

I have good news! This week should be easy. Last week with the First Commandment - that was impossible. The First Commandment - **“We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things”** - it’s just impossible. Last week, I didn’t even get through the service - distracted, grumpy. I was wondering if God would give me the Moses treatment - “No Promised Land for you.” But God didn’t strike me down; he hasn’t struck us down. Thank you, Lord! And now this week, we have an easy week.

This past week, when did you find the First Commandment especially impossible?

The Second Commandment - **“You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God.”** This one’s easy. Just don’t use the name of the LORD; don’t say the name; don’t write the name. Some Bibles help us with that - they spell LORD with the vowels of a different name for God so you don’t say “LORD”; they leave the “o” out of God so you don’t write “God” or read “God.” If I don’t see it or say it, I can’t misuse it, right? Easy.

Now teachers like Mrs. Voeks didn’t like easy. So they would make it tougher on us. With the Second Commandment - **“You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God”** - they would say - “No gosh, no golly, no Jeez.” Why? Don’t be messing with God’s name. Don’t show others it’s ok to mess with God’s name. Why not? God’s name is too precious to mess with. **“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”** If we - as the children of God - don’t take God’s name seriously, who will? If we don’t hold God’s name as precious, who will? If we treat God’s name as little more than a burp or a belch that slips out, why would we expect anyone else to take God’s name seriously? And if we don’t take God’s name seriously, why would we expect God to take us seriously?

Where might we have gotten into the habit of a “relaxed” attitude toward God’s name? ... God’s Truth? ... God’s standards?

I got a little off track there, didn’t I? I was going to tell you how easy it is to keep the Second Commandment - just don’t use God’s name.

Before I get any more off track, the Third Commandment - **“Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy.”** This one’s even easier. In Colossians, Paul says: **“Don’t let anyone judge you in regard to a Sabbath Day.”** In the New Testament, there is no Old Testament Sabbath Day. In the New Testament, when it comes to God’s commands for the days of the week, Saturday and Sunday are no different than any other

day. In the New Testament, there is no Old Testament Sabbath Day. Or maybe I should say: “in the New Testament, every day gets to be a Sabbath Day.”

How do you make your everyday a holy day? (a day set apart for God)

How do you make your everyday a Sabbath Day, a day to receive and soak in God's rest? (What is God's way to give us his rest?)

Now I'm getting off track again. We want to make this easy, don't we? In the New Testament, “we have no specific, commanded Sabbath Day to keep”; that takes care of the Third Commandment. And “don't use God's name”; that takes care of the Second Commandment. We can make this real easy. But if that's the way I think and live - “Don't use God's name, and treat God's Day like any other day of the week” - what am I doing? I'm cutting the cord that connects me to God. I'm making myself no different from the world that's going to hell. Strand by strand, I'm cutting the cord that connects me to God and I'm blowing off the best of God's gifts. What do we call that? A death wish. An eternal death wish. Maybe not a wish, but a determination. A determination to put God off; a determination to be far and farther away from God; a determination to be dead to God. But at least it's easy and convenient, right?

With the Second and Third Commandment, God isn't just giving us hoops to hop through or making us to be puppets or marionettes. No, God is looking to protect his connection to us; he's looking to protect our connection to him. Sure, we could make it as simple as this - God doesn't want us trashing his name and his Word because God is God and he doesn't want to be trashed. But there's more to it than that. God is looking to protect his name, protect his reputation, protect what we know about him, because it is through his name, through his reputation, through that we know about him that he gives us life. Take away or twist his name, take away or twist his reputation, take away or twist what we know about him, take away or twist his Word, and what is there to believe? And whoever does believe will be condemned.

In the same way, God could say: “I want my children to call every day; I want my children to come to my house every week; and if they don't want to call or come to my house for a visit, I'll just disown them and adopt new children who will be happy to call and visit.” When we hear that, it can be easy to think that by calling God and coming to church we're doing God some big favor. But the visit that God wants, the visit that God commands to be our highest priority, isn't a visit to entertain him. The visit that God wants, the visit that God commands to be our highest priority is a visit to hear the best news and best wisdom of the week, a visit to receive the best blessing and best promise of the week, a visit to be rested and recharged by God himself.

If God were content with us calling on him just now and then when we are in need ... if God were content with us joining him and his family in worship just when it was convenient, what would that say about his love for us?

If we are content with calling on God just now and then when we are in need ... if we're content to join God and his family in worship just when it is convenient, what does that say about our love for God?

But what if I don't want that visit or think I need that visit? What if I have better things to do, better places to go, better ways to make myself feel good? Have you ever been suckered into believing a lie ... and it cost you and your family? You know that kick-yourself-in-the-pants anger, that sick-in-your-gut shame, you feel when you've been suckered into a believing a lie? That's what Satan wants for you. And that's why he keeps distracting us from our daily and weekly visits with God. But God wants better for you, so he invites: **"Remember the Sabbath Day ... do not give up meeting together ... fill yourself to the full with Jesus."**

We've been suckered - haven't we? - suckered into thinking we have better places to be. And we've trashed God's name, not just with a Geez Louise, but by shaming God's name with our sin. I wish I could tell you there's an easy way out of that shame, an easy way out of God's judgment. There's not - the soul that sins, it shall die. The only way out is the way of the cross.

Thankfully, we know someone who has worked a way out; and by God's grace - we know his name - the LORD - **"The LORD, the gracious and compassionate God, forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin."** And we know his Way, his Truth, His Life; we know his Way, his Truth, his Life by name - Jesus. Why the name Jesus? **"Because he will save his people from their sins."**

You know Jesus. Jesus wasn't somebody who took the easy way out. Jesus lived the way of the cross ... he went to synagogue to listen and learn even though he knew better than the preacher; he went to temple for God-time even though people were making God's house to be a marketplace. And instead of twisting and turning God's Word to find a way out, Jesus went to the cross. He went to the cross for people who trashed his name, twisted his Word, blew off his blessings. He went to the cross for me and for you. There he took our sin and guilt. And there he paid the way out of God's judgment. You know all that; you've heard it all before - Thank you, Lord!

When and why did Jesus “go to church”?

When and why did Jesus pray?

When and why did Jesus pay for a world of people trashing his Name?

And now, what do you know? You know what the name LORD means for you, and what the name Jesus means for you - you have a God eager to hold you and hug you: **“Peace! Your sins are forgiven!”** You know the help your Father is eager to offer you - **“Call on me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver you.”** You know the purpose God has for you - **“to declare his praises,”** to share his Name, the only Name by which anyone can be saved - we get to be part of saving our family and friends! And you know the promise God has for you as you call on his Name, the promise God has as you share his Name - **“Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”**

Why do you know those wonderful truths?

Why do we know that? In his grace and mercy, God has given us his Word; he’s shared with us his Name. And not just in here [Bible]. In his grace and mercy, God has given us people - here in church, in school and Sunday School - God has given us people who take his Name and sharing his Name seriously - thank you, Lord! And not just here, but in our homes and families, in our family trees, God has given us people who took these Second and Third Commandments seriously, making sure we know God’s name, making sure we came and come to church, even when it’s not easy or convenient - thank you, Lord! Let me say it again: in his grace and mercy, God has given us people - here and in our families - people who have given so much so we can know the name that saves. And now with the Second and Third Commandment, God calls us to be

those people - God calls us to be those people who make sure his name and his blessing are passed and shared here - thank you, Lord!

How has obedience to the 2nd and 3rd Commandments been a blessing for you and yours?

How can your obedience to the 2nd and 3rd Commandments be a blessing to others?

Because of God's love - because of God's love in Jesus, because of God's love here and in you - when we hear the Second and Third Commandments, we don't look for an easy way out and settle for "Lord, have mercy." Instead, because of God's love, we take hold of his Word and call on his name, we get together with God's people and let the world know: "Thank you, Lord." Amen.

March 15 & 16, 2025

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... our favorite names might be “Me, Myself, and I.” Our favorite days might be the days we live for Self.

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we are reminded that God wants better for us, and so he points us to the better that he has for us. Today we review the 2nd and 3rd Commandments.

OPENING HYMN

“Open, Lovely Doors”

Hymn 912

Open, lovely doors, and let me come into God’s house today!
This is where great joys beset me more than I can sing or say.
Here I view God’s glorious face, see his light, receive his grace.

With a song I’ve come to greet you; come to me, dear Lord, I pray.
Where you let your people meet you heaven’s light is bright as day.
Let my heart your heaven be; Savior, make your home in me.

You deserve my deepest rev’rence; sanctify me through and through.
Let my worship in your presence clearly show my love for you.
Lord of mercy, hear my cry: lift my heart to you on high!

OPENING SENTENCES

Our help is in the name of the Lord.
Who made heaven and earth.

CONFESSION

Brothers and sisters in Christ, during the days of Lent, we fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God.

The time of Lent reminds us that to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, we must also know the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.

As disciples of the Lord Jesus, we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor. A review of God's Holy Ten Commandments can help us. This week we review the Second and Third Commandments.

The Second Commandment

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not use his name to curse, swear, lie, or deceive, or use witchcraft, but call upon God's name in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

The Third Commandment

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not despise preaching and his Word, but regard it as holy and gladly hear and learn it.

I invite you, now, to confess your sins, ask our Father for forgiveness, and commit yourselves to this struggle.

“Lord, Have Mercy”

Hymn 652 vs. 1

For what we have done and left undone we fall on your countless mercies.
For sins that are known and those unknown we call on your name so holy.
For envy and pride, for closing our eyes; for scorning our very neighbor.
In thought, word, and deed we've failed you, our King;
how deeply we need a Savior.

Refrain I

Lord, have mercy, Christ, have mercy, Lord, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy, Christ, have mercy, Lord, have mercy on us.

ABSOLUTION

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not desire the death of sinners but rather that they turn from their wickedness and live. Therefore, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

During these days of Lent, let us implore God to give us renewal and his Holy Spirit. May we continue to abide in the true faith and at the last be received by him through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

“Lord, Have Mercy”
Hymn 652 vs. 2

For what you have done, your life of love
you perfectly lived, we praise you.
Though tempted and tried, you fixed your eyes;
you finished the work God gave you.
And there on the tree, a King among thieves,
you bled for a world’s betrayal.
You loved to the end, our merciful friend; how pure and forever faithful.

Refrain II

Lord, have mercy, Christ, have mercy, Lord, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy, Christ, have mercy, Lord, have mercy on us.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty and merciful God, it is only by your gift of grace that we come into your presence and offer true and faithful service. Grant that our worship on earth may always be pleasing to you, and in the life to come give us the fulfillment of what you have promised; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

Exodus 34:1-7

The LORD said to Moses, "Chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones, and I will write on them the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. Be ready in the morning, and then come up on Mount Sinai. Present yourself to me there on top of the mountain. No one is to come with you or be seen anywhere on the mountain; not even the flocks and herds may graze in front of the mountain."

So Moses chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones and went up Mount Sinai early in the morning, as the LORD had commanded him; and he carried the two stone tablets in his hands. Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.

Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation."

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalms 116B

Refrain

I will walk in the pres - ence of the LORD,
in the land of the liv - ing.

I love the LORD, for he / heard my voice;
he heard my cry for / mercy.
Because he turned his / ear to me,
I will call on him as long / as I live.
The LORD is gracious and / righteous;
when I was brought low, he / saved me. *Refrain*

What shall I return / to the LORD
for all his good- / ness to me?
I will lift up the cup of sal- / vation
and call on the name / of the LORD.
Precious in the sight / of the LORD
is the death of his faithful / servants.
**Glory be to the Father and / to the Son
and to the Holy / Spirit,
as it was in the be- / ginning,
is now, and will be forever. / Amen. *Refrain***

SECOND READING

Hebrews 4:1–11

Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed. Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said,

“So I declared on oath in my anger,
‘They shall never enter my rest.’ ”

And yet his works have been finished since the creation of the world. For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words:

“On the seventh day God rested from all his works.” And again in the passage above he says, “They shall never enter my rest.”

Therefore since it still remains for some to enter that rest, and since those who formerly had the good news proclaimed to them did not go in because of their disobedience, God again set a certain day, calling it “Today.”

This he did when a long time later he spoke through David, as in the passage already quoted:

“Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts.”

For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL

John 2:13–22

When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, “Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father’s house into a market!” His disciples remembered that it is written: “Zeal for your house will consume me.”

The Jews then responded to him, “What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?”

Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.”

They replied, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?” But the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise be to you, O Christ!**

HYMN

"These Are the Holy Ten Commands"

Hymn 634 vs. 1, 6, 7

These are the holy Ten Commands God gave to us by Moses' hands
when high on Sinai's mount he stood, receiving them for our good.

Have mercy, Lord!

"In what you speak bring me no shame; do not misuse my holy name,
but call on me in troubled days; give me your thanks, prayers, and praise."

Have mercy, Lord!

"Respect the Sabbath of the Lord! Do not despise my holy Word,
but hold it sacred, precious, true, and hear that truth preached to you."

Have mercy, Lord!

SERMON

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

OFFERING

If you prefer to give online, the code at the right will take you to our Online Giving page. We invite our online givers to join in our offering with an "I Give Online" card in the pew racks.



PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

In peace let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the leaders of our synod and district, for all pastors in Christ, for all who are servants of the Church, and for all the people of God, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who bring offerings, those who do good works in this congregation, those who toil, those who sing, and all who await from the Lord great and abundant mercy, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger, and need, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For . . . let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the faithful who have gone before us and are with Christ, let us give thanks to the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Silence for individual prayer may follow.

Rejoicing in the fellowship of all the saints, let us commend ourselves, one another, and our whole life to Christ our Lord:

We commend ourselves to you, O Lord.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be 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.

THE SACRAMENT

(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)

(Gluten-free wafers are available; ask Pastor.)

PREFACE - SUNG

CW 183

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who brought the gift of salvation to all people by his death on the tree of the cross so that the devil, who overcame us by a tree, would in turn by a tree be overcome. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY - SUNG

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power, God of might.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest!

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my T body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my T blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **Amen.**

JESUS, LAMB OF GOD - SUNG

Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us your peace.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

"I Come, O Savior, to Your Table"

Hymn 670

I come, O Savior, to your table, for weak and weary is my soul;

O Jesus, you alone are able to satisfy and make me whole.

Refrain

Lord, may your body and your blood be for my soul the highest good.

O grant that I in manner worthy may eat and drink and be restored,
and, dwelling on your boundless mercy, look only unto you, O Lord.

Refrain

I should not be your sheep, dear Savior; I stray in sin's accursed terrain.
And yet you pardon my behavior; my faithful Shepherd you remain.

Refrain

O let me loathe all sin forever as death and poison to my soul,
that I through willful sinning never may see your judgment take its toll!

Refrain

Your holy heart has one obsession, one blessed thing it burns to do—
to cleanse the sinner from transgression; so I, a sinner, come to you. *Refrain*

My soul is burdened; Lord, relieve me, by all this weight of sin oppressed!
Though sinful, yet, in grace receive me and feed me as your grateful guest.

Refrain

Within me, Lord, your vision traces a heart of deep humility
that mourns its sin and yet embraces the merit you have earned for me.

Refrain

By faith I call your holy table the testament of your deep love,
for by your gift I now am able to know the heart of God above. *Refrain*

This meal with blessing is abounding:
to poor ones wealth, to weak ones pow'r,
to angels joy, to hell confounding, and life for me in death's dark hour.

Refrain

My heart has now become your dwelling, O blessed, holy Trinity.
With angels I, your praises telling, shall live in joy eternally. *Refrain*

CLOSING PRAYER

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his mercy endures forever.

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet you have given us in this Sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love. By your Spirit, help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

“Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing”

Hymn 927

Lord, dismiss us with your blessing; fill our hearts with joy and peace.

Let us each, your love possessing, triumph in redeeming grace.

O refresh us, O refresh us, trav’ling through this wilderness.

Thanks we give and adoration for the gospel’s joyful sound;
may the fruits of your salvation in our hearts and lives abound!
Ever faithful, ever faithful to your truth may we be found.

So whene’er the signal’s given us from earth to call away,
borne on angels’ wings to heaven, glad the summons to obey,
may we ever, may we ever reign with Christ in endless day.

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