

TRUTH B-P CHURCH
Adult Sunday School

SERMON ON THE MOUNT (I)

LESSON SEVEN: KILLING

I. PASSAGE

Matthew 5:21-26, “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. ²³ Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; 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. ²⁵ Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. ²⁶ Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.”

II. INTRODUCTION

What comes to your mind when you think of killing? It is not about killing animals. It is about killing people. However, this does not prohibit those who have the authority to kill. Those with authority like the court judge, and police, were given the authority to kill. Those caught trafficking drugs or guilty of kidnapping in Singapore context, the punishment is death penalty. This kind of killing is justified.

If killing is only when the act of taking a human life is done, then this commandment number 6 is a very easy commandment to keep. But the Lord is going to deal with everything even before the act is committed. What leads to killing? Is it not anger?

III. KILLING BEGINS WITH ANGER (verses 21 to 22)

Anger is an emotion which we all have. Even God has it. The Bible often records how God was angry with sin. Anger is a normal and common emotion. It is not wrong or sinful to be angry for a just cause. We ought to be angry. If we are not, something is wrong.

Over here, the Lord Jesus says, if without a cause (or just cause) we get angry, we sinned. It is important for us to check what we are angry about. Is it for something just or unjust? If it is an unjust cause, then we must not even let the emotion of anger start. We must learn to control it because killing begins with such anger. We need to be careful. Even when we are angry for a just cause, the Lord wants us to control ourselves. If not, it is possible to say something that is sinful.

What is raca? Raca means empty, worthless. It implies scolding someone who is worthless. Even if it is true, it is still wrong to call people worthless in order to hurt their feeling. The Sanhedrin council possessed the right to punish anyone for calling others bad names in order to destroy their reputation.

However, there is another word that is even more serious. Jesus says, “... but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.” Why is it calling one a fool or moron a more serious warning? The reason is because this is in the form of a curse. “Thou fool” is a curse word. You are condemning the person. It is more than Raca. It is more than hurting the person. It is cursing the person and condemning the person. And it was so serious that those who said Thou fool will end up in hell fire.

IV. SEEK RECONCILIATION (verses 23 to 24)

When we come to worship God, God wants us to worship Him with nothing that holds us back. He wants us to worship Him with a clear conscience. And so the Lord gave this scenario for us. God wants us to seek reconciliation. It can be a broken relationship or an unresolve matter that can hinder our worship. And in this scenario, it was a case whereby a brother is angry with you. And it did not say who is right or who is wrong. It does not matter.

Why is the brother angry with you? It could be something you have done that makes him angry. Anyway, it does not matter. Because the Lord wants us to seek reconciliation. If it is his fault, forgive him. If it is your fault, seek forgiveness. Whatever it is, seek reconciliation. That's the whole purpose here because without reconciliation, it is hard to continue to worship God, both for you and the brother in Christ.

V. SEEK FORGIVENESS (verses 25 to 26)

The reason why we seek forgiveness is not because we do not want to be punished. No, that must never be on our mind. We must always be ready to bear the consequences of our wrongdoing. But we must still seek forgiveness. Because if we do not seek forgiveness, it means that we do not admit that we are wrong. It means that we have not learnt our lesson. And the Lord wants us to learn our lesson by seeking forgiveness.

That's why He says in verse 25, "... Agree with thine adversary quickly..." This does not mean covering up the truth and promoting falsehood in order to get away. No, to agree with thine adversary means to make up with him. We are to seek forgiveness. We are to say sorry for the wrong we have done. We must be prepared to pay back whatever we owe plus interest.

The Lord gave the scenario of a legal case. It is a case when I had caused the other party to suffer loss. And because I did not resolve it with him, he is about to bring it to the law court for them to take over. But the Lord does not want this to happen. He wanted us to resolve the matter quickly before that happens. If not, the price to pay will be even heavier. And the price is our testimony for Christ.

The whole matter will keep hanging on our head, until we are forgiven. The Lord wants us to eat the humble pie and seek forgiveness. It is not easy to do that. The Lord knows. Yet this is what we must do. We know what it means to be forgiven. We ourselves are forgiven of all our sins. And what a relief we felt inside when we knew we are forgiven. Should we not seek forgiveness when we have done wrong?

We do not have to commit the act of killing in order to break the 6th commandment. All it takes is unjustified anger and, it includes also justified anger but not controlled rightly. By seeking reconciliation and forgiveness, we keep the sixth commandment rightly.

Let us always seek reconciliation for any broken relationship and to seek forgiveness for the sake of our testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, it goes a long way for us to keep the sixth commandment faithfully in our life. May God help us. Amen.