

TEN COMMANDMENTS

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 take the name of the LORD your God in vain.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not use His name to curse, swear, practice witchcraft, lie, or deceive; but we should call upon His name in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

The Third Commandment

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not despise His Word and the preaching of it; but we should regard God's Word as holy and gladly hear and learn it.

The Fourth Commandment

You shall honor your father and your mother that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not despise nor anger our parents or superiors; but we should honor, serve, and obey them, and give them love and respect.

The Fifth Commandment

You shall not murder.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not hurt nor harm our neighbor's body; but we should help and be a friend to him in every bodily need.

TEN COMMANDMENTS (CONTINUED)

The Sixth Commandment

You shall not commit adultery.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we live a pure and decent life in words and actions, and that husband and wife love and honor one another.

The Seventh Commandment

You shall not steal.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not take our neighbor's money or possessions, nor get them in a dishonest way; but we should help him to improve and protect his property and way of making a living.

The Eighth Commandment

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, or say anything that might ruin his good name and reputation; but we should defend him, speak well of him, and explain all his words and actions in the best possible way.

The Ninth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not sinfully desire to get our neighbor's inheritance or house by a trick or in a way that appears to be right; but we should do everything we can to help him keep what is his.

The Tenth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his workers, nor his animals, nor anything that is your neighbor's.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not sinfully desire to use tricks or force, or do anything that might cause our neighbor to lose his wife, workers, or animals; but we should urge them to stay and do their duty.

TEN COMMANDMENTS (CONTINUED)

The Conclusion

What does God say about all of these commandments?

He says, "I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments."

What does this mean?

God threatens to punish all who do not obey these commandments. Therefore, we should fear His anger and not do anything against what He commands. God also promises grace and every blessing to those who obey these commandments. Therefore, we should love and trust Him and willingly do what He commands.

THE FIRST ARTICLE (ABOUT CREATION)

I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean?

I believe that God has created me and all creatures. He has given me my body and life, eyes, ears, and all my bodily members, my mind, and all my senses and still keeps them for me.

God also preserves me by richly and daily providing clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, spouse and children, land, animals, and all my property and all I need to support this body and life. He protects me from all danger. He guards and defends me from every evil.

God does all this because He is my good and gracious Father in heaven, not because of anything I have done to earn or deserve it. For all of this it is my duty to thank, praise, serve, and obey Him.

This is most certainly true.

THE SECOND ARTICLE (ABOUT REDEMPTION)

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there He will come to judge the living and the dead.

What does this mean?

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord.

He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and His innocent suffering and death.

He did this that I should be His very own, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in eternal righteousness, innocence, and joy; just as He is risen from death, lives and reigns in eternity.

This is most certainly true.

THE THIRD ARTICLE (ABOUT SANCTIFICATION)

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

What does this mean?

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him.

But the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified, and kept me in true faith.

In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In this Christian Church He daily and richly forgives all sins to me and all believers.

On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead and give to me and all believers in Christ eternal life.

This is most certainly true.

I. What is Baptism?

Baptism is not just plain water. It is water used by God's command and connected with God's Word.

What is that Word of God?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Matthew, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

2. What are the benefits of Baptism?

Baptism works the forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe, as the words and promises of God declare.

What are these words and promises of God?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Mark, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16).

3. How can water do such great things?

The water doesn't actually do anything by itself. The power is in God's Word, which is in and with the water, and in faith which trusts this Word of God in the water.

Without the Word of God it is just plain water, and there is no baptism. But with the Word of God it really is a baptism; that is, a gracious water of life and washing of rebirth through the Holy Spirit.

Just as Saint Paul says in the third chapter of Titus:

"According to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying . . ." (Titus 3:5-8).

4. What is the meaning of this Baptism with water?

It means that the old Adam in us should be drowned by daily contrition and repentance and die with all sins and evil desires. It also means that a new man should daily appear and arise, who lives eternally before God in righteousness and purity.

Where is this written?

Saint Paul says in the sixth chapter of Romans, "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

THE OFFICE OF THE KEYS AND CONFESSION

A. The Office of the Keys

1. What is the Office of the Keys?

The Office of the Keys is the special power Christ gave to His Church on earth to forgive the sins of penitent sinners and to retain the sins of the impenitent as long as they do not repent.

Where is this written?

The holy evangelist John writes in chapter 20: “[Jesus] breathed on [His disciples] and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained’” (John 20:22,23).

2. How does a Christian congregation use the Keys?

A Christian congregation, with its pastor, uses the keys according to Christ’s command, either by forgiving those who repent of their sins and are willing to change, or by excluding those who are obviously impenitent from the Christian congregation. These actions are as valid and certain in heaven also as if Christ our dear Lord were dealing with us Himself.

B. Confession

1. What is Confession?

There are two parts to confession. One is that we confess our sins. The other is that we receive absolution, or forgiveness, from a fellow Christian as from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly believing that our sins are forgiven in this way before our heavenly Father.

2. What sins should we confess?

Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even those we don’t know we have done, as we do in the Lord’s Prayer. However, before one another we should confess only those sins which we know and feel in our hearts.

3. How can eating and drinking do such wonderful things?

Eating and drinking actually do nothing. It is the words, "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins" which do this. These words, together with the bodily eating and drinking, are the main part of the Sacrament. Whoever believes these words has exactly what they say: forgiveness of sins.

4. When is an individual properly prepared to receive this Sacrament?

Customs in connection with eating and clothing are indeed a fine preparation. However, a person is truly worthy and well-prepared who has faith in these words, "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." Whoever does not believe these words or doubts them is unworthy and unprepared. The words, "for you," require nothing but believing hearts.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (KING JAMES VERSION)

The Address

"Our Father, who art in heaven."

What does this mean?

With these words God tenderly encourages us to believe that He is our true Father and we are His true children, so that we may ask Him boldly and with complete confidence as dear children ask their dear father.

The First Petition

"Hallowed be Thy name."

What does this mean?

God's name is certainly holy all by itself, but we pray in this petition that we also keep it holy.

How is God's name kept holy?

God's name is kept holy when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we as children of God also live a holy life according to it. Help us do this, dear heavenly Father.

But whoever teaches and lives contrary to the Word of God dishonors God's name among us. Keep us from doing this, heavenly Father.

The Second Petition

“Thy kingdom come.”

What does this mean?

God’s kingdom certainly comes all by itself, even without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it also come to us.

How does the kingdom of God come?

God’s kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and live a godly life here in time and hereafter in eternity.

The Third Petition

“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

What does this mean?

God’s good and gracious will is certainly done without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it be done among us also.

How is God’s will done?

God’s will is done when He breaks and stops every evil will and plan of those who do not want us to hallow His name or let His kingdom come, such as the will of the devil, of the world, and of our own flesh. His will is also done when He gives us strength and keeps us firm in His Word and in faith for as long as we live. This is God’s good and gracious will.

The Fourth Petition

“Give us this day our daily bread.”

What does this mean?

God gives daily bread without our asking, even to unbelievers, but we pray in this petition that He would teach us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What is meant by daily bread?

“Daily bread” means everything we need for our bodily well-being. It includes food, drink, clothes, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money and goods, a godly husband or wife, godly children, godly workers, godly and faithful leaders, good government, good weather, peace, health, education, honor, faithful friends, trustworthy neighbors – and things like that.

The Fifth Petition

“And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.”

What does this mean?

We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look on our sins or deny our prayer because of them. We are not worthy of things for which we are asking, neither have we deserved them. However, we ask that our Father would by His grace give us what we ask; even though we sin often every day and indeed deserve nothing but punishment. We, too, will from our hearts gladly forgive and do good to all those who sin against us.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (CONTINUED)

The Sixth Petition

“And lead us not into temptation.”

What does this mean?

God indeed tempts no one; but we pray in this petition that He would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our flesh do not deceive us or lead us into misbelief, hopelessness, or any other shameful or sinful acts; and, although we are tempted by them, we ask that we win in the end and keep the victory.

The Seventh Petition

“But deliver us from evil.”

What does this mean?

We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would deliver us from every evil to body and soul, property and reputation, and finally, when our last hour comes, give us a joyful end and graciously take us from this valley of sorrows to Himself in heaven.

The Doxology

“For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.”

What does “Amen” mean?

“Amen” means that I should be certain that these petitions are really heard by the Father in heaven; for He Himself has instructed us to pray in this way and promised that He will hear us. “Amen! amen!” that is, “Yes, indeed, it shall be so!”

THE LORD'S PRAYER

(New King James Version)

“Our Father in heaven. Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And do not lead us into temptation. But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

DAILY PRAYERS

How the head of the family should teach his household to pray in the morning and evening, to ask a blessing and say grace at the table.

The Morning Prayer

In the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept all harm and danger away from me last night; and I pray that You would also protect me today from sin and every evil, that my life and all my behavior may please You. Into Your hands I entrust my body and soul and everything else. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the devil may have no power over me. Amen.

The Evening Prayer

In the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me today, and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins, wherever I have done wrong, and graciously protect me tonight. Into Your hands I entrust my body and soul and everything else. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the devil may have no power over me. Amen.

To Ask a Blessing

The eyes of all look expectantly to You, O Lord, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

Psalm 145:15

Lord God, heavenly Father, bless us and these Your gifts, which we receive from Your bountiful goodness through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

To Say Grace

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good. For His mercy endures forever. Amen.

Psalm 106:1

We thank you, Lord God, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, for all Your kindness, who lives and reigns eternally. Amen.

Your Own Personal Prayer