Pentecost Day – The Ten Commandments – Part 4

We now come to the remaining five commandments, which will all be civil laws, which is why all of them will have the words 'Thou shalt not'. This means they'll deal with our relationships to our fellow mankind and, obviously, God is telling us what we are *not allowed* to do…

Exodus 20
13 ***Thou shalt*** *not kill.*

This is another commandment greatly mis-taught and thus mis-understood. So, we must start off by analyzing the word 'kill'…

"**Kill**" is #7523 in the Hebrew, a primitive root that means: *to dash in pieces*, i.e. *kill* (a human being), ***especially to murder***. It's been translated in the KJV as - put to death, kill, (man-) slay (-er), murder (-er).

So, this command is not saying that all killings are bad. This Sixth Commandment is saying we should not commit *murder*. The Word of God is so very clear about this that there really should be no confusion but we'll still fully document what this commandment is all about. And, in the process, we'll discover that truly, this commandment is spiritual at its root (which is why Rom 7:14 says the '*law is spiritual'*). Meaning, that murder is simply a physical manifestation of the hate, bitterness, anger and resentment we hold in our heart towards others (Mth 5:21-22). So, again, the breadth of this law is far reaching; it is not confined merely to our actions but also to what goes on inside our heart (Mth 15:13-20, Mk 7:20-23). But first, let's document that not all killings are included in this command.

To start with, God ***does*** delegate killing by the government. There are certain crimes (sins) that God's Word commands the government to punish by death (called 'capital punishment'). Consider the following:

1. Murder, but *not* for accidental killings (Ex 21:12-14)
2. Striking or cursing a parent (Ex 21:15, Lev 20:9, Prov 20:20, Mth 15:4, Mk 7:10). It should be noted that Christ condemned the scribes and Pharisees for setting aside this law
3. Kidnaping (Ex 21:16, Deut 24:7)
4. Adultery (Lev 20:10-21)
5. Incest (Lev 20:11-12, 14)
6. Bestiality (Ex 22:19, Lev 20:15-16)
7. Sodomy and homosexuality (Lev 20:13)
8. Unchastity (Deut 22:20-21)
9. Rape of a betrothed virgin (Deut 22:23-27)
10. Witchcraft (Ex 22:18)
11. Offering human sacrifice (Lev 20:2)

12. Incorrigible delinquency or habitual criminality (Deut 21:18-21)
13. Blasphemy (Lev 24:11-14,16,23)
14. Sabbath desecration (Ex 35:2, Num 15:32-32) – superseded by Jesus (Mk 2:27-28, Lk 6:5, Col 2:16)
15. Propagation of false doctrines (Deut 13:1-10)
16. Sacrificing to false gods (Ex 22:20)
17. Refusing to abide by the court decision and thus denying the law (Deut 17:8-13)
18. Failing to restore the pledge or bailment (Ezek 18:12,13) because such an act destroyed the possibility of community trust and association

Methods of capital punishment *were*:

1) Burning (Lev 20:14, 21:9)
2) Stoning (Lev 20:2, 27, 24:14, Deut 21:21)
3) Hanging (Deut 21:22-23, Josh 8:29)
4) Sword (Ex 32:27-28) – the use of the sword was in an exceptional circumstance; and the basic requirement in every case was the death penalty itself rather than the form of it.

- ❖ Capital punishment was NEVER to be inflicted on the testimony of less than two witnesses (Num 35:30, Deut 17:6, 19: 15).
- ❖ In specified instances, capital punishment was to be executed by the witnesses themselves, as in Deut 13:6-10, 17:7.
- ❖ In some instances, execution was by the congregation (Num 15:32-36, Deut 13:6-10), or by nearest of kind, the avenger of blood (Deut 19:11-12)

Murder is further defined elsewhere in God's Word. Deuteronomy 19 explains that accidental killing is *not* considered murder and God's Law required special cities to be reserved for people to flee to when they accidently killed someone (it would do us well to still abide by this law yet today). This was for their protection, so a loved one of the person they killed wouldn't kill them out of rage when they truly did not mean to hurt anyone. Let's look at that account…

3 Thou shalt prepare thee a way, and divide the coasts of thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee to inherit, into three parts, that every slayer may flee thither.
4 And this is the case of the slayer, which shall flee thither, that he may live: Whoso killeth his neighbour ignorantly, whom he hated not in time past;
5 As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour, that he die; he shall flee unto one of those cities, and live:
6 Lest the avenger of the blood pursue the slayer, while his heart is hot, and overtake him, because the way is long, and slay him; whereas he was not worthy of death, inasmuch as he hated him not in time past.
Deut 19:3-6

Clearly, killing someone in 'ignorance' (accidently) is way different in God's eyes than someone who kills from hate (pre-meditated murder). And God gives an example for us of when an axe head accidently slips off and kills someone. God even acknowledged that people are inclined to hurt others when they are angry due to a loved one being hurt (that's a normal flesh emotion). So, God commanded Israel make cities to keep people (on both sides) safe. The person who did the accidental killing would be safe from harm **if** they stayed in the city of refuge and the angry loved one would be safe from killing an innocent person in their anger. Hopefully, their anger would die down and they would not want to harm them anymore but the person who committed the accidental killing was still to be confined to the city until the death of the high priest (which could be a lifelong sentence) because sometimes grudges like that can last a long time. This would give extra impetus to be careful not to have accidents since most people don't want to lose their freedom to move from place to place. With freedom comes responsibly and we all have a responsibility to make sure we don't harm others, even in accidents. The law is given mostly to control those who don't care about others and to those who don't want to be responsible citizens (1 Tim 1:8-10).

This account in Deuteronomy is not the only place the Bible talks about murder verses accidental killing. The book of Numbers gives a very detailed account concerning this subject and makes it clear how to tell what an accidental killing is verses pre-meditated murder. These cases in the Word of God should govern our courts even yet today *if they want to be righteous*. Though it's rather long, we'll take a look at this account in Numbers simply to reinforce the fact that not all killings are the same in God's eyes…

9 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
10 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come over Jordan into the land of Canaan;
11 Then ye shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares.
12 And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger; that the manslayer die not, until he stand before the congregation in judgment.
13 And of these cities which ye shall give six cities shall ye have for refuge.
14 Ye shall give three cities on this side Jordan, and three cities shall ye give in the land of Canaan, which shall be cities of refuge.
15 These six cities shall be a refuge, both for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them: that every one that killeth any person unawares may flee thither.
16 And ***if he smite him with an instrument of iron, so that he die****,* ***he is a murderer****: the murderer shall surely be put to death.*
17 And ***if he smite him with throwing a stone, wherewith he may die, and he die****,* ***he is a murderer****: the murderer shall surely be put to death.*
18 Or ***if he smite him with an hand weapon of wood, wherewith he may die, and he die, he is a murderer****: the murderer shall surely be put to death.*

19 The revenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer: when he meeteth him, he shall slay him.
20 But if ***he thrust him of hatred, or hurl at him by laying of wait****,* ***that he die****;*
21 ***Or in enmity smite him with his hand, that he die****: he that smote him shall surely be put to death; for* ***he is a murderer****: the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer, when he meeteth him.*
22 ***But if he thrust him suddenly without enmity, or have cast upon him any thing without laying of wait,***
23 Or with any stone, wherewith a man may die, seeing him not, and cast it upon him, that he die, and was not his enemy, neither sought his harm:
24 Then ***the congregation shall judge between the slayer and the revenger of blood according to these judgments:***
25 And the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the revenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled: and he shall abide in it unto the death of the high priest, which was anointed with the holy oil.
26 But if the slayer shall at any time come without the border of the city of his refuge, whither he was fled;
27 And the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer; he shall not be guilty of blood:
28 Because he should have remained in the city of his refuge until the death of the high priest: but after the death of the high priest the slayer shall return into the land of his possession.
29 So these things shall be for a statute of judgment unto you throughout your generations in all your dwellings.
30 Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death ***by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die.***
31 Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death.
32 And ye shall take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest.
33 So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for ***blood it defileth the land****: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein,* ***but by the blood of him that shed it****.*
34 Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel.
Num 35:9-34

This is such a critical chapter in the Word of God for it clears up the issue of this Sixth Commandment perfectly. It clearly states that anyone who kills when they have hate in their heart, lies in wait, or has enmity for another person is a murderer. In other words, *you have to prove the motive* to seek the death penalty. Note that we are ***not*** to have pity on the murderer (*ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer*) or those who are confined to the city of refuge. They chose their own path and must suffer the consequences for their actions. This means Christians should ***not*** be petitioning to 'save' the life of murderers (more on this later). Also note that insanity is *not* a reason given for self-defense (this is a common technique to get people out

of the death penalty nowadays). But jealously would be an example of someone who had not hated in times past. If a man or woman found their spouse in bed with another person, they might kill out of extreme rage and anger; but, since they had not hated them in times past, it would not be considered murder. More than likely, it would be under the category of accidental killings since their jealousy and anger was not premeditated nor did they hate in times past so they would need to flee to the city of refuge. If someone murders, they are to be put to death, regardless of race, age, gender, how much money or influence they have. There are no excuses in God's Law to not put the murderer to death. The law of God is to be applied to everyone equally (this also used to be America's motto but has sadly changed a lot in the past few decades).

A couple other things to note from Numbers 35 (above) is the fact that the 'revenger of blood' was given the right to kill the murderer. HOWEVER, the murder *had to be a proven fact* before that was allowed (Num 35:30. Deut 17:6-7), which was the entire point to the cities of refuge. Even a murderer could flee there but there had to be a fair trial to see if he really deserved protection or if he truly deserved to die. If he deserved to die, then the city of refuge HAD to give him to the revenger of blood. If the 'revenger of blood' (i.e., the closest family member such as a father) wanted to beat the bloody pulp out of the SOB who raped and murdered his daughter, then he could do so but he had to make sure the murderer was put to death. Would this not be sweet justice for all those innocent people killed, raped, kidnapped and/or molested? It also is a *great deterrent* for people who have a sick mind to keep their lusts and hatred under control.

Another point to note in Numbers 35, is the fact that, if a person who accidently killed someone *didn't flee to the city of refuge* (or they didn't stay there until the death of the high priest) and they were killed by the 'revenger of the blood' there was nothing to be done to the 'revenger of blood'. In other words, if you accidently kill someone and you don't want to go to a city of refuge, you risk your own life if you remain outside. A 'revenger of blood' has the right to kill outside the city of refuge (until the death of the high priest). This also has huge implications because it tells us that even accidentally killing someone has huge consequences. God values life in the flesh because it's a big part of His plan of Salvation and we are not to circumvent it with killing his children unless in self-defense or in ridding society of incorrigible criminals. Again, with freedom comes responsibility. If you have proven so irresponsible as to accidently kill someone, you lose your freedom. Accidents do happen but we are duty bound to God to try our hardest not to allow them to. Our society would work much better if we abided by God's Laws instead of our own manmade laws, which can change every time a new administration gets in power.

So, we see then, that, this Sixth Commandment is speaking about murder and not about accidental killings. How then do we know that self-defense is ok? For several reasons. First off, we have examples in the Bible (1 Cor 10:11) which show us that self-defense is a God given right. Even in this book of Exodus we've seen that. Back in chapter 17 Amalek attacked Israel *unprovoked*. Israel had water and Amalek wanted it (coveting) so they attacked Israel. What was God's response? <u>He told them to go to war with Amalek</u>. So, we know that war, in self-defense,

is approved (even expected) by God. The Bible repeatedly affirms this. Abraham fought to free his nephew and was blessed by God for doing so (Gen 14). King David was an extremely successful warrior (1 Sam 17 onward documents this) and God called David a 'man after' His own heart (1 Sam 13:14, Acts 13:22). Why? Because the reasons David fought were not for pride for riches but *for righteousness*. The account of David killing the giant Goliath proves this (1 Sam 17:23-52). Consequently, that's what made David such a good overall king (2 Sam 8:15, 2 Chron 18:14). A study of the Psalms will witness to this and it also tells us that David relied heavily on God Himself to help him fight his physical and spiritual battles. David even said that God taught his *hands to war* and his *fingers to fight* (Ps 144:1). So, obviously, God does not mind us defending our country in warfare. But what about personal self-defense? This great book of Exodus also gives us the answer to that…

2 If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him.
3 If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him; for he should make full restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft.
Ex 22:2-3

Verse 2 tells us that we have a God given right to self-defense. However, we don't have a right to go after a thief and kill him. Verse 3 uses a figure of speech "*If the sun be risen upon him*", which (as the Companion Bible notes) means, if the thief was killed after he had gotten away. And this is not speaking about police who go after criminals, for their job is to try and safely apprehend people but sometimes the actions of the people they are trying to arrest make using deadly force necessary. So, if someone breaks into your home and tries to harm you, your family or anyone who is at your house, you have a right to self-defense but you don't have a right to go after the criminal and kill him just because he stole from you or even if he/she harmed your family. That's what we have police for and, even if the police are corrupt, you must ask God to execute justice in His time and be content with that. As Prov 23:4 says, *Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom*. Jesus also said to *take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth* (Luke 12:15). We also *know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God* (Heb 10:30-31).

So, the Sixth Commandment definitely says we should not *murder* and it does *not* prohibit self-defense, individually or nationally. And the Bible has many examples (cases) we can learn from to rightly divide true murder from self-defense or accidental killing.

Now, we must also look at this commandment from the spiritual aspect. For, like all the other commandments, this commandment is truly an issue of the heart. Remember, Rom 7:14 says that *the law is spiritual*. This means God's Law can only truly be kept 'from the heart'. If we truly 'love our neighbor' (as God commands us to do in Lev 19:18, Mth 19:19, 22:39, 12:31, Rom 13:9, Gal 5:14, James 2:8) then *we won't hate them in our heart or have enmity towards them in our heart*. Remember, Numbers 35:20-21 told us hating someone and having enmity towards

someone were two indications that revealed the death was murder (Deut 19:11 confirms this too). It's not surprising then, that Jesus told us…

17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.
18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.
19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.
20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.
21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:
22 But I say unto you, That ***whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment****: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*
23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;
24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.
Matt 5:17-24

Jesus clearly told us He didn't do away with the law. He fulfilled it, which means He fulfilled the ordinances contained in blood sacrifices, as Eph 2:14 and Col 2:15 clearly tell us. But Jesus did not do away with any of the Ten Commandments, Statutes or Judgments. However, *He did change the way some of them were to be kept*, as we learned when studying the Fourth Commandment about the Sabbath day. Moreover, Jesus not only did ***not*** do away with the law, **Jesus made the law stricter because He taught that we should keep God's Law *from our heart***. So, just as we are to love God *in our heart* more than anyone else (Commandment #1), and just as we are not to have any other laws written *in our heart* (Commandment #2), and just as we are not to make God's name vain by not keeping His Word first and foremost *in our heart* (Commandment #3), and just as we are to rest spiritually from our wicked works by cleaning the sin *out of our heart* (Commandment #4), and just as we are not to hate our parents *in our hearts* or hold any grudges *in our heart* for the way they raised us (Commandment #5)… likewise we are not to even keep anger *in our heart* for others.

Furthermore, in Mth 5, Jesus is specifically speaking of murder. He confirms that murder is what the Sixth Commandment truly is. "Kill" Mth 5:21 (above) is #5407 and it means: *to be a murderer* (of). The word 'angry' is #3710 and it means: *to provoke or enrage*, i.e. (passively) *become exasperated*. While there are times anger is good (there is such a thing as righteous indignation at those who violate God's Word – Ps 139:21-22), most of the time our anger is not

righteous and we must learn to forgive so our anger does not fester inside our heart and cause us to do wickedly. [Learn more about **Anger**: https://t.me/BibleStudyTruth/957].

Moreover, the word 'fool' is #3474, the Hebrew word moros (pronounced: mo-ros') and means: *dull or stupid* (as if shut up), i.e. *heedless*, (morally) *blockhead*, (apparently) *absurd*. We must be careful how we judge others. Jesus warns us of this in Mth 7:1-5. He also tells us to *judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment* (John 7:24). That's why it's so important to get the 'beam' (sin) out of our own eye. **You'll learn many of your anger problems will quickly dissipate *when you face yourself and clean your own heart out***. Self-righteousness (hypocrisy) is a dangerous thing because it inflates our ego and keeps us from seeing how we are truly making our own problems to our own demise. Anger, if not cleaned out of your heart, *leads to hate and enmity* which is what causes us to do wicked acts such as murder. However, anger, hatred, bitterness, jealousy (envy), and so forth, also cause us to do much damage *with our tongue* and this is just as bad, if not worse (James 3). In fact, God linked these things together, clearly showing us what the root cause of murder is…

16 Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the LORD.
17 Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.
18 Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.
Lev 19:16-18

Talebearing (i.e., gossip) is connected to being a false witness just as hating others in your heart is connected to *not* rebuking them when needed (chastisement or 'tough love'). And likewise, bearing a grudge against others (not forgiving) is likened to hate. God tells us that loving our neighbor is thus defined by *not* talebearing, *not* hating them, rebuking them of sin, *not* avenging and *not* grudging… all these things we must do *from the heart* in order to truly love our neighbor. Do you see how truly these fundamental Ten Commandments truly are spiritual in nature? (Rom 7:14) *We must keep them from our heart*; therefore, <u>they are spiritual because our heart (carnal mind, Rom 8:7) is not something we can see physically</u>. We can only see the physical manifestations of the sin in our heart much like we can only see the physical manifestations of wind. Yet we know wind is real because we can feel it… even though we cannot see it. Jesus told us that those who learn to take dominion over their carnal heart (Rom 8:7) (i.e., are 'born of the Holy Spirit') are like the wind (John 3) simply because *it is a process that happens in our heart*; <u>it's not something you can see physically</u>. We can only see the physical manifestations of someone who has been changed into a 'new man' by the Holy Spirit, which Paul calls the 'works of the Spirit' in Galatians 5.

So, the Sixth Commandment tells us not to commit murder but Jesus explained that, to truly keep this commandment, we must not even be angry with our brother *in our heart* because this causes hate. This is why forgiving is so critical…

25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.
26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.
Mark 11:22-26

Forgiving others in our heart is so critical to God that He won't even forgive us if we do not forgive others. What does this mean? It means, of course, you will still be liable to pay for your sins but it also means is you won't get any healing (spiritual or physical) from Him nor have any release from your guilt in your conscience for your past sins if you don't forgive others (i.e., you won't have peace in your heart). Paul explains how the death of Jesus Christ paid for our sins and thus we were given the Holy Spirit *to clean our conscience of guilt* in Heb 9:9-14 and 10:1-22. Paul also calls the pain from our conscience the 'sting' of death in 1 Cor 15:55-56 and notes that we won't ever be released from it in this flesh body unless we're forgiven by the Holy Spirit; and even then, when we sin again, we'll feel that 'prick' from our conscience. Paul lamented at how hard it is to keep from sinning in this flesh body, in Romans 7 so don't be surprised that this is something you struggle with *daily*. We all do. That's why Jesus told us deny our 'self' by crucifying (putting to death) our carnal mind each and every day (Lk 9:23). If we don't learn to forgive, eventually we will harden our heart to the point where we sear over our conscience, which is extremely dangerous for our soul (1 Tim 4:2) because our conscience is what keeps us from doing things such as murder, rape (molesting children is accounted as rape) and homosexuality – all things the government is delegated to enforce capital punishment for. We need our conscience to prick us to help bring us to repentance. It is difficult (not impossible) for people to repent once they have hardened their heart to that point. The book of Matthew says…

*23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing **all manner** of **sickness** and all manner of **disease** among the people.*
*24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all **sick** people that were taken with divers **diseases** and **torments**, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; **and he healed them**.*
Matt 4:23-24

Notice that Jesus healed "all manner of **sickness**" and "all manner of **disease**" among the people. In the English, we think of these terms as the same thing but they are not. Consider the following…

"All manner" is #3956 and means: *all, any, every, the whole*.
"Sickness" is #3554 and means: *a malady* (rarely figuratively, of moral disability). It's been translated in the KJV as - disease, infirmity, sickness. According to The Noah Webster 1828

Dictionary, a malady is defined as any sickness or disease of the human body.

So, the Greek word for 'sickness', as used in this verse (along with the term 'all manner') means *any, and all, physical illnesses (maladies) of the human body*. It can range from a minor illness, to a far more serious disease. ***The term represents nonspecific illnesses, however, because it simply means to be sick.***

So, with this in mind we can see the word sickness, alone, describes what we might think of when we read of "sickness and disease." After all, the term "all manner of sickness" means any and all sickness, disease, or infirmity of the human body. **What then was the disease Jesus had healed people of when He healed them in verse 23 of "all manner of disease**?

"Disease" (in verse 23 only) is #3119 and means: softness, i.e. enervation (debility). It comes from #3120 and means: *soft*, i.e. *fine* (clothing); figuratively, a *catamite*. It's been translated in the KJV as - effeminate, soft.

So, 'disease' (in vs 23) means, in the literal sense, soft as in fine clothing, but that is obviously not the way it's used here in Mth 4:23. It's being used figuratively and when used in a figurative sense, it means enervation, which is the act of weakening or reducing strength - it is the state of being weakened as in effeminacy. Effeminate is to unman or make womanish. It is used to describe a catamite [a boy kept for homosexual relations with a man], a male who submits his body to unnatural lewdness, and is put for male prostitutes. It does not describe a man with mere feminine traits. *It describes men that indulge in unmanly pleasures characteristic of the female sex*. Effeminacy are traits found in men characteristic of the female sex, but in men are deemed a reproach. It also means voluptuousness; indulgence in unmanly pleasures; lasciviousness. Lasciviousness is to be filled with lewd sexual desire and includes irregular indulgence of animal desires. The above definitions certainly bring to mind a couple of different acts, or, as they are called today, "lifestyles," including: homosexuality, pedophilia, male prostitution, and bestiality. While some people might be offended at the suggestion that these things are 'wrong', the truth is they really are sins and those who do such things need spiritual healing that only comes with repentance and belief upon Jesus Christ.

Of course, we're warned repeatedly throughout the Bible against participating in homosexual acts, because they go against our heavenly Father's natural order, and He therefore considers them to be an abomination that prevents one's entry into the eternal Kingdom. In the Old Testament we're told that those who did participate in acts of homosexuality were to be put to death (Lev. 18:22; Lev. 20:13; Deut 22:5). In the New Testament we're told there's no place in Father's Eternal Kingdom for those that continue in such acts (1 Cor 6:9-11), instead of repenting and turning to Christ for His mercy, grace and guidance. But Mth 4 tells us that, even though the government is delegated to put these people to death (the government only is

delegated; mere citizens are NOT to do so) that doesn't mean these people don't need spiritual healing. And since Jesus has the power to heal *any and all* sicknesses, as well as debilitating physical diseases, palsy, lunacy, and devil possession - He also the power to heal homosexuality, and all other forms of the LGBT (etc.) group. But that healing only comes with true repentance and belief in Jesus Christ.

So, ultimately, short of sincere repentance, these acts carry an eternal death penalty, as 1 Cor 6:9-10 states. But as 1 Cor 6:11 then declares, some of the Corinthians Paul was speaking to had participated, at some point in their lives, in the unrighteous acts listed in verses 9-10, which included acts of homosexuality, male prostitution, pedophilia and sodomy. This verse tells us that, upon repentance of such sins, and acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit of Christ washes clean and sanctifies even those who were formerly homosexuals (i.e., "effeminate" and "abusers of themselves with mankind." – Rom 1).

And it does not negate the government's duty to punish these crimes with the death penalty. But, since the government does not do its duty anymore, it is the Christian's job to take the Gospel to whosoever the Holy Spirit leads them, even those who have committed 'abominations' in God's eyes. After all, as Mth 4:23-24 tells us, Jesus 'healed them' of their spiritual sickness so they no longer wanted to do such vile things. This means Jesus cleaned and healed their heart so their actions follow suit. This healing is still available to us today, through the power of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5, John 15:3).

Additionally, Jesus told us there is no unforgivable sin except for blaspheming the Holy Spirit (Mth 12:31-32) and God Himself forgave David (2 Sam 12:13), for adultery and even murder when he repented sincerely. However, this again does not negate our government's duty to enforce capital punishment for these crimes. Jesus said He didn't come to do away with the law but to fulfil it by sacrificing Himself so we could be forgiven and find healing and freedom from sin (Mth 5). Now, people might still have to face the death penalty for premeditated murder, but they surely can repent *from their heart* before they do die **if** they truly believe in Jesus Christ. But it's important to remember that *people in the government cannot read hearts*. Therefore, they must judge people by their actions. Just because someone who murdered says they repented does not mean they really did. God knows but the government doesn't. Since David was king, the only higher authority there was to exact the death penalty was God Himself. But He chose to forgive David because He could read his heart. And from Psalm 51 we see that David indeed made a sincere repentance. Thus, the government is still supposed to enforce the death penalty. And, while it's a great thing for Pastors to go preach the Gospel to those in prison (regardless of their crime), trying to get them 'off the hook' for their crimes is working against God's Word. This is why 1 John 3:15 says that: *Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him*.

Now, Paul explains more as to why it's critical for us to *let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice* (Eph 4:31)…

17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.
18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.
19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.
20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.
21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.
Rom 12:17-21

How are we to 'feed' and give 'drink' to our enemies? This command comes from Jesus in Mth 5:43-45 and He got this from Proverbs 25:21-22. It has been twisted by many to say we should be walking matt for evil people to use but that's not true at all. What Jesus simply meant was, *we must treat all people according to God's Laws* (Lev 19 outlines this well). We are not to treat only the people we like according to God's Law but *everyone* should be treated according to God's Laws: that's what righteousness truly is. And, as Eph 6:14 explains, *this is what protects our heart*. Of course, Paul expounds more on this…

20 But ye have not so learned Christ;
21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:
22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;
23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;
24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.
25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.
26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:
27 Neither give place to the devil.
28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.
29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.
30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.
31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:
32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.
Eph 4:20-32

Paul also explains why it's important to forgive…

14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:
15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; ***lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;***
Heb 12:14-15

Not forgiving others will lead to hate, anger, bitterness, resentment and all kinds of other negative emotions in our heart and ***those things are what defile us spiritually***: they lead to death. *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord* (Rom 6:23). As Jesus noted in Mth 15:13-20 and Mk 7:20-23, *sin starts in our heart* and God expects us to clean sin out of our heart if we are going to obtain eternal life. But we can only do this with the help of the Holy Spirit and that's why Jesus is the only path to salvation (John 14:6). And that's why forgiving *from the heart* is so important. You don't have to personally go up to someone and tell them you forgive them (sometimes that might not even be wise to do, especially if they don't think they did anything wrong to you). But you must forgive them in your heart and *let the bitterness, anger, pain and resentment go*. Again, only the Holy Spirit can help with this; if you struggle with not being able forgiving someone(s) then pray about it and ask for God's help. And above all, remember to keep on working to clean your heart of other sins too for it's likely the reason you cannot forgive someone is because of another sin you are keeping locked up in your heart (pride, selfishness, lust, etc.). Forgiveness is one of the keys to truly changing in side. It's how we learn to put down the carnal mind and allow the 'new man' to rise up.

1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.
2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.
3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.
4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.
5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:
6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:
7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.
8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.
9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;
10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:
Col 3:1-10

We'll pick this up in Part 4… AMEN.