

Sermon Discussion Guide
Sunday, January 17, 2021
The Cry of the 60,000,000+
Matthew 2: 13-18

This Sunday was Sanctity of Life Sunday, the annual day when the church pauses to remember that life is sacred. This passage, sometimes referred to as “the slaughter of the innocents”, is particularly appropriate because it is one of the clearest examples in Scripture when the sanctity of human life was grossly violated. King Herod was an evil man with evil deeds. He was ruthless in protecting his hold on power, even killing some of his own sons whom he felt threatened by.

Understanding Jesus’ mission, we know that this was more than just a politically motivated event. On another level, this event had great spiritual significance. Satan was aware of God’s promise to redeem his people. Like Pharaoh in the Old Testament, Herod was a typological figure, representing Satan. His actions, character, and motives depict Satan’s response to the arrival of the Messiah. To the prince of darkness, the Messiah was a threat to his hold on power. Both Herod and Satan were driven to neutralize the perceived threat to their reign. The murderous assault on the babies of Bethlehem and vicinity was pure evil.

1. The sermon talked about how people falsely believe that God looks at all sin the same. It was stated that the Law is a reflection of God’s character and values. The Law distinguishes between sins, some being worthy of capital punishment, and others not. How does that demonstrate that God makes a distinction between degrees of sin?

The confusion is related to the interpretation of James 2:10, where it says if you’re guilty of breaking part of the Law, you’re guilty of breaking all of it. James’ point is not to say that all sin is the same in God’s eyes. His point is that no matter what sins you commit, you stand condemned by the Law as a sinner. The root of the problem is not the individual sins we commit. The root is our fallen nature. The sins are the symptom of the real problem, our nature, or heart. The point is, we all need a Savior. So, yes, one sin is enough to keep us out of heaven, but not because all sin is the same. It is because any sin is evidence of the real problem, our hearts.

2. The “shedding of innocent blood” is a particularly heinous sin in God’s eyes. Why do you think the indiscriminate taking of human life is so abhorrent to God?
3. As we evaluate the issues in our society, we need to do it through the lens of God’s Word. God opposes all injustice, but he does acknowledge differences in degrees of injustice. Why does that matter as we evaluate the issue of abortion in our society?
4. Sometimes people rationalize the legality of abortion because of other justice issues. Several of these were mentioned in the sermon. What issues might tempt a Christian to rationalize the need for legalized abortion?
5. When Cain killed his brother, Abel, God said, “What have you done? Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground.” God then spoke of a covenantal curse that effected both Cain and the land. Read 2 Chronicles 7:14. What does the promise to heal the land have to do with the curse that was pronounced upon Abel and the land?
6. Atrocities affect the “spiritual climate” of places. The Sentinel Group has documented revivals around the world. When revival comes the land often experiences “healing”, or restoration. Why do you think that is? What part do you think repentance plays in this (2Chron.7:14)?
7. How has God spoken to you? What are you going to do about it? How can we support you?