

Week of Trinity 9

First recite the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the weekly section of the Small Catechism. Then read the Proper and assigned Scripture reading followed by the devotion. Conclude with singing the hymn of the week.

Weekly Catechism section: *Fourth Commandment (Luther's Small Catechism)*

Hymn of the Week: *One Thing's Needful (LSB 536)*



Monday - Introit (Psalm 54:4-5, 1-3, 7)

Read Psalm 54.

Our *Introit* comes from Psalm 54. David wrote this Psalm when he was on the run from Saul who was trying to kill him. This specific Psalm was written after the people of the wilderness of Ziph gave away to Saul David's location. It is in this context when David learns the hard way who his true friends are. He finds that such friends are very few. And the reason for this was because defending David was risky. David, after all, was not the visible king of Israel at the time. He was only the king by promise. It is the same for David's Offspring, Jesus Christ. He is the true King of Israel, the true King over all the earth. But he is invisible. Until he comes on the last day, he is only recognizable through faith in the promise of God. Much less was his reign visible while he suffered on the cross, but God's promise was attached to that cross, namely, that this was the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world and conquering all spiritual enemies.

This is why so many people are afraid to confess the true Word of God. And the result of this is that Christians get thrown under the bus by others who claim to be brothers. But this is when we learn to appreciate those who are not afraid to stand up and confess. We become thankful for true Christian friends, like Jonathan was to David. And so we sing with him, "Behold, God is my helper; the Lord is with those who uphold my life." The world knows how to make friends with their false gods. They learn who is willing to strive for earthly riches with them, take risks, and be successful. These friendships last a life time. But even more than this, God teaches us to find true friends who uphold us with the true treasure of God's Word. These friendships never end. These are friends who suffer with you when enemies of Christ rise up against you. And they rejoice with you that God has delivered you from all evil until you finally see with your eye the defeat of the devil and all spiritual

enemies. These friends rejoice with you in the gospel of Christ our Savior. They are saved by the same name of Jesus, and they are vindicated by the strength of God's Word. May God continue to bless those who stand on his Word with you!

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Tuesday - Old Testament Lesson (2 Samuel 22:26-34)

Read 2 Samuel 22.

Our Old Testament lesson from 2 Samuel 22 is the same as Psalm 18. Here David explains that to the merciful, blameless, and pure God shows himself to be merciful, blameless, and pure, but to the devious God shows himself to be shrewd. The merciful are those who know God's mercy. The pure are those who know God's pure Word that saves them. The blameless are those who repent of their sins and commend themselves to God. But the devious are those who try to hide from God. Yet God will not be fooled. In shrewdness he will bring judgment. This is what David wrote after God had saved him from the curse that Saul had brought on Israel and when God gave the Philistines into his hands. The way David responds to all of this is remarkable. He does not see these battles as wars against flesh and blood. Instead, these were spiritual battles in which God saves those who have been humbled, but judges those with haughty looks. But how would he save the humble?

David knew that God had a much greater plan for his people than merely making them a great physical kingdom. This is why he says at the end of the Psalm, "Great deliverance he gives to his king, and shows mercy to his Christ, to David and his Seed forevermore." David learned from the prophet Nathan that God would raise up one of his sons to be an everlasting king (2 Sam 7). So when David says that God has made him the head of the nations and that a people he did not know will serve him, he knows that his earthly kingdom is only a shadow of what God has promised to accomplish after him. But through faith in this sure promise, David can confidently assert that God has already made him the head of the nations. When he reflects on the fact that God has saved him from his physical enemies, he confesses the greater, eternal truth that God rescues him from the pangs of death. He knows that his righteous cause is taken up by God, and he will reward him. But he does not take any credit for his own greatness. Instead, he attributes it to God's gentleness. He does not boast in his own works, but in humility waits for God to exalt and save him.

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Wednesday - Gradual (*Psalm 8:1*)

Read Psalm 8.

Psalm 8 is a song to God our Creator, glorifying him for his handiwork and considering how small mankind is compared to him. All of our own accomplishments, which we achieve through our use of mammon, are nothing in comparison to God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. Yet, the Psalm subtly shifts, somewhat ironically, into a declaration of God's greatest work. As the Psalmist meditates on how small man is, asking why God would even be mindful of him, he reveals that he isn't talking about a mere man, but the Son of Man who himself bore our humble estate. Christ, the eternal Son of the Father, became a man and humbled himself, being made for a while lower than God's throne. But after he had finished his course, dying for our sins, he was raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of the Father. All things are under his dominion.

This is purposefully reflected in God's creation of man in his own image. He gave to Adam and his wife dominion over all the animals. But the Psalmist reveals a greater Adam who willfully humbled himself in order to lift fallen man up above all rule and authority. So we sing in our *Gradual*, "O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth, you who set your glory above the heavens!" The Psalm leads us along, as if it is merely talking about God's act of creation, but then, in a rather surprising way, it reveals God's new creation, putting all things under our Savior's feet. Thus, it ends with the refrain, now with the Son of Man in mind: "O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth!"

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Thursday - Epistle (*1 Corinthians 10:6-13*)

Read *1 Corinthians 10*.

The Scriptures are written for our comfort and instruction (Rom 15:4), that we may believe in Christ (John 20:31), and that those who teach may be prepared for the work of Christ's ministry (2 Tim 3:16,17). St. Paul also says in our epistle lesson that the Scriptures were written down for our example. They were written down to warn us against the unbelief of those who fell in time past. When we remain in the Word of God, the Holy Spirit keeps us from becoming secure in ourselves. And he does this so that we would not trust in anything coming from ourselves, but only in our Savior who leads us out of sin and unbelief.

St. Paul says that the end of time has come upon us. We are waiting for

the appearance of our Lord Jesus who will judge the living and the dead. With this in mind, the Apostle urges us to be careful not to fall into temptation. The children of Israel were shown mercy by God in the same promise of the same Christ. But they were swept away by sexual immorality, false worship, and grumbling against God. Don't think that the temptations you must endure are somehow unique to you. No, these are common to man. All people are judged for common sins. So beware, lest you fall into the smugness of thinking that you don't need repentance. It is only when we live in this daily repentance that the Holy Spirit also guides us to see that God and God alone provides the way of escape from temptation. When we escape falling into temptation, then we escape God's judgment. This way of escape is found in nowhere else but in Christ who made full payment for our sins. He will never fail us even as we battle against the deceit of the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh. Though our goods will fail, Christ will receive us into his eternal dwelling. In the meantime, even as they keep us on guard against temptation, the Scriptures also keep us grounded and mindful of this sure promise of our Lord Jesus.

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Friday - Alleluia Verse (Psalm 112:1)

Read Psalm 112.

There is a terrible and false gospel, which deceives even some of the elect. It is known as the prosperity gospel. It basically teaches that if you follow certain supposedly biblical principles and have enough faith, then you will be successful in what you set out to do, get wealthy, and have a comfortable life. It knows nothing of the cross and afflictions, which God assures will follow us on our way. It ignores our Lord's words, "Blessed are the poor!" This false prosperity gospel is geared toward a worldly ambition, pandering to the desires of the greedy, sinful flesh.

And yet, this does not mean that God's Word does not prosper us. God certainly gives daily bread to all people, even to all evil people. In our *Alleluia verse* we sing the opening words of Psalm 112: "Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who delights greatly in His commandments." The Psalm then goes on to say how such a man will prosper. "Wealth and riches shall be in his house." But what follows these words is crucial for us to pay attention to: "And his righteousness endures forever." Certainly, God gives us our earthly wealth. He is never short in his generosity toward us. But what endures forever is the righteousness he

bestows on us by his grace in Jesus Christ. He who fears the Lord, trusting in the one who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness. It is the very righteousness of Jesus who forewent all earthly pleasures to be obedient in our place under the law. So the one who delights in God's commandments, trusting in the one who fulfilled them for all sinners, is blessed. His children will be blessed. He will be able to recognize how much God blesses him with his earthly needs, receiving his daily bread with thanksgiving. When we rely on this righteousness of our Lord, which endures forever, then we learn to be generous to the poor. This is because we learn how little earthly wealth is worth compared to the wealth of being blessed by God. The one who rests on God's righteousness has a steadfast heart, not afraid of bad news, since his trust is in the Lord who is generous in every way. So you may be content with the wealth God gives you here on earth. This is because you count is a very little thing, merely unrighteous mammon, compared to the surpassing riches of Christ and his righteousness.

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Saturday - Gospel (Luke 16:1-9)

Read Luke 16.

The money that God gives us is not our own. It belongs to God. In fact, all of our possessions belong to him. Whatever possessions we have, therefore, are to be used to serve our neighbor. Jesus calls it unrighteous mammon. It's unrighteous not because it is in and of itself evil. Money is not the root of all evil. The love of money is rather the root of all evil (1 Tim 6:10). Another word for "the love of money" is greed. And out of such greed, the world uses our money to do very wicked things. Yet Jesus tells us to make friends with our money. And what kind of friends are we to make? Friends who will receive us into everlasting habitations. Jesus is not talking about unbelievers here. He is talking about Christians to whom God has promised his Kingdom.

Jesus is teaching us that our money isn't really worth anything, because our real treasure is in the gospel of Christ. We possess the greatests treasure in the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation, which we have in our Lord Jesus Christ who bled and died for all sinners. This is why we support missionaries. The gospel that they preach and their congregations confess is more precious than anything in heaven and on earth. We have the Word of Christ as our near and dear treasure, in our mouth, and in our heart (Rom 10:8; Deut 30:14). And as we possess this treasure, God has given us earthly possessions. Therefore, if we need to

use our money, which we don't treasure, to support the preaching of the gospel, which we do treasure, then so be it! If we can put this worthless mammon to good use here on earth, then great! So make friends with it according to the station in life to which God has placed you! If you have children, then take care of their bodily needs. But do this so that you can teach them the Catechism, showing them that our Father who provides for us in our bodily needs also gave up his only Son to rescue us from sin forever. If you have an employer, then do your duty honestly, and don't cheat him out of his money. In the mean time, confess the hope you have that is in Christ Jesus (1 Pet 3:15). And treasure that hope. It is to this living hope that God has caused us to be reborn through the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Pet 1:3). This is the hope of everlasting habitation to which God freely invites us (John 14:2) and we as Christians invite each other (Rom 15:7).

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366 One Thing's Needful; Lord, This Treasure

Luke 10: 42

Eins ist not: ach, Herr, dies eine
Johann H. Schröder, 1697, cento
Tr., Frances E. Cox, 1841, alt.

8. 7. 8. 7. 12. 12. 11. 11.

Eins ist not
Friedrich Layritz, 1849

1 One thing's need-ful; Lord, this trea-sure Teach me high-ly to re-guard;
 2 Wilt thou find this one thing need-ful, Turn from all cre-at-ed things
 3 How were Ma-ry's tho'ts de-vot-ed Her e-ter-nal joy to find
 4 Thus my long-ings, heav'nward tend-ing, Je-sus, rest a-lone on Thee.



All else, though it first give plea-sure, Is a yoke that press-es hard.
 Un-to Je-sus and be heed-ful Of the bless-ed joy He brings.
 As in-tent each word she not-ed, At her Sav-i-or's feet re-clined!
 Help me, thus on Thee de-pend-ing; Sav-i-or, come and dwell in me.



Be-neath it the heart is still fret-ting and striv-ing,
 For where God and Man both in one are u-nit-ed,
 How kin-dled her heart, how de-vout was its feel-ing,
 Al-though all the world should for-sake and for-get Thee,



No true, last-ing hap-pi-ness ev-er de-riv-ing.
 With God's per-fect ful-ness the heart is de-light-ed;
 While hear-ing the les-sons that Christ was re-veal-ing!
 In love I will fol-low Thee, ne'er will I quit Thee.



One Thing's Needful; Lord, This Treasure



The gain of this one thing all loss can re - quite
There, there, is the wor - thi - est lot and the best,
For Je - sus all earth - ly con - cerns she for - got,
Lord Je - sus, both spir - it and life is Thy Word;



And teach me in all things to find true de - light.
My One and my All and my Joy and my Rest.
And all was re - paid in that one hap - py lot.
And is there a joy which Thou dost not af - ford? A - men.



5 Wisdom's highest, noblest treasure,
Jesus, lies concealed in Thee;
Grant that this may still the measure
Of my will and actions be,
Humility there and simplicity reigning,
In paths of true wisdom my steps ever training.
Oh, if I of Christ have this knowledge divine,
The fulness of heavenly wisdom is mine.

6 Naught have I, O Christ, to offer
Naught but Thee, my highest Good.
Naught have I, O Lord, to proffer
But Thy crimson-colored blood.
Thy death on the cross hath Death wholly defeated
And thereby my righteousness fully completed;
Salvation's white raiments I there did obtain,
And in them in glory with Thee I shall reign.

7 Therefore Thou alone, my Savior,
Shalt be All in all to me;
Search my heart and my behavior,
Root out all hypocrisy.
Restrain me from wand'ring on pathways unholy
And through all life's pilgrimage keep my heart lowly.
This one thing is needful, all others are vain;
I count all but loss that I Christ may obtain.