

DATE: May 23, 2010

TITLE: "LIFE IS VALUABLE"

TEXT: Exodus 20:13 "You shall not murder."

SERIES: Back to Basics: sermon 6 of 10

(*PROP - Sign that reads, "Life is Valuable")

INTRODUCTION: *Leadership Magazine* reported that The Smith Agency in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, launched an advertising campaign in September 1998 to promote messages from God. "An individual simply appeared in the office one day and hired us on the spot," said the Agency's President. "He gave a large chunk of money to put more than a dozen different messages, all signed by God, that appear on area billboards and buses." Some of them you may have seen or heard.

*****(PICTURE)**(If you can find pictures of some of these or all of them, put them up on the screen)

- Example: "We Need to Talk". -God
- Example: "I Love You... I love you... I Love You." – God
- Example: "Will the Road You're On Get You to My Place?"
- Example: "Loved the Wedding, Invite Me to the Marriage." -God.
- Example: Among those messages was one referring to the Ten Commandments - It said "What part of 'Thou Shalt Not...' Didn't You Understand?" – God.

What we do and what we do not do says a lot about who we are and what we really believe. In our study of the Ten Commandments, we come now to a short four word powerful statement, "You shall not murder". It speaks to us about the sacredness and value of life.

I. VALUE LIFE BECAUSE LIFE IS VALUABLE

1. God made man in His own image.
2. This truth gives value to human life that cannot be ignored or underestimated.
"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:27)
3. Human life is special, for we are created by God in His own image.
This is the written account of Adam's line. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God." (Genesis 5:1)
4. We are truly wonderfully and fearfully made.
5. Since man is made in the image of God, taking of a man's life is the destruction of the most precious and the most holy thing in the world.
6. Our incredible value and the sanctity of human life finds its base in our being created in the image of God.

ILLUSTRATION: As one pastor, (Albert Mohler Jr.) once said, “The worth of human life is grounded in the Creator rather than in the creature.”

7. The sanctity of life, as God’s gift, is clearly established in His word.
8. The sacredness of life is related to the fact that we are made by a holy God, in His image.
9. God alone is the giver of life.
10. Life is the gift of God, which cannot be replaced by a person if he takes it.
11. Only God can breathe the breath of life into someone.
12. Life is man’s most prized possession.
13. We revere life because life is precious.
14. To God, life is sacred.
15. This commandment teaches that life is to be valued.
16. You are valuable to God, for He made you.

ILLUSTRATION: (*Picture of the book, Happy Birthday to You!, By Dr. Suess)

Like many parents, Sharon and I would read books to our daughters when they were little. Amanda had her favorite series, though they changed from season to season. Among those series were books by Theodore Geisel. Theodore started with a dream – a dream of writing children’s books. No fewer than 21 publishers rejected his work. No one wanted to take a chance on the unique, almost wacky stories and illustrations of an unknown author. Finally, a friend conceded and gave Geisel a try, publishing his work under the assumed name of Dr. Seuss. Today, his classic books have sold in the millions. Dr. Seuss has an uncanny way of making you smile. His stories encourage you and cause you to realize your unique value, bestowed at creation. Consider the following from one of my favorite Dr. Seuss creations, Happy Birthday to You!

*If you’d never been born, well then what would you be?
You might be a fish! Or a toad in a tree!
Or worse than all that....Why, you might be a WASN’T!*

*A WASN’T has no fun at all. No, he doesn’t.
A WASN’T just isn’t. He just isn’t present.
But you...You ARE YOU! And, now isn’t that pleasant!
Today, you are you! That is truer than true!
There is no one alive who is you-er than you!
Shout loud, “I am lucky to be what I am!
Thank goodness. I’m not just a clam or a ham
Or, a dusty old jar of sour gooseberry jam!
I am what I am! That’s a great thing to be!
If I say so myself, “HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ME!”*

17. God has created you.
18. You were made with a purpose.
19. You are valuable to the creator, for you were made in the image of God.
20. Value life, for life is valuable.

21. The OT's protection of human life has explicit theological roots in the declaration that God created human beings in the image of God.
"Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man. (Genesis 9:6)
22. To take a life is to ignore man's created nature and to ignore his worth in the sight of God.
23. The act of murder involved the abrogation of divine power, the taking away of that which God had given and which God alone could give, namely life itself.
24. The prohibition on murder, therefore, is a matter not merely of horizontal human rights, but of our accountability to God for the lives of our fellow human beings, for in this sense, we are our brother's keeper.
25. This commandment cannot be separated from the first five commandments and our relationship with God.
26. Violation of any one of these commandments is violation of community.
27. Care of an individual and a community effort is needed in the preservation of human life.
28. Therefore, murder stands at the head of the Old Testament's list of iniquities.
29. There are five different Hebrew words which describe the taking of a human life.
30. The Hebrew word used here is 'ratsach', translated "kill or murder". It is a verb that occurs far less frequently than the more general terms.
31. In the 46 times the word is used in the Old Testament, almost every usage carries the sense of willful hurtfulness or mayhem toward others, often in the form of blood vengeance and murder.
32. It is a word generally used only of unauthorized killing, though sometimes unintentional, and means, 'to take an innocent life, either by criminal intent or through negligence'.
33. The verb came to designate, 'those acts of violence against a person, which arose from personal feelings of hatred and malice'.
34. The command in its present form forbids such an act of violence and rejects the right of a person to take the law into his own hands.
35. Parallels to the commandment against the taking of life are found elsewhere in the Pentateuch, in Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy.
36. This is not a simple command, as it has been used to bring up all kinds of social issues, including, suicide, euthanasia, abortion, war, capital punishment and others.
EXAMPLE: The account of Cain killing his brother, Abel in Genesis 4, reveals the seriousness and tragedy of the first murder recorded in scripture.
EXAMPLE: The tragic story of God's anointed King David killing the husband of Bathesaba in II Samuel 11, and the murder of Naboth, the owner of a vineyard, murdered for greed in I Kings 21, are other accounts that again show the tragedy and series of this sin.
37. In the Old Testament, this commandment was not absolute, for provision was made for excusable (21:13), accidental (Numbers 35:23) and justifiable homicide (22:2).
38. In the Old Testament, His Word reveals that for certain offences, man had the right to terminate another human life (Genesis 9:6; Numbers 35:16-18, Leviticus. 24:17).
39. In OT times, people were put to death in obedience to the command of God, for the Old Testament speaks clearly of war and capital punishment.

40. Most theologians agree that the only way you can make the argument that all killing is wrong is to select certain verses from the Bible and reject others, but private or personal killings is proscribed, prohibited or outlawed.
 41. Thus, some translations have used the word, 'murder' instead of 'kill' to try to discern and define the biblical difference and understanding of this commandment.
 42. The focus in the Old Testament, and of this command, is clearly on the value of life.
 43. We are living in a time today when it seems human life is valued less and less.
 44. This commandment reminds us that human life is valuable.
 45. We are to value life, for life is valuable and sacred.
 46. God, the Creator, loves and values that which He has created in His own image.
 47. Every life He created is valuable to the Creator, who made us in His own image.
 48. People are so valuable to God that He gave His only Son, Jesus for us.
- (*Picture with this) John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believe in him shall not perish but have eternal life."**

49. As the lover of our souls, God recognizes the true value of ordinary- looking people like you and me.

ILLUSTRATION: Some years ago now, a gem dealer was strolling the aisles at the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show, when he noticed a blue-violet stone the size and shape of a potato. He looked it over, then, as calmly as possible, asked the vendor, "You want \$15 for this?" The seller, realizing the rock wasn't as pretty as others in the bin, lowered the price to \$10. The stone has since been certified as a 1,905-carat natural-star sapphire, about 800 carats larger than the largest stone of its kind. It was appraised at \$2.28 million. It took a lover of stones to recognize the sapphire's worth.

50. God loves people.
51. Value life, for life is valuable.

II. BE CAREFUL IN YOUR ACTIONS BECAUSE LIFE IS VALUABLE

1. One American is shot, stabbed, beaten, or strangled to death every minute, with someone being killed in America every 22 minutes.
2. It seems that no matter where you turn in our society, or even our world, there are murders.
3. With a murder rate of 10 in every 100,000, your chances of being murdered are far greater than your chances of dying in an airplane or automobile crash.
4. It has been estimated that (2 million) 2,000, 000 Americans now alive will one day be murdered:
5. The news is filled with murder, freeway snipers, gang killings and "drive by" shootings.
6. It has been stated that the average child by the 6th grade has witnessed 8000 murders on TV and 110,000 acts of violence.
7. Violence has made murder so routine that we have become complacent about life.
8. Over popcorn in our homes, many have watched men and women shot, drowned, burned alive, crushed by cars, eaten by sharks, swallowed by snakes, consumed by aliens, and numerous other things, through television and movies.
9. The past hundred years have seen truly horrific acts of evil against humanity.

10. This commandment causes us to stop and honestly search our hearts.
11. Murder is a crime against God and against one's fellow man.
12. Therefore, this commandment impacts the way we live our life, as well as our attitude towards life.
13. When we value life that God has created, we must stop and evaluate our actions and our attitudes.
14. We are responsible for our actions or lack of action.

“Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor’s life. I am the Lord.”

(Leviticus 19:16b)

15. We are to take responsibility for our actions, for our actions can impact others.
16. We are not to be negligent when it comes to human life
17. As a pastor for these 30 years, I have sat with people in many settings and situations where the choices and actions of others had deeply impacted their lives, and, in some cases, taken the lives of those they loved.
18. In Exodus, there is a verse that, at first, might seem irrelevant to many of us, but, if we stop and understand its message, in reality, it speaks to all of us.

(*Picture of a bull in pasture etc.) “If, however, the bull has had the habit of goring and the owner has been warned but has not kept it penned up and it kills a man or woman, the bull must be stoned and the owner also must be put to death.”

(Exodus 21:29)

19. The issue was simply that if you had a bull that you knew was dangerous and you did not keep it penned, you were responsible.
 20. Look for the bulls or things in our lives that can harm or hurt others.
 21. This verse is one that promotes life and doing all we can to keep others safe.
- ILLUSTRATION: When I was a youth pastor, things were different. We did not have cell phones like we do today. I heard one report a while back that said, “75 percent of teenagers today have a cell phone.” However, we did have cars when I was a youth pastor. One Sunday evening, I received a call at the church about 20 minutes before the evening service. One of our new Christian teenagers had just hit a child with her car. I hopped in my 1964 Rambler and was there quickly, for it was less than a mile from the church. When I arrived, she was in a state of shock. She was screaming, crying, shaking, hitting herself, blaming herself. This was a kid who was a sharp, active, energetic, well-liked, popular teenager. But, she had a little red Volkswagen and, that evening, she had gone racing around a corner and hit a child. In this case, thankfully, the child was not seriously injured, for the bike had taken the bulk of the impact. And, as the story unfolded, she began to calm down and give thanks, along with the parents, that this little child was going to be okay. She would have done anything to take back that last few minutes of driving. She was reminded that day that her actions can impact the lives of others.**
22. The actions we take in life must show forth our value of life.
 23. As Christians, we must allow this command to impact our actions.
 24. This verse addresses relevant issues like euthanasia, sometimes described as "self-murder", abortion, genetic engineering, and suicide, for it calls us to cherish human life.
 25. Abortion has been described as the most terrible manifestation of negligence toward human life.

26. Tragically, abortion is now a routine medical procedure, under the moral logic of personal autonomy and a woman's right to choose.

EXAMPLE: Some statistics have pointed out that over forty-five million unborn Americans have been killed in the womb since the Supreme Court sanctioned the practice in 1973, (Roe v. Wade).

27. Abortion is murder! It ends a human life, and that is the domain of Almighty God. **In Psalm 139:13-16 it says "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."**

28. Life is far too valuable to just throw it away.

29. Once again, life is a gift of God, and we are not to take it through abortion or euthanasia.

30. The literal meaning of euthanasia is "dying well," but the term has come to mean, 'the intentional medical termination of a person's life'.

31. Abortion and euthanasia allow us to become judges of what is a valid life and what isn't.

32. Suicide is another sad breaking of this commandment.

33. We live in a time when, every 90 minutes, a teenager tries to take his/her life. Every 30 minutes one succeeds!

34. Our young people need to know they are valued.

35. Tragic stories this year in the news have again reminded us of the influence young people can have on their peers.

36. We must help people to realize the value of life and that they are valuable.

(*Picture) "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body." (I Corinthians 6:19-20)

37. You are valuable and precious to the Lord.

ILLUSTRATION: (*Frame this) Devotional writer, Oswald Chambers, in his book, My Utmost for His Highest, said, "Never allow the thought, 'I am of no use where I am'; you certainly are of no use where you are not."

38. We don't always realize the struggles people are having and the difference our actions can make.

39. We need to be responsible for our actions.

ILLUSTRATION: (*Picture of bridge, if possible) In May of 2009, on the Haizhu bridge in Guangzhou, China, a disturbed man in deep financial debt was poised on the edge of the bridge, contemplating suicide. Because of him, police had closed the bridge, disrupting traffic for five hours. People stood watching, as police cordoned, to see what he would do. Suddenly a 66-year-old man pushed his way through the police cordons and walked up to the man considering suicide. He reached out and shook the hand of the troubled man. Then, he pushed him off the bridge. Later, he explained why. "I pushed him off because jumpers like [him] are very selfish. Their action violates a lot of public interest. They do not really dare to kill themselves. Instead, they just want to raise the relevant government

authorities' attention to their appeals." Fortunately, the police had spread an inflatable emergency cushion beneath the bridge, and as a result the suicidal man was injured but not killed. Jesus does not push troubled people off bridges. A bruised reed He will not break. A smoldering wick He will not snuff out. He is patient and merciful.

(Craig Brian Larson, Editor of PreachingToday.com; source: Associated Press, "Passer-by Pushes Suicide Jumper in South China," www.news.yahoo.com (5-24-)

40. Jesus sees man in his deadly and hopeless situation and comes to our rescue.

"Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrow, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities, the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed." (Isaiah 53:4-5)

41. In our hopelessness, Jesus reached out with action to bring us into general safety and give us purpose.

42. Most people are not going to push a man off a bridge intentionally, but we might stand by and do nothing.

43. If we really value life, we cannot stand by and do nothing.

44. We must speak up with the hope Christ brings.

45. Teenagers, if you know Jesus, you know the hope that Christ can offer your peers.

46. If you know Jesus, you know the hope God offers to those who feel hopeless.

47. Take action by speaking up about Jesus.

48. Take action by praying. – the 52 Week Prayer Challenge focuses on praying for others.

49. Take action to use the responsibility we have of voting in our nation for that which protects human life.

50. Take action, as the Spirit lead each of us in our daily lives, for life is valuable.

51. Take action by listening to others and being sensitive to those who need hope.

52. Be careful in your actions, for life is valuable.

53. Do your actions and attitude show the value of life?

III. LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF BECAUSE LIFE IS VALUABLE.

1. This commandment flows out of the fact that because God is God in the community of Israel, there must be mutual universal respect for life.

2. The prophets extended its meaning to include all that cuts at the roots of life, such as injustice and robbing a man of the means of livelihood.

3. The Ten Commandments show that God cares about our relationship with God and God cares about our relationship with others.

Example "Do not hate your brother in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in his guilt. "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord." (Leviticus 19:17-18)

4. The grand positive expansion of this command, 'You shall not murder' is, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself'.

5. This commandment flows out of God concern about how we treat others.

6. Listen again to what Jesus said about the commandments.

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.” (Matthew 5:17)

7. In the New Testament, we find that Jesus did not abolish them, but He strengthens them by further describing what they mean.
8. Jesus helps us to have a greater grasp of this command and what it means to our daily lives.
9. Jesus expands on this sixth commandment further in Matthew 5:21-22, when He says, **“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment’. But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.”**
10. This commandment, like adultery, can be violated not only overtly, but as well in mind and in intention.
11. Jesus condemns angry contempt and all its cousins thereof, such as animosity, malice, hostility, malevolence.
12. Jesus is saying that we mustn’t think we are safe just because we haven’t shed blood.
13. We are guilty enough to receive punishment if we have harbored anger, and Jesus is teaching that murder is simply the ultimate and most destructive form of anger.
14. Proverbs warns about anger saying, **“Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared.” (Prov. 22:24-25).**

ILLUSTRATION: In his autobiography, Number 1, Billy Martin told about hunting in Texas with baseball great, Mickey Mantle. Mickey had a friend who would let them hunt on his ranch. When they reached the ranch, Mickey told Billy to wait in the car while he checked in with his friend. Mantle’s friend quickly gave them permission to hunt, but he asked Mickey a favor. He had a pet mule in the barn who was going blind, and he didn’t have the heart to put him out of his misery. He asked Mickey to shoot the mule for him. When Mickey came back to the car, he pretended to be angry. He scowled and slammed the door. Billy asked him what was wrong, and Mickey told him that his friend wouldn’t let them hunt. "I’m so mad at that guy," Mantle said, "I’m going out to his barn and shoot one of his mules!" Mantle drove like a maniac to the barn. Martin protested, "We can’t do that!" But, Mickey was adamant. "Just watch me," he shouted. When they got to the barn, Mantle jumped out of the car with his rifle, ran inside, and shot the mule. As he was leaving, though, he heard two shots, and he ran back to the car. He saw that Martin had taken out his rifle, too. "What are you doing, Martin?" he yelled. Martin yelled back, face red with anger, "We’ll show that son of a gun! I just killed two of his cows!" **Anger can be dangerously contagious.**

15. Choose to forgive.
16. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus reached behind the commandment to the principle involved-the sacredness not only of human life but also of human personality.
17. Murder is more than an act of the flesh; it is an attitude of the heart.
18. The call is not to do harm with my hands or from my heart.

EXAMPLE: Turn to I John 3:11-15. When the writer of I John speaks about love, he uses the murder of Abel by his brother, Cain as an example: “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.” (I John 3:14-15)

19. We are to forgive and not bear grudges in our hearts.
20. Have you murdered anybody with your words, thoughts, or attitude?
21. The cause of Christ has been injured by those who have demonstrated hatred in their action.
22. Have you shown contempt for others on the highway, in the store, at the gas station, at school, or at work?
23. Confess, if you have a murderous spirit towards someone, and allow the Lord to heal and restore.

Paul wrote, Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.” (Romans 12:19)

24. Christians are called to choose to forgive and choose to love.
(*Picture) “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” Ephesians 4:32.

25. Practice God’s plan for unconditional love and absolute forgiveness of others.
26. Christians have the responsibility to love.
27. Loving God and loving others will impact our behavior.

“Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman, has fulfilled the law. The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.” (Romans 13:8-10)

28. It is a tragedy when a Christian does unloving things in unloving ways in the name of Jesus.

29. It is more than being nice; it is loving your neighbor, the person in need.

ILLUSTRATION: Evangelist, Dwight L. Moody, the Billy Graham of his day, said something so crucial. “If only we could make the world believe that we love them.” said Mr. Moody, “There would be fewer empty churches and a smaller proportion of our population who never darken a church door. Let love replace duty in our church relations, and the world will soon be evangelized.”

30. We need to stand up with love in this day, for every life is valuable.

31. A little less than two thousand years ago, God gave his Son to be murdered so that we could be given life eternal.

32. It was the demonstration of what love looks like.

33. You are so valuable, He gave His only Son for you.

“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.” (I Peter 1:18-19)

34. Jesus reaches out with love because you are valuable.

35. Following Jesus, we are to love our neighbors as ourselves because life is valuable.

36. Every life is a life for which Christ died.

ILLUSTRATION: Tim Sanders, Leadership Coach and former Chief Solutions Officer at Yahoo!, often tells the story of a young manager named Steve, who was challenged by one of Sanders's radio interviews to love others. Steve resolved to visit each of his employees, all six of whom he had not seen face to face in over six months, even though they worked in the same building and on the same floor. Steve wanted to tell each of them how much he appreciated them, and name one thing they did with excellence. After the visit from Steve, one of his software engineers, Lenny, presented him with an X-Box gaming console. Steve was taken aback, as he knew Lenny had taken pay cuts over the last year. But, he was more surprised to learn that the money had come from the sale of a nine-millimeter pistol—a pistol Lenny had bought months earlier with the intention of killing himself.

Lenny told him of his mother's death the previous year, and of his ensuing loneliness and depression. “I started a routine every night after work, eating a bowl of Top Ramen, listening to Nirvana, and getting the gun out. It took almost a month to get the courage to put the bullets in the gun. It took another couple of months to get used to the feeling of the barrel of the gun on the top of my teeth. For the last few weeks, I was putting ever so slight pressure on the trigger, and I was getting so close, Steve—so close.” He then said, “You came into my cubicle, put your arm around me, and told me you appreciated me because I turn in all my projects early, and that helps you sleep at night. You also said that I have a great sense of humor over the e-mail and that you are glad I came into your life. That night, when I went home and got the gun out, it scared me silly for the first time. All I could think about was what you said—that you were glad I came into your life. The next day, I went back to the pawnshop and sold the gun. I remembered that you had said you wanted the X-Box more than anything, but with a new baby at home, could not afford it. So, for my life, you get this game. Thanks, boss.”
(From an e-mail newsletter by Tim Sanders; submitted by Rich Tatum, Romeoville, Illinois)

37. Love saved a life and made the difference.

38. Love your neighbor as yourself, for life is valuable.

CONCLUSION: (Story of man who was going to commit suicide at El Morro)

I. VALUE LIFE BECAUSE LIFE IS VALUABLE

II. BE CAREFUL IN YOUR ACTIONS BECAUSE LIFE IS VALUABLE

III. LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF BECAUSE LIFE IS VALUABLE