



The Ten Commandments

by Pastor Glenn Huebel

Isn't it amazing that God can summarize the entire moral law governing all people in all places of all time in ten simple commandments? Laws passed by our Congress usually fill reams of paper and require teams of lawyers to explain and apply. The highly controversial "Obamacare" law covered more than 2,000 pages which very few of our elected officials even read before voting on it. It has been observed – rightly I believe – that simplifying is the mark of genius and true art. Israel was right in boasting that the Ten Commandments set them apart as a people possessing the wisdom of God (Deut 4:6).

Unfortunately this tested wisdom is being cast aside as archaic and impractical in our present age. We Christians know that the moral precepts replacing the Ten Commandments in our culture are neither wise nor practical in the long run. Like so many other "improvements" that make matters worse instead of better, this new morality will collapse under its own weight. We will discover, as so many people in the past have, that the Divine Law is as universal and permanent as the laws of science. Despising the Ten Commandments has always and will always bring

disastrous and predictable temporal and eternal consequences to individuals, families and nations. Laws of science sometimes appear to be violated with impunity (as in magic shows), but we know that appearances are deceptive. So it is with the moral law – a democratic vote to change the law in order to suit our desires does not evade

the consequences, even if the vote is unanimous.

If God's revealed law (the 10 commandments) truly transcends human tinkering and manipulation it would be prudent for us to learn it just as we learn the precepts of math and the laws of physics. How foolish would it be to discuss abolishing the distributive law in Algebra and replacing it with something else? The laws of Algebra are given and we learn how to apply them in order to solve equations. So also we learn and teach the divine moral law so that we may apply it to our lives. Now I suspect that a few Lutherans get a little nervous with this kind of talk because we know that we are saved and justified by the Gospel, not the Law. In fact, we know and confess that the Law plays absolutely no part in our justification before God (Rom 3:28; Gal 2:16). We further know and confess that our sanctification (life of good works) only flows out of our faith in justification. It is not motivated by the Law but by the Gospel alone. We are wrong to conclude from this, however, that the Law is evil, or that it is not to be diligently taught and applied to Christians as well as unbelievers, or that we don't need to be taught the Law after coming to faith because

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Rembrandt, *Moses With the Ten Commandments*. 1659. Oil on canvas, 168.5 cm x 136.5 cm. Gemäldegalerie, Berlin

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That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name. —John 20:31

we already know what to do. If any of this were true, we would have to excise many paragraphs from the inspired epistles as well as many words of Jesus Himself.

If Christians do not need to be instructed in how to live a Christian life, why do Jesus and the Apostles give so much practical instruction in the written Word?

If the Law *only* serves to produce repentance, why does the Catechism include a “Table of Duties,” drawn from both Old Testament and New Testament, to guide each of us in our vocations in life?

We are commanded to faithfully teach the moral Law to our children (Deut 6: 7). Jesus condemns those who teach against the Law and blesses those who faithfully teach it (Matthew 5:19).

We know from God’s Word that the Spirit works through the Law to 1) curb the flesh, 2) expose our sin, and 3) guide the believer into the path of righteousness. Though we may apply the Law to serve any one of these purposes, we ought to be aware that the Law will also be working in the other ways as well. The Table of Duties, for example, will not only guide our new man, but will also inevitably strike our conscience and remind us of our failure to live as a faithful spouse, worker, pastor, etc.

Teaching the Law without the Gospel will ultimately only produce sinful pride or despair and hatred for God. That is our main concern with those religions and denominations who teach good and right moral precepts outside of the empowering context of the Gospel of forgiveness in Christ. Knowing the difference

between right and wrong is a good thing, but that knowledge is powerless to change us and enable us to obey. That is why a steady diet of “how to” sermons will not produce better people, but worse ones. I fear that many Lutherans lack the spiritual perception to recognize this subtle error. Consequently, “precept preaching” may become very attractive because it is always so “practical.” And this, of course, is how that kind of preaching is generally marketed to the masses.

However, I must acknowledge that in our effort to avoid the trap of using the Law to make people better or to make sermons more “practical” and interesting, we Lutheran pastors sometimes fall into neglect of our duty to adequately instruct concerning God’s will. Though the second use of the Law (exposing sin) is the primary use, Scripture frequently uses the law in a guiding and instructional way. Christians evidently need to be TAUGHT how to live as Christians in this sinful world (Psalm 119: 9, 104, 105). The Law is given to us, not only to expose our sin, but to show us how to live a godly life in Christ (2 Tim 3:16-17). A believer does not automatically know how to be a good husband or wife or how to raise children. A believer does not automatically know how to manage finances (stewardship) or even the proper and improper channels of sexual impulses. A believer has a right heart and a new mind, but that spiritual power needs to be directed and guided in the ways of life.

These things are not left to the painful and slow process of trial and error. God has provided instruction for His people in the Ten Commandments. Luther writes:

It is a fact that anyone familiar with the Ten Commandments is, in consequence, familiar with the Scriptures as a whole. He is able in all affairs and emergencies to counsel, to help, to comfort and to come to an understanding and decision, whether the subject is temporal or spiritual. (Luther’s Large Catechism, preface)

Furthermore, the Augsburg Confession states that Lutheran pastors were diligent to teach the people good works from the Ten Commandments:

Our teachers are falsely accused of forbidding Good Works. For their published writings on the Ten Commandments, and others of like import, bear witness that they have taught to good purpose concerning all estates and duties of life, as to what estates of life and what works in every calling be pleasing to God. (Augsburg Confession, Article XX) It is in this ancient Lutheran tradition and practice that I will begin a series of articles on the Ten Commandments in September. It will be my purpose to set forth the commandments in such a way as to enable believers to help, comfort, and come to an understanding and decision in all affairs of life, and to teach what are the duties of life and what works in every vocation are pleasing to God.

Oh that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes! (Ps 119:5)

Blessings in Christ,
Pastor Huebel

Meet the Fields Family by Stephanie Gutierrez



This month we introduce the Field Family to the congregation. Scott, DeAnne, Katie, and Faith were received into the congregation in February. They became interested in the church because of the wonderful experience the family had with Messiah Lutheran Classical Academy (MLCA).

Scott is a fuel and lubricant salesman and DeAnne is a stay at home mother. She is a tireless volunteer for the school, assisting with lunchroom duty and playground help. She also serves as a co-chair for the Parent Council. Scott is

also a liaison for the school board. Katie attends MLCA and Faith attends Early Childhood Center (ECC).

Scott and DeAnne met on a business trip. They have lived in Keller for four years. In their leisure time they enjoy golf, listening to music, swimming with the kids and social activities with the Messiah couples' group. They are devoted to the school and want to do whatever they can to help MLCA advance in any way possible. Please welcome the Field Family to Messiah.



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VBS 2012 : the Amazing Desert Journey! by Barbara Brewer



Our Vacation Bible School was a huge success! We had 139 students in attendance with the help of 72 volunteers.

Our mission offering this year was to bring clean water to people in many countries across the world, as 99 percent of the earth's water is

unsafe or not available for drinking. More than half of the people in hospitals in developing countries are sick because of unclean water. Every year, almost 2 million children die because they do not have access to clean water. \$10 provides a water filter for children in Cambodia, \$35

provides a water filtration system for a family in Haiti, and \$500 will help bring water to an entire community in rural China. We asked the children in our VBS for assistance in reaching a goal of \$500 dollars to provide clean water for an entire community in China. They did it!

We had a little over \$500 dollars raised during this one week of VBS.

I'm so proud of the many accomplishments the children made during the week. One of my favorite highlights of this year's VBS happened on the

night of the closing program. We had all the slides ready to show on the back wall of the sanctuary with words to the songs. Well, something went wrong on our fourth song - the words didn't pop up on the wall, and the song wasn't loud enough for the children to hear. I was panicked, but then I heard the most amazing thing, as the children started singing with no one leading them and no words

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on the projector. They had memorized the entire song in two days. The song was the Lord's Prayer, and when they sang it my heart leapt and I started to cry because our church had planted the tiniest seed. The entire Lord's Prayer had been memorized! HE is GOOD!

Thank you to everyone for helping make our VBS this year another success. A Special Thanks to: Marcia Huebel, for the printing of our VBS publications and Gray Wolf Promotions for our wonderful T-shirts.

Thank You especially to Merissa Nuse for taking on the huge task of co-directing. You did a wonderful job on all of our decorations!



Sing a New Song to the Lord

by Vicki Main, Kantor

In August we will be learning our next new hymn, *Wide Open Stand the Gates* [LSB 639] from The Lord's Supper section. The text was written by Johann Konrad Wilhelm Loehe [1808 – 1872] and translated by Herman G. Stuempfle [1923-2007].

Lutheran Service Book Lectionary Committee wrote a document entitled "Commemoration Biographies" which was published by LCMS Worship. Included in it was a bio of **J. K. Wilhelm Loehe**. "Although he never left Germany, Johann Konrad Wilhelm Loehe, born in Fuerth in 1808, had a profound impact on the development of Lutheranism in North America. Serving as pastor in the Bavarian village of Neuendettelsau, he recognized the need for workers in developing lands and assisted in training emergency helpers to be sent as missionary pastors to North America, Brazil, and Australia. A number of the men he sent to the United States became founders of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. Through his financial support, a theological school was established in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and a teachers' institute in Saginaw, Michigan. Loehe was known for his confessional integrity and his interest in liturgy and catechetics. His devotion to works of Christian charity led to the establishment of a deaconess training house and homes for the aged." His chief concern was that a parish find its life in the eucharist, and from that source evangelism and social ministries would flow.

He died in Neuendettelsau at the age of sixty-three, having influenced the life of the Lutheran Church on five continents. The chapel at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa is dedicated to his memory.

Herman Stuempfle, Jr., who translated Loehe's text, served as a pastor in Pennsylvania and Maryland. In 1959 he joined the staff of the Board of Missions of the United Lutheran Church of America. He also served as Professor of Preaching at Lutheran Theological Seminary as well as its Dean and President during his twenty-seven years there. Dr. Stuempfle passed away in March 2007 after a long battle with ALS. He was eighty-four years old.

639 Wide Open Stand the Gates

- 1 Wide open stand the gates adorned with pearl,
While round God's golden throne
The choirs of saints in endless circles curl,
And joyous praise the Son!
They watch Him now descending
To visit waiting earth.
The Lord of Life unending
Brings dying hope new birth!
- 2 He speaks the Word the bread and wine to bless:
"This is My flesh and blood!"
He bids us eat and drink with thankfulness
This gift of holy food.
All human thought must falter—
Our God stoops low to heal,
Now present on the altar,
For us both host and meal!
- 3 The cherubim, their faces veiled from light,
While saints in wonder kneel,
Sing praise to Him whose face with glory bright
No earthly masks conceal.
This sacrament God gives us
Binds us in unity,
Joins earth with heav'n beyond us,
Time with eternity!

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The scriptural references for this hymn are Rev. 5; Is. 6:1-3; Rev. 21:12, 21, 25. I would encourage you to read them as they certainly add to our picture of Heaven and its magnificence.

The tune is also used for *Jerusalem, O City Fair and High* [LSB 674] which we will be singing in the future.

May God bless our learning and singing!



"Fathers and mothers have lost the idea that the highest aspiration they might have for their children is for them to be wise...Specialized competence and success are all that they can imagine." - Allan Bloom

When two guys meet for the first time, they'll shake hands, introduce themselves, and then, nine times out of ten, one will ask the other, "So, whaddya do?" - by which he will mean, "What's your job?" When an adult meets a child for the first time, it's more than a little likely that the child will be asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" And the child, having been enculturated enough, will probably answer in terms of vocation: "I wanna be a fireman!" or, "I wanna be an astronaut!" Here in the good ol' functionalist, pragmatic US of A, that's more or less to be expected.

I suspect that any one of us would find ourselves slack-jawed and mouth agape in astonishment if the aforementioned child, in response to the question, "What do you want to be?" would look up at us and say most earnestly, "I want to be....wise." To be sure, it would take a certain amount of wisdom to

understand that gaining wisdom is a desirable thing, and that it goes well beyond just learning how to do a particular job, to have what Allan Bloom called "specialized competence". One who is wise will of course acquire the skills and knowledge that will allow him or her to get along in the world by means of a vocation. But the wise person will have so much more. The wise person will have learned to distinguish fact from fiction, and truth from error. He will know enough of history to be able to avoid making the same mistakes that have been made before. He will be able to understand that connections exist between all manner of seemingly compartmentalized and distinct subjects, that for example, the study of biology is largely the study of chemistry and chemical processes, that understanding of principles of physics are a great help in understanding anatomy and kinesiology. What, after all, are our muscles, tendons, ligaments and bones but a series of complex levers, operated by a series of chemical/electrical impulses?

The Scriptures teach us that the "beginning of wisdom is the fear of

the Lord" (Proverbs 9:10). To fear the Lord is to know Him as the Lord of all Creation and Author of all Truth. It is to know that all truth is God's truth, and that in our Creator all truth is one. I hope it is the aspiration of the parents who elect to send their children to our school, MLCA, that their children are started on the path to wisdom, that they become wise, that they see their children's education as something that is so very much more than mere extended vocational training, or the acquisition of a specialized (and therefore limited) competence. It is surely the hope of our administration and teaching staff at MLCA that the children whose education is entrusted in part to us that we are about the task of bringing up children in the nurture and admonition and wisdom of the Lord.

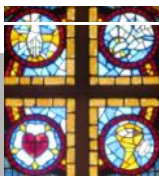
**THE FEAR of the
LORD is the
beginning of
WISDOM.**
Proverbs 9:10

A New Young Adult Group

Under the leadership of one of our elders, Steven Latham, Messiah sponsored a lunch for the young adults of our congregation on Sunday, July 8th. Seventeen young women and men attended and became acquainted or better acquainted with one another. The purpose of the gathering was to determine how our congregation can better serve post high school young

adults. We recognize that this transitional time of life is burdened with unique demands, temptations, and challenges requiring the support offered by the encouragement and accountability of Christian fellowship. The first official social gathering for this group was scheduled for Saturday evening, July 14, at the Twisted Root Restaurant in Roanoke. They will meet during the

Sunday School hour on July 15 to discuss a summer topic of study. Dave Schultz has volunteered to lead a study topic. Summer is an excellent time for our college students to become involved. If you are interested in participating in these activities, please contact Steve Latham, celatham@verizon.net. Friends are also welcome.



Messiah Lutheran Church & School

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

1308 Whitley Rd. Keller, TX 76248

Church Office: (817) 431-2345

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Sunday Worship: 8:00 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Sunday School & Adult Bible Class: 9:30 a.m.

Rev. Glenn Huebel, Senior Pastor

Rev. Dennis Kitzmann, Assistant Pastor

Mrs. Ellen Malzahn, Interim Principal, Academy

Mrs. Alison Smith, Principal, Early Childhood Center

Mrs. Vicki Main, Kantor

Mr. Joseph Sustrik, Financial Director

www.messiahkeller.org

Youth News



Our annual Youth Retreat was held on June 4—7, with 18 youth and adults attending. We piled into a spacious, and newly remodeled, beach house in Port Aransas for a great time.

Pastor Huebel led the retreat Bible Study on the Foundation Stones of Christian Faith, reflecting on such fundamental questions as “Does the Universe Have a Creator?”, “Is the Bible Trustworthy?”, and “Is the Bible Relevant?” We considered and discussed the kinds of arguments and

false assumptions youth may have to contend with when they enter the university environment, and why these arguments are not valid or convincing.

Time was also spent on the beach, in the pool, playing sand volleyball, a little shopping, dancing with the Wii, playing cards (Did you know that can be a contact sport?), singing, and sightseeing on the USS Lexington in Corpus Christi.

