

# VI: Not Murdering

Turn with me, if you have a bible, to [Deuteronomy chapter 5](#). Today we are talking about the command to not *murder*. So [if we were content](#) with just a *basic* understanding of this command, today's teaching could be the shortest sermon in the history of the world. I would say "let's not murder," and all of you would say, "cool—we were already *planning* on not murdering. And we actually prefer not *getting* murdered. So we'll be *glad* to not murder." And then I would *pray*, "God, please help us keep not murdering each other. Amen," and then we'd all go to brunch.

But [most of you know the bible well enough](#) to know that it's not always that "basic" or "simple." [And most of you know me well enough to know I don't really do short sermons.](#) Which means that today, we're going to go a little deeper than a "surface" reading of this commandment, including getting into some potentially very challenging things. / But at the end of the day, this probably *is* one of the commandments in the list of Ten that [makes a good bit of sense](#) to us—at least on the surface. It's quite obvious to us that a society can't *function* well if people feel complete freedom to murder anyone they want, and if there are no consequences in place *for* doing so.

*However*, while it seems obvious to *us* that murder be prohibited, not all societies agree with that perspective. [Including our own society](#), in the not-so-recent past. I'll remind you that just a couple hundred years ago in *our* country, people used to have [duels](#) with each other—like Wild West-style duels.<sup>1</sup> People actually thought this was a reasonable method of conflict resolution. If you disrespected or dishonored someone, you would then stand with your back to them while holding guns, take some amount of steps forward, then turn around and take your best shot at *murdering each other*. People would *watch* this happen, in the city square, as *entertainment*. Some of the people who wrote our nation's founding documents—the ones we abide by to this day—thought "yes, this is how we will resolve our differences with each other: *duels*."

Which I personally just [have all kinds of questions about](#). Like, was there no one who spoke up and said "hey guys, what if when we have beef with each other, we like *punch* each other? Or open-hand *slap* each other. Or call each other really mean names. Or something like *that*? Really *anything* other than murder." But some people were like, "nah man—he said something mean about my dad. One of us has to die as a result." *Unreal*.

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<sup>1</sup> For an abbreviated list, visit [this page](#).

So **all of that to say**, believe it or not, *our* society is actually not *that* far removed from functionally *disagreeing* with this command from the bible—the one about *not murdering*. People back then were *very* okay with murder in certain scenarios. And, in *some* ways, we're actually *still* fairly comfortable with it (more on that as we move through the teaching this morning). So as common-sense as the command might sound to most of *us*, this sixth commandment is actually still very needed and very relevant to us today, in a number of different ways. All of which we'll get into this morning.

So let's **start by reading the command** again, and then we'll get into it. Deuteronomy 5:17 says, quote:

**You shall not murder.**

**To murder is to take human life.** It's to decide that *another* person's life is not worth *continuing*, and taking decisive action against them in light of that assessment. **The sixth commandment is a statement from the creator of human life, saying that you and I are not allowed to take human life.**

The **reason we aren't to do that** is actually very intentional thought-out. It's because **according to the Scriptures, there is something distinctly different about human life, from all other types of life.** If you start reading **in Genesis 1** of the bible, you'll read about how God creates *all* the *other* types of life on the planet. And in almost every creative act, God brings forth life from the *earth itself*. He says things like "let the *water* bring forth living creatures...", "let the *land* produce living creatures..." God brings *animal* life *out* of the *earth* itself. **But then, when he creates human life, it's an altogether different method.** Read with me on the screen, starting in **Genesis 1, v. 26-27:**

*Then God said, "Let us make **mankind** in **our** image, in **our** likeness, so that they may **rule over** the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild **animals**, and over **all** the **creatures** that move along the ground." So (notice this part) God created **mankind** in **his own** image, in the image of God he created **them**; male and female he created them.*

So **when creating human beings**, everything God says sounds way more *personal* in its intention. He says, "Let us make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness." He *doesn't* tell the *earth* to bring forth *people*. He doesn't tell the *waters* to bring forth *people*. He says, "*I'm* gonna do this." *I* am going to make *these* creatures. Humans will be made in *my own* image. *My own* likeness. **Which means humans are altogether different from the rest of creation.**

**Genesis 2** actually gives us even *more* detail on this idea. If you've never read Genesis, Genesis 1 is kind of like the "overview." It gives us a big picture, 30,000-foot view of God creating *everything*. But then Genesis 2 zooms in specifically on God's creation of *humanity* and gives even more *detail* about *it*. *There*, we read about God creating *Adam*, the first human being. And there, we get some *specifics* on just how *distinct* human life is. It says *this* in chapter 2, v. 7:

*Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.*

God **breathed into man's nostrils** the breath of life. The very *breath of God himself* causes the man to become alive. That is at least *part* of what it means for humans to be made in the image of God: they have divine *breath* in their *lungs*. The theological term for all of this is *imago dei*, meaning "image of God." **Humanity is distinct and different from the rest of creation, in that humans bear in themselves the image and very breath of God.**

**But then, just two chapters later** in the story, the first thing that a human *takes* from another human is their *life*. You might be familiar with the story of Adam and Eve's sons, Cain and Abel. As the story goes, Cain was *angry* at Abel—he was *jealous* of him. And because of that anger and jealousy, he *murders* Abel—takes his life. Takes the breath *out* of his lungs that God *put* there. And God immediately confronts Cain about it, saying:

*"What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground."*<sup>2</sup>

**God so values human life**, that when Cain kills His brother, God says that his *blood* "cries out" to Him from the ground. We see no mention of anything *like* this when any *other* creature is killed—**because God's connection with humans is different. The value he places on human life is distinct. Such that when the life of a human is taken, God feels it.** It *grieves* him. It *angers* him. / We see that in the account of Cain and Abel. **We see that in the life of Jesus when his friend Lazarus dies.<sup>3</sup> Jesus, the creator of life, who knew He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead, still wept after Lazarus died. Human death brings tears to the very face of God.** The point being: human life is *sacred* to God. Humans have inherent *dignity* and *worth* given to them by the God who created them.

And **all of this is actually the heart behind** the sixth commandment. Which means that **"do not murder" is not just a command about care and harm. It is that, but not just**

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<sup>2</sup> Genesis 4:10

<sup>3</sup> See John 11:1-44

**that. It is actually a command about the “sacredness”–the sanctity–of a human life.** Human life is set apart, distinct, different from the rest of creation. Human life is sacred to God; life *belongs* to God. **Which means we don’t get to decide of our own accord to *take it away*.** It’s *his*.

Now, to some of us, **this might raise *practical* questions about what all “counts”** as murder. About if there are ever any “*exceptions*” to the rule. **So, things like killing in the context of a *war* or serving in the *military*. Things like killing in an effort to *defend yourself* or to defend *others who can’t* defend themselves. Things like capital *punishment of various types and forms*.** And I think those are very important questions to ask. So if those things specifically are on *your* mind when learning about a command like this, feel free to come talk to me after the Gathering or shoot me an email,<sup>4</sup> and I’ll be glad to point you to some resources to help you study further on all of that.

**But for *today*,** here’s all I want to say. Whether or *not* the bible condones taking a person’s life by *those* means–bare minimum, I think we can say that as followers of Jesus, we should never be *eager* to take *anyone’s* life–*regardless* of the situation. Best I can tell from the Scriptures, there’s really no place for a follower of Jesus to say or think things like, “I can’t *wait* to join the military so I can wipe out some terrorists.” “I *hope* someone tries to break into my house in the middle of the night so I can use my gun on them.” “I’d *love* to see some drug dealers get *executed* by the state.” As followers of Jesus, it’s hard to make the case that we should ever be *excited* about the death of another image-bearer of God. Might it be *necessary* in some situations? *Maybe*. But should we *rejoice* in it, look *forward* to it, be *excited* about it? *Never*.

I say that **in part because** the Scriptures tell us that even God *himself*, who values *justice* more *highly* than us–even *he* does not *delight* in death, even in the death of *wicked* people. **Ezekiel 33:11** puts it like this:

*Say to them, ‘As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live.’*

**God never *delights* in the *death* of human beings.** When a person’s death means they can’t continue to commit evil, we can be *grateful* that the *evil* won’t continue–sure. But that’s different than celebrating their death *itself*. **So there’s *room for good faith debate*** among followers of Jesus about whether those types of things should be included in the command not to murder, or whether they’re different. **But I think it’s very clear**

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<sup>4</sup> You can find emails for all of our leadership team [here](#).

~~that followers of Jesus should never celebrate a human life ending. That would seem to indicate a departure from the worldview of the Scriptures. Human life is sacred, precious to God. That's true of the most faithful follower of Jesus to the most wicked, depraved person there is—all of them have the breath of God within them. And that should, on some level, impact how we think about and interact with them as a result. Does that make sense?~~

Okay. So beyond that sort of stuff, what should this command mean to us at a practical, everyday sort of level? For that, let's take a look at what Jesus had to say about this commandment when he expounded upon it in one of his teachings. This is Matthew 5, starting in v. 21. Look with me up on the screen:

*"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder (so that's the six commandment, verbatim), and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I (Jesus) tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca (an ancient insult),' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell."*<sup>5</sup>

So Jesus starts by referencing the sixth commandment: "you shall not murder." But then, he dials it up a notch. He says that if you have a deep-rooted, unaddressed anger<sup>6</sup> with another person, you are actually liable to the same judgment as a murderer. / You see, God has always been most concerned with our hearts. Not just with how we behave, but with our hearts that drive our behavior. So in biblical terminology: he's not just concerned with the fruit. He's also concerned with the seed that becomes the tree that bears the fruit.

So here's a sermon soundbite for you: **murder is the opposite of sex**. Write that down, and then let me explain, because you're gonna want some context for that: murder is the opposite of sex. **Sex is the extreme unification of a relationship to the point that it creates life (or at least has the potential to). Murder is the extreme deterioration of a relationship to the point that it creates death. Murder is the furthest extreme of a relationship breakdown.** Which is why Jesus doesn't just say, "hey guys—do your best not to end up murdering each other." He actually goes further than that. He says "don't even let the seed of murder stay in the ground. Pluck it up before it even has a chance to become a tree that bears the fruit of murder." Deal with anger in your heart, wherever it exists.

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<sup>5</sup> v. 21-22

<sup>6</sup> Greek *orgizō*: a fixed anger focused on the offender rather than the offense

Did you know that the frustration, self-righteousness, and resentment in your heart right now towards someone else is actually the *seed* of murder? Did you know God takes it *that* seriously? Did you know that your anger and bitterness towards that person at your job, towards that family member, towards that person in your LifeGroup—did you know that's where the fruit of murder *comes from*? In fact, sometimes we even *reveal* that connection in the *language* we use about our frustrations with people. When someone frustrates us, we might say something like "I swear I could *kill* them." When a relationship has gone sour and you want nothing to do with a person anymore, we sometimes say things like, "that person is *dead* to me." *Anger* is the *seed* of murder.

Even if you think about some of the most horrible atrocities in human history, this is often where they start: a coldness, residing bitterness, or resentment towards a person or people group. A belief that *their* life or their way of life is the *problem* in the way of *my* life flourishing. And the end result of that line of thinking, if it goes unchecked and unaddressed long enough, is wanting to *remove*—take the life of—that other person, so that *my* life can continue flourishing as I want it to. And **that's the point that Jesus is making here: that a heart posture of anger, or insult, or devaluing the life of another person can and absolutely has led to horrible outcomes.**

Now just to be clear: I'm *not* saying that I'm actively worried about you guys going out, any day now, and murdering people because you're angry. **But I am saying—and I think Jesus is saying—that some of us don't take relational breakdowns in our life seriously enough.** And I *am* saying that *all* of us are capable of holding the seed of murder in our hearts. Of *nourishing* it. *Cherishing* it. Maybe even *watering* it. **Some of us have become entirely too comfortable with the anger we hold in our heart towards fellow image bearers of God.** People who carry in them the very breath of God, and are sacred to him. Some of us could stand to take *those* types of situations, and those postures of our heart, far more *seriously* than we do right now.

Maybe it's anger or resentment towards your spouse. Maybe it's towards roommates you live with. Maybe it's towards people you work with. Maybe it's just people you know of who are on the other side of the political aisle from you. People on the other side of the world from you. Could be most anybody. **But anytime I hold in my heart the belief that another person is less than me**—that their *mistakes*, their *weaknesses*, their *failures*, their *sins* against me make them *less* worthy of dignity and *more* deserving of my wrath. And anytime that I decide that *I* am the rightful judge of that person's value, the rightful judge of their worthiness: **that's the seed of murder at work.** And whether you ever act on it or not, Jesus says that you will be liable to *judgment* for it, short of him intervening in your heart.



And **so packed into this command** to not murder are all of these implications of seeing ourselves and others *rightly*. Seeing the true *sacredness* of another person's life. And seeing our own *humanness*—our own not-God-ness—as well. *All* of us are capable of holding the seed of murder in our hearts. All of us are capable of regarding human life as less than the sacred, unique, work of God that it is. And all of that is what the sixth commandment is about.

So the **implications of this** are massive. This means that the sixth command includes in it the call to uphold the value of every human life made in God's image. **Every human being you meet, everyone you interact with, everyone you work with, go to class with, live with—all of them are human beings made in the image of God—and are to be treated as such.** This is why the Scriptures are *filled* with with instructions for God's people to care for the poor, the oppressed, the immigrant, the widow and the orphan: because *all* of those people *belong* to God. They *matter* to *Him*, and so they *should* matter to God's *people*.

This is why virtually **everywhere the kingdom of God has broken through**, everywhere the Church has gone in the world, along *with* it has usually come ministries of *mercy*—care for the sick, the poor, the widow, the orphan, the displaced foreigner. This is why for *years*, scholars—Christian and secular ones—have concluded that the vast majority of our *own* nation's *emphasis* on care for the poor and the disadvantaged, is due primarily to the influence of the Church.

This is why Christians step in to serve those who are marginalized and cast aside. **It's why we serve the poor** and honor them in whatever ways we can. Because people in poverty are made in God's image and are sacred to him. It's why we speak up about the historic and at times, *present*, mistreatment of people of color in our country. Because they carry the very breath of God in their lungs and are sacred to him. It's why we create *space* in our church for the addicted and overwhelmed and the broken to pursue hope and recovery in Jesus—because *those* people are made in God's image and are sacred to him.

This **means that your boss** at work is sacred to God. Your most frustrating, irresponsible *coworker* or *employee* is sacred to God. The person who cut you off in *traffic* is sacred to God. That annoying person in your *LifeGroup* is sacred to God. That very weird, off-putting person in your *family* is sacred to God. Your *mother-in-law*, your *father-in-law*, is sacred to God. Your political *enemy* is sacred to God. The life of the presidential candidate that you are presently most outraged by is sacred to God.

And while we're on the subject, you are sacred to God too. You see, this is what makes suicide so tragic: it's a person who carries the very breath of God within them, who somehow has come to believe that things would be better if their life was over. Human life, all human lives, including your own, are sacred to God. As the psalmist wrote so vividly in Psalm 139:

*For you (God) formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.<sup>7</sup>*

Some of us have come to believe that somehow, for some reason, we are less than, unworthy, unloved. Some of you have been told you are an accident—you were not. I don't care what type of planning your parents did or did not do: God had a plan. And it involved you being alive and in the world. It involved you being uniquely you. He knit you together, as you are, in your mothers womb, just like Psalm 139 says. **The Scriptures tell us that before you were even a fully formed person, God set his care and attention and affection on you.**

So at this point in the teaching, as we talk about the command to uphold the value of human life, I do think it would be pastoral negligence if I didn't at least bring up the topic of abortion. And I do understand that that may mean I am about to swat a hornet's nest. I'm fully aware that it would be much easier for me to not bring it up, given how divisive it has become in our society. But I honestly do not think the Scriptures afford me that option. So here's how I'd like to navigate it. I'd like to start by offering a handful of disclaimers, so that you understand what I am and am not trying to do.

First, upon me bringing this up, no doubt some people will think something like “ugh, here we go again. Christians harping on the only issue they seem to care about. It seems like all Christians want to talk about in the public square is abortion.” And on that note, I'll go ahead and acknowledge that I too am often frustrated at the tendency of some Christians to talk about this one issue non-stop. It in fact is not the only issue we should care about as followers of Jesus. It certainly shouldn't be something we talk about more than we talk about the gospel. And sometimes, some Christians do that. But that said, I do not think it is fair to categorize me or us at City Church as such Christians. We have been a church for seven years now, and to my knowledge, we have never talked at-length about abortion, other than just saying the word a couple times. Some would argue we should have by now; maybe they're right. But regardless, to say that we

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<sup>7</sup> Psalm 139:13-16



are just getting on our soapbox would not be at all an accurate description of *our* church. So I would humbly ask that you not put us in categories that are actually not descriptive of us.

**Second** disclaimer. Some would say that **since I am a man**, I do not have any *right* to speak about the morality of abortion. The thought is that this issue impacts women far more than it impacts me, so therefore I should just keep my mouth shut. And on one level, I *agree* with the assessment: there is zero doubt that *this issue* impacts women far more substantially than it impacts me. **But at the same time, I am neither Jewish nor German; and I still would like to maintain the right to say that the Holocaust was morally wrong. Most of us are neither Jewish nor Palestinian, and I think it matters that we speak up about what's happening in that region of the country right now. I don't think you have to be directly involved or impacted to speak to the morality of things happening in the world—and I don't think you think that either.** *Facts* are not male or female. Facts do not have a gender or an ethnicity; facts are facts.

**Third** disclaimer. I have worked very hard to say in the next few minutes exactly what I *intend* to say. I'm not going to *say* things I don't *mean*, and I'm not going to *mean* things I don't *say*. So I would humbly ask that you not *assume* I *meant* things I did not say. If I *meant* something, I would have *said* it. And if I *didn't* say something, it's *not* fair to assume I *meant* it. Make sense? **Fourth and final** disclaimer: my *hope* in what I'm about to say isn't to simply disagree with you or assert that you or others are wrong about this issue. My hope is to *persuade* you. You'll note that *persuading* someone is a much more *difficult* objective than just disagreeing with someone. So if nothing else, maybe this will cause you to *root* for me as I speak, because I am an underdog, shooting for the stars.

Okay. With those disclaimers out of the way, **here's what I'd like to say** on the subject. I'm gonna give you my *conclusion*, and then I'll give you my *reasoning*. **My conclusion is that an elective abortion is the unjust taking of a human life, and is therefore a violation of the sixth commandment.** That's my *conclusion*—here is my *reasoning*. An unborn baby is a human life. It **isn't another species**. We have no examples on record of a life beginning as a human fetus and then becoming a different species by the time it's born.

An unborn baby is **inside its mother's body**; but it **isn't a part** of its mother's body. It has its own DNA, its own unique genetic code. It has its own blood type. At eight weeks of gestation all the baby's organs are present and forming. The *brain* is functioning, the *heart* is pumping, the *liver* is making blood cells, the *kidney* is cleaning the fluids, the *finger* has a fingerprint. At eight weeks, some babies recoil at pain. So the brain is already receiving signals that say “that hurts.” It is *human* and it is *alive*. **If finding**

bacteria on Mars means that scientifically there is “life on Mars,” then scientifically, a fetus constitutes *life* in the womb.

I realize there is **some debate** out there about when life begins. To be sure, an unborn baby is very reliant on its *mother* for survival. But so is a *sixth* month old—and I don’t think any of us would say that six month old babies aren’t human beings and don’t deserve to live. There are some *adults* who are reliant on the help of others for *their* survival—I don’t think we want to argue that they aren’t *human beings* because of that. An unborn baby is **less developed** than a baby out of the womb, to be sure. But similarly, a five year old is less developed than a teenager—they aren’t somehow less *human* because of that. An unborn baby is **very small**, but size should not determine *value*. My wife weighs far less than I do and is noticeably shorter than me—I don’t think any of us want to insist that that makes her less of a human being than me.

I would argue that **the conversation** surrounding abortion actually **should hinge** on this one question: ***is abortion the taking of a human life?*** That actually is the question we have to answer. Because if it’s *not* the taking of a human life, then *yes—obviously*, the rights of the mother take precedent over what’s in her womb. If it’s no different than an organ in the mother’s body, then *yes—the mother has the right to make whatever decision she wants to make*. / But if there is a human *life* in her womb—if it’s a living being that God has literally put his *breath* within—then that changes *everything*. And I would say I am not compelled in the slightest by arguments that a baby in the womb is *not* a human life—for all of the reasons I just mentioned and more. And more importantly, I don’t think *God* is compelled by those arguments either. Based on passages like Psalm 139, I think it is very clear how God feels about even the ‘unformed substance’ of a human life.

Now, *practically*: **if you’re bothered or frustrated** with anything I just said, I’d invite you to send me an email via the website, and we can talk more at-length about it. You don’t need to vent to your LifeGroup or LifeGroup leader about what I said, because *I’m* the one who said it, and you can just talk to *me* about it. I’ll be glad to hear you out on any *biblical* reason you have for believing otherwise. Now, if you have *other* reasons for not liking what I just said—*political* reasons or *societal* reasons or *cultural* reasons—I think you’re going to find a discussion with me fairly unproductive on this. I’m a *pastor*; my job is to teach what the Scriptures say—when it’s culturally popular, and when it’s not. But if you have *biblical reasons* for believing otherwise, I’ll be glad to have the discussion with you.

But with *all that said*: **I understand that in a room** this size, there is a very good chance that for some of us, abortion is not a political or societal issue, as much as it’s a very

*personal* one. Statistically, just *under* 1 in 4 women will have an abortion by the time they're 45.<sup>8</sup> Which means there's a very good possibility that *many* people in this room have wrestled with this issue on a *personal* level. Some of you may have been in a situation where an abortion felt like the best option. Some of you may have been in a situation where it felt like it was the *only* option. Some of you may have been in a situation where *medically*, you had to choose between *your* life and health and the life and health of an unborn child.

And I personally cannot *imagine* what being in a situation like that feels like. I cannot *imagine* having to make that decision. So I want to be very clear that none of what I just said is an attempt to shame you, make you feel less than, or heap any additional guilt on you. It is simply an attempt to bring some moral clarity to a situation that sometimes is seen as cloudy. **If you personally have had an abortion, or have considered one: what I want you to hear this morning is that *nothing*—and I do mean *nothing*—puts you beyond the reach and the grasp of the grace and love and compassion of the Father.**

If you spend much time in the Scriptures, you will notice that God has quite a habit of reaching into the darkest situations and breathing his *life* into them. Some of the people God chooses to rescue, redeem, and use for his kingdom purposes were guilty of far *more, and far worse than having an abortion*.<sup>9</sup> Because one thing God *does* is that he breathes *life* into *dust*—literally, and metaphorically. In all sorts of different ways. And **regardless of what you've done in your life, *nothing* you've done can disqualify you from *that*.** No *one* can disqualify you from that. If *anyone* tells you that *your* life is somehow less valuable to God because you *have* made that decision, *they* are actually the ones that have not properly understood the heart of the sixth commandment.

So today as we wrap up this morning, here's what I'd like to *invite all of us into*. I'd like to invite all of us to join "**Team Sixth Commandment.**" For all of us to be on the side of *valuing* human life—*all* human lives. *Born and unborn. Rich and poor. All races and colors and backgrounds. People we get along with and people we honestly don't. People that vote like we do and people that vote nothing like we do. People we really enjoy hanging out with, and people that annoy the snot out of us. And the list goes on.*

Because, you see, *when you derive* your understanding of humanity from the opening pages of Genesis, **the only logical thing to conclude is that every human life bears God's image.** *All* of them. Every human life contains in its lungs the *breath* of God. Which means that *every human life* is deserving of dignity and respect and

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<sup>8</sup> [Source](#)

<sup>9</sup> Moses, David, and Paul—to name just a few.

compassion—without exception, ever. And when you follow Jesus, you give your life to someone who *opposes* death in all its forms. But **not only does Jesus oppose death**—he actually *overcame* death on our behalf. **In the kingdom of God, even *death* doesn't have a final say.** Look with me at **Romans 6** on the screen:

*For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.*

Part of the reason **Jesus went to the cross** is to show you and me that in his kingdom, even something as horrible as death isn't final. It isn't forever. It's a doorway into eternity to everyone who knows and follows Jesus. Which means that death in all its forms—murder, abortion, sin, bitterness, war, conflict, violence, suffering, and anything else you can think of along those lines—*all* of those things have an expiration date in the kingdom of God. Their demise is coming. And when you follow Jesus, one day, you get to live in a world forever without *any* of those things.

So **every week after the teaching**, we go to these tables and take the bread and the cup. When we do that, we are remembering the moment that *Jesus'* death struck a fatal blow to death *itself*. Jesus once said as he ate a version of this meal with his disciples: "I will not eat of this bread and drink of this wine until I drink it anew in the kingdom of God." So the next time we eat this meal with Jesus in the flesh, it will be when death is gone forever. So until then, we practice and we hope for that day. And we say "come, Lord Jesus. And make it all new again."

Let's pray.