

Sermon followed by Service - Ten Commandments-4,5,6 Mar 23, 25

I had it coming. I should have seen it coming. Last week I said this week would be easy. After the first week with the impossible First Commandment - “We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things” - I said last week would be easy with the Second and Third Commandments - “Do not misuse the name of the Lord your God” and “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” The Second and Third Commandments were supposed to be easy, but I fear I shamed God’s name and unholyed God’s preaching.

How? On Monday, I started getting ready for today, studying the 4th, 5th, and 6th Commandments. Then on Tuesday, God started on me. He tested me; he tested us on the heart of those commandments - love for other people. And I fell short. Tuesday morning, after hours, days ... after weeks of phone-call run around, I lost my patience. After calming down, I told myself it was a good thing I was working from home, because whenever I preach on love for other people, somebody needing money help that I can’t give, somebody needing Level Three help while we’re still toying around with Level One help, drops in asking for the Pastor. Well, I needed to come in to the office, so you know what happened. Just when I’m getting something done, God tests me; God tests us with a someone looking for help. I don’t want to be one of those loveless, useless people James talks about: full of talk - “I wish you well,” but no useful action. I don’t want to be one of those churches that looks good on the outside, but doesn’t care about people from the other side of town. I said it would be an easy week; it didn’t work out that

way. Then on Wednesday, I come in and somebody is parking in my parking spot, but not just that, he's parking in my back-up parking spot as well - he's straddling two spots, paying no attention to the fact that that's where I park. Thankfully, God gave me a closer parking spot before I failed yet another test. I should have seen it coming. I had it coming.

This commandment thing can be hard - especially if we go to the heart of the commandments. You know what Paul says: **“The good that I would, I do not. The evil I don't want to do, I keep on doing.”** What comes next? It's not a shrug of the shoulders: “Oh, well.” No, Paul doesn't just shrug over sin. Even before there was such a thing as the season of Lent, Paul lived with the heart of Lent: **“What a wretch I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?!”** But Paul didn't sit around and wallow, either. Instead Paul brightened with Easter: **“Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! ... There is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus!”** I failed; I fell short, but I don't need to wallow. I imagine I wasn't alone this past week. In how many different ways did you fall short of the life God has for you in the Ten Commandments? But we don't just shrug our shoulders, do we? - “oh, well.” And we don't just stew in the pit of Lent: “what a wretch I am.” With Jesus we get to move on to Easter - “there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.” And now what? We don't just go on our way; we do what Paul does next. With the Holy Spirit inside us, we take up the struggle to live the life God has for us - a life showing and sharing God's goodness, a life showing and sharing God's heart with the people around us.

That's what the 4th, 5th, and 6th Commandments are about. In the first 3 commandments, God is talking first and most about our relationship with him. Now in the 4th, 5th, and 6th Commandments, God is talking about our relationships with each other.

We could talk about what God commands - The Fourth Commandment - "**Honor your father and mother.**" Not just when or because they do something to deserve our honor, but "honor your father and mother" because in God's plan our parents represent God; it is first and foremost through father and mother that God wants to show and share his love and wisdom with us. But in this world of sin, moms and dads need help, so God has given us government to help keep us in line, and church to help teach us the heart of God. And so with the 4th Commandment - "**Honor your father and mother,**" we include honor and obey your government, respect and listen to your church leaders.

Then we have the 5th Commandment - "**Thou shalt not murder.**" Now before we think "this should be an easy one," what did Jesus say? "**I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.**" John put it this way: "**Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.**" Luther pulled it together this way: "We should fear and love God that we do not hurt nor harm our neighbor in his body, but" - oh, here's where it gets tough - "help and befriend him in every bodily need." Lord, have mercy! Christ, have mercy! Lord, have mercy on us!

Then we have the 6th Commandment - “Thou shall not commit adultery.” Jesus doesn’t let us off easy here either, does he? **“I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”** We live in a world that has largely written off the 6th Commandment, and what about us? We like to pick and choose, and excuse, don’t we?

We could talk for hours and days about what God is commanding in these commandments. But with these commandments God isn’t just commanding, God is protecting. What is he protecting? **“Honor your father and mother”** ... **“do not commit adultery”** - God is protecting family life. **“Thou shalt not murder”** - God is protecting his gift of life; he’s protecting our time of grace, our neighbor’s time of grace.

Because God loves us, he gives us parents and family; because he loves us he looks to protect parents and family - not just from the world out there, but he looks to protect parents and family from ourselves. Because he loves us, God gives us life, and because he loves us, God looks to protect life - not just our own life, but the lives of the people around us, throughout the world - not just so that hearts keep ticking, but so that hearts worldwide are cared for - by us.

I don’t always share God’s interests. Growing up, I was more interested in what my parents were supposed to do for me than what I was supposed to do for them. When it comes to the government, I can be far more interested in my rights and what I can get, than in my responsibilities and what I owe my God-given

government. When it comes to church leaders, I can be far more in tune with my petty frustrations, than reflecting the heart of Jesus. With the 5th Commandment, I can be far more interested in my property rights and borders, than sharing God's interest in the well-being of my neighbors here and around the world. I can find it a whole lot easier to think someone else should take care, than to think that I should take care of others. With the 6th Commandment, it's a whole lot easier to pick on them for their sins, than to be a husband who is always more and more like Jesus - good and gentle, kind and true.

This next week won't be easy. When I think it will be, God will test me and Satan will work his way in. The good that I would, I won't. The evil I don't want to do, I'll do it again. And you? The same, right? But that isn't a reality we will just shrug off. It's an ugly reality that will sicken us inside - **“what a wretch I am - who will rescue me from this body of death.”** More importantly, it is a reality from which Christ has rescued us!

Yes, we have God commanding us, and God condemning - the soul that sins, it shall die. But in Jesus, the same God who demands our life, he gave his life for us. In Jesus, that same God who condemns us, he speaks up for us and forgives us. In Jesus, that same God who commands us, he stepped in for us and obeyed, and he covers you with his perfect life of love.

What does that mean for us? Instead of imagining God as a scowling Father, instead of imagining God as the Father whose approval we can never have, you get to see God as a Father with

arms open and ready to hug you; you get to see and hear God as a Father smiling on you - **“You are my son, my daughter, whom I love, with you I am well-pleased.”** Now, when we’re haunted by sins of the past, instead of kicking ourselves, instead of beating ourselves up, instead of slaving to somehow make up for what we have done - we get to see Jesus as the perfect husband for his church - he gave himself for us; with water and the Word he washed us clean, without spot or wrinkle, or any other blemish; now he whispers “peace” to our hearts, and proudly presents us as his. And that’s the way we get to live! We don’t just shrug off sin as no big deal or the commandments as no big deal; and we don’t give up on the commandments as unreasonable or impossible. With Christ and his Spirit to power us, we take on the life God gives us as the family of God.

We love God for giving us family and life. We love God for stepping in to save and protect family and life. We love God for giving us the privilege of blessing family and life. And how do we do that? We love God first and most and we love our neighbor as ourselves; we love our neighbors with the love of God. Amen.

March 22 & 23, 2025

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... we are surrounded by hurting people. Some people hurting with no one else specifically to blame (illness, aging, ...); so many hurting because of avoidable and loveless actions or inactions of other people.

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we see that our God is a God of love, and in love he has blessed us with commandments designed to guide us in his love and to protect us and bless us with loving families and community.

OPENING HYMN

“Speak, O Lord”

Hymn 633

Speak, O Lord, as we come to you to receive the food of your holy Word;
take your truth, plant it deep in us, shape and fashion us in your likeness,
that the light of Christ might be seen today
in our acts of love and our deeds of faith.

Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us all your purposes for your glory.

Teach us, Lord, full obedience, holy reverence, true humility;
test our thoughts and our attitudes in the radiance of your purity.

Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see
your majestic love and authority.

Words of pow’r that can never fail, let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds,
help us grasp the heights of your plans for us,
truths unchanged from the dawn of time,
that will echo down through eternity.

And by grace we’ll stand on your promises,
and by faith we’ll walk as you walk with us.

Speak, O Lord, till your Church is built,
and the earth is filled with your glory.

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 Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Commandments.

The Fourth Commandment

Honor your father and mother, that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not dishonor or anger our parents and others in authority, but honor, serve, and obey them, and give them love and respect.

The Fifth Commandment

You shall not murder.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and befriend him in every bodily need.

The Sixth Commandment

You shall not commit adultery.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we lead a pure and decent life in words and actions, and that husband and wife love and honor each other.

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

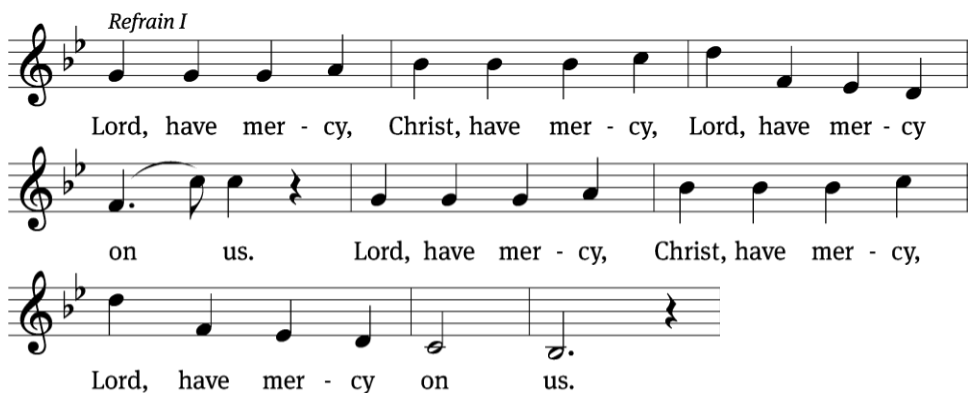
“Lord, Have Mercy”

Hymn 652 vs. 1



1 For what we have done and left un - done we fall on your
count - less mer - cies. For sins that are known and
those un - known we call on your name so ho - ly.
For en - vy and pride, for clos - ing our eyes; for
scorn - ing our ver - y neigh - bor. In
thought, word, and deed we've failed you, our King; how
deep - ly we need a Sav - ior. *Refrain I*

Refrain I



Lord, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy
 on us. Lord, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy,
 Lord, have mer - cy on us.

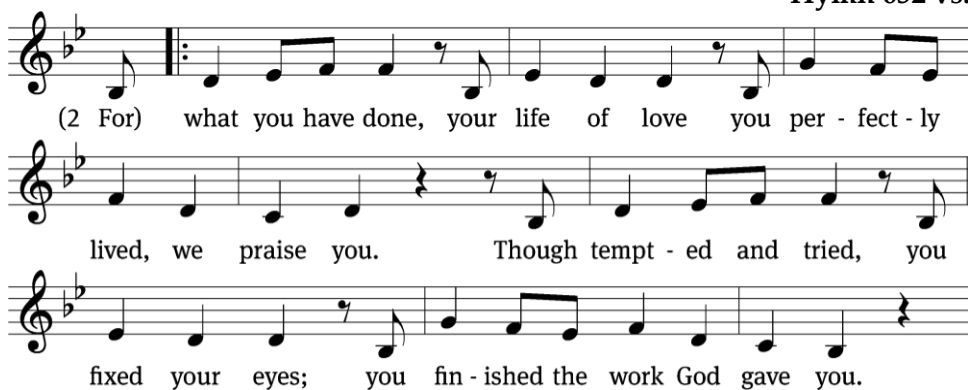
ABSOLUTION

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



(2 For) what you have done, your life of love you per - fect - ly
 lived, we praise you. Though tempt - ed and tried, you
 fixed your eyes; you fin - ished the work God gave you.

And there on the tree, a King a - mong thieves, you
bled for a world's be - tray - al. You
loved to the end, our mer - ci - ful friend; how
pure and for - ev - er faith - ful. *Refrain II*

Refrain II
Lord, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy
on us. Lord, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy,
1 2 *Fine (last time)*
Lord, have mer - cy on us. on us.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord, create sympathy in our hearts for the poor and oppressed. In their suffering, help us to see you, denied and betrayed by your own disciples. Lead us to remember your suffering that we may have compassion for all people. In our Savior's love we pray. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

Ecclesiastes 4:7-12

Again I saw something meaningless under the sun:

There was a man all alone;
he had neither son nor brother.

There was no end to his toil,
 yet his eyes were not content with his wealth.
 "For whom am I toiling," he asked,
 "and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment?"
 This too is meaningless—
 a miserable business!

Two are better than one,
 because they have a good return for their labor:
 If either of them falls down,
 one can help the other up.

But pity anyone who falls
 and has no one to help them up.
 Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.
 But how can one keep warm alone?
 Though one may be overpowered,
 two can defend themselves.
 A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

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

PSALM

Psalm 41D

1 O blest are they who in their love com - pas - sion
 2 When all the e - vils earth can dream are cast on
 3 The hands which shared my bro - ken bread, my love with
 4 To me, O LORD, in mer - cy turn; your fa - vor,
 hold for those in need; for they shall find, when
 me, my faith to break, their rage I tem - per
 their de - ceit re - paid; and friends whose trust I
 my most trea - sured prize; my mouth shall sing re -



faced by foes, the LORD is their de - fense in - deed.
through God's grace, and bear them bold - ly for God's sake.
count - ed mine have left me wound - ed and be - trayed.
demp - tion's song, and tears of love wash clean my eyes.

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 13:1–8a, 13

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

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

GOSPEL

Matthew 5:21–22, 27–30

“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.’ 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.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.”

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

HYMN

“These Are the Holy Ten Commands”

Hymn 634 vs. 1, 8, 9, 10



A These are the ho - ly Ten Com - mands God gave to us by
 4th “Give to your par - ents hon - or due, be du - ti - ful and
 5th “You shall not mur - der, hurt, or hate; your an - ger dare not
 6th “Be faith - ful to your mar - riage vow; no lust or im - pure



Mo - ses’ hands when high on Si - nai’s mount he stood,
 lov - ing, too, and help them when their pow’rs are few;
 dom - i - nate. Be kind and pa - tient; help, de - fend,
 thoughts al - low, Keep all your con - duct free from sin



re - ceiv - ing them for our good. Have mer - cy, Lord!
 so shall it go well with you.” Have mer - cy, Lord!
 and treat your foe as your friend.” Have mer - cy, Lord!
 by self - con - trolled dis - ci - pline.” Have mer - cy, Lord!

SERMON

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. 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 all who govern our nation and for all public servants, that they may be upheld and strengthened for every good deed, let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

For those who work to bring peace, justice, health, and protection in this and every place, 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 favorable weather, for an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, 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 . . . [*additional bids for prayer may be inserted here*] . . . 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.

PRAYER AND 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.

M: O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, you have brought us safely to this new day. Defend us with your mighty power, and grant that this day we neither fall into sin nor run into any kind of danger; and in all we do, direct us to what is right in your sight, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING

The grace of our Lord † Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

"Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways"

Hymn 705

Oh, that the Lord would guide my ways to keep his statutes still!
Oh, that my God would grant me grace to know and do his will!

Order my footsteps by your Word, and make my heart sincere;
let sin have no dominion, Lord, but keep my conscience clear.

Assist my soul, too apt to stray, a stricter watch to keep,
and should I e'er forget your way, restore your wand'ring sheep.

Make me to walk in your commands— 'tis a delightful road—
nor let my head or heart or hands offend against my God.

Acknowledgements: Created by Christian Worship: Service Builder © 2025 Concordia Publishing House. Texts and music covered under OneLicense.net #A-712373 and CCLI Copyright License 11194382, CCLI Streaming License CSPL059933 Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zonderwan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zonderwan.com The "NIV" and "New International Version" are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™ These Are the Holy Ten Commandments Text (sts. A-1st): © 2006 Concordia Publishing House; (B): © 1980 Concordia Publishing House. Text (6th): (c) 1980 Concordia Publishing House. Psalm 41D Text: (c) 1999 Witherspoon Press. Lord, Have Mercy Text and tune: (c) Common Hymnal Publishing / 10000 Fathers, admin. IntegratedRights.com Speak, O Lord Text: (c) 2006 Thankyou Music, admin. CapitolCMGPublishing.com.