not used. The specific word is *rātsaḥ*. And when you look at this, this makes it kind of uncomfortable because here we're talking about these questions that we're going through. Murder is....

We're confronted with the idea that do not murder goes beyond physical violence. It forces us to examine what our hearts, our minds and the words

that we choose. Huge. Which has the power to wound and destroy. That makes sense. We tracking? Okay. **We're confronted with the idea that do not murder means goes beyond physical violence. It forces us to examine our hearts, our minds and our words. Which has the power to wound and destroy.**

In fact, scripture also points out that **the sixth commandment reveals that God is the author of life.** Life is sacred. We're going to read in a second. **Life is sacred and we're all valuable in God's eyes.** God created. God is the author and can choose to do what God. If God can choose, should someone live or die at the very core, message or not message. But idea that God is God, we don't get to make necessarily that choice. Okay, So I want to make this Difference, though, that this is about essentially premeditated murder. This is so happy, isn't it?

Now, I want to go to Psalm 139, okay? Psalm 139. And I want to share a passage that shows why we are so valuable. Okay? Psalm 139. Psalm 139. And I want to go to verse 13, okay? Psalm 139, verse 13. Are we all there? Okay. *For you, what? created my inmost being. The psalmist writes, you, God created my inmost being. You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am what? fearfully and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful. I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in that secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.*

We are all so special and made in the image of God. In fact, even when you go to the creation account, God said, I'm going to create humans in our image, my image. And if we're all created beings from God, we're all brothers and sisters. Amen. And when you choose to get a little upset, how should you respond to your fellow brother and sister in Christ?

I'm going to make this very visceral, okay? I apologize if I offend you or if I make you uncomfortable, but I think that I want to make this point very clear, because this commandment, if anything, is probably so timely for our.... what we're experiencing right now. So I'd like to invite Alex to come on up and. Alex, can you please grab that chair? Go ahead and have a seat right here. I'm going to pull this back. Okay? Go ahead and have a seat. Actually, you know what?

Come on back a little bit. Go ahead. Now, in my hand, I have a knife. It is a retractable knife, okay? It's not real. All right, so in the idea of murder, what has to happen, okay, If I just come up and I try to stab him? All right, what has to happen, though? Before that, somebody has to say, you know what? I think I will kill him. You take a step back. But even before that, you have to have that idea of someone needs to kill them, so let me be me. But even before that, they don't deserve to exist, therefore, somebody needs to kill them. I'm gonna kill them before even that, though. Hmm. You know what? My world would be better if they're not in it. So, somebody's gotta kill him. Let it be me. Before all of that, you have what? You have contempt.

You all know what contempt is. Meaning we devalue, we dehumanize, or we choose to make somebody of less value or no value at all. Are we getting uncomfortable? Have you ever thought of somebody that they're not worth living or it would be better that they're not around? And before even all of that, where does it begin? With anger? Contempt? They're not worth it. It would be better if they're not around. They're worthless. They don't deserve to exist. Somebody's got to do it. Let it be me.

You know, most murders, only 19% are done by strangers. Let that sink in. Only 19% of murders are done by strangers. So what does that mean? 81% of conflicts that end in a murder are by somebody, either a family member or somebody that you know. Meaning we're at... We fight amongst each other. Let's give Alex a hand. Thank you.

My friend Tim Kress said this a couple of months ago. He said contempt is the currency of our culture. **Contempt is the currency of our culture.** When you look around, is there a lot of contempt? How many of you, let's be honest, don't say it out loud. Please don't say it out loud. But how many of you thought that person is better off if they were dead? Because maybe the world would be better off? I'm not pointing at anybody in particular, just in general. Have you thought perhaps this person is worthless? This person is a pain. Contempt. Contempt, meaning it's expressed as well, through Mariann Edgar Budde. Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde says **contempt is expressed through disdain, dismissal, or even superiority. And it damages trust, creates emotional distance. It erodes relationships and spiritual values.**

When you look at the world right now, are we united or are we fractured? Do we lovingly approach each other or do we treat people with respect or disrespect? Do we make fun of people? Do we try to aim for the gotcha moments? Or do we try to put people down? And if we look at it, it's a heart issue. You don't need to physically murder somebody to cause great harm.

There's a story told of a man who. He never killed anybody. That mattered to him. He was a good man. He was a law abiding citizen. He went to church. He was careful with his words. And when he hears this commandment, you shall not murder, he felt pretty good in his heart. I'm okay. That line at least is. That's something that he could follow through. There was a man, a boss at his work, that made his blood temperature boil. It wasn't a big offense, but it was the slow accumulation of a thousand paper cuts that eventually caused him to want to snap. The way the man talked over people, the way he took credit when he did not deserve that credit. It was the team or the smirk or the roll of the eye would internally set this man off. And every time it happened, his chest started to compress and get a little tighter. He never said anything. He never lashed out. He never made a scene. He just carried it inside internally. No weapon, no crime scene, just a stone in his pocket. Not a literal stone, but a stone in his pocket that he kept, that kept getting heavier and heavier and started to weigh his pocket down. And he went to church. He heard the minister speak words that he had never really heard or he'd never really paid attention to until this time. We read him earlier, Matthew 5:21 *You have heard, it was said of those of old, you shall not murder, but I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, raca is answerable to the court. Anyone who says, you fool, will be in danger of fire, of hell.* It was as if Jesus reached into his pockets. Jesus didn't deny the commandment, he completed it. He moved it from the hands to the heart and from the act of murder to anger that practices it in advance.

Jesus goes deeper. It's not just an act, it's where does it start? Where does it come from? Jesus cares about our hearts and our minds. We go to verse 23 and 24. *If you're offering your gift at the altar and there, remember that your brother has something against you. Leave your gift there first, be reconciled.* So before you go to worship, before you were to go to the sacrifice, before you were even trying to pretend everything is fine, everything is okay, put the stone

down, put the anger, put the grudges, put the beef down. And in this realization, in that moment, the man understood he had been following Exodus 20, verse 13 from a surface level, but internally, in his heart, in his chest, in his veins, in his anger, every day, he had been committing murder.

Jesus says, it's not about the act of ending the life, it's about treating as if their life matters. And anger, when it's nursed, it's justified. And when it's even, dare I say, protected, does that.

Here we find in the Sermon on the Mount this idea, Exodus 20 verse 13 keeps us from shedding blood. Jesus keeps us from becoming the kind of people who want to. You understand the difference? Jesus doesn't wait until a stone is thrown. Jesus preemptively goes ahead. He stops it while it's in our pockets. I love this because Jesus refers to Exodus 20, verse 13.

Jesus uses a particular word called *raca*, and essentially what it means is to call somebody a fool or trying to demean somebody, or call them basically a scoundrel, or that they're ignorant, or, dare I say, parents, forgive me, stupid. And Jesus takes something so simple and makes layers out of it. And we focus not on the exterior, but what is happening internally. He's saying, I'm not worried about your external actions. I'm not worried about what you do physically. I'm worried about what is internally happening in your heart and in your mind. What would cause you to want to cause ill will towards somebody else? Let's work on that first. In your mind, what are you thinking? Is there somebody in your life right now that you just wish they did not exist because it would be easier? Or maybe you harbor resentment or grudges because of past offenses because they made your life miserable. And I'm not trying to excuse that, but you have the power to hold the rock. Or as I've explained before, you have the power to drink the poison and allow that anger to slowly but surely eat you up and slowly kill you every little bit, day by day. Anger is a powerful thing,

You know, how does this express itself sometimes even too, with your family members around you? How is this expressed? If you're angry with somebody, how do you talk to them? Because talking and communicating, as we've talked before, it's not just about what you say, but how you say it, how you communicate it with your body language, your tone of voice. I could be

smiling, but I could also be internally angry, right? How does that convey? Or maybe it's not even saying anything. You give them the silent treatment as if they do not exist. They're not worthy of being talked to. How do you treat your friend? How do you treat your spouse, your children, your parents, your loved ones? What do they take away from that?

So what, as Bill likes to say, okay, do we want to lead with contempt? Do we want to disdain, dismiss, or be superior to others? Do we want to damage trust? Do we want to create emotional distance? Do we want to erode our relationships? No, we want to bring them together. How can we have unity if we're being contempt with other people?

So when we lead the promises of.... **when we lead with empathy and compassion, it will repair the relationships, it will change our hearts and bring real peace.** You know, and I wrote that earlier this week and as I was reviewing it this morning and last night, man, that sounds so Pollyanna ish. It's so easy, right? Let's be real. But it's also true.

How can we lead going forward? You know, we've been talking about this idea as well for SHINE, and I think the first two, serving and helping, gets a lot of notice because it's really seen, you can see, by other people. It really makes an impact. But I feel that the last three, when you inspire, nurture and engage, especially using words that can have a great impact, just how you can encourage or affirm somebody, maybe they're struggling, but if you say, hey, I am praying for you and I believe in you. When somebody says that they believe in you, how does that make you feel? Oh, you feel 10 times better. You feel like you want to move forward. So continue to SHINE. By the way, you have one more week. If anybody wants to share a story of how you had an opportunity to shine in someplace or somebody shined for you, how they served, helped, inspired, nurture, engaged with you, we want to hear that. We want to give an opportunity for people to share next week.

So as we start to land the plane, okay, it's been very sobering. I want you to reflect. **Is there someone you personally know that causes you to become angry? And if so, why?** Why do they make you angry?

The hard part, now that I'm asking you to, to walk the path or, and I want to challenge you, is this. **I want you to choose someone this week that you are angry with, and I want you to listen with empathy and compassion.** Okay? I'm not saying you have to agree, but I want you to listen with empathy and compassion. Why? Because I want you to understand where they are coming from, whether they're right or wrong. Because what that other person needs to know is that they're being heard. How much better would our will be if somebody. If we could just be heard? And then where possible, because I know sometimes it's not always either safe or the other person's not ready yet, but **where possible, start the process of reconciliation.** If that even means to say, I can't talk to that person, but I'm going to choose to move forward and not harbor that anger towards someone else.

Have you ever had a conversation with somebody perhaps that you were angry at and you decide to say, hey, I want to I want to try to patch things up. And they have no idea that you've been harboring this anger. Or they did something and they had no idea that it offended or made you angry. It almost feels like it's worse because they had no idea. And then you've been carrying this anger, this rage and this frustration for maybe years. And what you should have just done was at the very beginning, just say, hey, here's where I'm at. Let's talk about this. Sometimes being a follower of Jesus also means we have to get uncomfortable and we have to face our fears and have a conversation where safely possible. But my friends, as we move forward in your daily lives, when you start to feel upset and angry, whether you're on the freeway or you're watching TV or your phone and you're hearing something, take time to lead with compassion. Try to truly understand. I'm not saying you have to agree with them, but try to understand. And when we do that, when we find understanding, we can find community. We can, dare I say, try to find connection. Otherwise, if we're just trying to send zingers and we're trying to rearm what we're going to say before they're even done speaking, all we get is noise and we don't get resolution. So may God bless you. Reflect on this, and I'm gonna be praying for you as you reach out to somebody and hopefully turn your relationship around. Lead with peace. Drop the stones and don't lead and live with anger.

Father in heaven, Lord, today we've talked about a very challenging, challenging subject that affects us all. Sometimes I feel like, even daily, help

us, Lord, to drop the stones, to not lead with anger, to be affirming, to lead with love. Help us to be the difference makers that say, no, we're not going to live like this and make a difference for you. In Jesus name, amen.

Grace and peace.