



Grain

“We aren’t born with hate, we learn it... hate builds from biased attitudes and can lead to bias-motivated violence. That is why we must always challenge hate, no matter where it comes from.” –Anti-Defamation League

Field

²¹“You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not murder’; and ‘whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.’ ²²But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, ‘You fool,’ you will be liable to the hell of fire. ²³So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. ²⁵Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. ²⁶Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

Thoughts

I heard someone who seemed to be a magnet for controversy, with a grin, once say, “Thank God murder is illegal, or I’d be dead.” I laughed thinking that probably wasn’t true, or was it? Don’t most people in society have ingrained in them that taking another life outside of extraordinary circumstances is deeply wrong? Or, is it the threat of prison that keeps the majority of citizens in-line? Perhaps having a law against killing, in and of itself, has influenced our morality.

Forbidding murder is also an ancient religious law, which has to be understood through the lens of our contexts. Jesus interpreted the law for his generation. He did not negate the law but extended it on the level of internal intentions. He said, okay, so you’re managing your anger outwardly and not killing anyone, but what about that anger? I can’t believe Jesus, who himself could be outraged, was attempting to stifle his disciples’ feelings or stop the crowd from experiencing any angry emotions. He must have been referring to the kind of anger that people harbor over time, leading them to want to murder or even to committing the act. He speaks these words to us when we become obsessed with our biases and hate so that we cannot hear another perspective, especially from those who have become our foes.

We advocate for just laws to protect us from our worst moments and from systemically sanctioning harm against groups of people. We can have healthy anger and anger from trauma that we work through over time, etc., but when do we need to step back and forgive? “You have heard it said, ‘You shall not murder...’” but what about your internal dialogue and sense of peace? May we be graced to choose peace. Happy Monday!

Find all Monday Quotes at loppw.org/monday-quotes-other-reflections

Many Blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy