

“YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, II, YOU SHALL DO GOOD.”

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First Christian Reformed Church

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Heidelberg Catechism: Lord’s Day 40

Scripture Texts: Exodus 20:13; Galatians 6:9-10; I Thessalonians 5:14-15

Introduction.

As we have mentioned before the reason we are doing two sermons on each commandment is because each commandment is stated in Scripture as half a commandment. In each of the Ten Commandments there is commission and omission, action and restraint.

If a virtue is being upheld, then it follows the opposite vices would be excluded.
If a vice is being prohibited, then it follows the opposite virtue would be exalted.

Two weeks ago we considered you shall not murder and mentioned over a dozen ways in which we murder each other. I titled the sermon “You Shall Do No Harm.” This week we want to look at the other side of the coin under the title, “You Shall Do Good.”

It is not enough just to do no harm, we must also do good. The opposite of everything forbidden is also positively commanded.

This commandment proclaims the preciousness of life, the supreme value of life. It affirms and protects the imago Dei, the image of God in all human beings, we are all endowed by God with an eternal soul. We must hold each other as sacred.

Avoid extremes.

Did you know we can go to extremes in our view of life? It’s happening all around us all the time, very misguided souls elevating human life too high, even above God, or devaluing human life even below other forms of life. Let me give some examples.

First, there are people who love this life so much they lose it in the life to come.

Psalm 63:3 Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.

4 So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands.

Life is good, valuable and precious, but it is not better than or more valuable than God Himself. Keep first things first. There are times when we will sacrifice our lives for the sake of God or others.

Second, another example is Muslims. They believe infidels (non-Muslims) are a lesser category of human undeserving of life. Muslims elevate their life above all others. This is part of the twisted logic behind suicide bombers willingness to kill others and themselves. In the name of doing good, they are doing evil.

Third, another example is what PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) does and what some environmentalists do.

They don't elevate trees and animals to the level of human, they devalue human beings down to the level of trees and animals. Who can be against kindness to animals? No one, but that isn't the issue. They deny any moral difference between humans and animals. In the name of doing good, they are doing evil.

In the famous words of Ingrid Newkirk, President, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) "A rat is a pig is a dog is a boy. They're all animals" (Ingrid Newkirk, *Washingtonian Magazine*, 1986 August 1). She says herself, she has no reverence for life, she has no basis for distinguishing one form of life better than another.

But there is yet another extreme with regard to animals, instead of devaluing humans there are many today who value animals too much, even to the point of worshipping them and putting them above children, even treating them like children, their fur babies.

You don't think people worship animals. Have you seen all the dog and cats videos? Have you seen the multi-billion-dollar industry around pet owners? Dog boutiques, dog hotels, dog parks, dog psychologist, dog jewelry stores, purse puppies, dog spas, social media sites for pets, pet horoscopes. People pushing their dogs around in dog strollers. Sure we can love and care for our pets, but that's not all that is going on.

We've become morally depraved as a culture. We love our pets while we refuse to have children or worse yet, are murdering our children. The image of God means nothing to us. Like Paul said in Romans 1 we have exchanged the truth for a lie, and the glory of God for images of animals, worshipping the creature rather than the Creator.

There are grandparents who can't visit their grandchildren because they have to take care of their pets. You don't think that happens? All the time, more and more.

A company that sells pet health insurance policies has dubbed the last Sunday in April is "Pet Parents Day."

Psalm 8:4 what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

5 Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

6 You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his

feet, **7** all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field,
8 the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

God loves us more than any other created being, we are infinitely more valuable than a cat or a dog. For the proof of this we need look no farther than Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ affirms the value of human life in *four ways* and so fulfills this commandment by doing good.

First by being life and having life and giving life.

John 1:3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. **4** In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

Jesus is “The way, the truth and the life” (John 14:6) and He is “the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25). Jesus is life and has life and gives life. There is no life apart from Him.

Second, by taking on human nature in Himself, by becoming man, the incarnation.

The conception, birth, life and death of Jesus declare God values and cares for human life more than all other life form, angelic or animal.

John 1:14 The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Philippians 2:6-7 Though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, **7** but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

He didn't become like any other life form.

Third, by securing for us not just life, but eternal life.

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. **17** For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

The greatness of the benefit proves the value, worth and love of God in Christ toward us.

Fourth, by the greatness of the price He paid to secure that eternal life. He redeemed us with Himself. The cost shows the value.

Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

Romans 5:6, 8 Christ died for the ungodly. ... **8** God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

I John 3:1 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God.

Jesus died for human beings to rescue us and save us from our sins, our moral failures and irresponsibility's. Animals don't need a savior, they are not morally responsible or morally guilty.

God sent His only Son who came and took on human likeness which forever assigns the highest value, dignity and priority to human beings.

Do good because Jesus did good, and Jesus is in us.

By giving His own life, Jesus gives new life to us, He enables us to become new creatures and new creation, restored in our image and likeness of God. We have in us the source of life. As we have been saved from death, so now we can hold out to others the same source of life. Jesus gives us life so we can help and bless the lives of others.

Because the life of the Spirit is in us we are able to dispense life and life giving grace, mercy, forgiveness and kindness to others as we seek to meet their physical, spiritual, mental and emotional needs.

Give life by doing good.

Christians become sources of life, blessing and encouragement when they show up in places like Everson after a flood, Haiti, and Ukraine. When they serve the poor in Bellingham or volunteer at Project Hope. When they take a meal to a grieving family or a new mom.

We become the hands and feet and eyes and heart of Jesus to another. We give a needed cup of cold water or life giving bread in the name of Jesus, in the name of the Lord and Giver of Life.

The *Heidelberg Catechism* on this commandment teaches:

“God tells us to love our neighbor as ourselves, to be patient, peace-loving, gentle, merciful, and friendly to them, to protect them from harm as much as we can, and to do good even to our enemies.”

The *Westminster Larger Confession* of Faith urges us to have:

“... charitable thoughts, love, compassion, meekness, gentleness, kindness; peaceable, mild and courteous speeches and behavior; forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and requiting good for evil; comforting and succoring the distressed and protecting and defending the innocent.”

Comfort those in sorrow. Relief those in need. Heal their wounds and injuries.
Give blood, care for the sick, nurture the weak, stand up for the defenseless, voiceless.
Treat one another with dignity and respect.
Preserve and defend life, fight for it.

Give without thought of reward or a return.
Be like God, in giving generously, in giving mercy and kindness.
Share, show mercy.

Christ takes every act of kindness personally, as though it were to Him.
What we have done to the least, we have done to Him.

As fruit adorns trees so will your actions adorn your profession of faith.

Matthew 5:16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Speak well of one another, build each other up, spread kindness.
Build up the church, sow good seed among the brethren, not discord. Build up the reputation of the church.

What is it about us that the closer we are to people the worse we treat them?
We are kind to total strangers and mean to those we love.
Those you love the most deserve to be treated the best.
There should be no person in your life you treat better than your spouse.

Bless those who curse you, bless and curse not.
Love and pray for your enemies.
Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.
Love your neighbor as yourself.
Love one another. You can't murder someone you love.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Galatians 6:8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

9 And *let us not grow weary of doing good*, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. **10** So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

To all of this Paul urges us to not grow weary of doing good. All of us know the thrill of a new venture, the excitement of a new opportunity, the enjoyment of a fresh start. But we also all know the feeling when the novelty wears off, when the honeymoon is over, the joy fades.

Even Christians get weary of doing good. Some of you have been doing good for so long, you have completely lost any satisfaction in it or any blessing from it. It is just a habit or a routine or a rut. Whether it is reading the Bible, teaching Sunday school, volunteering at the Senior center or Project Hope, or ushering, making cookies or serving in the nursery, over time it can become a chore. It might be because of Satan, or that we are doing it in the flesh without the Holy Spirit, or because the love has died.

To encourage and help us Paul reminds us of the goal, remember in due season we will reap eternal life if we do not give up. Give renewed consideration to life, to eternal life and all that leads to life. Do good, do everything in your power and ability to affirm it and preserve it and give it and share it and improve it and enhance it and build up and bless it.

This week do five good works in the name of Jesus. May we be a congregation that out does each other in love, honor and good deeds. See what difference it makes.

I Peter 3:8 Finally, all of you have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. **9** Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.

10 For “Whoever desires to love life and see good days,
let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit;

11 let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it.