

The Killer in Me

Tad Morris

Solomon must have been disappointed as he concluded, *“Truly, this only I have found: That God made man upright, But they have sought out many schemes”* (**Ecclesiastes 7:29**). This observation is as true today as it’s ever been.

The inclination to kill is one of these schemes. When we see people today assassinating their political or theological opponents, we are disappointed, but we are not surprised. Killing is not an anomalous human behavior. In fits of anger, jealousy, and self-righteousness, people will murder their competitors under the illusion of justice and necessity. Of course, we have many virtuous instincts—like kindness, forgiveness, and altruism—but human nature also includes these animal instincts that lead us to lie, cheat, steal, and even kill. This is documented over and over again in the Bible.

In **Genesis 4**, Abel brought a respectable offering, and Cain did not. So, Cain killed his brother. *“Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him”* (**Genesis 4:8**). Cain was jealous of his brother, so he killed him. This revealed a pattern of human behavior that has never changed and never will.

In **1 Samuel 18**, Saul, king of Israel, decided to kill his servant David for no other reason than that David was more successful and more admired than he was.

So the women sang as they danced, and said: "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands." Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?" So Saul eyed David from that day forward (1 Samuel 18:7-9).

Saul eyed him to kill him, and tried unsuccessfully many times. David didn't do anything wrong. David didn't need to apologize for being successful. David had no control over the people who admired and respected him. Saul didn't care. Saul only knew that he hated David, and he wanted David dead.

In **2 Chronicles 24**, the Jews tried to kill Zachariah the prophet because he told them the truth. He told them they had rejected the one true God.

Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood above the people, and said to them, "Thus says God: 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He also has forsaken you.'" So they conspired against him, and at the command of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the LORD (2 Chronicles 24:20-21).

People hate to be told that they're wrong. Rather than responding with thoughtfulness or introspection, our instinct is to respond with hate, violence, and even murder.

The plot to kill Jesus all started because Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath, the Jewish Day of rest.

Then He said to them, "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other. Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him (Matthew 12:11-14).

Jesus wasn't killed because he did something evil. He was killed because he did something good and told people the truth. The Pharisees and the other religious leaders could not stand to be corrected, so, in their minds, the solution was to kill their opponent.

This is the way people solve their problems. They kill them. Something similar happens in **John 12**. Jesus raised a man from the dead, Lazarus, and many people became believers in Christ on account of this awesome miracle. How did the Jewish leaders respond to this great work? They decided that Lazarus needed to die again.

Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus (John 12:9-11).

The Bible contains many, many more examples just like this. Stephen, Peter, Paul, James, and almost all of the apostles of Christ were killed for preaching the gospel. They were hated, hunted, and ultimately martyred because they preached the truth about sin, judgment, and salvation through Jesus Christ. They were kind, they were compassionate, and they were the best neighbors a person could ever have. But that wasn't good enough. Their communities decided they had to die for their non-conformance to social and religious traditions. People have a long history of killing their adversaries.

There is only one way out of this cycle. Jesus said, "*For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies*" (**Matthew 15:19**). The heart has to change, and the human nature has to die. That's the freedom offered to you through Jesus Christ and Christ alone. There is no law, code, or philosophy that can set you free from your human passions. That power does not exist in you, and it doesn't even come from this world. How to conquer your carnal human nature is from God through Jesus Christ, **Galatians 5:24**: "...*those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*"