

Week of Trinity 14

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: *Ninth*

Commandment (Luther's Small Catechism)

Hymn of the Week: *Now Thank We All Our God (TLH #36)*

Monday - Introit (Psalm 84:9-10, 1-2, 4, 10, 11)

Read Psalm 84.

"O God, behold our shield, and look upon the face of Your anointed. For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand." These words from Psalm 84 are the words of our *Introit*. David was God's anointed king, yet he knew that his anointing as king meant nothing apart from the courts of God. They meant nothing apart from the blessing that would come from God's Anointed Son, Jesus Christ. As he also says, "I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness." All the wealth in the world means nothing if we are not protected by our Shield and Savior, Jesus Christ. All our friendships mean nothing if we are not in the company of God and his saints.

We therefore learn from David what it means to worship God. His soul yearns and even faints for the courts of the Lord. True worship is in the heart that longs to hear God's Word. And why? "For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly. (Ps. 84:11)

Those who walk uprightly are those who worship God rightly. And who are they? David reiterates: "O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man who trusts in You!" He who trusts in the Lord, finding him his shield from sin and every evil, is the one who worships God rightly. He longs for what God promises in his Word. He pursues the good fruits of the Holy Spirit who dwells in him as he strives against his sinful desires. He hungers and thirsts after righteousness. And Jesus promises that he will be filled (Matt 5:6). He trusts in God, longing for his Word. And as Jesus said to the Samaritan cleansed from leprosy and worshipping at his feet, "Your faith has saved you." Faith is true worship of God, because faith gives glory to God. That is to say, faith gives Christ all the credit as

it receives nothing but good from God. This is what it means to dwell in the courts of God. This is true worship.

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Tuesday - Old Testament Lesson (Proverbs 4:10-23)

Read Proverbs 4.

"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks. (Luke 6:45)" According to these words of our Lord, the heart doesn't only describe the organ in our body pumping blood throughout our body. It describes the seat of all treasure in this life and in the next. As Jesus also says (Matt 6:21), "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." As Solomon says in our Old Testament lesson from Proverbs 4, it is out of the heart where the issues of life spring. This is true for better or for worse, which is why it is so crucial to guard our hearts against false doctrine.

You see, our hearts are already evil due to the original sin we inherited from our first parents. Jeremiah says that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jer 17:9). So if we allow our hearts to be fed false doctrine, then this will only make the wickedness of the heart stronger. False doctrine is like sugar feeding cancer cells in the heart, growing more lively in its destruction. Solomon alludes to the sinful heart when he describes the wicked as never sleeping until they make someone fall. So the heart that is darkened grows even more boastful as it feeds on falsehood. For example, people are taught to trust in themselves. They are taught that they are in charge of their own destiny. This makes them boastful, neglecting to give thanks to God or even acknowledge him. They grow in a dark yet lively zeal for the teachings of worldliness, have less and less use for God's grace in their lives. These are those who walk in darkness, whose hearts treasure themselves, their own intellect, and their own possessions. But the true doctrine of our Lord Jesus is what our hearts need. Only the blood of Jesus can cleanse our conscience. Only faith in Christ's merits can cleanse our hearts. Only by the doctrine and instruction of the gospel can living water gush out and well in hearts to eternal life (John 4:14). So keep firm hold of this instruction; do not let go. Guard her, for she is your life!

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Wednesday - Gradual (*Psalm 92:1-2*)

Read Psalm 92.

Our *Gradual* is from Psalm 92, a Psalm for the Sabbath Day. It therefore teaches us what it means to worship God. First, it declares that it is good to give thanks to God and sing praises to his name. It is good to do this in the morning and at night. It's as we pray in the proper preface, "It is truly good, right, and salutary, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks." It is good to give him thanks and praise. But what does this entail? It entails declaring his mercy, loving kindness, and faithfulness. This means that we talk about what God has done. We use music to do this, not because we are trying to make ourselves feel fuzzy and proud inside. Instead, our goal is always to articulate what God has done. Music helps us enunciate the works of God. Of course, the world and our sinful flesh use music to declare their own talents, emotions, and accomplishments. But Christian music gives all credit to God.

So what will this sound like? It will obviously vary from song to song, composer to composer. But it will have a common goal, and we should be able to identify that goal. That common goal is not to perform or entertain, but to articulate with both reverence and joy the wonderful works of God. This is beauty, when thanksgiving and praise harmonize from a pure heart in worship toward God. Good worship speaks of God's works. "O Lord, how great are your works." This includes that which is pleasant and that which is fearful. It includes his wrath against the ungodly, "When the wicked spring up like grass, and when all the workers of iniquity flourish, it is that they may be destroyed forever." Good worship is not afraid to mention God's judgment against sin, because good worship is confident in the atonement God provides in Christ. It declares the resurrection of Christ, the Righteous One, who as the Psalmist says, "will flourish like a palm tree," God's promise to all his saints, that they will still bear fruit even in old age. Worship is instructional. It teaches those who participate. This is because it articulates the words and works of God our Savior.

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Thursday - Epistle (*Galatians 5:16-22*)

Read Galatians 5.

St. Paul tells us that if we walk by the Spirit then we will not be under the law. We will not become slaves to our sinful desires that are under the law. Those who imagine that they are free from the law because they do whatever their natural will desires are only fooling themselves into

thinking they understand liberty. In fact, they are slaves to sin. St. Paul gives a list of specific sins and a strict warning that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. They will be condemned in hell. Paul by no means exhausts the list of such works of the flesh. In 1st Corinthians 6:9, for example, he also mentions homosexuals, sodomites, and thieves. St. Paul mentions specific sins in order to bring to mind that sin is not simply some abstract problem within us. It manifests itself in very real things. And he shows that the horrifying sins such as murder and adultery are in the same lists as dissensions, contentions, and selfish ambitions. They come from the same heart. Sin lies dormant seeking to rule over us, but we must rule over it. We can't imagine that this is some ugly evil that can't actually do us any harm. Real people fall into these sins, whether subtly or not so subtly, and they make shipwreck of their faith. They become slaves to the law, which condemns them.

St. Paul warns us not to be slaves to these desires of the flesh. With this warning is a comforting encouragement not to despair. The desires are there. You will feel them. But don't let that drive you to fear and torment, giving in to the god of this age. No, instead walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify these desires. Listen to the joyful words of the Spirit about your salvation. Learn from him of God's gentleness and kindness, and let your heart be controlled by his peace. And though you fail in weakness, there is no law against you when the Spirit rules your conscience. Because he rules it with the Word of Christ who silences all the law's accusations. So give thanks! Your faith has saved you, and Christ has set you free! The fruits of this are pleasing to God.

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Friday - Alleluia Verse (Psalm 65:1)

Read Psalm 65.

Our *Alleluia verse* prepares us for our Gospel lesson by reminding us where God is to be praised. Psalm 65 says, "Praise is awaiting you, O God, in Zion." Zion is another name for Jerusalem, which represents the temple where God promised to dwell with his people. But he didn't only promise to dwell with them. He also promised to provide the sacrifice needed to make atonement for our sins. The temple mount was where Abraham was sent to sacrifice his son, Isaac, trusting that God would provide the lamb. In fact, after he received his son back, he called the mount, "the Lord will provide." So Psalm 65 continues, "As for our transgressions, you will provide atonement for them." This is where our

praise is appointed. It is where God made atonement for our sins. It is in the crucified and risen body of our Lord, Jesus. Praise is not about us expressing how we feel about God. Praise is about confessing, with great joy, what God has done and established. He has made atonement for the sins of the world. And he has established his church, built on his Word, and free from all sin and uncleanness.

We praise God by repeating back to him what he has done and by learning the great works of salvation he has performed. We praise Christ when we learn more about the salvation he earned for all sinners. Praising without learning is a waste of time. St. Paul says. (Col 3:16), " Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." This is why praise is appointed in Zion. In other words, it is where God establishes it, founded on his salvation, the very thing he wants to teach us. He wants us to learn of his Incarnation when he claimed his eternal temple in flesh and blood, and about the wages of sin, his grace, and his redemption. When the Samaritan praised God, Jesus taught him. He taught him that he is saved by faith. We need the same instruction as our praise is established before God.

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Saturday - Gospel (Luke 17:11-19)

Read Luke 17.

To be thankful is to be joyful. It is certainly true that the joy can be combined with sorrow. For example, a widow who has recently lost her husband is thankful for her children who gather to comfort her. This is a gift that God gives in the midst of mourning. And so it is with the gospel. As we live in this disease ridden, death reigning world, having our sin-stained nature and desires clinging to us at all times, God still blesses us with the gift of salvation, righteousness, and life found in Jesus Christ. He clothes us with the forgiveness of sins, and the hope of the resurrection of the body where all of our diseases will be no more. This gives us joy. This causes us to rejoice in thanksgiving to God despite the crosses he might also give us.

Joy is a fruit of the Spirit. This means that it isn't something that we achieve simply by adopting a positive attitude on life. Often Christians are attacked by the devil's lies that if you are feeling sorrow or depression then you must not be a good enough Christian. Christians, after all, are happy, right? Doesn't Jesus say, "Happy are those who

hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matt 5:6)"? But this happiness, this blessedness, this joy, is not something that originates in us. Our joy is found in Christ who cheers and comforts us when sin annoys us. He is the source of all our healing both of body and soul. And this is what that one Samaritan recognized. No doubt the other 9 lepers rejoiced that they had been healed of their leprosy. But the Samaritan acknowledged the one source of his rejoicing. He ran back to thank Jesus, glorifying God, because Jesus is the God of all blessings. We have a great example in this Samaritan. He finds the true source of his joy when he worships at the feet of Christ, giving him thanks. He finds freedom from condemnation at these same feet that would be wounded for our sins. Therefore, when we give thanks to our Lord, finding in him the source of all divine favor and goodness, then nothing can accuse us (Rom 8:33-34), for against such joy there is no law (Gal 5:23).

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Now Thank We All Our God

Ecclus. 50 : 22-24

Nun danket alle Gott

Martin Rinckart, 1636

Tr., Catherine Winkworth, 1858

6. 7. 6. 7. 6. 6. 6. 6.

Nun danket alle Gott

Johann Crüger, 1648

1 Now thank we all our God With heart and hands and voic - es,
 2 Oh, may this boun-teous God Thro' all our life be near us,
 3 All praise and thanks to God The Fa-ther now be giv - en,

Who won-drous things hath done, In whom His world re - joic - es;
 With ev - er joy - ful hearts And bless - ed peace to cheer us
 The Son, and Him who reigns With them in high - est heav - en:

Who from our moth - er's arms Hath blessed us on our way
 And keep us in His grace And guide us when per - plexed
 The one e - ter - nal God, Whom earth and heav'n a - dore!

With count-less gifts of love And still is ours to - day.
 And free us from all ills In this world and the next!
 For thus it was, is now, And shall be ev - er - more. A-men.