

June
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HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

Words from the Cross

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I will be preaching on the Ten Commandments beginning with the first commandment on Trinity Sunday, June 3. This is part of an ongoing effort to regularly include portions of Luther's Small Catechism in our worship services at Holy Cross. Luther wrote the following concerning the Law of God:

Therefore the proper and true use of the Law is to fill with terror by lightning (as at Mount Sinai), by tempest, and by the blast of the trumpet and by thunderbolt to beat down and crush the beast called the delusion of righteousness. Accordingly, God says through Jeremiah: My Word is a hammer, breaking rocks (23:9). For as long as the delusion of self-righteousness remains in a man, there also remains immeasurable pride, presumption, security, hatred of God, contempt of His grace and mercy, and ignorance of the promises and of Christ.

Of course, as Lutherans we know that this use of the Law is to set up the preaching of the Gospel. The Law drives us to ask with the Philippian jailer: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). And the Gospel gives the good news: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household" (Acts 16:31).

Only by means of the hammer of God's Law are people humbled and begin to thirst for the mercy and forgiveness Christ offers to everyone through His atoning death on the cross and His glorious resurrection from the dead. To the thirsty He gives drink as He says in John 7:37: **"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink."**

As we continue to watch our society morally crumble around us, we must not be afraid to hold forth the totality of God's Word of Law and Gospel so that we might be effective witnesses to others. In order for us to effectively speak the Law of God, however, we must be certain of what it is and rightly condemn what it condemns. One reason why so many people (including Christians) support or do not object to many gross sins, which are increasingly accepted as "normal" behavior, is that they are ignorant of God's Word. Let that not be the case with us, but let us meditate on it and boldly proclaim it so that others will also have the opportunity to repent of their sins and believe in Jesus Christ and be saved.

In Christ's love,

Pastor Skelton



EXODUS 20:1-17