

Sermon for July 27,2025 – The Sixth Sunday after Trinity

We have a way of comparing things whereby we place one thing on one hand and another thing on the other hand. So, let's place (sin and death) on one hand and then place (baptism and life) on the other hand. John Doe Christian is a sinner on one hand but he is - at the same time - a saint on the other hand. John Doe Christian is dead in sin on the one hand but baptized to new life in Christ on the other hand. All of us who believe in Christ, who are buried with Him through baptism into death on the one hand are on the other hand raised with him from the dead by the glory of the father.

And so we have it in our scriptures today, the Ten Commandments on the one hand and the fulfillment of the Ten Commandments through Christ on the other hand. Our O T reading for today is Exodus 20:1-17, God giving the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mt. Sinai.

The first table of the law, the first three commandments deal with our relationship with God. We should fear, love, and trust in the only true and living God above all things. We should deal with God's Name respectfully – even with fear and trembling - and not take it in vain. We should also remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy, not despising preaching and His Word.

The second table of the law, commandments four through ten deal with our relationships with our fellow human beings. Don't disrespect our parents and those God has placed in authority over us. Don't kill or hurt other humans. Don't have sex with any one except your spouse, the one whom God has given to you. Don't steal. Don't lie. Don't slander your neighbors. Don't desire your neighbor's wife, servants, or animals for yourself. Don't desire your neighbor's physical possessions for yourself.

There you have it, God's law. Simple enough, right? But, if you think that keeping these simple laws is a snap, tell me which one you can keep perfectly, for you see keeping of them is not easy, you don't necessarily have to kill someone to break the commandment on murder, just be angry at them. You don't necessarily have to worship a buddha to break the first commandment, just trust in money or your job or your doctor or yourself more than you trust in God. On one hand we can't keep the ten commandments and on the other hand we don't keep the ten commandments. We are, in truth, law-breaking idol-making machines.

On the other hand, along comes Jesus the Son of God born into flesh to suffer and die to pay for the sins of the world who kept these commandments fully and perfectly. He did what we could

never do. And the failure of the Pharisees and Sadducees to find some sin Jesus committed, is solid testimony to his ability to keep the law perfectly. For these were people who knew the law well for they not only sought to keep the Ten Commandments, but they also sought to keep the other 613 additional laws that they had contrived. And they claimed to keep all 623. They were fooling themselves in thinking that they kept these laws. But, they did **know** the law.

But, Jesus kept the law, the commandments perfectly. Unlike us who sin and are baptized to wash away our sin, Jesus was baptized to take on the sins of the world. Jesus was crucified as punishment for the sins of the world. The wages of sin is death. Jesus died, though He had no sin of His own, he died to pay for our sin. Jesus was raised from the dead for our justification, that those who believe in Him might be saved.

Romans 6:3,4,5,6 - ³ *Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?* ⁴ *Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.* 5,6 - *For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,* ⁶ *knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.*

From Martin Luther: For, imagine to yourself a physician, who possessed an art preventing persons from dying ; or, even if they died, immediately restoring them to life so as to live eternally afterwards, how the world would rush and flock around him with money, while the poor, prevented by the rich, could not approach him ! And yet here in Baptism, every one has such a treasure and medicine gratuitously brought to his door—a medicine which abolishes death, and preserves all men to eternal life.” (LC IV 43).

Dear Ones, you can't do what is required of you by God's law. You can't keep and you don't keep God's commandments. Should you try? Yes. **BUT** - If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

He said it: *“Believe and be baptized and you shall be saved.”* For you who believe in Christ and what He has done for you, you have been baptized, and you shall be – SAVED. You will be raised from the dead and live into eternity. Believe it! You are God's baptized child. Amen.

Exodus 20:1-17

20 And God spoke all these words, saying:

20:1 *words*. Hbr *dabar*; see p 971.

² “I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

20:2 I ... *you*. The Lord directly addresses each individual of Israel. *your God*. The God who established a covenant with Abraham and Moses (cf 3:14) and who holds authority over these people.

20:3–17 Though traditionally known as the Ten Commandments, the term “commandments” occurs only in v 6.

See note, 34:28. The list proclaims both Law (vv 3–17) and mercy (vv 2, 6). According to the Jewish Mishnah, reciting the Ten Commandments was a significant feature of temple liturgy (Tamid 5:1).

³ “You shall have no other gods before Me.

20:3 Prohibits any other gods from Israel’s exclusive relationship with Him. See note, Dt 32:39; see also SC, First Commandment, p xxxv. *before Me*. Lit, “in front of My face.”

⁴ “You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth;

20:4 *carved image*. Explanation of v 3. See p 141. Cypr: “Idols are not gods, and ... the elements are not to be worshipped in the place of gods” (ANF 5:498).

⁵ you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me,

20:5 *jealous*. Hbr *qanna*’, adjective used esp of God; associated with term for “zealous” and “passionate.” God prohibits worshiping other gods because, as in any good marriage, the relationship does not admit third parties. See note, Hos 4:13. This was not sinful jealousy, but a righteous desire for His people to be faithful. *visiting the iniquity*. Bringing the deserved condemnation. *of the fathers on the children*. Sin, which is inherited (Ps 51:5), corrupts and affects families. Consider how children often repeat the sins of the parents and then suffer the consequences. Our relationship with God is both individual and corporate. However, note two things: God pictures His mercy here as being much greater than His wrath. Every person stands before God in judgment based on his own relationship with God, not another’s (cf Dt 24:16). See SC, First Commandment, p xxxv. Luth: “ ‘Although the Law does not justify, it is nevertheless extremely useful and necessary. In the first place, it acts as a civic restraint upon those who are unspiritual and uncivilized. In the second place, it produces in a man the knowledge of himself as a sinner, who is therefore subject to death and worthy of eternal wrath.’ But what is the value of this effect, this humiliation, this wounding and crushing by the hammer? It has this value, that grace can have access to us. Therefore the Law is a minister and a preparation for grace” (AE 26:314).

⁶ but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

20:6 *steadfast love*. See p 843. *commandments*. See p 971.

20:7–17 God no longer speaks directly to the people (see note, v 2), but Moses speaks for Him. Cf v 19.

⁷ “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless who takes His name in vain.

20:7 The commandment prohibits taking oaths or vows in the Lord’s name, which one does not intend to keep. See “oath,” p 7. *in vain*. Without meaning (i.e., to use it unnecessarily or casually). See SC, Second Commandment, p xxxv.

⁸ “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

20:8 *Remember*. Pay attention to. *Sabbath*. Hbr means “rest” or “stop.” *keep it holy*. Keep it special by being

separate from other days. It is meant for rest and worship. Cf Dt 5:12–15 for emphasis on worship as reexperiencing the saving acts of God. See “holy,” p 7; see also SC, Third Commandment, p xxxv. According to Ne 13:17–19, the Sabbath began when it grew dark (Friday night).

⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work,

¹⁰ but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates.

¹¹ For *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

20:11 Follow God’s example by resting. People worked six days a week, 12 or more hours per day. They needed a day of rest, primarily for the soul (cf Mt 11:28). *the LORD blessed the Sabbath day*. Declared it special, set apart for Him. See note, Gn 2:3.

20:12–17 Whereas the first set, or “table,” of commandments (vv 3–11) describes a person’s actions toward God, the second set, or “table,” describes one’s actions toward others.

¹² “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

20:12 Care for parents was esp needed during old age, during funeral and burial rites, and about a year after burial, when the bones of the deceased were gathered to the family bone pile. See note, 1Ki 2:10. *Honor*. Hold in high regard, respect and obey. See SC, Fourth Commandment, p xxxv. *your days may be long*. See note, Eph 6:3. *land*. Canaan.

¹³ “You shall not murder.

20:13 *murder*. The unauthorized taking of human life, whether premeditated, in anger, or by carelessness. See SC, Fifth Commandment, p xxxv; see also note, Gn 9:6.

¹⁴ “You shall not commit adultery.

20:14 *adultery*. Specifically refers to a married person engaging in sexual activity with someone other than his or her spouse. See SC, Sixth Commandment, p xxxv. See also pp 2120–21.

¹⁵ “You shall not steal.

20:15 God forbids taking private property, which shows approval of the concept of private property in human economy. Ultimately, He is the owner of everything (cf Ps 50:10). See SC, Seventh Commandment, p xxxvi.

¹⁶ “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

20:16 *bear false witness*. Lie under oath in court. See SC, Eighth Commandment, p xxxvi

¹⁷ “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that *is* your neighbor’s.”

20:17 Understood as two commandments. See SC, Ninth and Tenth Commandments, p xxxvi. Unlike the early commandments that address actions, these two focus on intentions. Ambr: “Love of money, then, is an old, an ancient vice, which showed itself even at the declaration of the divine law” (*NPNF* 2 10:63). *covet*. Hbr *chamad*, desire or crave. *neighbor’s*. Member of another household. *ox*. Large cattle were important contributors to the household and were kept nearby or in homes. See pp 380–81¹

Romans 6:3-11

¹ Engelbrecht, E. A. (2009). [*The Lutheran Study Bible*](#) (pp. 128–129). St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

³ Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?
6:3 *baptized into Christ Jesus*. Baptism connects us with Christ's work, clothing us in His righteousness. *baptized into His death*? Christ paid the penalty of our sin. Christ's work is applied to us in Baptism.

⁴ Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.
6:4 *buried ... by baptism*. As Jesus was covered by the earth in His burial, we are buried in baptismal water. Early Christian baptismal practices reflected the Jewish *tebilah* rite of purification, which was by immersion. However, there were other ways to wash or baptize. See p 1369. *just as Christ was raised*. We are united to Christ's death and burial so that we will be united to His resurrection and life. *by the glory of the Father*. God's power was gloriously revealed in the resurrection. *walk in newness of life*. Christ's work gives us a new life, free from the guilt of sin. Luth: "Imagine there was a doctor somewhere who understood the art of saving people from death or, even though they died, could restore them quickly to life so that they would afterward live forever. Oh, how the world would pour in money like snow and rain. No one could find access to him because of the throng of the rich! But here in Baptism there is freely brought to everyone's door such a treasure and medicine that it utterly destroys death and preserves all people alive" (LC IV 43).

⁵ For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness* of His resurrection,
6:5 *united with Him*. Christ identifies Himself with us; His death pays for our sins, and His righteousness is credited to us. *a death like His*. His death was on the cross; ours is in Baptism, which gives the benefits of His work on the cross. *a resurrection like His*. New life has already begun for the child of God; at Christ's return, our bodies will be raised to life again.

6:6 *old self*. Our sinful nature. *body of sin*. The whole person, controlled by sin. *brought to nothing*. Loses its destructive power. *enslaved to sin*. Completely controlled by the sinful nature. "The Law of the Lord is also necessary so that the old Adam ... may not use his own will, but may be subdued against his will" (FC Ep VI 4).

⁷ For he who has died has been freed from sin.
6:7 Those crucified with Christ in Baptism have been freed from sin's effects.

⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,
⁹ knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.
6:9 Christ lives eternally. He is not subject to death; He conquered it.

¹⁰ For *the death* that He died, He died to sin once for all; but *the life* that He lives, He lives to God.
6:10 *He died to sin*. Chrys: "He was not subject even to [sin], but for our sin, that He might destroy it, and cut away its sinews and all its power, therefore He died" (NPNF 1 11:410). *once for all*. Christ's single death paid for all sins. *He lives to God*. Christ's eternal life is devoted to the Father.

¹¹ Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.²
6:11 Because Christ has united Himself to us, we do not use forgiveness as an excuse to sin (v 1); instead, we joyfully live in service to Him. *in Christ Jesus*. See note, 8:1.³

Matthew 5:20-26

²⁰ For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

² [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Ro 6:3–11). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ Engelbrecht, E. A. (2009). [The Lutheran Study Bible](#) (pp. 1918–1919). St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

5:20 *righteousness exceeds*. See p 1904. True righteousness is the result of a right relationship with Jesus. Good works are a fruit of faith in Him (Eph 2:8–10), something that most scribes and Pharisees did not possess. *scribes*. See note, 2:4. *Pharisees*. See note, Mk 2:18.

5:17–20 The scribes and Pharisees read and study the Law and the Prophets. They accept the fact that “Scripture cannot be broken” (Jn 10:35), but they do not believe that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Scriptures (cf Jn 5:39). They seek to achieve righteousness by keeping the Law, for which they have a high regard. But Jesus goes on to point out just how defective their righteousness really is (vv 21–48). “Christ takes the Law into His hands and explains it spiritually” (FC SD V 10). When judged by the true intent of God’s Law, our righteousness is likewise defective. Only in Christ do we have true righteousness. • Jesus, when I read and study the Scriptures, help me to see my sin and to see You, my Savior. Amen.

Murder

²¹ “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘*You shall not murder*, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’

5:21 *You have heard*. What the disciples heard from Jewish religious teachers such as the scribes and Pharisees. *liable to judgment*. From a human court

²² But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.

5:22 *But I say to you*. Jesus stated His own teaching with the voice of authority (cf vv 28, 32, 34, 39, 44; 7:29). “Christ takes the Law into His hands and explains it spiritually” (FC SD V 10). *brother*. A fellow believer. See p 1901. *liable to judgment*. God’s judgment. *council*. Religious court. *You fool!* Another term expressing anger and abuse. *hell of fire*. Lit, rubbish pit near Jerusalem, where fire always smoldered. See ESV note. Symbolic of eternal punishment. See p 792. “He says that we must not kill, neither with hand, heart, mouth, signs, gestures, help, nor counsel” (LC I 182).

²³ Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, **5:23** *gift at the altar*. An offering to be sacrificed on the temple altar. Aug: “We may interpret the altar spiritually, as being faith itself in the inner temple of God, whose emblem is the visible altar. For whatever offering we present to God, whether prophecy, or teaching, or prayer, or a psalm, or a hymn, and whatever other such like spiritual gift occurs to the mind, it cannot be acceptable to God, unless it be sustained by sincerity of faith” (NPNF 1 6:12–13). *something against you*. A fellow believer has a grievance against the worshiper.

²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

5:24 The first priority for a worshiper is to seek reconciliation with an offended believer.

²⁵ Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.

5:25 *Come to terms quickly with your accuser*. Jesus urged immediate action in resolving disputes. On legal proceedings, see p 792.

²⁶ Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.

5:26 *paid the last penny*. See ESV note. The end for someone who is angry with a fellow believer (v 22) and does not seek reconciliation (vv 24–25) is imprisonment. See note, 18:34.

5:21–26 Jesus teaches that not only murder but also anger makes one liable to the hell of fire. He urges His disciples to energetically seek reconciliation with fellow believers who might be vexed with them. This stern preaching of the Law causes us to take stock of our own behavior and to confess that we often, through sinful anger, fall. Our only hope for salvation is to trust the reconciliation that Christ accomplished by His sacrificial death (cf 2Co 5:19). Having been reconciled to God, we may be reconciled with one another. • Mighty Judge, cover

my outbursts of sinful anger with the embrace of Your reconciling peace. Amen.

THE SMALCALD ARTICLES

IX. EXCOMMUNICATION

We consider the greater excommunication, as the pope calls it, to be merely a civil penalty which does not concern us ministers of the church. However, the lesser (that is, the truly Christian) excommunication excludes those who are manifest and impenitent sinners from the sacrament and other fellowship in the church until they mend their ways and avoid sin. Preachers should not mingle civil punishments with this spiritual penalty or excommunication.

X. ORDINATION AND VOCATION

¹ If the bishops were true bishops and were concerned about the church and the Gospel, they might be permitted (for the sake of love and unity, but not of necessity) to ordain and confirm us and our preachers, provided this could be done without pretense, humbug, and unchristian ostentation. However, they neither are nor wish to be true bishops.

² They are temporal lords and princes who are unwilling to preach or teach or baptize or administer Communion or discharge any office or work in the church. More than that, they expel, persecute, and condemn those who have been called to do these things. Yet the church must not be deprived of ministers on their account.

³ Accordingly, as we are taught by the examples of the ancient churches and Fathers, we shall and ought ourselves ordain suitable persons to this office. The papists have no right to forbid or prevent us, not even according to their own laws, for their laws state that those who are ordained by heretics shall also be regarded as ordained and remain so. St. Jerome, too, wrote concerning the church in Alexandria that it was originally governed without bishops by priests and preachers in common.

XI. THE MARRIAGE OF PRIESTS

¹ The papists had neither authority nor right to prohibit marriage and burden the divine estate of priests with perpetual celibacy. On the contrary, they acted like antichristian, tyrannical, and wicked scoundrels, and thereby they gave occasion for all sorts of horrible, abominable, and countless sins, in which they are still involved.

² As little as the power has been given to us or to them to make a woman out of a man or a man out of a woman or abolish distinctions of sex altogether, so little have they had the power to separate such creatures of God or forbid them to live together honestly in marriage.

³ We are therefore unwilling to consent to their abominable celibacy, nor shall we suffer it. On the contrary, we desire marriage to be free, as God ordained and instituted it, and we shall not disrupt or hinder God's work, for St. Paul says that to do so is a doctrine of demons.

XII. THE CHURCH

¹ We do not concede to the papists that they are the church, for they are not.

² Nor shall we pay any attention to what they command or forbid in the name of the church, for, thank God, a seven-year-old child knows what the church is, namely, holy believers and sheep who hear the voice of their Shepherd.³

³ So children pray, "I believe in one holy Christian church." Its holiness does not consist of surplices, tonsures, albs, or other ceremonies of theirs which they have invented over and above the Holy Scriptures, but it consists of the Word of God and true faith.