

Text and Theme: 1st Commandment

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father, and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

My dear beloved flock, the text for our meditation today is the First Commandment and it's meaning found on Page 321 of your hymnals. Please turn to that page now and let us read the commandment and its meaning together. "You shall have no other gods." What does this mean? "We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things."

Boys and girls how are you doing today? Good? Excellent! Do you have rules at home? Maybe you have to go to bed at a certain time. Maybe you have to help take care of your brothers or sisters, as well as many others. In our text for today, God as our loving Father, gives us His rules in the Ten Commandments. What does God want us to do? let us look at the First Commandment and see what God has given us as His dear children. You may go back to your seats and those who love you.

The same as moms and dads put rules in place for the good and wellbeing of their children. They shall you should go to bed on time. You should not touch a hot stove or play with knives. You shall eat your fruits and vegetables. So too does God give us His rules that we obey as His dear beloved children. "You shall..." and "you shall not..." The children are not permitted to behave any way they choose. They're not to act like spoiled brats. There is a definite order and structure for living. He has "brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery," He has redeemed you by the precious blood of His only-begotten Son to be 'like this' and 'not like that.'

It is in that redeemed structure that we live as the children of God. We know the great things that God has done for us. Therefore, we fear, love, and trust in God above all things. We must ask, what do we mean by God? In his Large Catechism, Luther states, “A god is that to which we look for all good and in which we find refuge in every time of need. To have a god is nothing else than to trust and believe him with our whole heart... That to which your heart clings and entrusts itself is really your god.” When everything seems to be going bad, what do you put your trust into? For some it is money, power, their authority, their possessions, their relatives or friends, their success or fame, their intelligence or smarts, their strength, and much more. They trust that no matter what happens, if they have enough money, if they have enough good things, then they will be alright no matter what bad thing comes their way. Yet, what happens when their money runs out? What happens when they no longer have the newest and the best? What happens when they are not as strong or as smart as they once were? They are stuck in the good old days when they were famous and wealthy while losing sight of the future as the years pass them by. They get depressed, despondent, and look for something else to place their trust into.

Where do we turn to for refuge? We turn not to objects, possessions, our own selves, or other people. Rather, we look to the very One who created them. We turn to God Himself for every good thing even when it seems as though everything is going worse and worse.

Think about Jesus. When He was in trouble how did He react? In His deepest and darkest hour, even hanging from the cross for our sins and punishment, look at where His heart is – “Into Your hands I commend my spirit.” He trusts in God

despite all the voices that shout out for Him to despise God. His actions reveal His heart. His heart trusts perfectly in God. It looks to God for all good, even in the very midst of death. Through the power of His Holy Spirit within us, we do the same. When times are hard, when we do not have enough money or possessions, when evil assails us with trials and temptations, what do we do? We cling to God, trusting that in His promises that every blessing will be yours and He will help and protect us in all need and in all adversity. Why? Because He has promised it, and we hold Him to His promise. As Luther writes in the Large Catechism, “We trust in God alone and look to Him, expecting from Him only good; for it is He who give us body and life, food and drink, nourishment, health, protection, peace, and all temporal and eternal blessings. It is He who protects us from misfortune and saves and helps us when calamities befall. It is God alone, from whom man receives all good and by whom he is delivered from all evil.”

We know and believe that we have received all good, not because of anything that we have done, but because of the grace, mercy, and love of God, shown in the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Jesus died and rose to give us the forgiveness of our sins, and reconcile us back to God, that He indeed is our dear and loving Father who gives us every good and perfect gift according to His gracious will, as we have seen, He daily showers us with gifts that we may indeed fear, love, and trust in Him above all things.

May the Peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard and keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.