

Lutheran Confessions

Large Catechism: First Commandment.

You shall have no other gods before Me.

4] Therefore it is the intent of this commandment to require true faith and trust of the heart which settles upon the only true God, and clings to Him alone. That is as much as to say: “See to it that you let Me alone be your God, and never seek another,” *i.e.*: Whatever you lack of good things, expect it of Me, and look to Me for it, and whenever you suffer misfortune and distress, creep and cling to Me. I, yes, I, will give you enough and help you out of every need; only let not your heart cleave to or rest in any other.

5] This I must unfold somewhat more plainly, that it may be understood and perceived by ordinary examples of the contrary. Many a one thinks that he has God and everything in abundance when he has money and, possessions; he trusts in them and boasts of them with such firmness and assurance as to care for no one. 6] Lo, such a man also has a god, Mammon by name, *i.e.*, money and possessions, on which he sets all his heart, and which is also the most common idol on earth. 7] He who has money and possessions feels secure, and is joyful and undismayed as though he were sitting in the midst of Paradise. 8] On the other hand, he who has none doubts and is despondent, as though he knew of no God. 9] For very few are to be found who are of good cheer, and who neither mourn nor complain if they have not Mammon. This [care and desire for money] sticks and clings to our nature, even to the grave.

Large Catechism: Second Petition

57] For just as when the richest and most mighty emperor would bid a poor beggar ask whatever he might desire, and were ready to give great imperial presents, and the fool would beg only for a dish of gruel, he would be rightly considered a rogue and a scoundrel, who treated the command of his imperial majesty as a jest and sport, and was not worthy of coming into his presence: so also it is a great reproach and dishonor to God if we, to whom He offers and pledges so many unspeakable treasures, despise the same, or have not the confidence to receive them, but scarcely venture to pray for a piece of bread.

58] All this is the fault of the shameful unbelief which does not look to God for as much good as will satisfy the stomach, much less expects without doubt such eternal treasures of God. **Therefore we must strengthen ourselves against it, and let this be our first prayer; then, indeed, we shall have all else in abundance,** as Christ teaches [Matt. 6, 33]: *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.* For how could He allow us to suffer want and to be straitened in temporal things when He promises that which is eternal and imperishable?

(Bente, F., *Concordia Triglotta*, Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 1997).

Put it into Practice

These questions have been put together to help you as you extend and apply tonight’s Scripture to your life.

Prayer

O Lord, we implore You, let Your continual pity cleanse and defend Your Church, and because she cannot continue in safety without Your help, preserve her evermore by Your help and goodness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **AMEN**
(*Collect for Trinity 15*)

Word of God: St. Matthew 6:24-34 (on back)

Questions to Ponder in Prayer

- The first sentence of verse 24 is a fact. The verb “serve” (δουλέω) is not simply the work of an employee or the voluntary serving of one person to another. It is the action of a slave (δουλος) who is owned completely by his lord. Though not good English, we could say, “No one can *continue* to slave for two lords.” How is “slaving for” different from “serving”? (Note: See Rom 6:19-23)
- Is Jesus speaking from the point of view of the slave or the master?
 - Who will hate or love? Who will be devoted or despise?
 - Why would Jesus bring this point up? What were the disciples doing?
- When verse 25 says, “Do not worry...,” it admits that worrying was already going on, thus it means, “Stop worrying...” About what were the disciples worrying?
- Does worrying have something to do with the previous section on “serving two masters?” What is the effect of the “therefore” in verse 25?
- Is there life apart from food? Is there a body apart from clothes?
- Jesus gives an argument from the least to the greatest. If it is true for the least, then the argument goes that it must be true for the greater. What is true about birds/flowers? How are people greater than birds/flowers? Thus, what applies even more to people than to birds/flowers? What is God called in verse 26 for which the birds cannot claim about God?
- Practically speaking, worry/serving two masters can’t add hours to your life (Ps 39:5). In fact, worry (stress) destroys life. What do the pagans (lit. “nations” = Gentiles) seek after? What do they not know about the heavenly Father, that they seek after these things?
- Solomon was the most exquisite Israelite king! How does his dress compare with the clothing that God gives? (Note: Solomon served two masters. Did it work?)
- What does Jesus call his disciples? (v. 30) Ouch! True?
- What do Christians *continue* to seek? (v.33) What does that mean? Also note Matthew 5:6. Though seeking earthly treasures won’t last (Mt 6:19-21), what is the result of the “hunger and thirst for righteousness”?
- Is “seeking” an active or passive thing? How does God’s kingdom come?
- Whose kingdom and righteousness is it? (Romans 3:22)
- What will be given to those disciples who are seeking Christ’s kingdom and righteousness? Will there be any worry?
- If this is a teaching based on the first commandment, what is the answer?

6:30 PM “Learn by Heart”

Through simple repetition those present will inwardly digest...

Hymn TLH #267, stanza 1
Apostles’ Creed, First Article & meaning, p.301
Matthew 6:33

7:00 PM “Catechesis”

+ Opening Verses
“O Lord, open my lips...” p.224

+ Ascription of Praise
“Praise to you, O Christ. Alleluia.” p.225

Reading

St. Matthew 6:24-34 (back)

Hymn

“If God Had Not Been on Our Sider”
TLH #267

Catechesis on... (back)

St. Matthew 6:24-34

Liturgy

Catechism

--prayer based on reading

+ Recite Word by Word insert

Ten Commandments
Lord’s Prayer
Apostles’ Creed
Sacrament of Holy Baptism
Matthew 28:19
Mark 16:16
Confession & Absolution
John 20:22-23
Sacrament of the Altar
Words of Institution
Collect of the Day
--prayer based on reading
R. AMEN
Benediction R. AMEN

Catechesis on St. Matthew 6:24-34

24“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

25“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

26“Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

27“Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 28“So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin;

29“and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30“Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

31“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32“For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

33“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

34“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (NKJV)

The Article of Saving Faith

Faith = Believe = Trust

“The faith that justifies, however, is no mere historical knowledge, but **the firm acceptance of God’s offer promising forgiveness of sins and justification.** To avoid the impression that it is merely knowledge, we add

that to have faith means **to want and to accept the promised offer of forgiveness of sins and justification....** Paul clearly shows that faith does not simply mean historical knowledge but is **a firm acceptance of the promise** (Rom. 4:16): “That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may be guaranteed.” For he says that only faith can accept the promise. He therefore correlates and **connects promise and faith....**” (Ap IV, 49, 50).

The Object of Saving Faith

Faith Embraces Christ and His Work

“Scripture contains many pleas for mercy, and the holy Fathers often say that we are saved by mercy. 55 And so at every mention of mercy we must remember that this requires faith, which accepts the promise of mercy. Similarly, at every mention of faith we are also thinking of **its object, the promised mercy.** 56 **For faith does not justify or save because it is a good work in itself, but only because it accepts the promised mercy....** the patriarchs knew the promise of the Christ, that for his sake God intended to forgive sins. As they understood that the Christ would be the price for our sins, they knew that our works could not pay so high a price. Therefore **they received free mercy and the forgiveness of sins by faith, just as the saints in the New Testament.** (Ap IV, 56, 57)

The Fruit of Saving Faith

Faith Produces New Impulses

“**Since faith brings the Holy Spirit and produces a new life in our hearts, it must also produce spiritual impulses in our hearts.** What these impulses are, the prophet shows when he says (Jer. 31:33), “I will put my law upon their hearts.” After we have been justified and regenerated by faith, therefore, we begin to fear and love God, to pray and expect help from him, to thank and praise him, and to submit to him in our afflictions. Then we also begin to love our neighbor because our hearts have spiritual and holy impulses” (Ap IV, 125).

CATECHESIS ON ST. MATTHEW 6:24-34

Do Not Worry



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The Apostles' Creed, First Article

“...so that the Creed is nothing else than the answer and confession of Christians arranged with respect to the First Commandment” (LC II 10).

Trinity at Creation

“But that it may be most easily and clearly understood as it is to be taught to children, we shall briefly sum up the entire Creed in three chief articles, according to **the three persons in the Godhead**, to whom everything that we believe is related, so that **the First Article, of God the Father, explains Creation, the Second Article, of the Son, Redemption, and the Third, of the Holy Ghost, Sanctification**. Just as though the Creed were briefly comprehended in so many words: I believe in God the Father, who has created me; I believe in God the Son, who has redeemed me; I believe in the Holy Ghost, who sanctifies me. One God and one faith, but three persons, therefore also three articles or confessions”(LC, II, 6-7).

Genesis 1:1-2, “In the beginning **God created the heavens and the earth**. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And **the Spirit of God** was hovering over the face of the waters.”

John 1:1-3, 14 “In the beginning was **the Word**, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. **All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made....** And **the Word became flesh** and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of **the only begotten of the Father**, full of grace and truth.

Creation out of Nothing(*ex nihilo*) in Six Days

Genesis 1:3, “Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light.”

Exodus 20:11, “**For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them**, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”

Hebrews 11:3, “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that **the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible**.”

The Trinity Continues to Sustain His Creation

Colossians 1:17, “He {Christ} is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”

Psalms 145:15-16, “The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.”

Hebrews 1:3, “...{Christ} who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and **upholding all things by the word of His power**, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...”

The Father, Almighty

“Moreover, we also confess that God the Father has not only given us all that we have and see before our eyes, but daily preserves and defends us against all evil and misfortune, averts all sorts of danger and calamity; and that He does all this out of pure love and goodness, without our merit, as a benevolent Father, who cares for us that no evil befall us. But to speak more of this belongs in the other two parts of this article, where we say: Father Almighty” (LC II, 17).

Psalms 115:3, “But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases.”

Matthew 19:26, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

Genesis 17:1, “I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.”

For here we see how the Father has given Himself to us, together with all creatures, and has most richly provided for us in this life, besides that He has overwhelmed us with unspeakable, eternal treasures by His Son and the Holy Ghost, as we shall hear (LC II, 24)

John 3:35, “The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.”

The Love of the Triune God for Us

“We ought, therefore, daily to practice this article, impress it upon our mind, and to remember it in all that meets our eyes, and in all good that falls to our lot, and wherever we escape from calamity or danger, that it is God who gives and does all these things, that therein we sense and see His Paternal heart and his transcendent love toward us” (LC II, 23).

Romans 8:28, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

Lamentations 3:22-23, “Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.”

Psalms 118:1, “Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.”

Psalms 103:13, “As a father pities his children, So the Lord pities those who fear Him.

Ember Days

Today is an ember day! “The material in the Large Catechism originated as sermons by Martin Luther on the basic texts of Christian teaching. Already in the Middle Ages, some regional synods in Germany had called for regular preaching on the “catechism” (usually defined as the Ten Commandment, Apostles’ Creed, Lord’s Prayer and, sometimes, the Ave Maria). The Ember Days, four times of fasting spread throughout the church year *{The Wednesday, Friday and Saturday after 1st Sunday in Lent, Pentecost, Holy Cross Day(Sep 14), and St. Lucia’s Day(Dec 13)}*, were often designated for this purpose. Even before the Reformation, Wittenberg’s city church, St. Mary’s also seems to have followed this practice. Luther himself preached on various portions of the catechism as early as 1518” (*The Book of Concord*, Kolb, preface to Large Catechism, p.377)

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