

GOODNESS THAT GIVES LIFE

GOLDEN TEXT

“Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.” (1 John 3.15).

USEFUL PRACTICE

Life is a gift from God and no one has the right to take it apart from God himself.

SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 5:20-26

20 - For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

21 - “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’

22 - But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.

23 - “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you,

24 - leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

25 - “Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison.

26 - Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To explain that life is an act of God's goodness and that no one has the right to take it.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- I. **To recognize** that goodness is the believer's firm commitment to the benefit of others;
- II. **To show** that murder is the destruction of others, therefore, God condemns such an attitude;
- III. **To explain** why we must be kind and merciful.

INTRODUCTION

Do you already have a heart changed and regenerated by the Lord Jesus? Then there is no more room in your life for feelings and desires that were part of your old nature. In today's lesson, we will see that evil thoughts, deaths, adulteries, prostitution, false testimony, and blasphemies proceed from within man, that is, from the old Adamic nature (Mt 15: 18-19).

I - GOODNESS: THE FIRM COMMITMENT TO THE BENEFIT OF OTHERS

1. Goodness as the fruit of the Spirit. We can say that goodness and kindness are twin fruits. The Greek word for goodness is *agathosune*, and this word can be applied to God as a perfect and complete being (Mark 10:18), and in relation to one's benevolence (Mt 12:35, Acts 11:24; 1 Peter 2:18). As one of the aspects of the fruit of the Spirit we can say that goodness is a noble quality, generated by God, in the hearts of those who have experienced the new birth (John 3: 3). Anyone who has experienced regeneration in Jesus Christ is a new creature and is naturally inclined to do good (2 Cor. 5:17).

2. The goodness of God. The goodness of God is unique. He is good to all men, regardless of their condition (Psalm 145: 9). The goodness of the Father can be revealed in his provision, for He causes the sun and the rain to rise above the just and unjust (Mt 5:45). However, the greatest proof of God's goodness lies in the fact that He sent His only-begotten Son to die for us, sinful and evil men by nature (John 3:16). We usually act kindly only to those who treat us kindly, but the Creator is good to all; and as his children we must follow his example.

3. A kind man and a kind woman. In the Bible we find vivid examples of good men, and Job is one of these men. He was not only just and patient, but also kind to others (Job 29: 15-17; 31:32) and to his children, offering burnt offerings to God for them (Job 1: 5). Dorcas was a disciple who used her occupation as a seamstress to bless the poor (Acts 9:36, 39). The biblical text states that "she was full of good works and charitable deeds" (Acts 9:36). Her actions on behalf of the needy demonstrated her kindness and her love and devotion to God. He who loves the Lord loves his neighbors, but this love must be manifested through actions. It is not enough to say that we love; it is necessary to show this love by means of actions. What have you done to show your goodness to others?

II - MURDER, THE DESTRUCTION OF OTHERS

1. YOU SHALL NOT MURDER. In Exodus 20:13, we have an order from God for the preservation of life. The divine ordinance is very clear, so that even a child can understand it: "YOU SHALL NOT MURDER" (Exodus 20:13; Deut. 5:17). Throughout the Pentateuch we find various warnings about violence against life. God is good. Therefore, He established laws for premeditated murder, that is, when one person intentionally kills another (Deut. 27:24,25) and manslaughter, when there is no intent to kill (Deut. 19:4-6). The Lord Jesus, our greatest example of goodness and love, reinforced the divine legislation by teaching that we can harm the life of our neighbors even by words (Mt 5:21, 22). The apostle John also makes it clear that anyone who hates his brother is a murderer (1 John 3:15). May we love our neighbors, care for them and preserve their life, for this is the will of God for us.

2. Abortion, the death of a defenseless innocent one. When we talk about murder, we are also referring to abortion. This wicked act is inserted in the sixth commandment, because it is an attack against the life of a defenseless one, besides being an act against God, who is the giver of life (Is 45:12; Mt 10:28). Abortion, according to the Brazilian Penal Code, is also a crime. Although it is part of the Penal Code, some have mistakenly believed that abortion should be a woman's choice. But the Creator does not allow us, created beings, to decide who should or should not live. God created us; knows us and loves us since our body was still being formed in the womb of our mother (Ps 139:16).

3. The first murder. Right in Genesis, the first book of the Bible, we find the sad account of the first murder after the Fall (Gen. 4: 4-11). Cain killed

his brother because he let his heart be overcome with envy and jealousy. The biblical text says that God himself cursed Cain as a punishment for his act (Gen 4:15). No man can mock God, for all sin has its reward (Gal. 6:7).

III - BE KIND AND MERCIFUL

1. Serving others with love. Jesus must be our example of service and love. He declared that he did not come into the world to be served, but to serve and lay down his life for us (Matt. 20:28). We live in a selfish world where people just want to be served. Therefore, we need, as salt and light of this world, to show them our service and compassion (Mt 5: 13,14). Paul exhorted the believers in Galatia to bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6: 2). To carry out such an act we must love, because bearing the burden of others means helping a brother who is sick, facing tribulation or facing financial need. Have you helped your brothers and sisters carry their burdens or have you added even more weight to them?

2. Helping the wounded. We are living in difficult times, in which selfishness has prevailed in our society (2 Tim 3:1). We need to show the world the love of God through our actions while we still have time, because we know that soon Jesus will come. May we not act as the priest and the Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan, but let us be like the one who welcomes and helps the wounded (Luke 10: 25-37).

3. Helping the brothers and sisters. Paul taught the Galatians to do good to all, but especially those of the household of faith (Gal 6:10). How many brothers and sisters in our churches are in need of financial help, a prayer, or a comforting word! But sometimes we become indifferent to other's pain and forget to help those around us. Do not expect your brother to ask for your help. If you know he is experiencing some hardships and can help him, help him. Also, do not expect to get anything in return: do it out of love and goodness. The recompense will come from the Lord when we receive our rewards (Mt 10:41,42).

CONCLUSION

May we show the world and our brothers and sisters the goodness of God that was once poured out into our hearts! May we never accept any form of murder, for we are new creatures and we know that God hates such a practice.