

A 10 minute family devotion based on our Lenten Wednesday series, “*By His Wounds You Are Healed: The Wound of Murder*”

Opening Versicles

O Lord, open my lips,

And my mouth shall declare Your praise.

Make haste, O God, to deliver me.

Make haste to help me, O Lord.

All: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and forever shall be. Amen.**

Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;

Yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

But He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities;

Upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His wounds we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way;

And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. [*Isaiah 53:4-6*]

All: **Amen.**

Scripture Readings

1 John 3:11-18

For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. ¹²We 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. ¹³Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. ¹⁴We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. ¹⁵Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. ¹⁶By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? ¹⁸Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. (ESV)

Matthew 5:21-24

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ ²²But 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. ²³So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. (ESV)

Brief Meditation on the Word of God

“Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. ¹⁶By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?” [1 John 3:15-17]

We are commanded that **“we should love one another”** [1 John 3:11]. Jesus, our Lord and God, came teaching us that to murder is not just to kill with a knife or a club. Instead, the

anger or hate that flows out of the heart (and out of the mouth as hurtful insults) is already murder in God's courtroom. [Matthew 5:21-22]

And we learn in 1 John 3:15-17 that to love is to lay down our life for our brother – **“we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers”**. This includes, therefore, laying down life's goods for your brother. If having God's love in us means laying down even our lives for one another, then certainly doing the smaller thing of sharing life's goods and necessities with one another is also required.

“Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer”, it says. And then we're told what that hate is: **“If anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?”** To hate and to withhold the world's goods from our brother in need is murder and, worst of all, it shuts the love of God out of our hearts. This will be a deadly wound to our faith.

To refuse to be reconciled, to hold a grudge, to refuse to forgive, is murder against one's own self. If I will not forgive, I will not be forgiven. I strike a mortal wound against my own soul by my anger toward another.

And to fail to actively love, whether friend or enemy - to hate by withholding love from another – love in deed (action) and truth, not just in word and talk – is a murderous wound against, not only the person in need, but also against my own self. If I close my heart, how does God's love abide in me?

Brothers and sisters, love one another by the love of the one who has first loved you – **“By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us.”** Just as Jesus has first loved you, love each other [1 John 4:10]. Forgive as He has forgiven you [Colossians 3:13]. **“If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all”** [Romans 12:18]. And **“Whoever has two tunics, share with him who has none, and whoever has food, do likewise.”** [Luke 3:11]. Love as Jesus has loved you.

Jesus has given all for you, not matter who you are. Before you ever knew Him, Jesus died for you. **“God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”** **“While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.”** [Romans 5:6-8]

Your sin is a wound against you. Your sin of murder – the grudge or the refusal to give help – is a mortal wound. Yet Jesus died for you. **“By His wounds you are healed”** [Isaiah 53:5]. Jesus was wounded for your sin and failure. His bloody wounds on the cross were the healing blows for your sin. His death is an atoning sacrifice procuring forgiveness for all your misdeeds. He died for all you've done and for all you've failed to do to forgive you. His wounds forgive and heal even the wound of murder.

Know that you are forgiven and healed. And, now, love as you have been loved. Amen.

Prayer

Let us pray. Lighten our darkness, we beseech Thee, O Lord; and by Thy great mercy defend us from all peril and danger; for the love of Thine only Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever, Amen.

Benediction

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. **Amen.**