

**6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity: July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

**“Do You Believe What Jesus Said?”**

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

How many of you believe in Jesus? I mean really believe in Jesus? How many of you truly believe that He is the Son of God, that He is God Himself with full knowledge and authority? How many truly believe His words? Hear again and listen carefully to what He says to us this morning, “**Matthew 5:17-20.**”

Jesus came not to abolish or get rid of the Law. This summary, of course, that was given on Mt. Sinai was read again for us this morning in Exodus Chapter 20. Read that list again. There is nothing there that is still not required of you. Unless your righteousness surpasses the Pharisees and scribes, you cannot enter into heaven. You want to know God’s will and purpose for your life? You want to know His direction? You want to know what God wants, requires, and demands of you? He tells you in Exodus 20. That is His judging standard. Jesus has not come to say, “You don’t have to worry about those things anymore. You are free. Do whatever you want?” No! Jesus fills them and says, unless you are better than the Pharisees and scribes.

So what does that mean? Pharisees and scribes reinterpreted the Words of God to fit their own needs. They had downplayed the authority of God’s Word, and turned them into a selfish order of self-justification. They took the authority upon themselves, told God that He didn’t really know what He was doing, and changed the meaning of God’s Word. They taught that as long as one didn’t physically take another person’s life, they were not guilty of murder. They taught that actions are the only thing that accounted for sin.

It is beneficial and quite needed for us to think carefully about these words. When Jesus speaks of Pharisees and scribes, He is speaking to religious, church goers. Have we redefined Jesus’ words to fit our own? Do we have a misunderstanding of Jesus’ work, mission, and Words today?



Do we still believe Jesus that He has not come to abolish the Law and Prophets? This means, we are to live and try hard to square our lives away with the 10 Commandments; that when we are caught and see ourselves falling in any of the sins listed there, if we are caught in the actions covered by those commandments, we are to repent; confess our sins, turn away from them and live a new life!

Most church people, even those that deem themselves as spiritual and/or religious, which is another problematic, nonsensical phrase, have this idea that it is only the actions one must worry about. You see, it is actions and actions speak louder than words, but actions can also be deceiving. Jesus has not abolished the Law, He fulfills it. Immediately following this admonition, Jesus takes up two examples the 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment is the rest of our Gospel text, and the 6<sup>th</sup> Commandment following in the verses after. But see what Jesus does? He reveals the full intention of the Law of God. It is not just our actions, but it is the heart, the mind, and the will. The entire being of man is to reflect God thus being in the image of God.

It is not just actions, our words can kill another. "Raca" is a term that means "fool, moron, empty-headed," and we show this anger against our neighbor by saying this directly to them, when we refuse to talk to them or refuse to look at them, when we laugh at them behind their backs and make fun of them, ridiculing them to others, or when in any way we show that the degradation or ruin of a person would make us happy. You shall not kill is the same as saying, "You may find as many ways to kill as you have organs. You may use your hand, your tongue, your heart; you may use signs and gestures; you may use your eyes to look at someone sourly or to begrudge him his life; you may even use your ears if you do not like to hear him mentioned. All this is included in killing. Your heart and everything about you would be happy if that person were dead. Meanwhile your hand may be still, your tongue quiet, your eyes and ears muffled. Still your heart is full of murder and homicide."<sup>1</sup> — These things you shall not do; rather, repent; mark them and avoid them.

It is not just the actions, you good church people, it is your heart, mind and will. Take a moment to reflect upon the will of God in Exodus 20, not just your actions, but has your will, your heart, your entire being kept every one of these laws? Jesus'

---

<sup>1</sup> Luther's Works, Vol.21, pg. 77.



teaching does not end their either. He says, "Whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least." This phraseology in Matthew means you are out of the kingdom and liable to the fires of hell. What are you teaching? What are you teaching others about the Words and Will of God in every one of these commandments? Are you teaching the full extent and depth of each of these commands towards God to yourself, your children, your neighbors? What does your being say about you? Does it fully reflect God?

If not, repent! Confess to God and know His forgiveness. Jesus came to fulfill the Law and Prophets. Not one iota or dot has been changed or removed. You cannot fill it, Jesus does. Now, here is the great temptation used by the Great Deceiver, attempting to lead us into false belief and great vice; knowing that Jesus died for me and rose for me, can I just do whatever I want? Am I free to do what I want because I know that Jesus forgives me anyways? Is God a Divine vending machine? Not even close.

Hear again what St. Paul tells us this morning, *"What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. <sup>5</sup> For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup> We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. <sup>7</sup> For one who has died has been declared righteous from sin. <sup>8</sup> Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup> We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. <sup>10</sup> For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. <sup>11</sup> So you also must count yourselves dead to sin and living to God in Christ Jesus."*<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Romans 6:1-11



You see, Christ has washed us and set us free from sin. We are dead to sin. For the Christian, for those whom God has reborn and regenerated, you have new lives and thus live new lives. You live in the works of life; not in the works of death. You don't harbor anger at your neighbor, you pray for them. You forgive them. You live for them. You help them. You don't make them earn our forgiveness; you didn't earn it from God. You no longer live in selfishness, rather you live in selflessness.

Christ has died for my sin. He has me washed in His blood. My baptism has buried me with Him. He has set me free to live fully in the image of God and to bear the image of the fullness of His Commandments. My will is to love others. To see past the actions of the sin and to see another child whom God loves. For those whose actions or wills are still opposed to God, my will is the same as God's, "*Who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*"<sup>3</sup> To show them the fullness of God's Law so that they will know the comfort of the Holy Gospel. So that they will know the full consolation of Jesus Christ. To preach the Law is to show the depth of sin, to clean out the wound, so that healing and life can be given.

The Law has not changed. Our sinful nature has not changed. While I have been baptized, buried and risen again, my body still is waiting to be buried and rise again. Jesus has died for it, but it has not yet been realized. That means I live a life towards God still in a sinful body. Does that mean I will sin? Yes. But that does not mean that it is ok to willingly sin; to do so is to directly defy God.

The reality for the Christian is to be constantly reminded of His death for me. I have talked of the importance of eating and drinking the Sacrament as Christ's sacrificial death, to keep it ever before us and to deny that gift is to deny life itself. If you believe Jesus is the Son of God, then there should be no problem eating and drinking it often because He tells us to.

But there is another Sacrament of which you need to be reminded, not just weekly, but daily. Luther fully understood this and that is why in his outline for devotions that you will find in the catechism, he says to start by making the sign of the cross and saying in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This

---

<sup>3</sup> 1 Timothy 2:4



simple gesture is a reminder of the life giving sacrament that buried you with Christ. This sacrament gave you new life to eat and drink of Christ's Word, His body and blood.

This simple gesture is done in the morning to remind you of the gift of a new day, the gift of life from God, and a new disposition and will that you now live towards yourself and others because you are God's child. This gesture is done at the end of the day, to remind you of the gift of life and protection that is yours even while you sleep; that God's carries you and holds you as you rest. This simple gesture is done to remind you of whose name worship is done in and our standing before God as saints and sinners as we call upon His Name to begin our service. This gesture is done at the end of the Creed as a reminder that through baptism we have been given eternal life.

This simple gesture is done as we partake of the sacrament, when the body and blood are placed in your mouth, as a reminder that His death, His life, His victory, is for you, the baptized, to give you strength as you carry your crosses in life; a reminder that He has born your sins and your grief's, and here at this altar you share in His life with others as you kneel together as a family. This simple gesture is done at the end of the service, as a reminder of God's name placed upon you for your peace.

Luther says this gesture must be taught to every child. When something is scary, or frightening, or tempting, or difficult, one is to make the sign of the cross and say, "Dear Jesus help me." This prayer calls upon the Name of God, which causes the devil and the devil's power to flee.

Jesus has fulfilled the Law and the Prophets, and your righteousness is filled in Jesus. It is not a quantitative thing, it cannot be measured. His righteousness is yours and He gives it to you qualitatively and relationally. The Church, you and I, live in Christ and He in us and we make this simple gesture to remind us of that very fact.

Jesus fills the Law, fills the prophets and thanks be to God He fills us. We kneel and humbly receive His life and His grace for us.

“We thank You, Christ; new life is ours,  
New light, new hope, new strength, new pow’rs.  
This grace our ev’ry way attend  
Until we reach our journey’s end.”<sup>4</sup> Amen.

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

---

<sup>4</sup> LSB 562:6



**Prayer of the Church**  
**Sixth Sunday after Trinity**  
**11 July 2021**

O Lord, our Strength, our Refuge and our Rock, do not be deaf to Your people, but hear us as we lift up our hands and prayers toward Your most holy sanctuary in heaven through the mediation of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of all concord, by the death of Your Son You reconciled the world to Yourself and made peace between God and man. Give us Your Spirit of peace and reconciliation, that Your people may live together in forgiveness and harmony. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, You gave the Law that we might know Your will and live as Your holy people. Increase in us true fear, love and trust in Your saving Word and Your holy name, that we may have no other gods but You. Guide and bless all fathers and mothers, pastors and teachers as they bring up children in the discipline and knowledge of the true faith. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, You gave the commandments that we might live a holy life and love our neighbors as ourselves. Give us Your Holy Spirit and teach us to honor authority, protect life, cherish marriage, respect possessions, defend reputations and be content with the gifts You give us. Guide and bless all fathers and mothers, pastors and teachers as they bring up children in wisdom and in favor with God and man. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, You have promised to send Your holy angels to guard and keep Your children. We thank and praise You for the gift of life and for the protection and care you have provided as *Kathy, Richard, Robin, Laurie, Tanner, Carol, and Miriam* celebrate their birthdays. Grant that they may grow in grace, continue to know Your loving-kindness, abide in the confession of Your care and protection, serve You faithfully all the days of their life and finally come to the fullness of Your joys in heaven; Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord God, Giver of all that is good, grant Your healing and support to all who are in sorrow or need, sickness or adversity [*especially Carmen, Susan, Zoey, Donna, Floyd Doughty and those we name in our hearts*]. Give them also the gift of Your grace to accept and bear their crosses with faith in You, that finally they would be prepared to depart this life and receive the gift of eternal life in Your kingdom. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, in the Holy Supper of Your Son's body and blood, You forgive our sins and bind us together in Your communion of love. Grant that we also may gladly forgive the sins of our brothers and let no division arise among us gathered at Your table. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, in Holy Baptism You join Your children to the death and resurrection of Your Son. Bless the memory of all our loved ones who have departed in the faith, and comfort all who mourn with the knowledge that, being united with Christ in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

All these things and whatever else You know that we need, grant us, Father, for the sake of Him who died and rose again and now lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God forever. **Amen.**