

The Fifth Commandment*Charleston Shooting*

- 2 ½ weeks ago, Wed eve, 6/17, 21-year-old Dylann Roof entered Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Charleston, SC. Spent hour in Bible study; engaged in discussion of Scriptures. But mission that evening, not to receive word of life but take life, incite “race war.” Brandished 45 cal handgun, opened fire, killing 9, incl church’s pastor, wounding tenth, while fuming hate-laced racial epithets.
- Horrifying. To me: murder, senseless taking of life; terror felt before death, helpless, confused, had welcomed him; place of worship, sacred place, Christian church, believers in Jesus. Horrifying. Makes me think about victims’ families (who offered forgiveness); about gunman’s relationship with God; about our own congregation; about how we can show love, support for other Christians, not disregarding theological differences, but offering heartfelt prayers and showing genuine Christian love for those believers in Charleston. WELS Pres. Mark Schroeder offered sympathies, comfort from Scripture on behalf of our church body. Certainly citizens from all over US have shown love and support for this congregation in last few weeks since this heinous murder.

Hatred is the Moral Equivalent to Murder

- Today, **5th Com.** Could end here: as horrified as you and I are, so also God. Why 5th Com. Commands that we never do this, kill others, shoot up churches. If ended there, two reactions. “Of course! All agree. No brainer.” And self-righteous (“Never killed, shot people; kept com; never murdered anyone!”). May be true; maybe most have never taken another human life.
- But when study 5th com, have to understand that what God is protecting is a love for human life. (He loves human life; created it; commands we have same love, as well.) And when we have that same love for human life as God, that keeps us from not only harming others with hands, but also hating others with hearts. 5th Com is broader than just murder; it covers hurting people with hands and hating people with hearts. Page 6, additional Scriptures: **1 Jn 3:15. 1 Jn 4:7,20.**
- Acc to these, you can break 5th Com long before commit egregious act of murder (like Dylann Roof in Charleston). Love at heart of com; love opposite of hatred; here, hatred moral equivalent to murder. So, when our hearts are filled with anger, hatred, we break the break 5th Com. **1 Jn 3:15a**, 5th Com breaker.
- Analogy about springs of water surfacing (trickle, Old Faithful in Yellowstone). Hatred = underground spring of water. Surface small: grudges, refusal to forgive, unwilling to reconcile, my vengeance is to hold this against them (think of victims’ families!). Refusal to love and show compassion (think of parable of Good Samaritan). More: Physical fighting (adults, kids and bullying). Surfaces big: murder, Charleston, Cain/Able. Source is hatred. And abortion (FL signs) – source is lack of love for human life.
- 5th Com all about hatred springing up to surface. Way yours springs may be different from mine; one this, one that. All stems from same underground well of hatred in our hearts. Scary truth to admit. In our sinful nature, we have same heart as Cain, Dylann Roof. They let hatred spring up big; we may restrain ours. But that same hatred comes from the same sinful nature. And **1 Jn 3:15a**. So just as they were hateful murderers, also we.

Jesus Laid Down His Life for Us

- Which is why it’s so amazing that God sent Jesus to save hateful murderers like us. Very next verse: **1 Jn 3:16a**. 5th Com all about love for human life. Jesus Christ is so filled with perfect love, verse says, want to know what love is, here, look at Christ. Love for us! **3:16a**. His human life, laid it down! Knew we, all people filled with underground springs of hatred. He was not; sinless, pure, holy. No underground springs of hatred in his heart, only springs of love. Love bubbled up to surface throughout life in many small ways: healed ten lepers, healed blind man, raised Lazarus.
- Time when love burst to surface taller than geyser Old Faithful is when he laid down his life. All took place at cross; you know what happened there: Jesus let himself be murdered, to save murderers. Jesus

gave his life, to save our lives. Jesus had real whip on back; real nails through hands, feet; real punches to face; really murdered in really painful way. Really laid down human life, and by doing so really took away all the times we hurt people with hands and hate people with hearts. Those sins washed away in blood of Christ, forgiven, gone, forever, and God no longer sees murderers when he looks at us. He sees pure and holy people, as holy as Jesus, because when Christ laid down his life on cross (remember springs?), he dried up our underground springs of hatred and filled the empty cavities with his love. And so now as we live a Christian life, that love bubbles up and burst up to surface in acts of Christian love. What Christian lifecycle is all about; back of bulletin. That's how 5th Com fits into lifecycle of Christian.

God's Gift of Safety

- 5th Com is all about love for human life (God loves; we, too). On this Independence Day weekend (4th on Sat), as we celebrate freedoms we enjoy as Americans and all gifts God has given to these United States, today we remember especially our safety. Yes, murders in America, in recent weeks we've been painfully reminded of that. But despite Charleston, we still live in relatively safe place, compared to other parts of world in other times of history. That's gift from God that we must never take for granted!
- Way he often gives us that gift of safety is through the many selfless people have been willing to sacrifice their human life to protect our human life: soldiers in armed forces, people on police force and in fire department – any number of civil servants who work day and night to protect us. God protects our human life through them. And when they, in their call of duty, must take the human life of criminal or terrorist, or give their own human life to protect our human life, not only are they worthy of our respect and thanks, but we can also see God's love for human life at work in their service.
- Last (Sat) night I called up old friend. Went to school together; he studied to be a pastor. Decided to join Marines. Fought in Iraq during heart of Iraq War. Talked to old friend, thanked him again for service to our country and reminded him that, even though in war human lives are lost, God had used him as agent of protection of human life. But this weekend, as I celebrate my American freedom and consider this 5th Com, I thank God for my life and safety of family members; I thank God for warriors he uses to defend my life and freedom; I thank Jesus for laying down his life to give me eternal life; and I ask God to cleanse my heart of all hatred and to fill it with his love for human life.

Exodus 20:13 (NIV)

“You shall not murder.”