

SERMON – PASTOR GREG

8/10/2023

WHAT WE MUST DO. Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you like to be told what to do? Let us pray.

Genesis 1: *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."* Even after the Fall, all human beings are made in the image of God and as such all human beings have a deep, innate knowledge of God. Romans 1:21 and 2:15 tell us: *"although all people knew God they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him"* and *"the Gentiles (non- Jews) show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences are also bearing witness..."*. So the Gentiles have the law written on their hearts and so do the Jewish people but the Jewish people also have the Law of God written- first on stone then in book- as summarised in the Ten Commandments.

Do you remember the story? Living as slaves in Egypt, freed by the blood of the lambs and on the way to the Promised Land. But now a stop along the way- at Mt Sinai where God gave Moses His holy and life giving word- the way to live as God's people- the way to thrive and the way by which all people would come to know the only true and living God. We usually only think of the Ten Commandments but there were many other rules and regulations and celebrations that were given to God's people. As well as the whole sacrificial system- given so that the sins of the people might be dealt with. God's people and now God's Law. For life!

Luther understood the matter very well. His Small Catechism begins with the Ten Commandments then the Apostle's Creed then the Lord's Prayer and Baptism, Holy Communion and Absolution. To summarise: The Ten Commandments tell us WHAT WE MUST DO. The Creed tells us WHAT GOD HAS DONE. And the Lord's Prayer is OUR RESPONSE. Remember again the story of deliverance from Egypt- God could have given Moses the Ten Commandments and told him to go to the Israelites and say: DO THIS AND GOD WILL SAVE YOU but no- God heard their cry for mercy and saved them and then He gave them His good and holy will. And their response was to live holy lives just as God had declared them holy.

Most of you were baptised as infants- there God saved you and set you apart to serve Him- declaring you holy. Salvation first and then the call to respond- which many of you did when you confirmed. And how are we to respond? By keeping the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are of course summarised in the words of Jesus Christ in Matthew 22:37: *Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind...Love your neighbour as yourself.* The first three commandments deal with our relationship with God and the next seven speak of our relationships with one another.

The first three: The First Commandment: **You shall have no other gods.** *What does this mean?* We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

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.

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.

This is what we must do as the people of God. In fact, all people of all time and in every single place are called to do likewise- to trust and honour God above all things. But this is what we do not do. And so the Cross. And even we- the holy and baptised children of God fail to keep these commandments all the time- it is impossible and that is why we confess our sins and seek God's forgiveness- again and again.

God's word is holy and wonderful and life giving- to us who trust in Jesus Christ it is perfect, it revives our soul, it is worthy of our trust, it gives joy to the heart and is light to our eyes, it is more precious than much pure gold and sweeter than honey. The Law of God is wonderful because Jesus Christ has fulfilled all of it (Matthew 5:17).

Rejoice in the Lord always! Again I say it- rejoice! Amen.