

# Ethics of Life

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 07 September 2025

Preacher: Nick Lauer

- [ 0 : 00 ] Welcome to our adult Sunday school class that we've entitled The Ethics of Life.! Just a bit of housekeeping as we start. Our class is going to end at 9.50, so we can head next door from the service. So I'm going to lecture for about 30-40 minutes, and then we'll leave 10 minutes of questions before we break.
- So be sure to save your questions for that last part of the class, and we'll try to cover as much as we can. Question-wise, in the last 10-15 minutes of our time together. As we begin, let's praise the Lord.
- Father, Son, and Spirit, right in God, we give you praise today, for you are worthy of praise. And we ask for your help and your blessing as we begin this class.
- Would all that we say and do be pleasing in your sight, and in line with the purposes of your kingdom and the good news of Jesus Christ our Lord. It is in Jesus' name we pray.
- Amen. Amen. Alright, come on in, grab a seat. You know, we kind of get the pull up here, but we may transition. We are already. We're going to just squeeze in.
- [ 1 : 12 ] Next week we may need a lower level of Jesus, and we'll assess. But, okay, so as we begin, let me ask, why have you decided to attend a course on ethics?
- And what exactly would you mean by that work? Well, in this course, I am simply going to use the word ethics in a fairly non-technical way, I think.
- Why ethics will simply mean deliberate reflection on how human beings ought to live. Simple enough, right? Deliberate reflection on how human beings ought to live.
- Isn't it interesting that as human beings, we don't simply ask, what can I do?
- But what ought I do? That is, we ask questions about right and wrong, and about good and evil. Now, contrast, that very human experience, would say a shark, right?
- [ 2 : 16 ] When a shark in the ocean gobbles up a school of fish, or a sort of errant server, or whatever it decides to eat up, the shark doesn't later reflect and wonder, is that something I want to do?
- Or, is gobbling up fish in this way the sort of shark that I want to become? Or, is this the best way I can order my shark community for flourishing?
- No, right? The shark just eats the fish. It's a good way. There's no moral or ethical reflection at all. But human beings are unique in this way.
- We do wrestle over whether a course of action is right or wrong. Some of us wrestle, whether it's right or wrong, to be fish, right? We do ponder about what sort of people we want or ought to become in our character, in our habits.
- We do reflect on what sort of communities we want to build for flourishing. We don't just ask, what can I do or what do I want to do, but what ought I do. So I'm guessing you're here in this class because you aren't human.
- [ 3 : 27 ] I don't see any sharks. Good. And you are interested in engaging in some deliberate reflection on how we as human thought live. But at this point, kind of just as we're doing some introductory things, we might ask, is deliberate reflection really necessary?

After all, is it right and wrong or good and evil somewhat obvious? Do you remember Jiminy Cricket's advice to Pinocchio? After the very mixed Pinocchio into a real boy.

Testing your Disney knowledge right now. Yeah, right? Well, this is what Jiminy says. He starts to sing. He says, when you get in trouble and you don't know right from wrong, when you meet temptation and the urge is very strong, interestingly, right, when Pinocchio becomes a real boy, he must now face that question, right?

That is, moral awareness and responsibility goes hand in hand with being human. I think that something was right. Okay, do you remember how the rest of Jiminy's song goes? When you meet temptation and the urge is very strong, when you get in trouble and don't know right from wrong, give a little whistle.

And always let your conscience be your guide. You see? Who needs deliberate reflection? Just let your conscience be your guide. It's that easy. Listen to that little voice inside and it will always steer you in the right way.

[ 4 : 58 ] But is it that easy? After all, we might ask, what is it that informs our conscience, right? Where do we learn the values and the goals that really do shape our intuitive or kind of pre-reflective sense of right and wrong, good and bad?

What if the communities and cultures that we inhabit and the common stories that we tell have shaped us to think in a certain way that does not actually lead to the genuine human world?

Or what if we face a decision where two seemingly good values could lead us in opposite directions if we follow them? How do we decide?

Okay, so, Pache, Jimmy Cricket, we can't simply just listen to that little voice inside, the so-called conscience, and just do what it says inside.

And I'm guessing that's also why we're here in this class, because you realize that as human beings, we do have to engage in deliberate reflection of how we often live. Now, we could reflect deliberately on lots of human living and being, right?

[ 6 : 16 ] We could do environmental ethics. That is, how often human beings live with respect to the creative order, with respect to the environment, with the business ethics, and how often humans live with respect to the role of business and economics and work.

But for us, over the course of the next eight weeks, we're going to be doing what we call the ethics of life. That is, how, as human beings, ought we to live when it comes to protecting, honoring, or even taking the life of another human being?

That's going to be our focus. Okay, now, before we dive into that topic directly, I want to ask you another question, not just what is ethics, but how should we do this thing called ethics?

More specifically, how, as Christians, should we do ethics? What should shape and guide a Christian's deliberate reflection on how human beings ought to live?

Well, I want to suggest that there are four things that have to shape our deliberate reflection as Christians. First, we must do our deliberate reflection on how human beings ought to live. We must do it evangelical.

[ 7 : 35 ] I'm going to use the white word. New markers. Hey, they're so nice. I like this purple, too. It's all here. Yeah. If you've been to any Sunday school classes before where you've had the misfortune of me teaching, you'll know my handwriting is terrible, but I just put it up there to keep you there.

We have to do our ethical reflection evangelical. Now, when I say evangelical here, I don't mean sort of American evangelicalism, that sort of cultural phenomenon. Rather, I mean, our thinking must, first and foremost, be shaped by what the New Testament calls the euangelion, the evangelion, the good news, the gospel.

A truly Christian ethics must be, in that sense, evangelical ethics, ethics rooted in the gospel. And what is the gospel? The gospel is the person and work of Jesus Christ.

The incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ is the good news. Jesus Christ must be the fountainhead of all of our ethical reflections.

Why? The philosophy is why. Let me mention this, too. Because Jesus Christ is a manual, God with us.

[ 8 : 55 ] That means in Jesus Christ we see, on the one hand, who God is in all of his fullness, in all of God's grace and truth.

If we want to know what God is like, what God requires, then we must stare fully in the face of Jesus Christ, the word became flesh.

Moreover, in Jesus Christ, we see what it means to be truly human. In him, and in his teaching, we see how human beings ought to live.

We see what a truly human life looks like. So we have to do this deliberate ethical reflection evangelically. That is, with Jesus Christ, et cetera.

Second, Christians must do our ethical reflection scripturally or biblically.

[ 9 : 59 ] If we do begin with Jesus, we're going to be led, inevitably, to consider the whole scriptural witness in our ethical reflection. Inevitably, we do.

Why? Because Jesus himself affirmed the truth and goodness and authority of the entirety of the Bible. For Jesus, what scripture says, God says.

And that is true both of the Old Testament, which Jesus repeatedly quoted in the front, as God's word, as well as the New Testament. Jesus himself authorizes the apostolic New Testament.

Jesus stands at the center, affirming the old and authorizing the new. Remember how in John 14 through 16, Jesus promises that he will send the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, who will bring to remembrance all that he taught them, and they will bear witness in his name.

And the resurrected Jesus teaches them and commands them, before his ascension, to go and proclaim his works, and to teach in his name. That is, in his authority. And that is the apostles' own self-understanding, as well, when you read the New Testament.

[ 11 : 12 ] They understood themselves to be teaching not with their own authority, not with a merely human authority, but with the authority of the Lord Jesus. In 1 Thessalonians 2.13, in one of Paul's earliest letters, he says, You received the word of God, which you heard from us, and accepted it, not as the words of men, but as what it really is, the word of God.

You see, there Paul is saying, when I came and taught to you in my office as an apostle, it wasn't just merely man's words, it was God's words. Again, Paul says, If anyone is not a prophet or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord.

If anyone does not recognize this, he is not. That's verse 14. And Peter also affirms this when he writes in his second letter. Chapter 3.

Chapter 3. Our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand. Isn't that kind of not pretty? That's a sidebar.

That even the apostle Peter admitted that there are some things in the New Testament that are hard to understand. We have to pause, we have to think, we have to pray. Okay. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction as they do the other scriptures.

[ 12 : 36 ] Isn't that very interesting? There's Peter looking at Paul's writings and saying, they too are the scriptures. And I think Peter would have said the same thing about his own writings and John's writings and the other apostolic writings.

Okay, so our ethical reflection then must take both the Old Testament and the New Testament as God's word. Our ethical reflection has to be biblical. We can't do Christ-centered evangelical ethics without it being scriptural ethics.

We have. Paul says in 2 Timothy 3.16, All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the people of God may be completely in the work.

Now, of course, just a little hermeneutical principle. As Christians, we have to interpret the Old Testament in light of the Old Testament, right? Just as you would interpret any book according to the whole story and not just the first half.

I mean, Pride and Prejudice, right? Pride and Prejudice would be a very different book if we stopped reading when Elizabeth Bennett rejects Mr. Darcy's first proposal. Imagine that...

[ 13 : 46 ] I'm getting a lot of blank stares. Okay. Terrible example. You know, we're not going to learn more about it. But trust me, it would be a very different book, right? Okay, so we shouldn't ignore the Old Testament.

It is God's word. We must listen to it. Yeah? But we interpret it in light of the name. Okay. Third then. We have to do our deliberate, ethical reflection ecclesiastically.

Oh boy. Ecclesiastically. What do I mean by that? What do I mean by that?

What I mean by that is, we have to do our ethical reflection together. With and as the church, the ecclesia. And that means that we cannot and must not do our ethical reflection alone.

Right? And we have to listen and reason together, not just with our fellow Christians of today, but also listen and reason together with the Christians who've gone before us.

[ 14 : 59 ] We have to attend to the rich tradition of Christian reflection that's gone before us in the history of the church. C.S. Lewis used the phrase chronological snobbery to describe an attitude that views our contemporary age as the most enlightened and clear-sighted in all those generations that came before us.

And he rightly warns us against that attitude. We have to attend to what the church has said in the past on the basis of the gospel, on the basis of the scriptures.

We have to attend to what the church has said in the past if we were to know what the church ought to say the thing for today and the present. Okay, so we have to do our ethical reflection ecclesiastically.

Last, we have to do this deliberate ethical reflection prayerfully. Consider the text that we looked at last week in our sermon in Colossians chapter 1.

Remember that our Paul says in verses 8 and 9, So from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.

[ 16 : 27 ] For Paul, in the rest of the Lord, for Paul, in the rest of the New Testament, the wisdom that we need to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord has to come from God through people.

We need the Holy Spirit to grant us wisdom and understanding. And not just wisdom and understanding, right? Not just a kind of head knowledge, but we also have to pray, because we need the Holy Spirit to enable us to actually walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

Ethics isn't just about thinking. It's about living. Deliberate reflection without deliberate walking and letting it be is useless.

So, we have to pray. How easy is it for us to think these things, but not make these things? The presence is, don't we have to pray as we do this work?

Not just to understand properly, but the why. The word of it. So I think this is a start for how, as Christians, we need to kind of do this ethical task.

[ 17 : 36 ] Lastly, I want to just ask why. Why do we do ethics? I'll be brief here. On the one hand, we do ethics for the good of our neighbor, right? We want to know what we ought to do so that we can love our neighbors and promote their fruition.

We also do ethics for the good of self, right? We want to live in a way that pleases God and is in line with His purposes and the greater order He's made, and that's for our good.

We flourish when we live as God intends us to live. We live whole, satisfying, integrated lives. So it's good for us to live this way.

But ultimately, we do ethics for God's glory. In seeking God's will and living according to Him, we demonstrate that God is worthy of our praise and worthy of our love.

God is our creator and our remover. And in order to magnify His great glory and grace, in order to demonstrate how wonderful God is, in order to glorify Him, to show how He's our highest delight and our greatest good, we seek to live all of our lives in a manner that's pleasing to them.

[ 18 : 56 ] Jesus said, if you love Him, what? You think you might demand us? Right? That's how we show our great love for God, by living in line with His words and with His ways.

Okay, now, so much by way of prolonging preamble. What this class seems to be, over the next eight weeks, is really an extended meditation on the Sixth Commandment.

I had a whole thing I was going to do this morning about the Ten Commandments, and it's so great to use them as a structure for ethical teaching. But then I realized, I wouldn't even get to the Sixth Commandment. Come on! If you want to talk about that afterwards, we'll talk about that afterwards.

God says in the Sixth Commandment, you shall not murder. That is going to be the start from where we begin this class. We want to explore the theological and practical invitations of this commandment. What does it tell us about God?

What does it tell us about how we ought to order our lives before God? Not just what actions are right or wrong, but what sort of character should we cultivate? What sort of community should we develop?

[ 20 : 01 ] And also we want to ask, how does this commandment flow from and lead us back to the gospel, the saving person and work of Jesus Christ?

Now, before we dive into specific applications of this principle, right? Before we do some applied ethics to things like abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, warfare, all the things that this Sixth Commandment leads us to, I want to take the rest of the time today, and sometime next week too, we're going to do this in kind of two parts, to simply look at the community itself and some of the biblical tracts that it runs on and some of the different implications of it.

Now, if you're familiar with the work of John Frank, I'm going to be following pretty closely here his work in the doctrine, in his big book called The Doctrine of the Christian Life, which I found very helpful to think about this.

So, let's do some of that work. When we put this commandment of you shall not murder in the context of the whole Bible, we see the theological background to this commandment is that God is the Lord of life.

According to the Bible, God is not just a God, but the living God, right? Not static, not impersonal, not a force or an energy or a principle, but the triune God of life.

[ 21 : 29 ] And the Bible is all about life and death. Think about it. Where does the Bible begin? God is the creator and giver of life, right? In Genesis, God creates all things, and all things do well.

He first forced with life. God gives to creatures that swim and swarm and fly the breath of life. And at the climax of God's creative work is what? Human beings.

We read in Genesis 2 that evocative story of God taking the dust of the earth and breathing personally into it the breath of life, so that the man becomes a living creature.

Life, as it were, sums up the fullness of God's, of man's existence, of human's existence with God. Not only physical life, but also spiritual life.

And that fullness of life in communion with God symbolized in Genesis by what? By the tree of life that humans have access to.

[ 22 : 28 ] The truth. The truth. However, the word that most fully summarizes the result of Adam's fall is what? His death. In Genesis 2.17, remember, God warned that if Adam disobeyed and broke the covenant, that he would surely die.

And that is what we see in Genesis 3. God pronounces a curse that Adam will return to the dust. And the following chapters of Genesis begin to bear this out. In chapter 4, we see the first one where Cain kills the people.

But then in chapter 5, what do we read in that book of the generations of Adam? Again and again, as each generation is accounted, what do we hear that refrain? He died.

And he died. And he died. And he died. And he died. Except for Eno. That's a different story. But the rest of them died. And died. Died. What a trick. The unfaithfulness to God separates us from life and brings death.

And death pervades human history after the fall. And this death, like life, this death is also physical and spiritual.

[ 23 : 44 ] Physical death ends our participation in earthly events. But spiritual death is a loss of fellowship with God and the Lord of life. And unless God's grace intervenes, that spiritual death leads to eternal death.

To permanent separation from God and from God's blessing. To be spiritually dead, that is, broken in our fellowship with God, implies that there's nothing we can do to escape eternal death.

Now, what does God do about this death that we fall into? God sends his son. God sends his son. Right?

God gives a promise. He keeps that promise to send his son. And he sends his son to endure death in the place of his spiritual living.

When Jesus died, his people died with newness. And when Jesus rose, his people rose with him to the newness of life.

[ 24 : 55 ] According to Acts 3.15, Jesus is what? The author of life. And John's Gospel especially makes clear that fellowship with Jesus, trusting in him, and igniting ourselves to him, leads not just to earthly flourishing, but to eternal life.

So, throughout Scripture, God continues to offer life, not just earthly life, but life in fellowship with himself, the one who is life itself. God delights in life.

Do you see that? You know, it's a measure of the seriousness of sin that death prevails all around sin, all around sin.

But is it not also a measure of the greatness of salvation that in Christ, death is swallowed up by life? So, not only is the Bible a book about life and death, but the Gospel is the good news of how the living God brings life to the world.

So, ethically, in light of the whole Scripture, in light of this full story of God and the Gospel, we should certainly say that our attitude towards life and death is incredibly important.

[ 26 : 12 ] And when we return to the sixth commandment, what does it basically say? The sixth commandment is basically saying that life and death are God's provided. They are God's business.

They are God's business. God is the Lord of life and death. He alone has the right to give and take the life away.

And we humans may never take life without His authorization. Rather, we have to respect life and honor it as an aspect of our reference for God.

And especially, especially that respect must go to human life. Because humans are made in the image of God. Alone, among all creation, God says of humans in Genesis 1, 27, 1.

So, God created man in His own image. In the image of God, He created him. Male and female, He created him. His own image. Now, we're not going to get into a full explication of what the image of God means and what it entails in spring.

[ 27 : 17 ] We're probably going to do a class on the doctrine of creation. We're really deep into that. But suffice it to say, at the very least, the image of God means that every human being, every human being, we see here in Genesis, male and female.

We might include young and old. Regardless of class, education level, race, ability, regardless, every human being has unparalleled big meaning.

Because we bear His image. He made us in His own image. We reflect colors. And we represent them in the world of God's image. In fact, human beings have so much big meaning of work because of this image bearing.

Do you remember that after the flood in Genesis 9? What is the penalty for taking human life? Genesis 6 says, Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall this blood be shed.

For God made man in His own image. In other words, God places the highest sanction on taking human life because they are made in this image.

[ 28 : 32 ] So much so the doctrine of creation leads us, right? God made all things. It is His right. We are made in His image. Think about the doctrine of redemption as well.

In the incarnation, God reaffirms the dignity and value of human life in His image. Think about it.

From Jesus' conception in the womb of Mary. What do we confess as Christians? Not just He showed up one day. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

From conception in the womb of Mary, through His bodily death, bodily resurrection, Jesus has taken all of human life into God's self.

Every moment of human life, from conception to resurrection, is now hollowed by the incarnation of God the Son. There is no moment of human existence that is not dignified and continues to be dignified by the ascended, embodied Lord Jesus God the Son.

[ 29 : 38 ] So we have to especially respect human life, not only by virtue of creation, but also by virtue of redemption. Right? To summarize, as Creator, God alone has the right of a human life and death.

As Redeemer, God reaffirms that He alone holds the keys of life and death. Is that not what the resurrection shows us? Despite human's verdict over the life of Jesus, God reverses it and says, I hold the keys of life and death.

And Jesus comes to John in the book of Revelation saying, what? I can't say that in hell, I am. And in the work of creation, God makes human beings in His image.

And in the work of redemption, God takes human flesh and reaffirms the dignity of every moment. God is the only one. Okay, now with that theological background, let's return to the Sixth Commandment itself.

The Hebrew verb, in this commandment, is the verb, is the verb, uh, Bratzak. Bratzak. Uh, similar English translations, if you like, uh, say the King James version.

[ 30 : 44 ] Any, any King James readers here? A couple, yes, you're admitting to it, I love that, good. Uh, some, uh, older translations, like the King James, will translate that word and translate this command.

You shall not kill, right? Which just sounds kind of general. Newer translations, if you pick up one of those, like the ESV that we use on Sundays, will render, you shall not murder. Um, okay, well, what do we make of this Hebrew word?

Well, most often in the New Testament, this Hebrew word, Ratzak, refers to killing that is unlawful or forbidden. It's not actually used for killing animals, for example.

It's not used for killing in war. And we're gonna get into warfare and capital punishment as we go. But this isn't the word that we use for those. So, it probably is a better translation of the term to say you shall not murder rather than nor general kill.

However, that Hebrew word does differ from our English word murder, and that it applies to a much broader range of things. Things that we might call today in our system, manslaughter, or in English, and homicide.

[ 31 : 55 ] Now, I know there might be some lawyers in here. I know there's at least one. You know, what's murder today? Murder is sort of, involves both intent to kill and premeditation, right?

Voluntary manslaughter includes intent to kill without premeditation, when someone, like, kills someone else in rage. Involuntary manslaughter means there's no intent to kill, but someone behaves in a way that's likely to kill someone, like reckless drivers.

Then you have negligent homicide, the just failure to take adequate precautions. It would seem that this Hebrew word kind of covers that whole range of things.

Let's look at some examples. Deuteronomy 19.5 describes a case when someone goes into the forest with his neighbor to cut wood, and his hand swings the axe to cut down a tree, and the axe head slips from the handle and strikes his neighbor so that he dies.

Right? Now, the implication there is that that killing is accidental. So that's not what we would call murder. And yet, the word that describes the person responsible for that is a form of the verb used in the Sixth Commandment.

[ 33 : 05 ] The ESV translates it manslayer, which is kind of an archaic term, but it's probably a good translation. Right? So we see there that that kind of involuntary or negligent homicide is kind of conquered by this term.

Think as well about Deuteronomy 22.8. This is always one that, you know, when you're studying the Old Testament, you're like, what is this? God says, when you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof.

What's a parapet? It's like a low wall. It's like a retaining wall. Yeah. Now, why would you have to build a parapet? Because they use roofs as fountains, basically.

And as torches, as places in the evening where you go. It's cool. When you build a new house, make a parapet for your roof, that you may not bring the guilt of blood upon your house if anyone should fall from it.



In other words, if you don't take the proper precautions when building your house to make sure there's a guardrail to prevent people from falling on your rooftop patio, you're guilty for that. So you see, the sixth commandment doesn't just speak to what we would call to the urn or premeditated urn, and not even just to what we would call insubritable.

[ 34 : 12 ] What's the advantage to not taking appropriate caution and care and action to prevent the unjust loss of life? So then, what we see is that even in the Old Testament context, the sixth commandment tells us that we do have to guard against the possibility that someone might be killed.

Being alert to correct those life-threatening elements or situations, right? So it's about more than just murdering someone, it's about valuing and protecting life.

And working to prevent those things that would lead to the loss of life. Now, you can already start to see a trajectory here, right? When we turn to the New Testament, we see that Jesus is going to trace this commandment, not just in making sure that we're preventing situations, but straight to our hearts.

He, too, will tell us that the sixth commandment is about much more than simply not murdering, but he goes even deeper into the roots of the commandment. Let me read Matthew 5, 21 through 26.

He says, 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.

[ 35 : 34 ] Whoever insults his brother will be liable to counsel. And whoever says, you fool, will be liable to the hell of fire. So, if you're 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. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you're going to the court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison.

Truly I say to you, you'll never get out until you've paid the last penny. So you see, for Jesus, the sixth commandment forbids not just murder or manslaughter or negligence, but anger.

Not just anger, but contempt. Right? Whoever says, you fool, right?

Whoever insults his brother, what are those? They're expressions of contempt. My badness. My badness. My badness. My badness. My badness. So you see, Jesus wants us to see what lies underneath murder.

[ 36 : 41 ] He wants us to be on guard against the seeds in our hearts that give rise to murder and anger. Contempt. And we see in the New Testament, picking up that thread, the Apostle John underscores Jesus' teaching when he writes, everyone who hates his brother is a murderer.

And you know that no murderer has a murderer. But Jesus also shows us that the sixth commandment doesn't just forbid something.

Right? It also requires something. It requires that we pursue reconciliation. In fact, according to Jesus, this reconciliation is even more important than the duties of public worship.

In other words, Jesus is saying, you can't pretend to enjoy fellowship with God while you harbor contempt toward one another. We must go reconcile. And what enables this reconciliation?

How can we move past our anger and contempt, especially when someone has wronged us or hurt us? How can we then go and forgive? Again, listen to the Apostle John in that same passage.

[ 37 : 46 ] In that same passage, he says, in that context, he says, we know that we've passed out of death into life because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer.

If you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. And he says this, by this we know life. That he laid down his life for us. We ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

So you see, the gospel teaches us not just to refrain from taking the life of another, but to lay down our lives for the sake of the other.

Please, please lay down his head. We don't just seek to rid our hearts of anger and contempt, but we seek sacrificially the other's good, especially that most difficult of acts, which is forgiveness and reconciliation.

Where we lay down our right to return her to her and instead release the other from what they owe us. Okay. All of that requires a lot more unpacking, does it not?

[ 38 : 52 ] I hope to do that next week. So let's pause here and let's have some questions to discuss. And then I have no homework assignment for you. But first, no questions. Any questions?

I know we covered a lot this morning. Matt, yeah, go ahead. You mentioned that we should do ethics ecclesiastically and you mentioned the past.

Yeah. Would you say we have an equal obligation to, you know, talk with other contemporary examples?

Yeah, I think so. Yeah, I think so. I think I sort of hit on the history of that because I think in our tradition we sometimes overlook that. We're good at talking with one another and looking at the contemporary scene. But sometimes we're not as conversant with what's come before us as American Protestants would be totally blind.

So I maybe put the emphasis there a little bit. But yes, yes, we should be talking with others. And I think it's important too that we're, if we're able to, to be engaging with these questions with others from different parts of the world in this.

[ 39 : 59 ] I think oftentimes we're able to see each other's blind spots when we're not from the same cultural location. We see things in the gospel and scripture maybe a little more clearly. And we need that help to correct our blind spots too.

Go ahead, Matt. Do you have a follow up? Yeah. You may be absolutely right. But it just appears to me that with the political divide that we have, which extends within, I think, a lot of evangelical churches.

Sure. We, I have in the past and presently assumed, you know, that it's those guys who have blind spots.

Yeah. It's easy to do that, isn't it? Yeah. And it's hard. It's hard. You know, we're going to get into some topics in this course that are very emotionally challenging topics, right? And it's hard to have conversations about those when we feel like so much is at stake when someone views things differently than us.

So it does require the Holy Spirit to give us His peace and His patience and His understanding and supernatural love for our brothers and sisters in those moments so that we can have peaceable conversations and fruitful dialogue.

[ 41 : 22 ] We may not agree at the end of the day. And we may be fully convinced that they're totally wrong. Right? And yet we can still have those conversations respectfully and in honoring way.

And so it's great. And man, if we can model that as the church, goodness, would we not be so blind in our role? I mean, imagine, I mean, I bet there's different opinions about some of these topics in this room this morning. Imagine if we could talk about those things with dignity without shouting each other out of the room or treating each other with...

That's true. That's true. That's true. Never going to happen. I kill at least 20 people a day. 31 years, Pastor.

Yeah. The thing is, that brings me to the point where, you know what? Sure. It's not how I act or how I behave or what I believe. It's the completed work on that cross that saves me at the end of the day.

Because all I can bring Jesus every day is my sin. Yep. Not just one, multiple. But the Holy Spirit does live in you. Yes!

[ 42 : 28 ] Yes! And that's what I take comfort in. That's right. He's teaching us for glory and glory. Yes! Isn't that wonderful? He is! I've seen the change. Yeah. Amen, you know? But if I don't kill 20 people a day...

Sure. I'm a mess! We ought to do... Thank God! We ought to do our... You know, maybe I can add a bit from here. We ought to do our ethical reflection. Right?

I'm a mess! That's for him. Maybe time for one more question. Jeff? There's a difference between temptation and sin. Yes!

Thank you. That's a big issue. Yeah. Because we all grow up in... We have certain emotional things that we assume are true and real. Yeah.

So we're all fighting against whatever that disposition. Same for other cultures. Yeah. So that's a big... But then the other one is we... When we say we live by faith, what is not a faith is sin.

[ 43 : 24 ] So the question is, when you come to those conflicts between what I feel is really true and right and what is true and right, then I need faith to make that transition.

It seems to me we're always conflicted and we always have to choose faith, which is, you know, Christ says that I never knew you.

Well, if we don't know him, we need to know him, which means we need to unite the kingdom of God. All right.

It is almost 10 hours. We're afraid. Here's your homework assignment. I can't see my... And then come back for forgiveness. No, here's your homework. Here's your homework.

We said we have to be doing this work ecclesiastically. Go home, get on the Internet, and search for... Pick your favorite Reformed or Protestant confession.

[ 44 : 25 ] Just start there. Like the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Heidelberg Catechism, one of those, one of those and look up how they expand. Why don't you do Luther's catechism as well, Luther's confession on the ten commandments? Look up how they reflect on the six commandments.

And see how they begin to unfold and unpack along biblical lines and practical lines all that's contained in this command. I think that would be a very fruitful exercise to begin to think ecclesiastically and scripturally and even know about these things.

All right. Speaking of prayer, let me pray and then we'll finish. Lord Jesus, we come to you knowing that we need your grace to live in the way that you've called us and redeemed us to live. You set us free from death that we might live for life.

We thank you for your spirit and thank you for the promise that you've made the good work that you've begun in us. Lord, help us in these things over the next few weeks as we engage and wrestle with these difficult topics.

God, help us to do so with the love that you've poured into our hearts by the love of God. God, would our church know a deeper unity as we've talked about these things, a deeper love for you, a deeper desire to want to please you, and a deeper gratitude that you have rescued us from death for you.

[ 45 : 51 ] It's a love for Jesus our Lord. We pray this Father in his name. Amen. Amen. Amen.  
Amen. Amen.