



The Rich Man and Lazarus

Oalmighty God, whom to know is everlasting life, grant us without all doubt to know your Son Jesus Christ to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life that, following his steps, we may steadfastly walk in the way that leads to eternal life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. *(14 Pentecost)*

Lesson 1

The Ten Commandments

The First Commandment

The Second Commandment

The Third Commandment

✠ THE WORD OF FAITH ✠

The Rich Man and Lazarus

Luke 16:19-31

(19 Pentecost C/Trinity 1)

Discussion Questions

What kind of a man was the rich man? What does it mean that he “fared sumptuously every day”? What kind of position and probable reputation did he have in the community? What kind of a man was Lazarus? What was his status in the community? Why did the rich man go to hell? Who or what was the rich man’s god? Why did Lazarus go to heaven? Who was Lazarus’ God? What characterizes hell in this passage? How is heaven described? Why is *Father Abraham* chosen by Jesus as the “spokesman” for God and *Abraham’s bosom* as the designation for heaven? Is there any hope for an unbeliever after death? What is the rich man’s concern for his brothers? Why does he not want them to come to the place of torment? Was his concern motivated out of love for God, or something else? What, alone, can bring a sinner to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ? To whom do the Scriptures point?

Summary of the Bible Story

It is easy to despise the rich man because he had great wealth and did not seem willing to share it with his less fortunate neighbor. If we had lived in the same community with the rich man, however, we may not have had such a low opinion of him. The fact that he was “clothed in purple and fine linen” indicates that he was a prominent person in the community, perhaps a leader or merchant whose business fueled the local economy. In any case, there is no reason to believe that he did not enjoy the respect and admiration of his fellow citizens. Lazarus, on the other hand, occupied the lowest position in the community. He was a sickly beggar and the dogs licked his sores, a clear indication that he did not enjoy a position of respect or pity. It is quite probable that Lazarus was despised and the rich man loved. Yet, it is the rich man who is condemned to hell and Lazarus who is saved.

It is not that the rich man was a sinner and Lazarus was not. They were both sinners before God who alone is holy and righteous. But the faith of their hearts was not the same. The rich man's god was his wealth and all the things that he had achieved for himself, including his good name and reputation. He was proud of himself. These were the things in which he trusted. Lazarus' God, on the other hand, was the Lord—the God of Abraham—through whom he received life, salvation, and all things. Lazarus' confession was this, “Though I am a sinner and deserve nothing from God, I trust Him and entrust myself to Him, whether for good or ill, because He is merciful to me a sinner through Jesus Christ my Lord.”

Hell is the torment of being separated from God. Ironically, that is what the rich man wanted, for he put himself and his own works in the place of God. That is unbelief and idolatry. Even in hell the rich man's only thought was to avoid suffering for himself and his living brothers. There was no love of God in his heart. No sinner can escape the requirement of the First Commandment or the condemnation of hell by his own merit, works, or accomplishments. For in attempting to do so he makes an idol out of his own works!

The rich man refused to listen to the only thing that could have rescued him: the Word of God. The Word of God from Moses and the prophets, the Holy Scriptures, is the only thing that can bring sinners to repentance and faith. No miracle can rescue a sinner, not even the resurrection of the dead One, Jesus Christ, apart from the Word of the Gospel which tells us what His death and resurrection means, by preaching to us repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:36-53). For, it is only through this Word that our unbelief is exposed and we are brought to faith in Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen One, who takes away sin and restores us to the Father.

Heaven is the eternal communion with the blessed Trinity who, in selfless love, gives Himself to sinners. This is where all believers in Christ are found. Abraham is called the *Father* of all such believers, because he received the promise of salvation in the Son who would take away sin and make a great nation of Abraham and all his believing descendants. All who trust in Jesus Christ are the children of Abraham (Galatians 3:5-14). His *bosom* is the comforting and eternal presence of the Lord where they will no longer hunger or thirst. In the bosom of Abraham, the Lord Jesus will comfort them with the forgiveness of sins and wipe away all tears from their eyes (Revelation 7:13-17). This is life eternal: to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent (John 17:3).

✠ THE CATECHISM IN DETAIL ✠

The First Commandment

You shall have no other gods.

What does this mean?

We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

Catechism Terms

the Law

sin

The Holy Trinity

a god

idolatry

fear

love

worship

faith

repentance

Excerpts from the Large Catechism on the First Commandment

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. As I have often said, the trust and faith of the heart alone make both God and an idol. If your faith and trust are right, then your God is the true God. On the other hand, if your trust is false and wrong, then you have not the true God. For these two belong together, faith and God. That to which your heart clings and entrusts itself is, I say, really your God (365:2-3).

Behold, here you have the true honor and true worship which please God and which he commands under penalty of eternal wrath, namely, that the heart should know no other consolation or confidence than that in him, nor let itself be torn from him, but for him should risk and disregard everything else on earth (366:16).

Idolatry does not consist merely of erecting an image and praying to it. It is primarily in the heart, which pursues other things and seeks help and consolation from creatures, saints, or devils. It neither cares for God nor expects good things from him sufficiently to trust that he wants to help, nor does it believe that whatever good it receives comes from God (367:21).

How Christians Should Be Taught to Confess from the First Commandment

My God is that which I love, trust, and fear most in my life.

I expect my comfort, good, and delight from my God.

Have I loved, trusted, or feared other things or people more than I love, trust, and fear God? Have I committed idolatry by seeking comfort, good, and delight from my own efforts rather than from God?

Do I look to God my heavenly Father for all love, good, and joy? Is everything measured for me by what pleases me?

In all things am I self-centered and selfish?

Do I see my worry and fretting as sin against trusting God? On what things does my attention focus?

Do I complain about the troubles, people, work, and suffering God lays on me?

Do I love the things God gives more than I love Him? And do I cling to what God takes away, even though He gives me Himself?

Bible Verses for Meditation on the First Commandment

Deuteronomy 6:4-5

Psalm 90:1-2

Psalm 73:26

Psalm 118:8

Proverbs 3:5-6

John 14:6



The Second Commandment

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God
so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts,
lie, or deceive by His name,
but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

Catechism Terms

the name of God
cursing
swearing

satanic arts (or witchcraft)
superstition

Excerpts from the Large Catechism on the Second Commandment

As the First Commandment has inwardly instructed the heart and taught faith, so this commandment leads us outward and directs the lips and the tongue into the right relation to God (371:50).

“It is a misuse of God’s name if we call upon the Lord God in any way whatsoever to support falsehood or wrong of any kind.” Therefore what this commandment forbids is appealing to God’s name falsely or taking his name upon our lips when our heart knows or should know that the facts are otherwise—for example, where men take oaths in court and one side lies against the other. God’s name cannot be more grievously abused than for purposes of falsehood and deceit (371:51).

The greatest abuse, however, occurs in spiritual matters, which pertain to the conscience, when false preachers arise and peddle their lying nonsense as the Word of God (372:54).

God at the same time gives us to understand that we are to use his name properly, for it has been revealed and given to us precisely for our use and benefit. Since we are forbidden here to use the holy name in support of falsehood or wickedness, it follows, conversely, that we are commanded to use it in the service of truth and all that is good—for example, when we swear properly where it is necessary and required (373:63-64).

How Christians Should Be Taught to Confess from the Second Commandment

My God has placed His name upon me in Holy Baptism and made me His dearly beloved child through my dear Lord Jesus Christ. In His name He has revealed Himself to me as the God of love that I might worship Him.

Do I curse? Have I cursed?

Do I use God’s name cheaply for oaths that are frivolous or false?

Do I stand up and swear by God’s name when it is for the truth of the Gospel or the benefit of my neighbor in need?

Do I pray with fervor in times of trouble? Am I bored and indifferent in prayer?

Is it so that I cannot speak about God truly because I am bored with God’s Word and neglect the study of the catechism and doctrine?

Is my heart and life in the praise of God in worship? Am I mouthing things while my heart is far away?

Is my life—sealed with the name of God in Baptism—characterized by thanksgiving and praise?

Bible Verses for Meditation on the Second Commandment

Leviticus 19:12

Hebrews 6:16

Numbers 30:2

Matthew 5:37

The Third Commandment

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God
so that we do not despise preaching and His Word,
but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

Catechism Terms

**Sabbath
to keep holy**

**preaching
the Word of God**

Excerpts from the Large Catechism on the Third Commandment

The Word of God is the true holy thing above all holy things. Indeed, it is the only one we Christians acknowledge and have...God's Word is the treasure that sanctifies all things (377:91).

At whatever time God's Word is taught, preached, heard, read, or pondered, there the person, the day, and the work are sanctified by it, not on account of the external work but on account of the Word which makes us all saints (377:92).

Therefore this commandment is violated not only by those who grossly misuse and desecrate the holy day, like those who in their greed or frivolity neglect to hear God's Word or lie around in taverns dead drunk like swine, but also by that multitude of others who listen to God's Word as they would to any other entertainment, who only from force of habit go to hear preaching and depart again with as little knowledge of the Word at the end of the year as at the beginning (378:96).

Even though you know the Word perfectly and have already mastered everything, still you are daily under the dominion of the devil, who neither day nor night relaxes his effort to steal upon you unawares and to kindle in your heart unbelief and wicked thoughts against all these commandments. Therefore you must continually keep God's Word in your heart, on your lips, and in your ears. For where the heart stands idle and the Word is not heard, the devil breaks in and does his damage before we realize it. On the other hand, when we seriously ponder the Word, hear it, and put it to use, such is its power that it never departs without fruit. It always awakens new understanding, new pleasure, and a new spirit of devotion, and it constantly cleanses the heart and its meditations. For these words are not idle or dead, but effective and living (378-379:100-101).

How Christians Should Be Taught to Confess from the Third Commandment

My God has given Me His Word that I might know Him and believe in Him.
His Word makes me holy. It gives me eternal life and rest from all my enemies.

Do I strive to make the day of rest holy? Do I care about holy living?

Do I use the Word of God and prayer to make my time, work, study, and life holy day by day? Am I lazy and bored with the Word of God? Have I any fear of God over this neglect?

Do I honor the Word of God highly by eagerly hearing it preached at the times that are appointed? Do I gladly learn it by heart and live in it? Do I despise the Word of God by neglect, paying no attention to it when it is preached, taught, or read?

Do I love my fellow Christians by being present with them in the divine liturgy to sustain them? Am I quick to make excuses for neglecting the divine liturgy because of what someone else has said or done, or to do other things I like more?

Do I complain about the worship, the pastor, or other people in the congregation? Do I learn the Word of God gladly so that I may teach it to others?

Bible Verses for Meditation on the Third Commandment

Catechism—Table of Duties: To Bishops, Pastors, and Preachers

Catechism—Table of Duties: What the Hearers Owe Their Pastors

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

Psalm 111:10

Psalm 119:105

Isaiah 55:11

Luke 11:28

John 17:17

2 Timothy 3:16

Psalm 26:8

Psalm 27:4

Romans 1:16

✠ A LOOK AT THE DIVINE LITURGY ✠

Lutherans Believe that the Highest Worship of God Is the Desire to Receive God’s Gifts of Grace in Christ

The service and worship of the Gospel is to receive good things from God, while the worship of the law is to offer and present our goods to God. We cannot offer anything to God unless we have first been reconciled and reborn. The greatest possible comfort comes from this doctrine that the highest worship in the Gospel is the desire to receive forgiveness of sins, grace, and righteousness (Apology of the Augsburg Confession, IV, 155:310).

The divine liturgy of the church names God for who He is and for what He does for us. It not only uses the language of the Scriptures, it also faithfully confesses the faith of the Scriptures. We learn what the church believes by the way in which she worships.

The First Table of the Law describes the church as a people who “fear, love, and trust in God above all things.” Such a faith is impossible for us to achieve by the Law. The Law can only expose our sin and failure to believe. Nevertheless, the faith demanded by the Law is born in us by the Gospel and Holy Baptism.

The First Commandment in the Divine Liturgy

In the ancient Athanasian Creed we confess, “The catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in three persons and three persons in one God.”

Our trinitarian faith is reflected throughout the Divine Service:

- ◆ *The Invocation and Absolution:*
In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- ◆ *The Gloria Patri in the praying of the Psalms:*
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit...
- ◆ *The threefold Kyrie:*
Lord, have mercy upon us; Christ, have mercy upon us; Lord, have mercy upon us.
- ◆ *The Gloria in Excelsis:*
Glory be to God on high...O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.
O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ...
For Thou only art holy; Thou only art the Lord.
Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost,
art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.
- ◆ *The termination of Collects:*
...through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You
and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

- ◆ *The Nicene and Apostles' Creeds*
- ◆ *The threefold Sanctus:*
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth; Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.
- ◆ *The Benediction:*
The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you.
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

The Second Commandment in the Divine Liturgy

In the liturgy the company of the baptized *call upon* the name of God, asking for the good things which He Himself has promised:

- ◆ *The Confession of Sins:*
Our help is in the name of the Lord.
- ◆ *The Salutation:*
The Lord be with you. And with your spirit. (or, And also with you.)
- ◆ *The Collect of the Day*
- ◆ *The Prayer of the Church*
- ◆ *The Preface and the Sanctus:*
We laud and magnify Your glorious name...
Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.
- ◆ *The Lord's Prayer*
- ◆ *The Prayer Offices: Matins and Vespers*
- ◆ *The Psalms* (including the Introit, Gradual, Verse, and Offertory, which are prayed verses of Holy Scripture)
- ◆ *The Canticles:* the Nunc Dimittis, the Magnificat, the Benedictus, and the Te Deum Laudamus

The Third Commandment in the Divine Liturgy

In the Divine Service the Sabbath is hallowed by the preaching and hearing of the Word of God:

- ◆ The prophets speak in the Old Testament Reading.
- ◆ The apostles speak in the Epistle.
- ◆ The Lord Jesus speaks in the Holy Gospel.
- ◆ The minister preaches the Sermon “in the stead and by the command of Christ,” according to the faith of the church, which is founded upon the Word of the apostles and prophets of which Jesus Christ Himself is the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20, see also Luke 24:25-27, 44-47).