

**Text:** Exodus 20:13 || **Series**: 10 Ways to Be Perfect

**Sermon #6:** The Sixth Commandment – A Murderer’s Hope

Intro –

Good morning Mercy Church! If I haven’t met you yet, my name is Scott Urbanek and I’m one of the pastors here. Almost to the day, 3 years ago my wife and I with our kids moved here to be a part of Mercy Church. A church with a vision to reach our planet with the gospel. In my three years, I’ve learned a lot of things and I’ve seen our church grow in some pretty amazing ways. I tell guests who are checking out our church for the first time that we’re not a perfect church, we’re not, But God is doing something here and I love being part of it.

Today we’re jumping back into our series on the 10 Commandments. If you’re new with us this week, we’ve been in a series called 10 Ways to Be Perfect. When you look at this series title, our hope was that you would question it a little. Like, can we really be perfect in God’s eyes by obeying these commands? And of course, the answer is no. We can’t live these commands out perfectly. That’s the point. These commandments show us our need for a savior. It shows us our need for a savior that would live these commands perfectly in our place. This series, I think, has been a really strong one. I’ve loved every sermon in this series because what we have seen is that we break all of these commands waaay worse than we thought. Some of you might have read the 10 Commandments before the series started and said, “Ha! Have no other God’s besides me. Boom I’ve got that one. I worship Jesus.” But then you realize that while you might profess Jesus as Lord, you notice that your job has become your god, or the approval of others, success, or the welfare of your kids. The 10 commandments are like a surgical scalpel to our hearts. It exposes us for who we really are and brings us back to reality. The 10 commandments show us that our hearts are wicked down to the core. We need God!

As Pastor Spence mentioned last week, we there are two tables (or the two focuses’) to the 10 commandments. The first table or focus deals with our “vertical relationship.” By that, I mean our relationship with God. If we don’t have our vertical relationship right, then our horizontal relationships will never work. Today, we are in week two of the second table of the 10 Commandments. The second table deals with our relationship with other people.

Now if you’ve read ahead in the 10 commandments, you know that today’s verse is short and to the point. But even though it’s short, it brings a big punch. It is a Mike Tyson type verse. It may not be as big, but maaan… it hits hard. This next commandment is found in Exodus 20:13. Please turn there, and as you’re turning there we are going to follow the same pattern that we’ve been doing all series. We’re going to look at what is says, how we break it, and where we go from here.

Should I introduce the hope in the beginning or the point of the sermon in the beginning. Jesus actually preached on this. Let people know that’s where we’re going.

**What does it say?**

Let’s read and look at what it says…

13 Do not murder. -- Exodus 20:13 (CSB)

Pretty simple, right? Don’t murder people. Got it. No explanation needed. Yes, this command is simple, don’t murder people, but it goes much deeper than that. You see, like all of the other commandments, God is going to expose the depths of our hearts with this one. And before we dive deeper into this verse, there is one foundational truth that all of us need to understand if we’re going to understand this command rightly.

If we’re going to understand this, we have to know one foundational truth: **All people are created in the image of God.** Of all the things that God created, people are the pinnacle. In Genesis 1, we see that God created everything in the entire universe in 6 days. And after every day, he said that it was good. But on the 6th day it says this: “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth.” So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female. Men and women carry the image of God to our world. It wasn’t until after God created the man and woman that we see God say that “He saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed.”

Don’t let this wash over you… We have to understand the depth of that this means! My fear is that we have lost sight for what it means to be made in the image of God. God didn’t create the man and woman in the same way he created everything else. With everything else in God’s creation the Bible says that he “spoke it” into being. Let there be stars, let there be the oceans, and land, plants and animals. But with the man and woman… no no. He didn’t speak them into being. Like a master craftsmen, he formed them, he molded them, his creation of them was deeply intimate. It’s amazing when you actually see it in scripture. Let’s read it… So, God created everything and then it says this in Genesis 2:7, 7 Then the Lord God formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being. -- Genesis 2:7 (CSB). I love that. It wasn’t words and then a cosmic explosion of creation. Adam wasn’t spoken into being. It said that God formed him out of the dust. And just like a father staring into the face of his newborn child, he breathed life into him. He breathed life into his nostrils and it says that he became a living being. Woah!

And look at how he created Eve, it was just as beautiful! but for the man no helper was found corresponding to him. 21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to come over the man, and he slept. God took one of his ribs and closed the flesh at that place. 22 Then the Lord God made the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man. -- Genesis 2:20-22 (CSB) God took his time with Eve. He took her from Adam’s side as he slept and beautifully molded her. Right here is where we see God’s creativity. The creation of Adam and Eve was intimate, personal, loving, and it should bring awe to all who read it.

Quick question… Is this how you think of God?

God’s creation of man tells us all we need to know about our value to God. We aren’t accidents. People aren’t mistakes. People are created to be his image bearers on earth. Image bearers are to bring light, we bring hope to a hurting world, we are to help cultivate the world for human flourishment. Human life is the most sacred thing in all of God’s creation. We honor God by respecting his image in each other, which means constantly preserving life and furthering each other’s welfare in all possible ways.[[1]](#footnote-1) Life should be honored and protected from womb to the grave. We have to understand this if we’re going to understand the weight and depth of God’s command to not murder.

I think God’s has a lot of reason to rebuke us today. Our world and our culture have lost sight of what it means to be made in the image of God. All we have to do is look at twitter. Recently, there were a couple famous athletes that died tragic deaths. And within minutes of the news breaking, people were making jokes at their expense. Like, “he wasn’t that good of a player anyways.” What? They died! Are we that calloused?! I think God’s answer to that would be, yes.

We have lost sight for what it means to be made in the image of God. So, to destroy someone’s life by murdering them would be to destroy the very thing that God chose to bear his image on earth. God takes that very seriously! And this command shouldn’t be taken lightly.

**How do we break it?**

Alright, so we know what the command says. But what about New Covenant believers? Does this command still apply to us in the same way? Yes, but also more than we think. Yes, in that we shouldn’t murder people with our hands. But also, more, because when Jesus preached on this commandment he raised the bar of what murder means. When Jesus preached on this topic in Matthew 5, he told us that we break this command in two ways: We break this command with our hands and we break it with our hearts.

Let’s check out Jesus’ sermon on this command in Matthew 5. We will probably camp out here for the rest of our sermon. Since Jesus was the greatest preacher of all time, I’m just going to tell you what he said about this command and let Him speak. I’m just gonna get right out of the way. Here is what Jesus said… 21 “You have heard that it was said to our ancestors, Do not murder, and whoever murders will be subject to judgment. 22 But I tell you, everyone who is angry with his brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Whoever insults his brother or sister, will be subject to the court. Whoever says, ‘You fool! ’ will be subject to hellfire. -- Matthew 5:21-22 (CSB)

Abuse?

Jesus said, “You have heard that it was said to our ancestors, Do Not Murder, and whoever murders will be subject to judgement.” He was saying that we are not to kill anyone with our hands because if we do, then we’re subject to judgment of God. This is the commandment they knew from the 10 Commandments. But then Jesus raised the bar. Look at what he said in verse 22: 22 But I tell you, everyone who is angry with his brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Whoever insults his brother or sister, will be subject to the court. Whoever says, ‘You fool! ’ will be subject to hellfire. Did you see what Jesus did here? He expanded the parameters of what murder means. Murder isn’t just something we do with our hands, we do it with our hearts too. 10 years ago, I was living with some guys from college and I remember being mad at one of my friends, Devin. Devin was a guy that I really looked up to. He loved Jesus and loved the Bible. But for some reason, I can’t remember why, maybe he ate the last hot pocket, but I was mad at him. So, I pulled him aside and said “Man, I’m really angry with you about… whatever.” I can’t remember what it was. But he could tell that I was mad and had been mad for some time now. He responded by saying, “Oh, no! How long have you been murdering me in your heart?” Looking back, I now see what he was doing. He was helping me to not continue in sin, but at the time I was like, what are you talking about? Like Jesus, my friend showed me that I had a heart problem. I know that sounds ubsurd, but the reality is true. For weeks, I had been murdering my friend and he didn’t know.

Alright, so going back to these verses, we know that murdering someone with our hands is wrong, because they carry God’s image. But, now we know we do this with our hearts. Jesus shows us two primary ways we break this command with our hearts. Two ways we can break this command with our hearts: 1) Anger 2) Insulting others

Explain anger and insulting others is against the creation of humanity and offensive to God. Go in here. Again, murder is destroying the image of God. Here is how we destroy the image of God…. Anger is passive. Insulting is active.

1. Anger

What kind of anger is Jesus talking about? Because not all anger is sin. There is such a thing as righteous anger. We see that with God’s wrath against sin. God’s anger toward sin is holy and right. We also see that there are examples of righteous anger that is acceptable for people to have. For example, if its anger out of love. Martin Luther said, “Anger out of love, one that wishes no one evil, one that is friendly to the person but hostile to the sin.”[[2]](#footnote-2) Did you see that? Luther is saying that it is possible to be angry out of love. Another example is being angry about injustice. If you see someone being mistreated and you respond by helping them.But Jesus is talking to us about anger that leads to murder in our hearts. So, Jesus isn’t condemning all forms of anger. Jesus is against anger that is scoped and aimed at people. People who are made in His image. Jesus is saying that this is murder!

So, let’s look at some ways we murder each other in our hearts:

1. **Envy** – A feeling of ill will toward someone because they have what you want.Envy turns to anger! We do this all the time right? We start to resent someone because they started dating the person you liked. Jealousy because they got the job you really wanted. So, because that person has what you want you think about it all the time and that bitterness and anger turns into murder in your heart. Or maybe, they are getting the attention that you want. This used to happen to me. There was a guy that everyone liked him, guy was so stinkin’ cool hated that guy. Haha. Steve. What kind of name is Steve? Haha. A completely normal name, I know. But, Steve and let me tell you. Steve loved him some Steve. Every conversation turned into a story that was cooler than my story. A fish that he caught that was bigger than my fish. The vacation he took that was better than mine. And he got all the attention from the people I wanted attention from. I was constantly thinking, “Does this guy ever stop talking about himself?” Envy and Pride does that. Have you ever noticed this? The most prideful people are always the ones most offended by pride in someone else. Put two alpha’s in any group. Put two men or women in a group who are alpha’s and watch. Watch the war start. Just kidding don’t do that. Now, this seems funny but deep down, I was murdering this man in my heart. Instead of feeling compassion and love, I dehumanized steve. I made him out to be the devil. When in reality he should have been my brother. Sorry, Steve.
2. **Deceit** – This means you’re dishonest or misleading, with the intent of harming someone. This means taking credit at work for an idea that someone else came up with because you don’t like them. This means twisting the truth when you’re gossiping to paint someone in a bad light. The Lord tells you today, don’t do that to someone made in his image. You’re trying to stip away their image. Don’t do that!
3. **Malice** – Malice is a desire to see harm come upon someone. “I hope he or she gets what’s coming to them.” How many have ever daydreamed about beating the snot out of someone else? If you say no, you lie! For some reason, it feels good to imagine harm coming upon people. And we justify it by saying, well it feels good because I’m never going to actually do it with my hands. And Jesus tells you today that when you desire harm to come upon a person, it is just as bad as if you had actually done it. You’re committing murder in your heart. You’re taking someone made in His image and stripping them God’s image from them.
4. **Unforgiveness** – Anger at its core is unforgiveness. You can’t love your neighbor when you’re angry. Unforgiveness is hard because often times it starts with you actually being the one who was wronged. But, if it leads to unforgiveness that then becomes your sin issue. That becomes your anger. Sometimes this can start out small. Maybe a comment that hurt your feelings. Some of us are so afraid of conflict that we think its best to probably not bring it up. “I can just move on. It’s not that big of a deal.” That’s what we say. But all we’ve done is allow a small seed of bitterness get planted in our hearts. Seeds turn into trees. And uprooting trees of anger rips out a lot and it hurts. Some of you might say, “Pastor, I understand that, but you don’t understand what they did to me. What this person did to me was awful.” You’re right, I probably I don’t understand. But holding on to anger and being unwilling to forgive someone will enslave you. It is so easy to let the chains of anger to enslave and envelope your life. Unforgiveness, is often a lack of understanding of the gospel. Y’all, we have wronged Jesus way more than anyone else has ever wronged us. Yet, he joyfully, willingly, and enthusiastically went to the cross because he loves you. Listen, let me pause for a second. I don’t say that lightly. This one hits home for me personally because as a child I was sexually abused by someone close to our family. As a 33 year-old man, I’m still in a bout with processing what forgiveness looks like for me toward this man. Even though there are times when I’d rather be angry, I know that the cross tells me that I have to forgive this man. How can I believe the gospel and withhold forgiveness. I can’t. I must forgive him. Now, it’s taken some counseling and prayer and strength from the Holy Spirit. But the Lord helped me with that and he can help you.
5. **Pride –** Pride us the underlying sin of all anger. Anger rooted in pride is essentially us having a small view of our own sinfulness that leads us to think that the problem is always with someone else. As believers, we should be the most unoffendable people on the planet. We are a sinner first, sinned against second.

So the first way we murder people in our hearts is with anger. Let’s look at the second way we murder people in our hearts…

1. Insulting others

Jesus said, “Whoever insults his brother or sister, will be subject to the court. Whoever says, ‘You fool! ’ will be subject to hellfire.” Let me start by saying this, when you cast insults at another person, you are actively trying to dehumanize someone. Actually, no its worse, you’re trying to strip God’s image off of them. It as if they are clothed in God’s image and you’re trying to strip them bare leaving them naked in front for everyone to see. This is horrible! The translation for “you fool” is interesting. It’s basically another way to say “empty headed” or a “moron.”[[3]](#footnote-3) How many of you have ever made fun of someone else either to their face or behind their back? Our culture today, commendably, have been going really hard against bullying. Which is awesome. Bullying is terrible. But adults, please listen, we do this still right? We talk badly about someone to tear them down. How many of us do this in traffic? Some of us murdered 8 people on the way to church this morning.

Sometimes this stuff doesn’t seem like a big deal, but how many times have we said this to another family member… “My sister is such a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. She didn’t think of us at all when she decided to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. “ Or, at the office, we do this by not assuming the best in others and jumping to conclusions. Then we look at someone in our office and say, “This guy is an idiot.”Or we just walk into the office and tell them that they are an idiot. I hope this goes without saying by this point but it’s got to be said. There is no justification for trying to strip someone of God’s image from them through insults. It doesn’t matter if you feel wronged by it. That’s irrelevant!

But, also, let’s not skip over that last words there. Jesus said if you insult someone you will be subject to the court, and if you all someone a fool you will be subject to hellfire. Sheesh! Is this harsh? Insulting other people being subject to hell? I think our natural instinct is to say yes, but the further we look at these 10 Commandments, we see that we are deplorable! We deserve condemnation. It seems like at every turn our wants desire and do evil things. We deserve hell. We deserve the wrath of God.

*(if there is time)* One of my favorite things to do in ministry is to go and share the gospel on college campus’. And almost every time I share the gospel I get into the same conversation. As I’m sharing with them, I’m trying to show them their need for God. Because, their sin has separated them from a loving God. And in almost every conversation, I get this comment. “So, you’re telling me that I’m a sinner? I’m not that bad of a person. It’s not like I’ve killed someone.” I get that almost every time. And when that happens I pull out my phone and tell them this: “Imagine that you were wearing a necklace and at the end of it was your phone. And your phone showed every single thought that ever went through your mind. And everyone could see what you were thinking at all times because all they would have to do is look at your phone. Do you think you’d have many friends? I know I wouldn’t! Why? Because we all think horrible things about people.” And after I explain that, I try to show them that God doesn’t judges by the condition of our hearts and that we have no hope apart from the work of Jesus.

So… Let’s look at this hope. What hope is there for us serial murderers?

**Where Do we go from here?**

Let’s look at what Jesus prescribed…

23 So if you are offering your gift on the altar, and there you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled with your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. 25 Reach a settlement quickly with your adversary while you’re on the way with him to the court, or your adversary will hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison. -- Matthew 5:23-25 (CSB)

So, where do we go from here? **We need to seek reconciliation.** Jesus tells them that if they know someone has something against them, to not leave a gift or a sacrifice at the alter. Go and reconcile with that person. I also think it would be safe to say, that the opposite is true as well. If you have something against someone to go and reconcile first. Now for us, we don’t offer sacrifices anymore because Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice in our place. But the New Testament way we do this now is by taking communion. Communion is a celebration and reflection of the gospel. That Jesus died, so that we didn’t have to. We celebrate his sacrifice. I’m not sure if you noticed this or not, but as a church we celebrate communion on the first Sunday of every month. This week is the first Sunday of this month. But, we’re not going to take communion this week. As we we’re planning the service this week, we all sensed the Lord tell us that we needed to give ourselves an opportunity to reconcile with those who we feel like we’ve been murdering in our hearts. We were reminded of 1 Corinthians 11: 27 So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sin against the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Let a person examine himself; in this way let him eat the bread and drink from the cup. 29 For whoever eats and drinks without recognizing the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself. -- 1 Corinthians 11:27-29 (CSB). Church we want you to take this week and pray. Some of you all sermon have been thinking about the person you need to reconcile with. I think it would honor the Lord and it would set many of us free from bondage if we took this week and confessed our murderous hearts to those we have wronged.

The second thing**: We need to use our hands and hearts to bring about human flourishing.**

Church, we can’t be people who are known for what we don’t do. We need to be known for what we do. There are numerous people in here, I’m sure, that have murdered someone with their hands or helped someone murder. If that’s true, what you did was terrible, yes. But Jesus has swallowed that condemnation for you. At the hands of sinners, Jesus was flogged, beated and spat upon. They beat him so badly that he barely looked human. Those same hands nailed Jesus through his hands and his feet so that He can look at you now and declare that your sin is no more! In Christ you have been bought. Your freedom from your past has been purchased so that that for the rest of your days you can use your hands to bring about the flourishing of image bearers all over the world. Care for the widow, adopt the orphan, clothe the naked, use your hands to hug those in grief. God wants to use you. You are not too far gone!

Or maybe you’ve been angry and have been murdering people in your heart or through insults. You need to know that as Jesus carried the cross to Calvary, anger spewed from the mouths of those whom he came to save. They maligned him, they defamed his name. That insulted him. At the top of the cross that said “King of the Jews.” C’mon Jesus, if you’re God then get off that cross. Who cares let’s gamble for his clothes. They tried to humiliate the savior of the world. And he looked down on them and said, “Forgive them Father. They don’t know what they are doing.” Today, you need to know that Christ was insulted and died so that your sin can be forgiven. He didn’t do it because he had to. He wanted to. He loves you and he likes you. Today, he tells you to use your words to bring life. Encourage your friends. Tell people how you see Jesus I them. Let your words be full of grace and life. May it be that anyone who ever talks with you leaves encouraged in the Lord.

I mean seriously, what hope is there for us serial murderers?

All the hope in the world. In Christ, God’s saves us and sends us. He saves us from our sin, but sends us to bear his image to our world who needs the gospel so badly. Will you pray with me?

1. We were going to have communion and we decided to wait to give you an opportunity to seek forgiveness.
2. List out all of the ways you’ve been forgiven by God and thank God for the gospel.
3. Start working toward reconciliation.
4. Look at how Jesus fulfilled this command for you. Passive obedience vs active obedience. Passive is his dying for people who have broken his commands. His active obedience is fulfilling the law perfectly in our place.
5. Just as we murder with our hands, there is some redemption with our hands. We can be for the imago dei in our city. Fight for the valuing of life. Some of you it’s at work, how can I make it about others gain and not personal gain. For some of you, we need to get in the game in helping the poor.
6. The opposite of anger and speaking insults is speaking life into people’s life. The opposite of taking life, is preserving it and helping people flourish.

Make this that come from the hearts. It’s a rebuke from the Lord for our church right now.

1. What is our call as image bearers?
2. Why does murder break this?
3. Why is anger murder? Why is righteous anger not murder? Righteous anger is holding up the image of God.
4. Reconcilation is a beautiful picture of holding up the image of God.
5. Jesus did this perfect for us.
6. Communion.
7. Church, we can’t be people who are known for what we don’t do. We need to be known for what we do.

1. Keeping the 10 Commandments, J.I. Packer. Pgs. 77-78. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Message of the Sermon on the Mount. Pgs. 83-84. John Stott. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Raca*, Aramaic for “empty headed”, *More*, Greek for “fool” [↑](#footnote-ref-3)