

Walking with Jesus Through Sinai:
 Seeking Moral Clarity in an Age of Chaos with the 10 Commandments
 CPC Adult Sunday Studies Spring 2025
 22 - Sixth Commandment, part 3

From Womb to Tomb: Applying the 6th Commandment Ethically

Review: We began our study of the 6th commandment looking at the basics of what “unlawfully kill” means, it’s foundations in God and creation, and then expanded it to our heart and character based on Jesus’ teaching on anger. Last week, we looked at gentleness and sloth as additional implications.

Exodus 20:13 - “You shall not murder” - includes unlawful and unintentional killing

Framing Our Approach

1. **On Sensitivity;** or, on proclaiming ethical truths vs. being a welcoming community - sometimes the Church should proclaim ethical truths, and that is not always opposed to being a welcoming community, but it *can be*. If Jesus is our model, he largely proclaimed hard sayings to the prideful self-righteous, and offered mercy and comfort to those who knew they were sinful and brokenhearted.
 1. Moreover, culture war engagement, though sometimes necessary in politics, is much different than an individual Christian wrestling with God’s will in the church.
2. **On the Extent of Church Power;** or, on thinking institutionally - the Church should only preach and proclaim what is “either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture” (WCF 1.6)—no more, no less. Individuals must apply their own convictions further than that, especially in the political sphere, but that will extend beyond how much the Church can declare as a “necessary” conclusion.
3. **On Law & Gospel** - this whole class is an application of the “third use of the law”, which assumes that the Law *first* comes to us as sinners and condemns us, throws us at the feet of the Savior, and then raises us up in grace to live

holy lives. When (not if!) someone breaks the law, we bring them first back to the gospel.

4. **On Decision-making and Obedience** - when it's clear from Scripture, we pray for a humble mind to know and a willingness to obey. When it's not clear from Scripture, we pray for wisdom and insight, apply Scripture as far as we can, wait on the Lord, ask for counsel, and act out of good conscience the best we can.

"From Womb" - On Birth and Fertility

1. Life is God's gift

1. **Big Picture argument:** God alone is the Creator and Sustainer of life; all humans are made in the image of God; all human rights are derived from God and cannot usurp God's ultimate rights; we do not belong to ourselves, but God; barrenness and fertility are treated as under God's providence throughout the Bible.
2. **Specific texts related to "womb" issues:**
 1. Psalm 139 - *"For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made....My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. 16 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."*
 2. Luke 1 - *"And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, 42 and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!"*
 3. Ps. 71 - *"Upon you I have leaned from before my birth; you are he who took me from my mother's womb."*
 4. Jer. 1.5 - *"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."*

2. Implications for Abortion

1. **Black & White:** Abortion is wrong. The vast majority of reasons people give for having an abortion are not legitimate as a Christian motivation (disruption of education or employment; lack of support from the father;

desire to provide schooling for existing children; and poverty, unemployment or inability to afford additional children, etc.).

2. **Grey:** Is it equivalent to murder? Ought we to prosecute every person who has had one as a murderer? Should we have a funeral for every miscarriage? Conception is not a moment, but a process, so does that mean God endowing his spirit upon the fetus is a process? How can the Church stand on a moral truth, while also inviting people to Jesus who violate or disagree with that truth? How should individual Christians prioritize abortion policy in their political lives? How can we advocate for women's health without supporting abortion? How can we avoid the traps of today's rhetorical framing (pro-life vs. anti-abortion, for ex.)? Are there exceptions (life of the mother) for when abortion is allowed by God? How can the Church help alleviate the societal and structural reasons that contribute to why people feel the need for an abortion?
1. We should be asking these questions, but there is not one Christian answer, and they require deeply humble, communal responses.