

“These Things Doth the Lord Hate: Hands that Shed Innocent Blood”

Sunday, September 20, 2009

By Pastor Hubert Ulysse

This is the third sermon in an ongoing series based on the scripture in Proverbs 6:16-19. Pastor Ulysse started the sermon by reminding us that as people who claim to be “Christ Like,” we need to be aware of the things that the Lord hates. We should hate them too because that is part of following God. In the ten commandments, we find out that we should not kill right? This is a principle that God brings back through this passage of scripture in Proverbs.

Proverbs 6:16-19

16. These six [things] doth the LORD hate: yea, seven [are] an abomination unto him:
17. A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,
18. An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,
19. A false witness [that] speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

This is a deeper look at hands that shed innocent blood. The definition of shedding innocent blood in reference to this scripture is to murder someone who has no blame. This is not a new concept. We see that this happened all throughout the Bible. To see a little more clearly what it means to shed innocent blood take a look at these scriptures:

John 12:1, 9-11

1. Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.
9. Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.
10. But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death;

The chief priests were conspiring to kill Lazarus, and he had done absolutely nothing wrong. He was not standing in the streets telling people to convert, but Lazarus was a living testimony of what God was doing in the region of Bethany. His life (which was given back to him after Jesus raised him from the dead) was a magnet to Christ, and that made him a target.

Genesis 4:1-8

1. And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.
2. And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.
3. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.
4. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:
5. But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

6. And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?
7. If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee [shall be] his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.
8. And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

Cain killed his brother Abel, and he hadn't done anything wrong. In fact, he did exactly what he needed to do in God's eyes by giving the first and best of what he had as a sacrifice. Cain's jealousy pushed him to the point where he killed his own brother.

We see in scripture where David had Uriah sent to the front lines of battle to be sure that he was killed. This direction from the king was murder. David's fear of being caught in a lie was great enough that he found a way to get out of it and it didn't even consider the loss of life as a consequence. Uriah was not involved in any of the circumstances that lead to his death. He was out on the battlefield fighting just like he was supposed to be as an innocent man.

II Samuel 11:5-15

5. And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I [am] with child.
6. And David sent to Joab, [saying], Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David.
7. And when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded [of him] how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered.
8. And David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet. And Uriah departed out of the king's house, and there followed him a mess [of meat] from the king.
9. But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house.
10. And when they had told David, saying, Uriah went not down unto his house, David said unto Uriah, Camest thou not from [thy] journey? why [then] didst thou not go down unto thine house?
11. And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? [as] thou livest, and [as] thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing.
12. And David said to Uriah, Tarry here to day also, and to morrow I will let thee depart. So Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day, and the morrow.
13. And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house.
14. And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent [it] by the hand of Uriah.
15. And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die.

The greatest example we see in scripture of the loss of innocent life is Jesus. When he was killed, even the man who sentenced him to death knew that there was nothing Jesus had done wrong to deserve to die. (Matthew 27:23-24) But that is what the people wanted.

Matthew 27:23-24

23. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

24. When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but [that] rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed [his] hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye [to it].

Pastor Ulysse told us this story:

There was a little girl who was three years old. She had a pet turtle whom she loved very much. One day, she woke up and went to say good morning to her beloved turtle, and found that he would not come out of his shell. She took the turtle to her mother. After several attempts, she couldn't coax the turtle out of his shell either. She feared the worst. She put the turtle in a box in the corner of the kitchen, then sat down next to her daughter and had to explain that her turtle had died.

The little girl started to cry and cry. She sobbed until she couldn't catch her breath, and sat in the corner all day. She couldn't believe that her turtle was gone and would never be coming back.

Finally, to the mother's great relief, the father came home from work. She met him in the doorway and told him about the day's events. He quickly went to find his daughter and comfort her. He hugged her, and she started to cry again. There was no end in sight. Finally, he explained that they would have a funeral for the turtle. The little girl, being only three, did not understand this concept. The father explained that it would be like a going away party. Again, the little girl did not understand. Then, the light bulb came on for the father. He told his daughter that it would be just like a birthday party. There would be cake, ice cream, all of her friends would come over and say nice things about her turtle, and they would say goodbye to her wonderful pet.

The little girl's eyes dried for the first time all day. She actually started to smile! This was working! Meanwhile, the mother was in the kitchen and heard something moving in the box. It turns out the turtle was still alive and was just incredibly stubborn that day. She came over to her daughter with the turtle who was still very much alive.

The little girl started to smile but then realized that with the turtle still alive, the party would have to be cancelled.

"Mommy," she said "let's kill him."

WOW what a story! Today in our Christian walk, sometimes we seem to be ready to kill anything that gets in the way of our fun. Even if that is God and his word and plan for our life.

Abortion is something that is prevalent in our world today that exactly fits the description of the scripture that talks about "the hand that sheds innocent blood". Babies are innocent and have done nothing that is worthy of death, but so many people feel that they have the right to kill a child because of the inconvenience they might cause.

Since abortion was legalized, there have been over 46 million abortions. Of those, this is the breakdown of the reported reasons for those abortions.

1%- rape / incest

3% - health of the mother

3% - health of the unborn child

93% - inconvenience

Does that remind anyone of a little girl who wanted to kill a turtle so she could have a party? Maybe just a little.

Pastor Ulysse asked each of us to consider this question: Am I a murderer? There are only two answers to that question, and there are two very different attitudes that can be taken about our approach to how we answer that question (just like the Pharisee and Publican in the book of Luke)

Luke 18:9-14

9. And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:
10. Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.
11. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men [are], extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.
12. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.
13. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as [his] eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.
14. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified [rather] than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

We need to be careful that we don't approach this subject with any amount of pride. All of us have the tendency to get angry, and it's only God's grace that keeps us in line and allows us to stay in his will.

There was once a man who told Pastor Ulysse, "There will be two surprises in Heaven. There will be the people who were sure they would be the first in the door of Heaven who don't make it in, and there will be those who know that they tried their hardest to do God's will but are painfully aware of the fact that they are sinners who fall short and still make it into Heaven." This is something Pastor Ulysse never forgot. That element of humility and being aware of his unrighteousness is an attitude we all need to bring to the table when doing spiritual inventory in our lives.

Now that we all have had a chance to answer the question of whether or not we are murderers, let's check in with the scriptures to see how Jesus would answer the question of whether or not we are murders. As Christians living in the New Testament Church, we are no longer living through the physical law. We are living under a spiritual law.

For a simple real-world example of this, let's look at speed limits. Most people who drive look for signs that tell them how fast (or really how slowly) they should go. For many of us, this means we have a limit that we will push as far as we can, but since there are consequences like tickets or jail time for breaking those laws, we obey. It's not uncommon to see a pack of cars in traffic going nine miles per hour over the speed limit. Why? Because most drivers figure that they will be pulled over if they are going ten miles per hour over the limit, but nine seems to be alright. Human beings are conditioned

to push the limits as far as we can. But, as Christians living under a spiritual law, we should not need a physical sign to do the right thing. We should be able to look around us, and out of concern for the safety and respect for the people around us, we should go an appropriate speed. If that principle applies to even our driving habits, let's think about what this means for the emotions we carry around our daily lives about God's people.

As Christians we are held to a higher standard. There is a high level of responsibility for us, and murder starts with the intention of the heart. According to Jesus, anyone who has harbored anger in their heart toward another person is guilty of murder.

Matthew 15:16-20

16. And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding?
17. Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?
18. But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.
19. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:
20. These are [the things] which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

Pastor Ulysse taught on verse 16-20 in this chapter to highlight the idea that we are responsible for our spiritual man even if our thoughts never manifest themselves physically they effect us.

What if we found ourselves in a place that no one would ever see what we did or know what we were contemplating? How would that change our actions? If murder comes from the intention of the heart, we might have the thought that we would never miss someone if they were gone, but lack the opportunity to act on that impulse. That impulse is what the Lord hates. That is what we need to guard against as far as the "shedding of innocent blood" because now we are under the spiritual law.

There were some kids in the schoolyard playing a very dangerous game one day. They were pretending to be drug dealers. Somehow they had come in contact with this behavior either through a TV show or having older siblings that were involved in actual drug deals. The children dried grass clippings and pretended it was marijuana, put sugar in small bags and pretended it was cocaine, and then pretended to sell it to one another. These children were arrested. Were they selling real drugs? No. Were they putting anyone in danger? No. But they were arrested because the mindset that lead them to think that this was a game needed to be taken care of right away. They needed to understand that drug dealing is something that is serious and cannot be made into a game or something to joke about.

We have the thought and intent and ability to murder if we harbor anger. We need to deal with that right now. We cannot allow that to grow and fester in our lives because just having the attitude is not ok. It needs to be stopped and it need to be stopped NOW.

Jesus makes this point very clear in Matthew. He first addresses that he has come to fulfill the law and bring a new spiritual law to follow. Then, he addresses the idea of allowing anger to creep into our lives and the consequences we will face at judgment if we do.

Matthew 5:17-22

17. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

18. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

19. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach [them], the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed [the righteousness] of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

21. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

22. But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

Pastor Ulysse invited us to take a deeper look at verse 20 in the passage above. The Pharisees were pretty serious about their righteousness. These were men that fasted twice a week, went to the temple on a daily basis, knew the law inside and out, and the Bible teaches us that our righteousness has to exceed theirs. That's a pretty tall order, but remember this. We know that Jesus is the son of God manifest in the flesh and that he came to save us and fulfill the law. The Pharisees did not have that understanding. They fought Jesus. Their actions were based in religious traditions that had nothing to do with their spiritual daily lives. Today, as Christ followers, we are in a very different position. We have the knowledge that Jesus is our source of life, joy, and purpose. Following him is not a tradition. It is a way of life, and we need to be as dedicated to following Jesus as the Pharisees were to their traditions.

We cannot allow ourselves to be angry with our brothers and sisters for no reason. There will be times when we find that we are angry, and with just cause. But how we react at that moment is critical. The Bible teaches us to be angry and sin not. We cannot become overcome with emotion and let it push us to the point of sinning. We also have to know that the Bible teaches us to make things right with our brothers and sisters before the sun sets every day. We can't sit around and stew in our anger. That is the beginning of emotionally killing an innocent man, and that is what the Lord hates.

Anger that goes uncontrolled will kill us.

Take a quick look at verse 24 in the passage in Matthew 5.

Matthew 5:24

24. Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

We shouldn't even be coming to the altar without resolving issues between our brothers and sisters! This is definitely clear direction to take special care of this area of our spiritual lives because it is important to God.

Every day of our lives, we work on our actions to make them line up with the word of God. As Christians we strive to read the Bible and obey it. But we cannot stop there. We need to worry about our attitude and our heart. It's not enough to just be right in our actions and the things that others see. To really please God, we need to be sure that we don't allow our hearts to drift from Him either. That's how we can be sure that we are not falling into the trap of holding on to anger or being the hand that sheds innocent blood.