

## Week of Trinity 6

*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:** First Commandment (Luther's Small Catechism)

**Hymn of the Week:** *All Mankind Fell in Adam's Fall* (TLH 369)

## Monday - Introit (Psalm 28:8-9, 1-2, 7)

### **Read Psalm 28.**

This week we consider the law and the gospel. In Exodus 20, God opens with the gospel, describing himself as the Lord who saved them from bondage. He then goes on to declare his law in the Ten Commandments. St. Paul affirms the law in Romans 6:1 when he says that we should not continue in sin. But he declares the gospel when he describes how Baptism has freed us from sin by uniting us to the very death and resurrection of Christ. Matthew records Jesus teaching that our righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, and then he goes on to describe the true obedience from the heart required in the law. This Gospel lesson ends with a very clear teaching of the law, which cuts to the heart and condemns all hidden hypocrisy and false security. But the overarching theme of this week is given in our *Introit*, from Psalm 28: "The LORD is their strength, and he is the saving refuge of his Anointed. Save your people, and bless your inheritance; shepherd them also, and bear them up forever." Before we learn what the law truly requires, that it requires true love from the heart, we must first learn who our God truly is. He is the Lord who saves. And he reveals this salvation in his Anointed through whom he gathers and keeps us forever as a gentle and loving Shepherd.

With this in mind we ask God not to be silent. Of course, we want him to answer our prayers. But we also want him to instruct us. Even if such instruction exposes our sin and makes us uncomfortable, this is our cry, saved by the Lord our Shepherd who gave his life up for the sheep. We ask that he not be silent. Answer our prayers, but also instruct us! Warn us against hypocrisy! Teach us to fear your name! Admonish us to be reconciled with our brothers! Here we learn the law in a new way, with

the confidence in Christ that nothing can condemn us. Meanwhile, let the law condemn and root out our old man. St. Paul says that our old man has been crucified with Christ, who washed us by his blood. So our Lord warns us with his law, not to drive us away, but to keep us humble, lest we be like those who go down to the pit.

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## **Tuesday - Old Testament Lesson (Exodus 20:1-17)**

### ***Read Exodus 20.***

The righteousness taught by religious elite is always the standard in every culture. Sometimes they call themselves conservatives. Sometimes they call themselves liberals. Sometimes they call themselves strict. Sometimes they call themselves progressive. They are always more educated than you. Or at least that's what they think. But either way, this is the righteousness by which the world judges you and me everyday.

Jesus says that our righteousness must exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees. Our righteousness must exceed that of the religious elite. In other words, our righteousness must exceed what the culture deems as righteous. A tragedy occurs, and all the religious leaders gather together, each worshipping different gods or having different teachings about God himself. But they are seen as men of peace. Everyone praises them for their unity. They are very righteous in the eyes of the world. But your righteousness must exceed that. A church concentrates less on doctrine and more on social ministry, feeding the poor and giving people motivation to lead fulfilling lives. Your righteousness must exceed that. Your righteousness must not come from your own efforts, innovations, or religious exercises. It cannot come from your own desires, no matter how good they may seem to be. We know that out of the heart proceeds every sin (Matt 15:19). Your righteousness must meet up to God's law. This is why God gave the law on Sinai. He is setting the record straight that salvation has come from only him and not from any human efforts in being good and virtuous. His law demands love. You must love God with everything you have, even your entire heart, and your neighbor as yourself. His law guards his institution of the home, the authority of parents, the purity of marriage, as well as the protection of your neighbor's property, body, and reputation. Nothing concocted by men, no matter how pious it may look, can hold a candle to the righteousness required in God's law. Your righteousness must meet up to this. St. Paul says that through Jesus' obedience righteousness and life came to all men, just as sin came to all through Adam's disobedience (Rom 5:18).

Your righteousness is revealed in the gospel of Christ (Rom 1:16,17), received by faith. Your righteousness consists in reconciliation with God and the forgiveness of all your sins. This is why Christ admonishes us to seek peace with one another. His blood has broken down the hostility between us and God, as well as among ourselves (Eph 2:14ff). A congregation confesses Christ crucified, clinging to the pure doctrine of the Apostles. And because they find their righteousness in nothing but Christ and his Word, they refuse to give credence to false doctrine, they love one another in truth, forgiving and bearing with one another in love. No one notices it. The world won't broadcast such righteousness. But this is pleasing to your Father in heaven (Matt 6:3,4).

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### **Wednesday - Gradual (*Psalm 90:13, 1-2*)**

#### ***Read Psalm 90.***

Our theme for this Sunday is God's righteousness in Christ, which alone fulfills the law of God, declares us righteous, and gives us new lives to walk before him with a good conscience. God reveals his righteousness in the law, demanding that we love as he loves and condemning our sinful hearts for falling short. This is what the law does. Of course, it gives good order for the daily life. But the main purpose of the law of God handed down through Moses was to be a witness against sin and unbelief. Moses says to the Levites (Deut 31:26, "Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there as a witness against you." And Jesus says to those who would not believe in him (John 5:45-47), "Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" The righteousness declared by Moses was one that condemned sin and unbelief. If we would listen to this righteousness revealed through the law of Moses, then we would recognize our need for God's righteousness offered to us in Christ.

Moses understood this need. He wrote Psalm 90, providing the words for our *Gradual*: "Return, O LORD! How long? And have compassion on your servants." This is from the middle of Moses's Psalm, immediately following the mystery of God's anger and wrath against our sin. He prays, "Teach us to number our days, that we may get a heart of wisdom." This fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, because it recognizes the need for God's mercy to forgive us our sins and establish

the work of our hands by his favor. Such favor is the righteousness we rely on. It is the mercy of the Lord Jesus by which he was obedient in our place, intercedes for us at the Father's right hand, and clothes us. So we pray with Moses, "LORD, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Even from everlasting to everlasting, you are God."

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### **Thursday - Epistle (*Romans 6:3-11*)**

#### ***Read Romans 6.***

The law doesn't merely declare that the sinner must be good. The law declares that the sinner must die. The old, sinful nature doesn't need to be reformed. He needs to die. This is what Christ has won for us by his obedience in our place all the way to his death on the cross. And he unites us to his death by his gift of baptism. Yes, this means that in baptism we died with Christ. We died to sin, just as Jesus did. And we are therefore alive to God, just as Jesus is. Our baptism into Christ sets the course for our entire lives. It is a life of dying and rising, the old man being put to death as we count ourselves dead to sin and alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jesus died for all. This means that the gift of baptism is for all. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. The law declares all guilty so that the gospel might declare all reconciled in the crucified and risen body of Christ. St. Peter says in Acts 2, "This promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, all to whom the Lord calls to himself." Sadly, those who continue to rely on their own efforts remain slaves to their sins. Those who don't want to die to sin remain in chains. Baptism, on the other hand, frees us from sin. It doesn't do this by removing the sin entirely from our flesh. No, it does this by uniting us to Christ, his death, and his resurrection. And it remains with us, causing us to die to our sin every day until it does away with our body and sin. We look forward to when our bodies rise again without any sin, free from any stain forever. Yet even now we can enjoy this freedom even while we battle against our sinful nature.

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## Friday - Alleluia Verse (Psalm 31:1)

### *Read Psalm 31.*

Our *Alleluia verse* comes from Psalm 31, and it is a quite appropriate introduction to our Gospel Lesson. We sing: "In you, O Lord, I put my trust; let me never be ashamed; deliver me in your righteousness." And then we hear from Jesus that unless our righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. Our righteousness cannot merely be that of following the outward requirements of the law. It must be one that is grounded in mercy, blessing, and salvation. This is not a righteousness that holds a grudge against a brother, but one that turns anger away and seeks reconciliation. This is the righteousness of God by which he saves sinners. Unless we have this righteousness and build on this righteousness then we are stuck relying on our own righteousness.

This teaches us that the righteousness of the Lord is a righteousness of faith. We know this righteousness by trusting in the Lord and his promise of salvation. It is the righteousness of Jesus by which he fulfilled the law of love on our behalf by loving God above all things, showing divine mercy, and seeking reconciliation with his neighbors who sinned against him. It is the righteousness of faith, because faith receives this righteousness. It is the righteousness of faith also because faith builds on this righteousness, pursuing every good thing from God and confessing his name. So the Psalmist also says (31:14), "I trusted in you; I said, 'You are my God.'" And he concludes (31:24), "Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all you who hope in the Lord." To have the righteousness of Christ is first and foremost to receive this righteousness through faith. It is to have what Christ has accomplished by his perfect obedience in the place of every sinner (Rom 4:5; 5:18-19). But second of all, it is to build on this righteousness, enduring suffering, and pressing on in hope, since the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:2-5). So put your trust in the Lord who saves you by his righteousness.

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## **Saturday - Gospel (Matthew 5:20-26)**

### ***Read Matthew 5.***

The Scribes and Pharisees would have been good neighbors if they lived next door. They wouldn't have thrown wild parties. They would have spoken against abortion and the perversion of the marriage bed by fornication and homosexuality. They gave to the work of the church. However, their righteousness could not get them into the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus teaches Christians that our righteousness must be even better than this. But how can this be? It is impossible with us. But Christ came to fulfill it for us. He therefore declares us to be the light of the world. He declares us to be sons of God. He declares us righteous before the throne of God. And after doing so, he teaches us about this righteousness.

The righteousness that Jesus teaches us is not a righteousness that places itself above our neighbor, but one that seeks reconciliation with him. The righteousness that Jesus teaches us is one that seeks out peace and carries out kindness. This is what Jesus sought when he fulfilled all righteousness by his own obedience under the law (Matt 3:15; Phil 2:5-11; Rom 5:18-19). He sought our salvation. St. Paul says that God demonstrated his righteousness by giving his Son to die for our sins (Rom 3:25-26). God saves us by his righteousness. He reconciles us back to himself. Therefore, Jesus teaches us, as children of God who are righteous through faith in his saving death, what it means to live in righteousness. He credits us with his own righteousness, and then he admonishes us to pursue in our lives what is already ours by faith. He teaches us, as St. Paul says, to present our members to God as instruments of righteousness. And why? Because "sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. (Rom 6:13-14)" As God has reconciled us to himself, Jesus teaches us to be reconciled with one another. He teaches us a greater righteousness, which is not formed by our own adherence to the law, but by the mercy of our gracious God who seeks out and establishes peace.

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## All Mankind Fell in Adam's Fall

Rom. 3: 12

Durch Adams Fall ist ganz verderbt

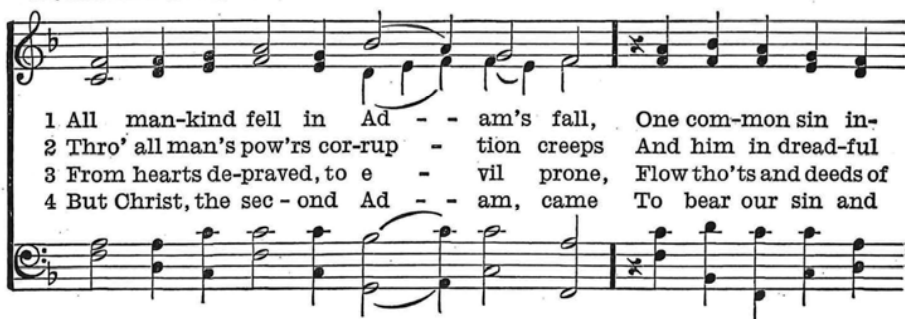
Lazarus Spengler, 1524, cento

Tr., Matthias Loy, 1880, alt.

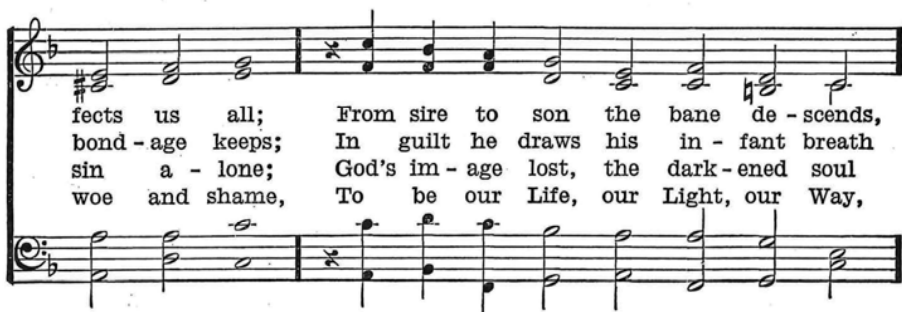
L. M.

Wenn wir in höchsten Nöten

"Genevan Psalter," 1547



1 All man-kind fell in Ad - - am's fall, One com-mon sin in-  
 2 Thro' all man's pow'rs cor-rup - tion creeps And him in dread-ful  
 3 From hearts de-praved, to e - vil prone, Flow tho'ts and deeds of  
 4 But Christ, the sec - ond Ad - - am, came To bear our sin and



fects us all; From sire to son the bane de - scends,  
 bond - age keeps; In guilt he draws his in - fant breath  
 sin a - lone; God's im - age lost, the dark - ened soul  
 woe and shame, To be our Life, our Light, our Way,



And o - ver all the curse im - pends.  
 And reaps its fruits of woe and death.  
 Nor seeks nor finds its heav'n - ly goal.  
 Our on - ly Hope, our on - ly Stay. A - men.

5 As by one man all mankind fell  
 And, born in sin, was doomed to hell,  
 So by one Man, who took our place,  
 We all received the gift of grace.

6 We thank Thee, Christ; new life is ours,  
 New light, new hope, new strength, new powers:  
 This grace our every way attend  
 Until we reach our journey's end!