

# The Right to Kill

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God has been cast out of our modern society. He is not merely ignored, but definitely rejected.

God's law is considered to be archaic, unsuited for our modern day. It plainly teaches: Thou shalt not kill. But modern man says, I have the right to kill, if it is to my advantage. Our modern society openly declares that man has the right to choose, the right to decide to abort the unborn child.

This is not ignorance, but wicked defiance of God's laws. Scripture tells us that even the pagan who never heard of the Ten Commandments still knows the difference between right and wrong. "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law are a law to themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another." (Romans 2:14, 15)

The Supreme Court does not ask whether abortion is right or wrong, but merely asks, what is the will of the majority of the people?

Our present presidential campaign centers to a great extent about this question of the right to kill. The outcome depends to a great degree on public sentiment, whether it has advanced so far that the right to kill is agreed upon by the majority.

A few years ago, when we were in Jamaica boys on the street shouted after us, "Yankee go home. You kill babies." They did not rationalize, they knew right from wrong.

Can you imagine what will happen as this sin develops? Already the unborn are being checked to see whether they are normal and well formed, if not, they may be put away. What will prevent the killing of all severely handicapped, or of the aged and infirm who serve no useful purpose and become a burden to society?

Scripture teaches us that lawlessness will characterize the end of the ages. This right to kill is another sign that the end is drawing near.

This is not an isolated instance, but is obviously a symptom of the times in which we live.

Do you wonder that this gun-toting generation kills at the slightest provocation? Do you wonder that stealing is a crime committed by those in big businesses, by those in leading positions of authority, as well as by drug addicts and slum dwellers? Do you wonder that the streets in our large cities are no longer safe to walk on? Or that jails are over-crowded, and that criminals are released without having served their full sentence?

Also, the seventh commandment is boldly trodden under foot.

For many the marriage bond has become nothing more than a protection of one's rights. A marriage license is regarded as a mere piece of paper. Many couples live together without bothering about getting married, and without being compelled to go through the trauma of a divorce when they weary of their companionship. Nor are they ashamed of their sinful way of life.

Homosexuals are not condemned for their evil practices, as is required in the Scriptures (Rom. 1:26, 27), but are condoned, defended. Instead of admitting that this unnatural lust arises out of their depraved nature, they are to be accepted in society as living according to their natural needs. Even some churches are accepting them as members in good standing.

The TV programs find their appeal by a strong emphasis on sex. The present day magazines and the modern novels would have no market if they did not boldly describe all sorts of sinful sexual relationships.

But even worse than that, instead of condemning sexual intercourse as sin outside of the marriage bond, young and old are all but self-seeking, we easily understand such a reaction of horror. But we must not be inclined, over against all the Sabbath desecration of our day, to react in a wrong way by taking a Phariseeistic attitude toward this fourth commandment. It is easy to make Sunday a day of precept upon precept, saying, "You may not do this and you may not do that." But that is not the Sabbath day! The Sabbath is not a day of doing **nothing**! That is how the Pharisees conceived of the Sabbath. To them there was **value** in doing nothing on the Sabbath day. And when Jesus and His disciples **did** things on the Sabbath - picked corn on the Sabbath, and **healed** on the Sabbath - they would kill Him. Violate that law of doing **nothing**, and you are worthy of death.

We must not be Pharisees. The Sabbath is not idleness. Jesus would condemn that Phariseeistic attitude by example. It was not an accident that He healed repeatedly on the Sabbath. In Matthew 12, Jesus healed on the Sabbath the man with the withered hand. He could just as well have told the man, "I'll meet you here tomorrow at 9:30, and heal your hand." That certainly was not an emergency, a life-threatening situation. The same is true concerning the incident of the man at the pool of Bethesda, as we read in John 5. That man had had his infirmity for 38 years! Certainly, his healing could have waited a few more hours. And even when Jesus healed him, He could at least have told the man, "Now leave your bed here; come back tomorrow and pick it up. It's the Sabbath." But no, Jesus says, "Take up thy bed and walk." What an offense to the Jewish idea of sitting idle on the Sabbath! But Jesus would teach us that there is no value in doing nothing on the Sabbath. In itself such outward observance of rules and forbidding of all activity is principally no different from the wickedness of those who pay no attention at all to this fourth commandment. Both approaches ignore the fundamental idea of the Sabbath. Obedience to this commandment comes not in a legalistic conformity, but only by an experiential understanding of salvation in Jesus Christ. And well might we ask ourselves the question: Do I understand the implications of my salvation with respect to the fourth commandment of God's law?

The cure for all Sabbath desecration comes only in the way of understanding the fundamental idea of the Sabbath. Many pertinent questions confront not only young people, but all God's people today: How strict must we be in making Sunday a day different from the other days of the week? Must Sunday be void of all activity? May we not do things of pleasure on Sunday, so long as we avoid working for wages? May I participate in sports on Sunday, so long as it is not for pay? The answer to those questions and others may be found in an understanding of the Sabbath as observed by Jesus.

When we see the light of Christ shining upon this fourth commandment, we see that the Sabbath day for us is not a day to do as we please; but that also with respect to the Sabbath day we walk in the perfect law of liberty **in Christ**. And the principle of that liberty is this: God is a covenant God, a God Who lives a life of perfect love and fellowship in Himself; and His people, worshiping Him, enter into the rest of His covenant fellowship. Do you? The cure for all Sabbath desecration comes by entering into that perfect rest of God. The keeping of the Sabbath is a **spiritual** act for the Christian, a work, a labor that requires intense dedication and devotion.

If we would walk in obedience to the fourth commandment, we must begin by seeing in our Lord Jesus Christ the fulfillment of that commandment. Jesus came as the fulfillment of the

Sabbath. God's tabernacle was with men **in Christ Jesus**. Christ took the sins of us Sabbath desecraters, and redeemed us out of all the unrest of hell. In His cross, we find the basis for our Sabbath enjoyment. And in the resurrection on the first day of the week, you have the completion of that work of our redemption. The labor to enter into that rest has been accomplished. Our Lord Jesus Christ **labored** under the mighty burden of God's wrath that we might enter into the rest of God. We do not need to toil under God's wrath, in order to enter the peaceful rest, which is His fellowship. We rest first. And in the strength of that rest we go forth to the battle which is our daily existence - the battle not of works, but of faith. All you who are in Christ Jesus are a Sabbath people.

God comes to us and says, "I am Jehovah your God, the God in Whom there is perfect rest. I have called you out of the house of bondage, where there is only unrest, and I have redeemed you in Christ. From that unrest of body and soul, that unrest which is death, I have delivered you. Now, therefore, My people, **enter** into that rest, **enjoy** that rest, by faith. Live it in your present existence, even in this world that is full of unrest. Reveal in all your life that you are a Sabbath people, the people of God. And to that end, while you walk in the midst of a world filled with darkness, and because I know the weakness of your own sinful flesh, I give you a special day, in order that you might experience a little taste of the blessings of the everlasting Sabbath."

Contrary to the false teachings of the Pharisees, the Sabbath was made for man; not the other way around. God gave us this day. And He purposed for us in this day, the first day of the week, to create as much as possible a **vacuum**, an empty space, as far as our earthly life is concerned, in order that we might labor at filling that empty space with the things of God's kingdom, the things that have to do with that spiritual rest. It is a day not of idleness, but a day in which we may, by God's grace, reveal ourselves as Sabbath **celebrators**, in separation from the world of Sabbath desecraters. It is a day in which we may enjoy and enter into the blessings of that covenant rest, a day in which we may receive nourishment and encouragement for our daily battle of faith.

Understand well (and let us examine ourselves), it is a sign of spiritual deadness and lack of preparedness to enter the **eternal** Sabbath, when we who call ourselves the people of God continue to desecrate the Sabbath. It is a terrible sign if you must be begged and urged to meet with the people of God for worship, or when you only attend once, and on the slightest occasion find a reason to stay home. It is an evil sign when the Sabbath rest does not mean much; when we spend our Saturday nights in such pleasure seeking that there is no ambition nor physical strength left on Sunday to serve the Lord with joy; when we cannot even stay awake, let alone labor to enter into the rest of God. Remember, the blessings of the Sabbath day are specifically and particularly the blessings of a Sabbath people. There is no peace for the wicked, for the Christ-less Sabbath breaker.

What a blessed privilege is the Sabbath day to the child of God, when from all his earthly labors he is given a day of rest and to remember the Lord's mighty works of redemption for us His people in Christ! The Lord says to us, positively, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." To remember the Sabbath day means basically two things.

In the first place, keep it in mind. Do not forget that day. Many are so busy with the business or taking care of yard work and jobs around the house, that they forget the Sabbath day. Others make the Sabbath day a day of recreation and earthly pleasure. And the result is that they too forget the Sabbath day. People (we?) seem to think nothing of making the Lord's Day a travel day during vacation. They (we?) can go without church when out of town (just so long as

it doesn't happen too often). But what are we teaching our children when we forget about the Sabbath day, though it be only occasionally? The day must be **remembered**. How? Positively, James writes in his epistle, chapter 1, vs. 27: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction." Let me ask, when did **you** last go to the nursing or rest home to visit one of God's saints? Some of our young people, to their shame, hardly ever visit their God-fearing grandparents. They are too busy, even on Sunday, with earthly pleasures and self-seeking. You cannot remember the Sabbath by spending the entire afternoon **sleeping**. How is that possible?? And therefore, again, to remember the Sabbath is not that we do **nothing**, but that we **crowd** the Sabbath day with work! That is right; but with a certain **kind** of work.

To remember the Sabbath day means, in the second place, to **hallow** that day. That is, set the day aside for a certain kind of work, for the service of the Lord your God. The weekly Sabbath, that wonderful gift of God to His people, must be filled, not with lazy inactivity, but with **rest**. And paradoxical as it may seem, that rest is **labor**, specifically the labor of entering into the fellowship of God's covenant through Christ Jesus, where alone is found true peace and rest with God. When we understand that the Sabbath is to be filled with the activity of entering into the rest of God, then the question of what we may or may not do will take care of itself. You cannot labor in the things of the world and rest in God. You cannot fill your Sabbath with mundane activities, with playing or watching football and baseball games, e.g., and at the same time fill it with the rest of salvation in Christ. The tendency of everyday life is that it makes us forget the rest of God. But in mercy God has given us the one day to be, as it were, a vacuum in our daily routine, in order that we might fill it with **heavenly** things, occupying ourselves as much as possible with the things of the kingdom of God. When we understand that, then we will walk in Christian liberty also in our observance of the Sabbath day. Then we will not need to ask, "May I do this on Sunday, may I do that?" For we will regard the day unto the **Lord**. And filling that day with heavenly things, there will be no time left to ignore the work of Christ and to fill our earthly desires. Then there will not be **time** to forsake the fellowship of the saints and the house of God. For we will be too busy receiving the blessings of the Sabbath!

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