

# **Evangelical Lutheran Worship**

## **Small Catechism of Martin Luther**

### **THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**

#### **The First Commandment**

You shall have no other gods.

*What is this? or What does this mean?*

We are to fear, love, and trust God above all things.

#### **The Second Commandment**

You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God.

*What is this? or What does this mean?*

We are to fear and love God, so that we do not curse, swear, practice magic, lie, or deceive using God's name, but instead use that very name in every time of need to call on, pray to, praise, and give thanks to God.

#### **The Third Commandment**

Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy.

*What is this? or What does this mean?*

We are to fear and love God, so that we do not despise preaching or God's word, but instead keep that word holy and gladly hear and learn it.

#### **The Fourth Commandment**

Honor your father and your mother.

*What is this? or What does this mean?*

We are to fear and love God, so that we neither despise nor anger our parents and others in authority, but instead honor, serve, obey, love, and respect them.

#### **The Fifth Commandment**

You shall not murder.

*What is this? or What does this mean?*

We are to fear and love God, so that we neither endanger nor harm the lives of our neighbors, but instead help and support them in all of life's needs.

#### **The Sixth Commandment**

You shall not commit adultery.

*What is this? or What does this mean?*

We are to fear and love God, so that we lead pure and decent lives in word and deed, and each of us loves and honors his or her spouse.

### **The Seventh Commandment**

You shall not steal.

*What is this? or What does this mean?*

We are to fear and love God, so that we neither take our neighbors' money or property nor acquire them by using shoddy merchandise or crooked deals, but instead help them to improve and protect their property and income.

### **The Eighth Commandment**

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

*What is this? or What does this mean?*

We are to fear and love God, so that we do not tell lies about our neighbors, betray or slander them, or destroy their reputations. Instead we are to come to their defense, speak well of them, and interpret everything they do in the best possible light.

### **The Ninth Commandment**

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

*What is this? or What does this mean?*

We are to fear and love God, so that we do not try to trick our neighbors out of their inheritance or property or try to get it for ourselves by claiming to have a legal right to it and the like, but instead be of help and service to them in keeping what is theirs.

### **The Tenth Commandment**

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

*What is this? or What does this mean?*

We are to fear and love God, so that we do not entice, force, or steal away from our neighbors their spouses, household workers, or livestock, but instead urge them to stay and fulfill their responsibilities to our neighbors.

### **What then does God say about all these commandments?**

God says the following: "I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments."

*What is this? or What does this mean?*

God threatens to punish all who break these commandments. Therefore we are to fear his wrath and not disobey these commandments. However, God promises grace and every good thing to all those who keep these commandments. Therefore we also are to love and trust him and gladly act according to his commands.

## **THE CREED**

### **The First Article: *On Creation***

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

*What is this? or What does this mean?*

I believe that God has created me together with all that exists. God has given me and still preserves my body and soul: eyes, ears, and all limbs and senses; reason and all mental faculties. In addition, God daily and abundantly provides shoes and clothing, food and drink, house and farm, spouse and children, fields, livestock, and all property—along with all the necessities and nourishment for this body and life. God protects me against all danger and shields and preserves me from all evil. And all this is done out of pure, fatherly, and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness of mine at all! For all of this I owe it to God to thank and praise, serve and obey him. This is most certainly true.

### **The Second Article: *On Redemption***

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead [*or, "he descended into hell," another translation of this text in widespread use*]. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

*What is this? or What does this mean?*

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father in eternity, and also a true human being, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord. He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned human being. He has purchased and freed me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death. He has done all this in order that I may belong to him, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in eternal righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he is risen from the dead and lives and rules eternally. This is most certainly true.

### **The Third Article: *On Being Made Holy***

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

*What is this? or What does this mean?*

I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but instead the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy and kept me in the true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and makes holy the whole Christian church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one common, true faith. Daily in this Christian church the Holy Spirit abundantly forgives all sins—mine and those of all believers. On the last day the Holy Spirit will raise me and all the dead and will give to me and all believers in Christ eternal life. This is most certainly true.

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

### **Introduction**

Our Father in heaven.

*What is this? or What does this mean?*

With these words God wants to attract us, so that we come to believe he is truly our Father and we are truly his children, in order that we may ask him boldly and with complete confidence, just as loving children ask their loving father.

### **The First Petition**

Hallowed be your name.

*What is this? or What does this mean?*

It is true that God's name is holy in itself, but we ask in this prayer that it may also become holy in and among us.

*How does this come about?*

Whenever the word of God is taught clearly and purely and we, as God's children, also live holy lives according to it. To this end help us, dear Father in heaven! However, whoever teaches and lives otherwise than the word of God teaches, dishonors the name of God among us. Preserve us from this, heavenly Father!

### **The Second Petition**

Your kingdom come.

*What is this? or What does this mean?*

In fact, God's kingdom comes on its own without our prayer, but we ask in this prayer that it may also come to us.

*How does this come about?*

Whenever our heavenly Father gives us his Holy Spirit, so that through the Holy Spirit's grace we believe God's holy word and live godly lives here in time and hereafter in eternity.

### **The Third Petition**

Your will be done on earth as in heaven.

*What is this? or What does this mean?*

In fact, God's good and gracious will comes about without our prayer, but we ask in this prayer that it may also come about in and among us.

*How does this come about?*

Whenever God breaks and hinders every evil scheme and will—as are present in the will of the devil, the world, and our flesh—that would not allow us to hallow God's name and would prevent the coming of his kingdom, and instead whenever God strengthens us and keeps us steadfast in his word and in faith until the end of our lives. This is God's gracious and good will.

### **The Fourth Petition**

Give us today our daily bread.

*What is this? or What does this mean?*

In fact, God gives daily bread without our prayer, even to all evil people, but we ask in this prayer that God cause us to recognize what our daily bread is and to receive it with thanksgiving.

*What then does "daily bread" mean?*

Everything included in the necessities and nourishment for our bodies, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, farm, fields, livestock, money, property, an upright spouse, upright children, upright members of the household, upright and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, decency, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

### **The Fifth Petition**

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

*What is this? or What does this mean?*

We ask in this prayer that our heavenly Father would not regard our sins nor deny these petitions on their account, for we are worthy of nothing for which we ask, nor have we earned it. Instead we ask that God would give us all things by grace, for we daily sin much and indeed deserve only punishment. So, on the other hand, we, too, truly want to forgive heartily and to do good gladly to those who sin against us.

### **The Sixth Petition**

Save us from the time of trial.

*What is this? or What does this mean?*

It is true that God tempts no one, but we ask in this prayer that God would preserve and keep us, so that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great and shameful sins, and that, although we may be attacked by them, we may finally prevail and gain the victory.

### **The Seventh Petition**

And deliver us from evil.

*What is this? or What does this mean?*

We ask in this prayer, as in a summary, that our Father in heaven may deliver us from all kinds of evil—affecting body or soul, property or reputation—and at last, when our final hour comes, may grant us a blessed end and take us by grace from this valley of tears to himself in heaven.

### **Conclusion**

[For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.] Amen.

*What is this? or What does this mean?*

That I should be certain that such petitions are acceptable to and heard by our Father in heaven, for he himself commanded us to pray like this and has promised to hear us. "Amen, amen" means "Yes, yes, it is going to come about just like this."