

Pentecost 19, 2011

705 "The Man Is Ever Blessed"

*579 "The Law of God is Good and Wise"

852 "O God of Mercy, God of Might"

"The Greatest Commandment"

³⁴When the Pharisees heard that [Jesus] had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" ³⁷And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

⁴¹Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, ⁴²saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." ⁴³He said to them, "How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, ⁴⁴"The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet"? ⁴⁵If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?" ⁴⁶And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions. Matthew 22:34-46

GOD COMMANDS YOU TO KEEP HIS HOLY LAW-SUMMED UP WITH THE WORD LOVE

In a very earnest manner, as though they were most sincere in their longing after truth, their spokesman, one well versed in the Law, put the question; Which is the great commandment, the most important, the one upon which everything depends? His purpose is evident. If Jesus should select some single precept of the Law and place it above the rest, He might be accused of giving to the other commandments a correspondingly low position and denying their validity. But Christ avoids the pitfall by giving a summary of the entire Law, placing that of the first table first and that of the second table immediately beside it. The love toward God is the fulfillment of the Law. But the entire heart, the entire soul, the entire mind must be His, Deut. 6, 5. Reason and intellect, sentiment and passion, thought and will, must be given into His service. [Kretzmann]

Love Neighbor (Friends AND Enemies): 2nd Table, Commandments 4-10

Leviticus 19:15-18 ¹And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²"Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy. . .

¹⁵"You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. ¹⁶You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD.

¹⁷"You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. ¹⁸You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

Romans 13:8-10 ⁸Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if

there is any other commandment, are *all* summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love *is* the fulfillment of the law.

Matthew 5:43-48 43 " You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 "that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 "For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 "And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more *than others*? Do not even the tax collectors do so? 48 "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

James 2:8-11 8 If you really fulfill *the* royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well; 9 but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all. 11 For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

Love God: 1st Table, Commandments 1-3

Deuteronomy 6:5-9 4 " Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one! 5 "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. 6 " And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. 8 "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 "You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

"Take, then, before thee this commandment: Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and think upon that, seek after it, and try to understand it, what kind of a law it is, how far thou still art from fulfilling this commandment; yea, that thou hast not really begun to fulfill it rightly, namely, to suffer and to do from thy heart what God wants of thee. It is pure hypocrisy if one will crawl into a corner and think: Aye, I want to love God! Oh, how dearly I love God: He is my Father! Oh, how well-intentioned I feel toward Him! and similar things. Indeed, when He does according to our pleasure, we can say many such words, but when once He sends us misfortune and adversity, we no longer consider Him to be a God or a Father. A true love toward God does not act thus, but feels it in the heart and says it with the mouth: Lord God, I am Thy creature, do with me as Thou wilt, it is all the same to me; for I am Thine, that I know; and if it should be Thy will that I should die this hour or suffer some great misfortune, I should suffer it with all my heart; I shall never consider my life, honor, and goods, and whatever I have, higher and greater than Thy will, which shall be well-pleasing to me all my life." (Luther.) [Kretzmann]

YOU CANNOT KEEP THESE LAWS OF GOD—THIS IS WHY YOU NEED CHRIST

No compromise, tolerance, or partiality with God

Romans 3:19-24 19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...

Galatians 3:10-14 10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. 11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, *it is* evident: for, The just shall live by faith. 12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. 13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree: 14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

AC: XVIII. FREEDOM OF THE WILL

¹ It is also taught among us that man possesses some measure of freedom of the will which enables him to live an outwardly honorable life and to make choices among the things that reason comprehends. ² But without the grace, help, and activity of the Holy Spirit man is not capable of making himself acceptable to God, of fearing God and believing in God with his whole heart, or of expelling inborn evil lusts from his heart. ³ This is accomplished by the Holy Spirit, who is given through the Word of God, for Paul says in 1 Cor. 2:14, “Natural man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God.”

FORMULA—ORIGINAL SIN

¹¹ **3.** That original sin in human nature is not only a total lack of good in spiritual, divine things, but that at the same time it replaces the lost image of God in man with a deep, wicked, abominable, bottomless, inscrutable, and inexpressible corruption of his entire nature in all its powers, especially of the highest and foremost powers of the soul in mind, heart, and will. As a result, since the Fall man inherits an inborn wicked stamp, an interior uncleanness of the heart and evil desires and inclinations. By nature every one of us inherits from Adam a heart, sensation, and mind-set which, in its highest powers and the light of reason, is by nature diametrically opposed to God and his highest commands ^(Mt 22:36-40) and is actually enmity against God, especially in divine and spiritual matters. ¹² True, in natural and external things which are subject to reason man still possesses a measure of reason, power, and ability, although greatly weakened since the inherited malady has so poisoned and tainted them that they amount to nothing in the sight of God.

CHRIST'S FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW DOES NOT EXCUSE YOU FROM DOING GOD'S LAW, BUT MEANS THAT YOU BEGIN TO KEEP THE LAW RIGHTLY, HAVING FAITH IN CHRIST

AC: VI. [THE NEW OBEDIENCE]

¹ It is also taught among us that such faith should produce good fruits and good works and that we must do all such good works as God has commanded, but we should do them for God's sake and not place our trust in them as if thereby to merit favor before God. ² For we receive forgiveness of sin and righteousness through faith in Christ, as Christ himself says, "So you also, when you have done all that is commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy servants'" (Luke 17:10). ³ The Fathers also teach thus, for Ambrose says, "It is ordained of God that whoever believes in Christ shall be saved, and he shall have forgiveness of sins, not through works but through faith alone, without merit."