

The Sixth Word: Killing Your Neighbor

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[0 : 00] Exodus 20, verses 1 to 13. If you would stand with me as I read God's word. And God spoke all these words, saying, I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless, who takes his name in vain. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male servant or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates.

[1 : 23] For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Honor your father and your mother that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. You shall not murder. This is God's holy and authoritative word.

You may be seated. The sixth word of the Decalogue, you shall not murder, is a commandment that most people think that they have kept.

But as we examine the scope of the command and the spirit of the command and the fulfillment of the command, I think we will be surprised by its relevance in so many aspects of our lives.

And the main point that I want to drive home is this, that we must uphold the sanctity of human life. And believe in Jesus who laid down his life for us. So let's first look at the scope of the command.

[2 : 29] It says, You shall not murder. This command is literally two words in the original Hebrew, but it's difficult to translate. The King James Version famously translates it, Thou shalt not kill.

The reason why this verse is difficult to translate is because the word kill is too broad and the word murder is too narrow to convey the full range of the meaning of this command.

On the one hand, the word kill is too broad. We use the word kill generally to refer to all kinds of killing. But the word used here is not one of those words. There are two other Hebrew words for kill that occur 360 times.

But this particular word used in verse 13 occurs only 46 times. Majority of which occurs in the context of instructions about the cities of refuge in Numbers 35, Deuteronomy 19, and Joshua 20 to 21.

We use the word kill for all kinds of killing, even the killing of animals. But this particular Hebrew word is never used with animals as the object.

[3 : 37] It only ever refers to killing another human. It refers specifically to homicide. Not only that, sometimes people understand thou shalt not kill so broadly that they think that it forbids killing in every context.

For example, even the killing in war and executions by the state. But this particular Hebrew word is never used in such contexts. The Bible uses a different word for kill in the context of war.

And since there are wars that are commanded by the Lord himself in the Old Testament, clearly not all such killing is unlawful. We can see the clear distinction between justified killing in times of war versus times of peace in 1 Kings 2, 5 to 6, where David gives on his deathbed instructions to his son Solomon, who has succeeded him as king.

He says, Moreover, you also know what Joab, the son of Zeruiah, did to me, how he dealt with the two commanders of the armies of Israel, Abner, the son of Ner, and Amasa, the son of Jether, whom he killed, avenging in time of peace for blood that had been shed in war and putting the blood of war on the belt around his waist and on the sandals on his feet.

Act, therefore, according to your wisdom, but do not let his gray head go down to Sheol in peace. So David wants Solomon to punish Joab, the commander of David's army, not for killing in times of war, but for avenging in times of peace for blood that had been shed in war.

[5 : 14] So during the Battle of Gibeon between followers of Saul's son, Ish-bosheth, and followers of David, Abner had killed Joab's brother, Asahel. But after David had made peace with Abner, Joab avenged his brother by killing unsuspecting Abner.

Likewise, during Absalom's rebellion, Joab was the general of David's army and he had fought against Amasa, who was the general of Absalom's army. But after David quelled rebellion, he reconciled with Amasa and actually appointed him head of his own army in favor of, I mean, bypassing Joab because Joab had previously defied his order to spare his son Absalom.

But in that instance also, Joab killed Amasa in times of peace. So both of these times, Joab killed men that he had fought against in times of war, but he did it in times of peace and therefore it was out of place and evil.

So Joab is condemned for doing that. But he's never condemned for the killing he did in times of war when you have to fight for your life and for the lives of your loved ones. On a related note, some people argue that the sixth command demands the abolition of the death penalty.

But scripture explicitly prescribes the capital punishment in numerous places, including for murder itself. The principle from Genesis 9, 5 to 6, specifically requires capital punishment for murder.

[6 : 43] It says, and for your lifeblood, I will require a reckoning. From every beast, I will require it and from man. From his fellow man, I will require a reckoning for the life of man.

Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed. For God made man in his own image. Capital punishment is required precisely because murder is such a heinous crime.

Murder is wicked for two primary reasons. First, and most obvious, is that it is a violation of the love of neighbor. Genesis 9, 5 says, from his fellow man, I will require a reckoning for the life of man.

The word translated fellow here is the same word for brother. So it's specifically highlighting the heinousness of homicide for a man to kill his fellow man, his brother in the human race.

In this sense, homicide, the killing of man, is always fratricide, the killing of one's brother. The second and most important reason why murder is such a heinous crime is given in Genesis 9, 6.

[7 : 51] For God made man in his own image. Every human being, man or woman, rich or poor, powerful or powerless, strong or weak, beautiful or ugly, old or young, healthy or sick, king or peasant, high IQ or low IQ, black or white, is created in God's own image.

And that's what gives human beings inestimable value. Why is a baseball that's signed by Yankees slugger Aaron Judge worth thousands of dollars?

It's made the same way as any other ordinary baseball that you can buy for a few dollars. But the difference is that it has the baseball star's signature on it.

Similarly, when you find a painting of Leonardo da Vinci, it doesn't matter how wrinkled or faded or ripped it is, people will pay millions of dollars for that painting because it's an original da Vinci.

It has his imprint on it. It was created by the master artist's own hands. Every single human being has God's signature on him.

[9 : 24] Every single human being was created by God as the pinnacle, the crowning jewel of his creation. So to deface or demean a human being, to murder a human being, is an affront to God himself.

This is why God commands capital punishment for murder. So it is not true that the sixth commandment calls for the repeal of the death penalty. This is why the translation thou shalt not kill is too broad.

The sixth commandment does not forbid all types of killing. While the Bible teaches the sanctity of life, it does not teach the absolute sanctity of life. Life in and of itself is not the highest good.

God's justice, God's righteousness, for example, are higher values. That's why Romans 13.4 teaches us that the governing authorities bear the sword in order to punish bad behavior.

But on the other hand, if we translate the verse as murder, you shall not murder as the English Standard Version does, that's too narrow. Murder in our language implies intent.

[10 : 33] It is the unlawful killing of a human being with malice. First degree murder is premeditated, planned killing. Second degree murder is intentional but unplanned killing, like in the heat of anger, for example.

When someone kills another person with neither plan nor intention, we call it manslaughter, not murder, at least in most states.

But the Hebrew word translated murder in verse 13 includes both murder and manslaughter. For example, Numbers 35 authorizes the avenger of blood to kill a murderer.

The word avenger is the same word that is sometimes translated redeemer or kinsman redeemer. It refers to the nearest male relative of the affected person.

In an event that a person is murdered, his nearest relative, his redeemer or his avenger, was legally responsible for avenging his family member. But this only applied to cases of murder, to intentional killing.

[11 : 35] If someone unintentionally, accidentally killed someone, he was permitted to flee into one of the six designated cities of refuge, where he would have immunity and be protected from the avenger of blood.

Killing a person created in the image of God was such a grave issue that even if it happened accidentally, the avenger of blood was activated. And if the manslayer refused to take shelter in a city of refuge, and if he ever left the city of refuge prematurely before his allotted time was up, the avenger of blood could kill him with impunity.

But the accidental manslayer would be protected from the avenger within a city of refuge. In this way, the Bible clearly distinguishes the punishment for murder and manslaughter.

But interestingly, in Numbers 35, verse 25, it refers to both the one who commits murder and the one who commits manslaughter as manslaughterers, which is the noun form of the verb that's used here in verse 13.

You shall not murder. This is why translating it as murder is too narrow. The sixth commandment is not restricted to intentional killing, but extends to unintentional killing as well.

[12 : 52] We should take care to avoid the taking of an innocent life, even accidentally. Having defined the command then, let's look at its many applications in our lives.

Obviously, the command forbids murder, but since it also forbids manslaughter, we must give utmost thought and care in activities that can threaten another person's life.

It means we should avoid reckless, distracted, or drunk driving because it selfishly endangers the lives of others.

Vehicular homicide is the most common type of involuntary manslaughter. It means we should not start campfires in the middle of a drought season in areas with risk of wildfires.

It means we need to take extreme care while hunting for sport to not shoot at the slightest sign of movement without confirming what it actually is that you're shooting. I think this commandment is a general warning against a gun-loving, trigger-happy culture.

[14 : 04] It forbids duels, Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr. And it forbids starting brawls and riots that endanger the lives of others like the riot after the Indonesian soccer match that left 174 people dead due to a stampede yesterday.

I think the sixth commandment also forbids abortion. I'm not talking about dilation and curettage, the DNC procedure after a woman's miscarriage, of course, they need that treatment.

I'm talking about aborting a baby that's alive in the womb. I want you to know that I'm not trying to take political sides. I would oppose abortion on biblical grounds, whether it's Democrats or Republicans promoting it.

In fact, when it comes to politics, I'm cynical enough to believe that most politicians say and do whatever it takes to win elections, and that if the pro-life advocates were not as numerous and influential, that most Republicans would have abandoned opposing abortion long time ago.

According to the Center for Disease Control, in 2020, the leading cause of death was heart disease, which claimed 696,962 lives. The second was cancer, which claimed 602,350 lives.

[15 : 38] According to the Guttmacher Institute, in 2020, the same year, there were 930,160 abortions in the United States. more than both of those two leading causes of death in the country.

There were more abortions in 2020 than there were people who died from COVID, accidents, and strokes combined. people in the child.

It repeatedly says that God forms and fashions the baby in the womb and relates to them personally. And if God relates to the babies in the womb as persons, then we have no right to kill them.

Galatians 5, 19-20 lists sorcery as a sin. That's not just referring to witchery or black magic.

In the ancient world, sorcery referred to the use of potions and poisons and drugs. And people frequently turned to sorcerers to terminate unwanted pregnancies. sonarists of Ephesus, 2nd century AD Greek gynecologists used this very term, sorcery, to refer to drugs that induce abortion.

[17 : 03] That's listed in Galatians 5, 19-20 as a sin. Moreover, it is theologically significant that Jesus' incarnation did not begin when he was born of the Virgin Mary, but when he was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Even though Jesus could have been incarnated as a grown man or even as a baby and skipped his time in the womb, God in his wisdom sent his son into Mary's womb.

In this way, Jesus embraced the whole of human existence from conception to death, from womb to tomb. Hebrews 2, 14-17 says that in order to save us, Jesus had to be made like us in every respect, taking on flesh and blood.

And becoming like us for Jesus, becoming human involved conception, first trimester, second trimester, and third trimester. Let me bring up one more passage which I will address in greater detail in two months.

Exodus 21, 20-24 specifically says this, when men strive together and hit a pregnant woman so that her children come out, but there is no harm, the one who hit her shall surely be fined as the woman's husband shall impose on him, and he shall pay as the judges determine.

[18 : 21] But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

A pregnant woman is specifically mentioned in this case law because it is concerned with what happens to the prematurely born baby as well as to the woman, to the mother. If men strike a pregnant woman so that her baby comes up prematurely and there is harm, then they have to pay life for life.

There's a similar law even in our country, the Unborn Victims of Violence Act of 2004. It states that whoever engages in violent conduct and thereby causes the death of or bodily injury to a child who is in utero at the time the conduct takes place is guilty of a separate offense under this section.

It says later on, the punishment for that separate offense is the same as the punishment provided under federal law for that conduct had that injury or death occurred to the unborn child's mother.

This federal criminal law does not apply to crimes prosecuted by the individual U.S. states, but still 38 states, including Massachusetts, have fetal homicide laws.

[19 : 41] So even our laws acknowledge the fact that when a violent offender hurts a baby in the womb that he should be punished as if the baby were a human being because that baby is entitled to protection every bit as much as the mother.

Sadly, however, the right of that baby in the womb is entirely taken away when it comes to abortion. So then, when the woman wants the baby, killing the baby is criminal.

But when the mother does not want the baby, killing the baby is totally legal. How is that right? The baby is either a person or not.

And if the baby is a person, killing him or her is a violation of the sixth commandment regardless of the woman's wish. according to the encyclopedia of the National Library of Medicine, at conception, the fertilized egg already contains all of the unique genetic material of that baby.

And three to four weeks after conception, the baby already has at least the beginnings of arms and legs, eyes and ears, brain, and a beating heart. But even before all of this, the biblical perspective, it's not a person's capacity for self-consciousness, reason, independence, speech, or moral choice that makes him or her a human.

[21 : 23] It's the fact that he or she is created by God himself in his own image that makes a person. But the personhood of the baby is not even the crux of the abortion debate.

The linchpin argument of abortion proponents is not that the baby in the womb is not a person, but that the woman has the right to privacy, that she has the right to be led alone.

An influential paper presented by Judith Jarvis Thompson in 1971 entitled A Defense of Abortion claims that abortion is morally permissible even if the fetus is a person has the right to life.

Because the woman has the right to control her own body. In a 2008 Salon.com article, American feminist academic Camille Paglia puts it even more bluntly.

Quote, let's take the issue of abortion rights of which I'm a firm supporter. As an atheist and libertarian, I believe that government must stay completely out of the sphere of personal choice. Every individual has an absolute right to control his or her body.

[22 : 27] And later on in that same article she says this, hence I have always frankly admitted that abortion is murder. The extermination of the powerless by the powerful. Liberals for the most part have shrunk from facing the ethical consequences of their embrace of abortion.

Which results in the annihilation of concrete individuals and not just clumps of insensate tissue. The state in my view has no authority whatever to intervene in the biological processes of any woman's body.

I appreciate her honesty even though I think what she's saying is monstrous. In other words, in her words, abortion is murder but it's still okay because the woman's right to control her own body trumps the baby's right to life.

But we find such a right to bodily autonomy nowhere in scripture. scripture. 1 Corinthians 6 19-20 says, Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you whom you have from God?

You are not your own for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. Our bodies belong to God.

[23 : 49] It's not ours to do with whatever we wish. it's not rich. Sure it might be legal to tattoo racial slurs all over your body since it's your body and you can do whatever you want with it.

But that's still wicked. That's still wrong. And you have to give an account to God for it. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people were upset about anti-vaxxers because decision not to inject vaccines into their own bodies was negatively affecting other people.

But abortion even more directly and fatally affects someone else. As far as I'm aware, every single church father condemned abortion as morally reprehensible.

Long before Roe v. Wade and long before Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization, long before the United States Supreme Court, long before our country even existed, in every generation, churches have steadfastly opposed abortion and the exposure of infants and murder because of the sixth commandment until the 20th century.

earthen. I think the sixth commandment also forbids suicide. The Bible nowhere gives us the right to end our own lives.

[25 : 24] The sixth commandment has no personal object. It doesn't say you shall not murder your neighbor. It says you shall not murder, period. And I think that includes killing yourself.

We are man, not God. Creatures, not the creator. And it's not our prerogative to destroy the image bearers of God, even when it comes to ourselves.

There are several people in Scripture who commit suicide. Saul and his armor bearer, Ahithophel, Israelite king Zimri, and Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of our Lord. While Scripture makes no comment on their suicide, none of these men are exemplary characters in Scripture.

In contrast, godly characters who are set forth as examples for us to follow, do at times despair of life. They do get depressed, they do get discouraged, and sometimes they despair of life, but they never take their own lives.

Job, in Job 3, curses the day of his birth and longs for death, and yet he does not take his life into his own hands and expresses his trust in God. In Job 19, saying, for I know that my redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth, and after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God.

[26 : 49] In 1 Kings 19, when his hope of revival in Israel is dashed to pieces, and when wicked queen Jezebel is seeking to kill him, prophet Elijah is so discouraged that he longs for death, but even then he does not kill himself, instead he asks God that he might die, saying, it is enough now, oh Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers.

In 2 Corinthians 1, 8-9, Paul writes that he and Timothy were so utterly burdened beyond their strength due to their affliction that they experienced in Asia, that they despaired of life itself.

They felt that they had received a sentence of death, death, but their response was not to contemplate suicide, instead they chose to rely not on themselves but on God who raises the dead.

Even when we are faced with such a dire situation, that death seems preferable, we should not choose death because we have a God who raises the dead.

Even in the most hopeless situations, we can't have hope in a God who raises the dead. So instead of taking our lives into our own hands, we should say with the psalmist of Psalm 31, 15, my times are in your hand, God.

[28 : 11] Not in our hands, in God's hand. I believe the same principle applies to euthanasia and physician assisted suicide.

But before I say anything else, I want to clarify that there is a difference between stopping treatment and taking life. when it's certain that treatments offer no relief or cure, there is a place for the patient and her family to decide to stop going through treatment.

Letting someone die when you have no real recourse is not the same as killing someone. And euthanasia and physician assisted suicide fall in the latter category. Shortly after the Netherlands became the first democratic country in the world to legalize euthanasia and physician assisted suicide in 2001, the Wall Street Journal published an article noting the tragic irony of that development in the Netherlands.

It notes that during World War II, doctors in every other Nazi occupied nation complied with the Nazis to perform euthanasia. But the Dutch doctors never performed a single act of euthanasia, according to the 1949 New England Journal of Medicine article.

Dutch doctors even disobeyed Nazi orders to withhold treatment from the old and those with little chance of recovery. But the essayist Malcolm Muggeridge has noted it only took one generation to transform a war crime into an act of compassion.

[29 : 53] Nowadays, proponents of euthanasia frame it as the right to die with dignity. They say that it's about personal choice, but that's naive. Imagine that physician-assisted suicide was readily available in our society and viewed as a normal option.

And imagine yourself in the shoes of the sick, the terminally ill, the disabled, and the elderly. when you feel that you are a burden on your loved ones and a financial drain on our society, when insurance companies increasingly prefer to cover cheap, death-inducing drugs over the more costly life-saving treatments, when society views you as a nuisance and you feel selfish for insisting to continue living despite your decreasing quality of life.

Do you really think that you will not feel pressure to choose death? In 2019, a Dutch doctor was sued for performing euthanasia on a patient against her will.

The patient was 74 years old and she had previously asked the doctors in writing to end her life should she be admitted to the nursing home in the future. A few years later, by the time she did enter the nursing home, she had a change of mind.

But the doctor at the nursing home consulted with the patient's family and decided to administer lethal injection to the patient anyway, concluding that she was mentally incapacitated due to dementia.

[31 : 33] So this doctor killed the elderly woman in spite of her active protesting based on her written consent from years ago. shockingly, the doctor was acquitted.

This is not an isolated incident. The paper entitled First Do No Harm written by Raphael Cohen Almagor and published in the Journal of Medical Ethics observes that in Belgium, another country where euthanasia has been legal for a long time, there are over 1,000 cases per year where patients are euthanized without their explicit consent.

Based solely on the doctor's assessment of that patient's quality of life and whether it is worth saving or not. It's a slippery slope.

Soon after legalizing euthanasia in 2001, Netherlands legalized euthanasia for children age 12 and older. And soon thereafter, it approved it for infants less than one year of age.

It was not enough to let parents abort children with birth defects while still inside the womb. Now they can kill the child after he's born. Just because the child has a birth defect.

[32 : 59] Who are we to decide whether that child's life is worth living or not? child? How do we know what plans God might have for that child?

Ryan Chase is one of my friends who's also a pastor within our denomination. He serves Emmaus Road Church in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. He and his wife, Barbara, have four children and one of their children is a nine-year-old boy named Caleb who suffers from myopathy and arthrogryposis.

which means he can't move his muscles and his joints are tight and crooked. He uses a ventilator to breathe and a feeding tube to eat from.

He is wheelchair bound and he uses a computer that helps him to talk by using his eyes to look at the words and the pictures that are on the screen in sequence. When Caleb professed faith in Jesus and his church was making a testimony video for him prior to his baptism, him, Ryan asked Caleb, Caleb, what has your life been like?

And Ryan, when he asked this question, was apprehensive because he didn't know what the boy would say. He could have said, my life has been hard. He could have said, my life has not been worth living.

[34 : 26] But no, Caleb said, my life has been great. Great. who are we to decide whether someone's life is worth living or not?

who are we to say that suffering has no purpose?

No human life may be taken without divine approval. And anyone who arrogates the right for himself is presuming to play God. notice how all of these different ways of breaking the sixth commandment, abortion, suicide, euthanasia, are all about my choice, my body, my life.

But where is the humility? Where is the surrender to the will of God? Where is not my will but yours be done?

We have a Lord, we serve the Lord Jesus who laid down his life for us and we're going to tell him, my life, my choice, my body. I have another pastor friend, Tim Shorey, who is languishing with incurable cancer right now.

[36 : 00] He journals on his CaringBridge website every day and he wrote in one of his posts that his favorite song this season is whatever my God ordains is right. It goes like this, whatever my God ordains is right.

Though now this cup in drinking may bitter seem to my faint heart, I take it all unshrinking. My God is true each morn anew.

Sweet comfort yet shall fill my heart and pain and sorrow shall depart. Whatever my God ordains is right.

Here shall my stand be taken. Though sorrow, need, or death be mine, yet am I not forsaken. My Father's care is round me there.

He holds me that I shall not fall and so to him I leave it all. It's beautiful. Maybe Christians have a worldly perspective on all of these issues because they've lost sight of the eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison that awaits them.

[37 : 15] And instead, they've fixed their eyes on the light and momentary affliction here on earth. I wonder how many people have chosen euthanasia or physician assisted suicide to be spared what is comparably a light and momentary affliction here, only to be cast into damnation and eternal death.

having addressed the scope of the command, let's now look at the spirit of the command, and don't worry, the last two points of mine are not as long as the first point.

In the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 5, 21 to 24, Jesus teaches us the spirit of the sixth commandment. You have heard that it was said to those of old, you shall not murder, and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.

But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment. Whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council. And whoever says you fool will be liable to the hell of fire.

So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift.

[38 : 30] Anger, prideful contempt, vindictiveness, are at the root of murder. You may have never killed a person physically, but if you harbor bitterness and anger against someone in your heart, you have murdered that person in your mind and in your heart over and over again.

And Jesus says we'll be liable to God's judgment for that. God, whom have you murdered recently? With your thought, with the look of your eyes, or with your words, or with a gesture?

It's not enough that we haven't murdered anyone. We also need to guard our hearts lest we commit murder there. By this spiritual standard, we are all murderers.

And that's why Jesus had to come to fulfill this command. In Numbers 35, 31, and 33, which is the passage I mentioned earlier about all the instructions about the cities of refuge, it says this, you shall accept no ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall be put to death.

You shall accept no ransom for him who has fled to his city of refuge, that he may return to dwell in the land before the death of the high priest. You shall not pollute the land in which you live, for blood pollutes the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of the one who shed it.

[40 : 15] Unlawfully killing a person who bears the image of God is so grave a sin that there can be no atonement for blood shed. No animal sacrifice will do.

The only acceptable atonement is the blood of the one who shed it. That means you and I have no escape. The wages of our sin is death.

The avenger of blood is at our heels and no city of refuge will admit us. The gates are shut because our murder was no accident.

But in an amazing turn of events, when the avenger of blood sent by God himself comes, he comes not to avenge but to redeem.

Instead of putting us to death, Jesus, that's what he should have done. He should have put us to death. But instead, Jesus takes our guilt of bloodshed upon himself and he dies on the cross.

[41 : 28] He spills his own blood to make atonement for our sins. He makes the only acceptable sacrifice. Bloodshed for bloodshed.

Brothers and sisters, do you have blood on your hands? Maybe you've had an abortion and have carried your guilt in silent shame for years.

Maybe you were a doctor and you performed physician-assisted suicide in Maine, New Jersey, Vermont, or California, or one of those other states where that's legal. Maybe you've been harboring bitter anger and unforgiveness for someone in your heart and you have wished ill on that person.

You have murdered them in your heart a hundred times over. We have blood on our hands. And only the blood of Jesus shed for us can wash us clean.

For my cleansing, this I see. Nothing but the blood of Jesus. For my pardon, this my plea.

[42 : 40] Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Oh, precious is the flow that makes me white as snow.

Oh, no other fount I know. Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Let's pray.

Father, we confess that we are stained by our own sins. Lord, thank you for sending our redeemer of blood.

Thank you for the blood of Jesus spilled for our cleansing. Thank you for washing us. Lord, we owe you everything.

Our lives, our choices, our bodies, our children, our future, they all belong to you, Lord.

[44 : 06] Take our lives and let it be consecrated, Lord, unto thee.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.