

The Basics of Lutheran Teaching - Class #5

The Fourth Commandment.

38. Which is the Fourth Commandment?

Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

39. What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we may not despise our parents and masters, nor provoke them to anger, but give them honor, serve and obey them, and hold them in love and esteem.

40. Who are parents and masters?

Father and mother and all those who, by God's ordinance, are placed over us in home, state, school, and church. Thus "fathers" can be biological fathers, father of the nation, or spiritual fathers

B. H. Gen. 41, 43. Joseph. — 2 Kings 2, 12. Elijah. — 1 Cor. 4, 15. Paul.

41/42. What is forbidden in the Fourth Commandment?

We should not despise our parents and masters, nor provoke them to anger, by not respecting their dignity and will, and provoking them to just anger by disobedience or any kind of wickedness.

Proverbs 23:22 Listen to your father who begot you, And do not despise your mother when she is old.

66) Proverbs 30:17 The eye that mocks his father, And scorns obedience to his mother, The ravens of the valley will pick it out, And the young eagles will eat it.

67) Romans 13:2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

68) 1 Peter 2:18 Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.

B. H. 1 Sam. 2, 12. The sons of Eli. — 2 Sam. 15. Absalom. — 2 Kings 2, 23. 24. The boys at Bethel.

43. What is enjoined in the Fourth Commandment?

We should give honor to our parents and masters, serve and obey them, and hold them in love and esteem by truly regarding them as God's representatives, of our own accord do for them what we can, obey them in all things in which God has placed them over us, and esteem them as a precious gift of God.

69) Ephesians 6:1-4 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²"Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: ³that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." ⁴And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

Acts 5:29 ... "We ought to obey God rather than men.

70) Col. 3, 20. Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well pleasing unto the Lord;

71) Proverbs 23:22 Listen to your father who begot you, And do not despise your mother when she is old.

72) 1 Timothy 5:4 But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God.

Titus 3:1 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work,

73) Hebr. 13, 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.

74) Romans 13:1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

Romans 13:7 Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

75) Leviticus 19:32 'You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the Lord.

76) Acts 5, 29. We ought to obey God rather than men.

B.H. Gen. 46, 47. Joseph. — Ruth 1, 16. Ruth. — 1 Kings 2, 19. Solomon. — Luke 2, 51. Jesus.

Large Catechism, Part I, Fourth Commandment

¹⁰⁵ **To fatherhood and motherhood God has given the special distinction, above all estates that are beneath it,** that he commands us not simply to love our parents but also to honor them. With respect to brothers, sisters, and neighbors in general he commands nothing higher than that we love them. Thus he distinguishes father and mother above all other persons on earth, and places them next to himself. ¹⁰⁶ For it is a much greater thing to honor than to love. Honor includes not only love but also deference, humility, and modesty, directed (so to speak) toward a majesty hidden within them. ¹⁰⁷ It requires us not only to address them affectionately and reverently, but above all to show by our actions, both of heart and of body, that we respect them very highly and that next to God we give them the very highest place. For anyone whom we are whole-heartedly to honor, we must truly regard as high and great.

¹⁰⁸ Young people must therefore be taught to revere **their parents as God's representatives**, and to remember that, however lowly, poor, feeble, and eccentric they may be, they are their own father and mother, given them by God. They are not to be deprived of their honor because of their ways or their failings. Therefore, we are not to think of their persons, whatever they are, but of the will of God, who has created and ordained them to be our parents. In other respects, indeed, we are all equal in the sight of God, but among ourselves there must be this sort of inequality and proper distinctions. God therefore commands you to be careful to obey me as your father and to acknowledge my authority....

¹⁴¹ In connection with this commandment there is more to be said about the various kinds of obedience due to **our superiors, persons whose duty it is to command and to govern. Out of the authority of parents all other authority is derived and developed.** Where a father is unable by himself to bring up his child, he calls upon a schoolmaster to teach him; if he is too weak, he enlists the help of his friends and neighbors; if he passes away, he confers and delegates his authority and responsibility to others appointed for the purpose. ¹⁴² Likewise he must have domestics (man-servants and maid-servants) under him to manage his household. Thus all who are called masters stand in the place of parents and derive from them their power and authority to govern. In the Scriptures they are all called fathers because in their responsibility they act in the capacity of fathers and ought to have fatherly hearts toward their people. So from ancient times the Romans and other peoples called the masters and mistresses of the household *patres et matres familias* (that is, house-fathers and house-mothers). Again, their princes and

overlords were called *patres patriae*⁴ (that is, **fathers of the country**) to the great shame of us would-be Christians who do not speak of our rulers in the same way, or at least do not treat and honor them as such.

¹⁴³ What a child owes to father and mother, the entire household owes them likewise. Therefore man-servants and maid-servants should take care not only to obey their masters and mistresses, but also to honor them as their own parents and do everything that they know is expected of them, not from compulsion and reluctantly but gladly and cheerfully; and they should do it for the reason just mentioned, that it is God's commandment and is more pleasing to him than all other works. ¹⁴⁴ They ought even to be willing to pay for the privilege of service and be glad to acquire masters and mistresses in order to have such joyful consciences and know how to do truly golden works. **These works in the past have been neglected and despised; instead, everybody ran in the devil's name into monasteries, on pilgrimages, and after indulgences, to their own hurt and with a bad conscience.**

¹⁴⁵ If this truth could be impressed upon the poor people, a servant girl would dance for joy and praise and thank God; and with her careful work, for which she receives sustenance and wages, she would gain a treasure such as all who pass for the greatest saints do not have. Is it not a wonderful thing to be able to boast to yourself, **"If I do my daily housework faithfully, that is better than the holiness and austere life of all the monks"**? ¹⁴⁶ You have the promise, moreover, that you will prosper and fare well in everything. How can you lead a more blessed or holy life, as far as your works are concerned? ¹⁴⁷ **In the sight of God it is really faith that makes a person holy; faith alone serves him, while our works serve the people.** ¹⁴⁸ Here you have everything that is good — shelter and protection in the Lord and, what is more, a joyful conscience and a gracious God who will reward you a hundredfold. You are a true nobleman if you are upright and obedient. If you are not, you will have nothing but the wrath and displeasure of God; there will be no peace in your heart, and eventually you will have all kinds of trouble and misfortune.....

¹⁶⁷ In addition, it would be well to preach **to parents on the nature of their office**, how they should treat those committed to their authority. Although the duty of superiors is not explicitly stated in the Ten Commandments, it is frequently dealt with in many other passages of Scripture, and God intends it to be included in this commandment in which he speaks of father and mother. ¹⁶⁸ God does not want to have knaves or tyrants in this office and responsibility; nor does he assign them this honor (that is, power and authority to govern) merely to receive homage. Parents should consider that they owe obedience to God, and that, above all, they should earnestly and faithfully discharge the duties of their office, **not only to provide for the material support of their children, servants, subjects, etc., but especially to bring them up to the praise and honor of God.** ¹⁶⁹ Therefore do not imagine that the parental office is a matter of your pleasure and whim. It is a strict commandment and injunction of God, who holds you accountable for it.

¹⁷⁰ The trouble is that no one perceives or heeds this. Everybody acts as if God gave us children for our pleasure and amusement, gave us servants merely to put them to work like cows or asses, and gave us subjects to treat them as we please, as if it were no concern of ours what they learn or how they live. ¹⁷¹ No one is willing to see that this is the command of the divine Majesty, who will solemnly call us to account and punish us for its neglect, nor is it recognized how very necessary it is to devote serious attention to the young. ¹⁷² **If we want qualified and capable men for both civil and spiritual leadership, we must spare no effort, time, and**

expense in teaching and educating our children to serve God and mankind. We must not think only of amassing money and property for them.¹⁷³ God can provide for them and make them rich without our help, as indeed he does daily. But he has given and entrusted children to us with the command that we train and govern them according to his will; otherwise God would have no need of father and mother.¹⁷⁴ **Therefore let everybody know that it is his chief duty, on pain of losing divine grace, to bring up his children in the fear and knowledge of God, and if they are gifted to give them opportunity to learn and study so that they may be of service wherever they are needed.**

¹⁷⁵ If this were done, God would richly bless us and give us grace so that men might be trained who would be a benefit to the nation and the people. **We would also have soundly instructed citizens, virtuous and home-loving wives who would faithfully bring up their children and servants to be godly.**¹⁷⁶ Think what deadly harm you do when you are negligent in this respect and fail to bring up your children to usefulness and piety. You bring upon yourself sin and wrath, thus earning hell by the way you have reared your own children, no matter how devout and holy you may be in other respects.¹⁷⁷ Because this commandment is disregarded, God terribly punishes the world; hence there is no longer any civil order, peace, or respect for authority. We all complain about this state of things, but we do not see that it is our own fault. Because of the way we train them, we have unruly and disobedient subjects....

The Fifth Commandment.

45. Which is the Fifth Commandment?

Thou shalt not kill.

46. What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we may not hurt nor harm our neighbor in his body, but help and befriend him in every bodily need.

47. What is forbidden in the Fifth Commandment?

That we should not hurt nor harm our neighbor in his body; that is, we should do or say nothing whereby his life may be destroyed, shortened, or embittered, and bear no anger or hatred against him in our hearts.

77) Genesis 9:6 “Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man. (deed)

78) Matt. 26, 52. All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

79) Rom. 13, 4. He beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

80) Rom. 12, 19. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

81) Matthew 5:21-22 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’ 22 “But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire. (word)

82) 1 John 3:15 Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. (thought)

83) Matthew 15:19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries,

fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

Deuteronomy 22:8 (**Killing through carelessness.**)

B. H. Gen. 4, 8. Cain. — Gen. 37, 31-34. Joseph's brothers. — 2 Sam. 11, 15. David. — Matt. 26, 51. Peter. — Jer. 18, 18. — Acts 7, 54.

48. What is enjoined in this Commandment?

That we should help and befriend our neighbor in every bodily need, and hence be merciful, meek, and forgiving towards him.

84) Isaiah 58:7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh?

85) Romans 12:20 Therefore “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.”

86) Matthew 5:5, 7, 9 Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.... 7 Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.... 9 Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.

87) Matthew 5:25 Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.

B. H. Gen. 14, 12, etc. Abraham. — 1 Sam. 26. David. — Luke 10, 33. The good Samaritan. — Matt. 25, 31-46. The Judgment

Large Catechism, Part I, Fifth Commandment

¹⁷⁹ “*You shall not kill.*”

¹⁸⁰ {*In the 4th commandment*} We have now dealt with both **the spiritual and the civil government, that is, divine and paternal authority and obedience.** In this {*fifth*} commandment we leave our own house and go out among our neighbors to learn how we should conduct ourselves individually toward our fellow men. Therefore neither God nor the government is included in this commandment, yet their right to take human life is not abrogated. ¹⁸¹ **God has delegated his authority of punishing evildoers to civil magistrates in place of parents;** in early times, as we read in Moses,² parents had to bring their own children to judgment and sentence them to death. Therefore what is forbidden here applies to private individuals, not to governments.

¹⁸² This commandment is simple enough. We hear it explained every year in the Gospel, Matthew 5,3 where Christ himself explains and summarizes it: We must not kill, either by hand, heart, or word, by signs or gestures, or by aiding and abetting. It forgives anger except, as we have said, to persons who occupy the place of God, that is, parents and rulers. **Anger, reproof, and punishment are the prerogatives of God and his representatives, and they are to be exercised upon those who transgress this and the other commandments.**

¹⁸³ The occasion and need for this commandment is that, as God well knows, the world is evil and this life is full of misery. He has therefore placed this and the other commandments as a boundary between good and evil. There are many offenses against this commandment, as there are against all the others. We must live among many people who do us harm, and so we have reason to be at enmity with them. ¹⁸⁴ For instance, a neighbor, envious that you have received from God a better house and estate or greater wealth and good fortune than he, gives vent to his irritation and envy by speaking ill of you.

Augsburg Confession, XXVIII. THE POWER OF BISHOPS

¹ Many and various things have been written in former times about the power of bishops, and some have improperly confused the power of bishops with the temporal sword. ² Out of this careless confusion many serious wars, tumults, and uprisings have resulted because the bishops, under pretext of the power given them by Christ, have not only introduced new forms of worship and burdened consciences with reserved cases¹ and violent use of the ban, but have also presumed to set up and depose kings and emperors according to their pleasure. ³ Such outrage has long since been condemned by learned and devout people in Christendom. ⁴ On this account our teachers have been compelled, for the sake of comforting consciences, to point out **the difference between spiritual and temporal power, sword, and authority, and they have taught that because of God's command both authorities and powers are to be honored and esteemed with all reverence as the two highest gifts of God on earth.**

⁵ Our teachers assert that **according to the Gospel the power of keys or the power of bishops is a power and command of God to preach the Gospel, to forgive and retain sins, and to administer and distribute the sacraments.** ⁶ For Christ sent out the apostles with this command, "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you. Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (John 20:21-23).

⁸ **This power of keys or of bishops is used and exercised only by teaching and preaching the Word of God and by administering the sacraments (to many persons or to individuals, depending on one's calling). In this way are imparted no bodily but eternal things and gifts, namely, eternal righteousness, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life.** ⁹ These gifts cannot be obtained except through the office of preaching and of administering the holy sacraments, for St. Paul says, "The gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith."^{2 10} Inasmuch as the power of the church or of bishops bestows eternal gifts and is used and exercised only through the office of preaching, it does not interfere at all with **government or temporal authority.** ¹¹ **Temporal authority is concerned with matters altogether different from the Gospel. Temporal power does not protect the soul, but with the sword and physical penalties it protects body and goods from the power of others.** (Tappert)

195. Why do you say, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins"?

The Scriptures teach that God by grace, for Christ's sake, through the Gospel, daily and richly forgives all sins to me and all believers.

Mark 2, 7. Who can forgive sins but God only?

Romans 10:14-15 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"

Psalms 130:3-4 If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? 4 But there is forgiveness with You, That You may be feared.

Psalms 103:2-3 Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: 3 Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases,

Eph. 1, 7. In Christ we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.

Rom. 3, 28. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the Law.

196. How does God forgive sins?

He does not impute their sins to sinners, or, in other words, He declares sinners righteous. (Justification.)

2 Cor. 5, 21. For He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Rom. 8, 33. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

B. H. Matt. 18, 23-35. The wicked servant.

197. Who receives this forgiveness?

Although it has been procured for all men, and is offered by the Gospel to all that hear it, yet only those who believe the Gospel and thus accept the forgiveness of sins actually become partakers of such forgiveness.

381) 2 Cor. 5, 19. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them ; and hath committed unto us the Word of reconciliation.

382) Gen. 15, 6. Abram believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness.

383) Rom. 4, 5. To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

B. H. Luke 18, 9-14. The publican.

198. What, then, do we, together with our Church, confess regarding the forgiveness of sins, or justification?

That we receive forgiveness of sins and are justified before God, not by our works, but by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith.

384) Rom. 3, 22-25. There is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.

199. Can every believer be sure of the forgiveness of sins and of his salvation?

Yes, he can and should be, because God's promise is sure.

385) 2 Tim. 1, 12. I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.

386) Rom. 8, 38. 39. I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

200. Why must we ever firmly maintain this Article especially?

Because it is the chief article of Christian doctrine, by which the Christian Church distinguishes itself from all false religions, and which gives all the glory to God alone, and affords enduring comfort to poor sinners.

B.H. Matt. 9, 1--8. The man sick of the palsy.

Apology of the Augsburg Confession II. Original Sin

² ... for it {AC II} says: “It is also taught that since the fall of Adam all men who are born according to the course of nature **are conceived and born in sin**. That is, all men are

--full of evil lusts and inclinations from their mothers’ wombs

--and are unable by nature to have true fear of God or true faith in God.”³

³ This passage testifies that in those who are born according to the flesh we deny the existence not only of actual fear and trust in God but also of the possibility and gift to produce it. We say that anyone born in this way has **concupiscence** and **cannot produce true fear and trust in God**. ... When we use the term “concupiscence,” we do not mean only its acts or fruits, but **the continual inclination of nature...**

⁹ To be able to love God above all things by one’s own power and to obey his commandments, what else is this but to have **original righteousness**? ¹⁰ If human nature has such powers that by itself it can love God above all things, as the scholastics confidently assert, then what can original sin be? What need is there for the grace of Christ if we can become righteous by our own righteousness? What need is there for the Holy Spirit if human powers by themselves can love God above all things and obey his commandments? ...

¹⁴ This was why in our definition of original sin we also mentioned concupiscence and denied to man’s natural powers the fear and trust of God. We wanted to show that original sin also involves such faults as ignorance of God, contempt of God, lack of the fear of God and of trust in him, inability to love him. These are the chief flaws in human nature, transgressing as they do **the first table of the Decalogue**.

¹⁵ We have said nothing new. Properly understood, the old definition says exactly the same thing, “**Original sin is the lack of original righteousness**.”⁸ But what is righteousness? Here the scholastics quibble about philosophical questions and do not explain what original righteousness is. ¹⁶ In the Scriptures righteousness contains not merely **the second table of the Decalogue, but also the first**, commanding fear of God, faith and love toward him. ¹⁷ So original righteousness was intended to involve not only a balanced physical constitution, but these gifts as well: a surer knowledge of God, fear of God, trust in God, or at least the inclination and power to do these things. ¹⁸ This the Scripture shows when it says that man was created in **the image of God and after his likeness** (Gen. 1:27). What else is this than that a wisdom and righteousness was implanted in man that would grasp God and reflect him, that is, that man received gifts like the knowledge of God, fear of God, and trust in God?

Original Sin

1) Concupiscence – inclination to do evil and 2) without the power to fear, love and trust in God above all things

Original Righteousness

1) Inclination and 2) power to fear, love and trust in God above all things [Image of God]

Apology of the Augsburg Confession IV. Justification

¹ In the fourth, fifth, and sixth articles, and later in the twentieth, they condemn us for teaching that **men do not receive the forgiveness of sins because of their own merits, but freely for Christ's sake, by faith in him.** They condemn us both for denying that men receive the forgiveness of sins because of their merits, and for affirming that men receive the forgiveness of sins by faith and by faith in Christ are justified.

Justification (Declared Righteous)

Man receives forgiveness of sins

- by grace
- through faith
- for Christ's sake
- apart from works

² In this controversy **the main doctrine of Christianity** is involved; when it is properly understood, it **illuminates and magnifies the honor of Christ** and **brings to pious consciences the abundant consolation** that they need. We therefore ask His Imperial Majesty kindly to hear us out on this important issue. ³ For since they understand neither the forgiveness of sins nor faith nor grace nor righteousness, **our opponents confuse this doctrine miserably, they obscure the glory and the blessings of Christ, and they rob pious consciences of the consolation offered them in Christ.** ⁴ To substantiate our Confession and to refute the objections of our opponents, we shall have to say a few things by way of preface so that the sources of both kinds of doctrine, the opponents' and our own, might be recognized.

Justification is the Chief/Main Doctrine

- It gives all glory to Christ
- It gives consolation to pious consciences

⁵ All Scripture should be divided into these **two chief doctrines, the law and the promises.** In some places it presents the law. In others it presents the promise of Christ; this it does either when it promises that the Messiah will come and promises forgiveness of sins, justification, and eternal life for his sake, or when, in the New Testament, the Christ who came promises forgiveness of sins, justification, and eternal life. ⁶ **By "law" in this discussion we mean the commandments of the Decalogue, wherever they appear in the Scriptures. For the present we are saying nothing about the ceremonial and civil laws of Moses.**

Two Chief Doctrines: Law and Gospel(Promises)

- By Gospel, we mean promises of forgiveness, justification, and eternal life
- By Law, we mean the Ten Commandments(Decalogue)

Diagram on

Three Classifications of Law

- 1) Divine -Revealed
- 2) Divine-written on heart
- 3) Human-or man-made

Diagram on

Three Divisions of Divine Law

- 1) civil = governmental
- 2) ceremonial = foreshadow the Christ until He comes
- 3) moral = Ten Commandments

⁷ Of these two doctrines our opponents select the law and by it they seek forgiveness of sins and justification. **For to some extent human reason naturally understands the law** since it has the same judgment naturally written in the mind. ⁸ But the Decalogue does not only require external works that reason can somehow perform. It also requires **other works far beyond the reach of reason, like true fear of God, true love of God, true prayer to God, true conviction that God hears prayer, and the expectation of God's help in death and all afflictions.** Finally, it requires obedience to God in death and all afflictions, lest we try to flee these things or turn away when God imposes them.

⁹ Here the scholastics have followed the philosophers. Thus they teach only **the righteousness of reason — that is, civil works** — and maintain that without the Holy Spirit reason can love God above all things. ...

¹⁰ Because **this view naturally flatters men, it has produced and increased many types of worship in the church**, like monastic vows and the abuses of the Mass; someone has always been making up this or that form of worship or devotion with this view in mind. ...

¹² ... But let the intelligent reader just consider this. **If this is Christian righteousness, what difference is there between philosophy and the teaching of Christ? If we merit the forgiveness of sins by these elicited acts of ours, of what use is Christ? If we can be justified by reason and its works, what need is there of Christ or of regeneration?**

¹³ ... that many people ridicule us for teaching that men ought to seek **some righteousness beyond the philosophical...**

¹⁶ So if we accept this teaching of the opponents that we merit forgiveness of sins and justification by the works of reason, there will be **no difference** between philosophical or Pharisaic righteousness and **Christian righteousness...**

Christian Righteousness (justified by grace, through faith, for Christ's sake, apart from works) **is different from the teaching of All Other Religions** (a righteousness by reason and the law)

²¹ Thus our opponents teach nothing but **the righteousness of reason or of law**, at which they look as the Jews did at **the veiled face of Moses**. In smug hypocrites, who think that they are keeping the law, they arouse presumption, a vain trust in works and a contempt for the grace of Christ. Timid consciences, on the other hand, they drive to despair because in their doubt they can never experience what faith is and how effective it is. And at last they despair utterly. ...

³¹ John 8:36 says, "If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." Therefore **reason cannot free us** from our sins or merit for us the forgiveness of sins. And in John 3:5 it is written, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, one cannot enter the kingdom of God." But if we must be born again through the Holy Spirit, then **the righteousness of reason does not justify us** before God, it does not keep the law. ³² And Rom. 3:23 says, "All fall short of the glory of God," that is, **they lack** the wisdom and righteousness of God which acknowledge and glorify him. And Rom. 8:7, 8, "The mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God." ³³ These words are so clear that they do not need an acute understanding but only attentive listening — to use the words that Augustine uses in discussing this matter.

If the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, then the flesh sins even when it performs **outward civil works**. If it cannot submit to God's law, it is certainly sinning even when it produces deeds that are excellent and praiseworthy in human eyes.

The sinful mind cannot please God by outward external works...

³⁴ Our opponents concentrate on **the commandments of the second table**, which contain the civil righteousness that reason understands. Content with this, they think they satisfy the law of God. Meanwhile they do not see **the first table, which commands us to love God, to be sure that God is wrathful at our sin, to fear him truly, and to be sure that he hears us.** But without the Holy Spirit, the human heart either despises the judgment of God in its smugness, or in the midst of punishment it flees and hates his judgment. ³⁵ **So it does not obey the first table.** It is inherent in man to despise God and to doubt his Word with its threats and promises. Therefore men really sin even when they do virtuous things without the Holy Spirit; for they do them with a wicked heart, and (Rom. 14:23) “**whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.**” Such people despise God when they do these things, as Epicurus did not believe that God cared for him or regarded or heard him.⁷ This contempt for God corrupts works that seem virtuous, for God judges the heart....

Ten Commandments

- a) Table One: 1-3 Love of God
“Fear, love and trust in God.”
- b) Table Two: 4-10 Love of man
Outward works toward man

⁴⁰ Therefore men cannot keep the law by their own strength, and they are all under sin and subject to eternal wrath and death. On this account **the law cannot free us from sin or justify us, but the promise of the forgiveness of sins and justification was given because of Christ. He was given for us to make satisfaction for the sins of the world and has been appointed as the mediator and the propitiator.** ⁴¹ **This promise is not conditional** upon our merits but offers the forgiveness of sins and justification freely. As Paul says (Rom. 11:6), “**If it is by works, it is no longer on the basis of grace.**” Elsewhere he says, “**Now, the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law**” (Rom. 3:21), that is, the forgiveness of sins is offered freely. Reconciliation does not depend upon our merits. ⁴² If the forgiveness of sins depended upon our merits and if reconciliation were by the law, it would be useless. For since we do not keep the law, it would follow that we would never obtain the promise of reconciliation. So Paul reasons in Rom. 4:14, “**If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void.**” For if the promise were conditional upon our merits and the law, which we never keep, it would follow that the promise is useless.

True Christian Righteousness
by faith is NOT conditionally
based on works.

AP. IV, PART 4: LOVE AND THE KEEPING OF THE LAW

¹²² Here our opponents urge against us the texts, “If you would enter life, keep the commandments” (Matt. 19:17), “The doers of the law will be justified” (Rom. 2:13), and many similar passages regarding the law and works. Before answering these, we must say **what we believe about love and the keeping of the law.**

¹²³ It is written in the prophet (Jer. 31:33), “I will put my law upon their hearts.” In Rom. 3:31 Paul says that faith does not overthrow but upholds the law. Christ says (Matt. 19:17), “If you would enter life, keep the commandments.” And again, “If I have not love, I am nothing” (1 Cor. 13:2). ¹²⁴ These and similar passages assert that

we should begin to keep the law ever more and more. **We are not speaking of ceremonies, but of Decalogue, the law that deals with the thoughts of the heart.** ¹²⁵ 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.**

¹²⁶ This cannot happen until, being justified and regenerated, we receive the Holy Spirit. First, it is impossible to keep the law without Christ; it is impossible to keep the law without the Holy Spirit.

¹²⁷ But the Spirit is received by faith, according to Paul’s word (Gal. 3:14), “That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” ¹²⁸ Then, too, how can the human heart love God while it knows that in his terrible wrath he is overwhelming us with temporal and eternal calamities? The law always accuses us, it always shows that God is wrathful. ¹²⁹ We cannot love God until we have grasped his mercy by faith. Only then does he become an object that can be loved.

¹³⁰ Although it is somewhat possible to do **civil works, that is, the outward works of the law**, without Christ and the Holy Spirit, **still the impulses of the heart toward God, belonging to the essence of the divine law, are impossible without the Holy Spirit**; this is evident from what we have already said. ¹³¹ But our opponents are fine theologians! They look at **the second table and political works**; about **the first table** they care nothing, as though it were irrelevant, or at best they require **only outward acts of worship**. They utterly overlook that eternal law, far beyond the senses and understanding of all creatures: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart” (Deut. 6:5). ¹³² But Christ was given so that for his sake we might receive the gift of the forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit, to bring forth in us eternal righteousness and a new and eternal life. Therefore we cannot correctly keep the law unless by faith we have received the Holy Spirit. Paul says that faith does not overthrow but upholds the law (Rom. 3:31) because the law can be kept only when the Holy Spirit is given.

Faith and the Holy Spirit produces
--a new life in our hearts
--spiritual impulses in our hearts.

After Faith and NOT before,
we begin (incipient)
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.
and we begin to love our neighbor

It is impossible
to begin to keep the Law
--without Holy Spirit, Christ, Faith
External works are somewhat possible

¹³³ In **2 Cor. 3:15-17** he states that **the veil that covered the face of Moses cannot be removed except by faith**, which receives the Holy Spirit. For this is what he says: “Yes, to this day whenever

Moses is read a veil lies over their minds; but when a man turns to the Lord the veil is removed. Now, the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.” ¹³⁴ By the “veil” Paul means **human opinion about the entire law, both the moral and the ceremonial; that is, hypocrites think that outward and civil works satisfy the law of God and that sacrifice and ritual justify before God *ex opere operato***. ¹³⁵ But this veil is removed from us, and this error taken away, when God shows us our uncleanness and the greatness of our sin. Only then do we see how far we are from keeping the law. Then we recognize how our flesh in its smugness and indifference does not fear God or truly believe in his providential care, but supposes that men are born and die by chance. Then we experience our failure to believe that God forgives and hears us. **But when we are consoled by faith through hearing the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins, we receive the Holy Spirit, so that we can think rightly about God, fear him, and believe in him.** From this it is clear that without Christ and without the Holy Spirit we cannot keep the law.

The Veil of Moses is

The human opinion that outward works satisfy the law of God.

The Israelites could not endure the full weight of the Law, but could handle a “diminished” or veiled law. Christ’s forgiveness allows us to rightly know the law’s demands.

¹³⁶ **Therefore we also hold that the keeping of the law should begin in us and increase more and more.** But we mean to include both elements, namely, the inward spiritual impulses and the outward good works. Our opponents slanderously claim that we do not require good works, **whereas we not only require them but show how they can be done....**

¹⁴⁰ We teach, furthermore, not only how the law can be kept, but also that God is pleased when we keep it — **not because we live up to it but because we are in Christ**, as we shall show a little later. **So it is clear that we require good works.** ¹⁴¹ **In fact, we add that it is impossible to separate faith from love for God, be it ever so small.** For through

Christ we come to the Father; and having received the forgiveness of sins, we become sure that we have a gracious God who cares about us, we call upon him, give thanks to him, fear and love him. So John teaches in his first epistle (4:19); “We love,” he says, “because he first loved us,” that is, because he gave his Son for us and forgave us our sins. So he indicates that faith precedes while love follows. ¹⁴² **The faith of which we are speaking, moreover, has its existence in penitence;** that is, it is conceived in the terrors of a conscience that feels God’s wrath against our sins and looks for forgiveness of sins and deliverance from sin. This faith ought to grow and be strengthened in these terrors and in other afflictions. ¹⁴³ **And so it cannot exist in those who live according to the flesh, who take pleasure in their lusts and obey them.** Therefore Paul says (Rom. 8:1), “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”

God is pleased that we “keep” the law, **because we are in Christ**, not because it is perfect or meritorious.

¹⁵⁶ We are debating about an important issue, **the honor of Christ and the source of sure and firm consolation for pious minds — whether we should put our trust in Christ or in our own works....**

¹⁷⁷ **We must conclude**, therefore, that being reconciled by faith we are accounted righteous because of Christ, not because of the law or our works. **The incipient keeping of the law pleases God because of faith**; because of faith our failure to keep it is not imputed to us, although the sight of our impurity thoroughly frightens us. ¹⁷⁸ If, then, we must seek justification elsewhere, our love and works do not justify. Far above our purity — yes, far above the law itself — should be placed **the death and satisfaction of Christ**, bestowed upon us to assure us that because of this satisfaction and not because of our keeping of the law we have a gracious God....

¹⁸⁹ **Good works should be done** because God has commanded them and in order to exercise our faith, to give testimony, and to render thanks. For these reasons good works must necessarily be done. They take place in a flesh that is partly unregenerate and hinders what the Holy Spirit

motivates, fouling it with its impurity. Because of faith they are nevertheless holy and divine works, sacrifices, and the reign of Christ, whereby he shows his rule before the world. For in these works he sanctifies hearts and suppresses the devil. And in order to keep the Gospel among men, he visibly pits the witness of the saints against the rule of the devil; in our weakness he displays his strength....

³¹⁰ **Thus 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. About this worship Christ speaks in [John 6:40](#), “[This is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life.](#)” And the Father says ([Matt. 17:5](#)), “[This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.](#)”...

³⁴⁴ Let us therefore hold to the church’s confession that we are saved through mercy.... Precisely in order to make hope sure and to distinguish between those who are saved and those who are not, we must hold that we are saved through mercy. Unless it is qualified, this statement seems absurd. In courts of human judgment a right or debt is certain, while mercy is uncertain. The judgment of God is another thing altogether. Here mercy has God’s clear and certain promise and his command. **Properly speaking, the Gospel is the command to believe that we have a gracious God because of Christ.** “[God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. He who believes in him is not condemned,](#)” etc. ([John 3:17, 18](#)). ³⁴⁶ **So whenever mercy is spoken of, faith in the promise must be added. This faith produces a sure hope, for it rests on the Word and commandment of God.** If our hope were to rest on works, then it would really be unsure since works cannot still the conscience, as we have often said above. ³⁴⁷ This faith makes the difference between those who are saved and those who are not. Faith makes the difference between the worthy and the unworthy because eternal life is promised to the justified and it is faith that justifies.

Good Works should be done

NOT because they justify, but to exercise faith and give thanks to God! Whatever is sinful in them is forgiven.

The Service & Worship

which God desires is that we receive forgiveness from God (Gospel), not present our works to Him (Law).