* **Series Slide**
* **“Give it up, Its time to stop running!”**
* Those are the words of Deputy Marshall Samuel Gerard to a convicted murderer who had escaped in the middle of a prison transfer.
* After a weeks long pursuit, the Marshall was face to face with the fugitive.
* Helicopters overhead. Police outside. The jig was up.
* “**GIVE IT UP!, ITS TIME TO STOP RUNNING!”**
* The murderer had been cornered and it was time for justice to be served.
* **“GIVE IT UP, ITS TIME TO STOP RUNNING”**
* The officers on the scene put the handcuffs on the fugitive…and handed him over to the US Marshall.
* But a strange thing happened next. The Marshall, got the keys…and took the handcuffs off the murderer. And then, he took an ice pack from the first aid kit and placed it on the fugitive’s bruises.
* …because he knew that this murderer…this fugitive…was innocent.
* If that story sounds vaguely familiar to you, its not because you read about it in the newspaper…but because you saw it at the theater.
* That’s the ending to 1993 Academy Award nominated movie “The Fugitive”.

As the story goes, Dr. Richard Kimball was a very successful surgeon. But one night he comes home and finds a one-armed man in his house that has just killed his wife.

After a brief wrestling match, the one-armed man gets away…and since there is no proof of this “One-armed man”…all signs point to Dr. Kimball as the murderer of his own wife.

He is convicted and sentenced to the death penalty, but escapes when a train hits his prisoner transport bus…and the chase is on.

Dr. Kimball on is on the run, trying to stay one step ahead of the US Marshalls…all the while, frantically on a mission to find the one-armed man and prove his innocence.

There’s this very moving scene right in the middle of the movie… one that seemed like something incidental to the plot when I first saw “the Fugitive”, but now I know it was a turning point.

Dr. Kimball is hiding in a local hospital disguised as a janitor… looking for the hospital records of the one-armed man that killed his wife.

He finds what he’s looking for and is on his way out of the hospital…headed toward the door, unnoticed by anyone.

But on his way out, suddenly the doors to the ER bust open and an influx of patients fresh out of a massive accident are brought in. The hospital staff is overwhelmed in the commotion, Dr. Kimball notices a little boy on a gurney whose chest X-ray has been misread. He’s being sent to triage to wait, but Dr. Kimball knows the boy needs an emergency operation.

He knows this little boy will die if he doesn’t do something…so he picks up the chart, writes down the proper diagnosis…all with the bedside manner of a doctor that cares about his patients. He asks him about his family. “What sports do you play kid?” “Don’t worry, son you’re gonna be OK, you’re gonna be just fine”

All the while calling him by his first name. Joel.

And as they roll the boy into the operating room, Dr. Kimball with a smile on his face, gently touches him on the cheek and says, “Bye, Bye Joel.”

But when he did this, another doctor noticed…I mean, when a janitor is looking at X-ray film and changing a diagnosis…it kind of looks out of place.

So she calls the police. …and Dr. Richard Kimball starts running again.

Well, in a few minutes, the Marshall shows up to question the Dr. that called the police. And he ends his interview by asking the Dr. “How’s the boy he sent surgery?”

She says, “He saved his life.”

**[PAUSE]**

…and in that moment, you can see it written all over the Marshall’s face…

That was the moment when Deputy Marshall Gerard goes from believing he’s chasing a murderer, to knowing he’s chasing an innocent man.

**TITLE SLIDE- “Fugitive Love: Why Its Time for the Murderers Stop Running” Exodus 20:13**

Today, we’re looking at the 6th commandment.

“Do not murder”.

I think for most of us, if we could pick one command that we were “doin’ pretty good with”… we’d go after this one.

Because most of us have never murdered someone.

But, like every single one of these commands…there is more going on than meets the eye.

I told you from the beginning of this series that each of these commands is a kind of revelation of the character and beauty of God.

In other words, while these are definitely commands, they are much deeper than that.

…and what I hope you see in this commandment today leaves you sort of like that US Marshall from the Fugitive.… finally understanding that you’ve been wrong about God all along.

I hope today is a moment you go from a person angry at God…condemning him for whatever you think he’s done to you… and today…you suddenly realize that he loves you…and all along, he’s been saving you.

Let’s read some of the Bible we’re covering today…I’m going pull this from multiple places, both Old and New Testaments…because I need to show you from the Scripture the breadth of this commandment…

* **Exodus 20:13**

**“You shall not murder.”**

* **Deuteronomy 19:2-6**
* **you shall set apart three cities for yourselves in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess. You shall measure the distances and divide into three parts the area of the land that the LORD your God gives you as a possession, so that any manslayer can flee to them.**
* **“This is the provision for the manslayer, who by fleeing** **there may save his life.**

**If anyone kills his neighbor unintentionally without having hated him in the past—as when someone goes into the forest with his neighbor to cut wood, and his hand swings the axe to cut down a tree, and the head slips from the handle and strikes his neighbor so that he dies—he may flee to one of these cities and live, lest the avenger of blood in hot anger pursue the manslayer and overtake him, because the way is long, and strike him fatally, though the man did not deserve to die, since he had not hated his neighbor in the past.**

* **Numbers 35:25**
* **And the congregation shall rescue the manslayer from the hand of the avenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to his city of refuge to which he had fled, and he shall live in it until the death of the high priest who was anointed with the holy oil.**
* **Deuteronomy 21:22-23a**

**“And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God.**

**Matthew 5:21-26**

“**You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire. So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.**

* **1 John 3:11-15**

**For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.**

**Transition:** Clearly, when the commandment says “Don’t Murder” there is something deeper in mind than simply Not Murdering.

So let’s start by talking about what actually is included in this command, “Do Not Murder”

* + Public Service announcement- This is a 2 point sermon…

**1) God is pro-life…and that’s why you’re running from him.**

* + Now, when I say “God is pro-life”, I’m sure your first thought goes to abortion.
  + But this is much broader than that.
  + Let me show you what I mean.
  + That little scene in the middle of “The Fugitive” where Dr. Kimball saves the little boy isn’t just a nice little heart-felt moment to add some emotion to an action flick.
  + It was something that was revealing the doctor’s character.
  + In fact, there’s a scene in the train wreck at the beginning where he’s trying to jump off the train, but instead, he comes back and picks up a wounded security guard and throws him to safety.
  + Then he has the opportunity to shoot the Deputy, but he lets him live.
  + See, Dr. Kimball is pro-llfe. Even when being pro-life is inconvenient, even when its dangerous…even when he has to risk his own life to save someone else’s…he values human life.
  + **Exodus 20:13**
  + And in this little 4 word commandment, You shall not murder…God is revealing to us that he is pro-life.
  + …and if you cut the politics out of that phrase...it seems odd that anybody would want to run from that.
  + I mean, don’t we all appreciate people who spend their efforts preserving life.
  + Doctors, fire fighters, policemen, military.
  + It's a pretty attractive character trait.
  + Well, to understand why we want to run from a pro-life God, lets talk about how far reaching this commandment goes.
  + First, this is definitely a commandment that God is against premeditated murder.
  + **Deuteronomy 21:22-23a**
  + And the penalty for taking a life…is to die a cursed death by hanging on a tree. Because the only thing that can atone for the taking of a human life…is giving up a human life.
  + See, God is against lashing out in anger, jealousy, greed, or envy and killing another person.
  + But, did you see the bit from Numbers and Deuteronomy about manslaughter?
  + In that weird passage about the guy who doesn’t make sure his axe head is secured…and it flies off and kills someone…that man is guilty.
  + He is guilty of being careless with life.
  + See, the commandment “Do not murder” applies to simply a lack of care for another human life.
  + …and with that, this category just got a LOT broader.
  + Anything that you do that treats human life as less than precious…is violating this commandment.
* **Back to 1)**
  + Let me give you some examples
  + How about the way you eat?
  + Do you overeat? Do you under-eat?
  + Do you consistently eat and feed to your children foods that are high in fat and calories?
  + Or how about exercise?
  + Do you live a sedentary life without seeking to give your body the exercise it needs to stay healthy?
  + Do you overwork?
  + Do you deprive yourself of sleep?
  + How do treat drugs and alcohol?
  + Do you smoke?
  + Do you teach your children what it means to live a healthy life?
  + See, even in some of the simplest categories…we can be careless about the preciousness of life. We can take life for granted.
  + Now, I know what you’re thinking.
  + “Come on, Trev…you’re telling me if I eat a Big Mac every now and then I’m guilty of murder? Murder? MURDER!?!?! Really? Its just a burger and fries!”
  + Look, this sermon is not intended to be a guilt trip about your diet…and I get it…having fast food every now and then is fine…
  + I LITERALLY ate the HUGE BURGER from Cookout last night.
  + …but I also had a Kale Salad on Tuesday…so BACK OFF, I’M STARVING!
  + Listen, I just want to point out to you that any sort of carelessness about human life is something that this commandment prohibits…including what we put in our bodies and what we do with our bodies.
  + College students, teenagers…if MTV could make a television show with what you do in your downtime… things involving fireworks and port-a-potties… you are probably breaking this commandment.
  + Now, let me address the elephant in the room for just a minute.
  + There is no doubt that abortion is included in this command.
  + See, the best question to ask when trying to understand whether or not abortion is murder is this, “Might that fetus, my that fertilized egg be a human being?”
  + Now, I think scientifically and ethically the only responsible answer to that is YES!
  + But…even if you say, “I’m not sure”…to have an abortion would be carelessness with a human life.
  + Think of it like this.
  + Imagine that you and I go on a hunting trip.
  + And as we’re out hunting we get separated.
  + Now, I’m really eager to shoot a deer… and suddenly, I see a bush about 50 yds away begin to shake.
  + Now, I something is in that bush. But, I’m not sure if it's a deer…or you!
  + What should I do?
  + Should I preserve my right to hunt deer and fire away?
  + Or is that careless?
  + Should I hold my fire because I know what’s in that bush MIGHT be human life?
  + Of course, 100 out of 100 times we would say, “DON’T SHOOT!”
  + See, we know for sure that if what’s in the womb is human life, that it would absolutely violate this commandment to have an abortion or to fund one.
  + But…even if you aren’t sure…to have an abortion is to be careless with human life...so you shouldn’t do it.
  + Now listen closely.
  + Whatever your views on abortion are…and yes, even if you’ve had an abortion…I want to show you something.
  + I’m not here today to condemn you, anymore than I’m here today to condemn you for eating a bunch of fast food…
  + I’m here today, to show offer you life. Not death.
  + Hope, not condemnation.
  + Look back at that passage about carelessness.
  + **Deut 19:4-5 (cut out part about axe head)**
  + See, there was this provision in the law, for everyone who broke the 6th commandment without hateful intent…for everyone who was simply careless with human life… God made this provision for them in the law.
  + They could flee to one of these 3 cities of refuge, where they would be protected from the avenger of blood. The Avenger of blood (besides having one of the coolest titles in the bible), was a representative of the victim’s family that would chase down the manslayer to take his life.
  + See, life is so precious, that the penalty for taking a life was forfeiting your own.
  + Nothing else could save you. BUT, if you could make it to one of these cities of refuge…your life was protected.
  + I know…sounds so Hunger Games-ish doesn’t it? (And you thought Deuteronomy was boring…and right here we have an avenger of blood in the middle of the Hunger Games.)
  + **Numbers 35:25**
  + Now, you might be wondering, “So is this person, this poor guy who just had a freak lumberjack accident…is he just destined to live out the rest of his days in this City of Refuge?”
  + Well, no.
  + But see, the only thing that can substitute for one human life is another one.
  + So, whenever the high priest died, any of these careless manslayer’s were released from the city of refuge back into society…and they were held innocent because the death of the high priest had sort of substituted for their death.
  + Ok, so, I know what you’re thinking.
  + How in the world does this matter to me?
  + Well, stay with me, I’m going to show you.
  + But first, let me show you something more frightening and more convicting than anything I’ve shown you yet.
  + And, maybe surprisingly, it comes from the NT.
  + Right, you probably would expect the most severe stuff to be in the OT…with the hunger games and the avengers of blood and such.
  + But did you notice what Jesus said?
  + **Matt 5:21-22**
  + When Jesus came on the scene, he was challenging the religious leaders at the time and their interpretation of the law.
  + See, they thought they were fine with this command…afterall, they had never killed a person, nor had they ever accidentally sent an axe head flying into someone’s forehead….so they thought, “we’re good!”
  + But Jesus told them that behind all murder…is hate.
  + He says, “If you have been angry with your brother, you've broken this commandment”
  + In fact, he says, if you’ve ever devalued a person to the point of insulting them…or calling them a fool…you are liable to the judgment that is due a murderer.
  + That word, ‘insults’ is the word ‘raca’…it literally means “empty head”
  + The word ‘fool’ is the greek word ‘moros’ where we get our word ‘moron’ or ‘idiot’.
  + Here’s what it means.
  + When you reduce a person or a group of people down to a simple insult…you empty them of their God-given value.
  + Every person is created in the image of God, so when you in anger reduce them down to simply a moron…or an empty head… you are draining out their value…and you are telling everyone who hears you that they are not really human.
  + See, when you insult someone, you are murdering them…you are aborting your vision of them as an image bearer of God.
  + …and Jesus says, now, for that murder…you owe your life.
  + You are guilty, not just of careless manslaughter that doesn’t have any hate behind it…now you are guilty of murder.
  + You have actively sought to devalue human life.

**1 John 3:15**

* + And that's why John writes, if you hate your brother, you are a murderer…and you will not live forever.
  + Why? Because the only way to pay for the taking of a human life…is by giving up your own life.
  + At its core, murder is a lack of love…it's the lack of the ability to see someone as created in the image of God.
  + And that’s why we run from a pro-life God.
  + Because what we see in God’s character is starkly different from ours.
  + In every moment of anger with my family, friends, …and enemies…where I choose to see them as less than human…I am committing murder.
  + And I know that before God I stand guilty.
  + He is the avenger of blood…and I’m on the run…looking for refuge.
  + And often, I find that refuge in things that will tell me “I’m not a murderer.”
  + I don’t want God’s law to define me, so I define myself with something else.
  + I want to be a good preacher…a nice person…a successful entrepreneur…
  + We want to redefine ourselves as sexy…funny…
  + See, we all want to wanted…just not wanted for murder.
  + So we will seek safety in any city of refuge where we can pretend we aren’t guilty.
  + But deep down…its always thinly veiled.
  + Deep down, we know we’re guilty…and we can feel the hound of heaven hunting us down. Like a US Marshall.
* **Back to 1)**
  + Listen…that’s what was so beautiful about all the moments that Dr. Richard Kimball, while trying to flee to a city of refuge, while trying to find a way to enter back into society a free man…
  + He never stopped valuing human life. He didn’t forsake that security guard on the train… he didn’t leave him to die.
  + He didn’t shoot the Marshall, when it would have benefitted him to do so.
  + And even in the middle of being hunted…chased down to pay the price for a crime he didn’t commit…he stopped…he paused to heal a little boy…even though it would only result in the authorities catching up with him.
  + You know, if you read the Gospels, you’ll notice something remarkably pro-life about Jesus.
  + Indeed, Jesus is on a mission. Sent by God the Father…to save the world.
  + And…he’s on the run. The Pharisees didn’t like being called murderers…so ironically, they plotted to kill him.
  + Yet, Jesus would stop. To heal. To love.
  + Parents of a little girl one time begged him to come and heal their daughter. And Jesus stopped what he was doing and not only healed her…but raised her from the dead. It doesn’t get more pro life than that!
  + **Mark 5:41**
  + And when he did…he did it with the most gentle bedside manner, “Talitha Cumi”. He said, little girl, arise”….I can imagine, he probably touched her on the cheek.
  + Then there was a little boy, whose Father came and told Jesus that his son was possessed by a demon…and Jesus went to the boy. Cast the demon out and everyone thought the boy was dead.
  + **Mark 9:26-27**
  + But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and the boy arose.
  + He healed the sick, the blind, the deaf, the mute…everything that was a part of the curse on humanity…everything that entered the world through our own sin and rebellion…Jesus was healing.
  + But, like Dr. Kimball, every time he did this, he drew attention to himself…and those that thought he was evil…the pursued him even harder.
  + **Many times, by ending someone else’s funeral…he was starting his own.**
* **Transition-** See Jesus was on a mission. But it wasn’t to prove his own innoncence. It was to prove yours.
* **…and the incredibly scandalous and mind-boggling truth is that HE IS THE ONE that is innocent…and we are guilty as charged.**
* **And that’s why I want to end with story of Barabbas. See…**

**2) You’re Barabbas…so, “Give it up, its time to stop running.”**

* + Barabbas is sort of an odd interloper in the story of Jesus as he heads to the cross.
  + We don’t know a whole lot about Barabbas, but here’s what we’re told.
  + **Mark 15:7**
  + We know that Barabbas is a murderer.
  + And he’s on death row. Convicted. Scheduled to be executed.
  + And the Jews have this tradition that on the Passover, a convicted criminal can be released.
  + Now, Pontius Pilate is the governor in charge of this backwater Roman territory and he doesn’t like where this whole trial of Jesus Jesus is going.
  + He doesn’t want to be the center of attention in a Jewish uprising and then be blamed for it by Herod.
  + So, he decides to get a man who has committed the nastiest crime. Murder. After all, he knows this gentle Jesus hasn’t really done anything except ruffle feathers…so Pilate lets the people choose.
  + Do you want me to let Jesus go, this man who has healed you, who has let your children sit in his lap, who has cast out your demons…sure, he’s said some things that make you uncomfortable…but he’s no murderer.
  + Or do you want me let Barabbas go.
  + The murderer and insurrectionist.
  + IN other words, should I kill the man who deserves to die…or kill the man who doesn’t.
  + And they all chanted, “GIVE US BARABBAS”
  + Do you know what Barabbas means?
  + Its sort of a generic term. It means “son of the father”
  + It's a kind of stand in term for the everyman.
  + And indeed that’s who Barabbas represents.
  + Me and you. The sons and daughters of fathers and mothers.
* **Back to 2)**
  + See, on one hand, there stood the true Son of the Father.
  + God’s own son. Perfectly innocent.
  + On the other hand…there is Barabbas.
  + Guilty of murder. Destined to hang on a cross.
  + And right then, in one moment, in a moment full of insults…people reducing God himself to less than even human…
  + …Barabbas, the guilty, the murderer…is set free because Jesus, the innocent Son of the Father….is convicted to hang cursed…on a tree in his place.
  + What did Barabbas do to earn his freedom?
  + Did he prove himself? No.
  + Did he convince everyone that he wasn’t a murderer? No.
  + **Did he, like Dr. Richard Kimball run away at this moment to try and gather evidence that he was a good enough person that deserved to live?!** ….NO!!!!
  + Yet somehow, you’re still running.
  + Somehow, even though Christ has died in your place…for all your sin…even though he knows you are guilty he’s substituted himself to purchase your freedom…
  + …you are still running…trying to prove to yourself and everyone else that you aren’t condemned. That you aren’t guilty of murder.
  + You are trying to be a better mom or a better dad or a better at work…you are trying to be more generous or be a nicer person NOT BECAUSE YOU VALUE LIFE
  + …but because you are trying to prove to yourself and others and to God that you are innocent. And you’re not.
  + So Give it up…and stop running.
  + Stop running and see that Jesus is the high priest who was cursed on a tree for you.
  + You cannot be tried for the sins that he paid for with his life.
  + And once you stop running long enough to see this…you can freely begin living your life NOT for yourself…but you can begin giving your life away to preserve life in others.
  + See, you are Barabbas. I am Barabbas.
  + But in Jesus, when he traded places with us, we become something more than sons and daughters of our earthly parents…
  + …we become sons and daughters of God our Father…
  + …we become brothers and sisters of Jesus.
  + …and in a culture of death…in a world where people are fighting to prove themselves innocent…
  + …we can, like good doctors, grab their misdiagnosed charts that read…”be better, try harder, prove your innocence”…
  + We can scratch out the words “SAVE YOURSELVES”….
  + And we can write the new diagnosis…. “Jesus took his place. Jesus took her place.”
  + You are running around trying to prove yourself innocent….stop, and see the true son of the Father cursed hanging on a tree.
  + The High Priest has died…you are free….Give it up, its time to stop running
  + Now, you do what Jesus said, you can go to people you’ve hated…those who you have hurt and those who have hurt you, and you can be reconciled. You can forgive. You can stop being an avenger of blood and start being an ambassador for Christ.
  + You can stop trying to prove your innocence…and you can start healing relationships.
* **Pray.**