

Confession and Absolution

579 The Law of God Is Good and Wise

- 1 The Law of God is good and wise
And sets His will before our eyes,
Shows us the way of righteousness,
And dooms to death when we transgress.
- 2 Its light of holiness imparts
The knowledge of our sinful hearts
That we may see our lost estate
And turn from sin before too late.
- 3 To those who help in Christ have found
And would in works of love abound
It shows what deeds are His delight
And should be done as good and right.
- 4 But those who scornfully disdain
God's Law shall then in sin remain;
Its terror in their ear resounds
And keeps their wickedness in bounds.
- 5 The Law is good; but since the fall
Its holiness condemns us all;
It dooms us for our sin to die
And has no pow'r to justify.
- 6 To Jesus we for refuge flee,
Who from the curse has set us free,
And humbly worship at His throne,
Saved by His grace through faith alone.

Text: Matthias Loy, 1828-1915, alt.
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Stand

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

Invocation

- P** In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Exhortation

LSB 151

- P** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
C **But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

Kneel/Stand

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

Confession of Sins

LSB 151

- P** Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.
C **Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**

Absolution*LSB 151*

- P** Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen.

*Stand***Service of the Word****Introit***Psalm 89:15–18; antiphon: v. 1*

- P** I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever; with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.
- C** **Blessèd are the people who know the festal shout, who walk, O LORD, in the light of your face,**
- P** who exult in your name all the day and in your righteousness are exalted.
- C** **For you are the glory of their strength; by your favor our horn is exalted.**
- P** For our shield belongs to the LORD, our king to the Holy One of Israel.
- C** **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**
- P** I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever; with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.

Kyrie*LSB 152*

- A** In peace let us pray to the Lord.
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- A** For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- A** For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- A** For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- A** Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.
- C** Amen.

This Is the Feast*LSB 155*

- C** **This is the feast of victory for our God.**
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us free to be people of God.
This is the feast of victory for our God.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
Power, riches, wisdom, and strength, and honor, blessing, and glory are His.
This is the feast of victory for our God.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
Sing with all the people of God, and join in the hymn of all creation:
Blessing, honor, glory, and might be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.
This is the feast of victory for our God.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
For the Lamb who was slain has begun His reign. Alleluia.
This is the feast of victory for our God.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Salutation and Collect of the Day

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Let us pray.

Almighty God, by the working of Your Holy Spirit, grant that we may gladly hear Your Word proclaimed among us and follow its directing; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Sit

Old Testament Reading

Jeremiah 28:5–9

⁵Then the prophet Jeremiah spoke to Hananiah the prophet in the presence of the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the LORD, ⁶and the prophet Jeremiah said, “Amen! May the LORD do so; may the LORD make the words that you have prophesied come true, and bring back to this place from Babylon the vessels of the house of the LORD, and all the exiles. ⁷Yet hear now this word that I speak in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people. ⁸The prophets who preceded you and me from ancient times prophesied war, famine, and pestilence against many countries and great kingdoms. ⁹As for the prophet who prophesies peace, when the word of that prophet comes to pass, then it will be known that the LORD has truly sent the prophet.”

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Epistle

Romans 7:1–13

¹Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? ²Thus a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. ³Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

⁴Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. ⁵For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. ⁶But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.

⁷What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.” ⁸But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. Apart from the law, sin lies dead. ⁹I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. ¹⁰The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. ¹¹For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. ¹²So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

¹³Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Stand

Alleluia and Verse

LSB 156

C Alleluia.

Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Holy Gospel*Matthew 10:34–42*

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the tenth chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

³⁴[Jesus said:] “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. ³⁶And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household. ³⁷Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. ³⁸And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

⁴⁰“Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. ⁴¹The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person’s reward. ⁴²And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Apostles’ Creed

C **I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And 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 sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

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.

Sit

685 Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus

- 1 Let us ever walk with Jesus,
Follow His example pure,
Through a world that would deceive us
And to sin our spirits lure.
Onward in His footsteps treading,
Pilgrims here, our home above,
Full of faith and hope and love,
Let us do the Father’s bidding.
Faithful Lord, with me abide;
I shall follow where You guide.
- 2 Let us suffer here with Jesus
And with patience bear our cross.
Joy will follow all our sadness;

- Where He is, there is no loss.
 Though today we sow no laughter,
 We shall reap celestial joy;
 All discomforts that annoy
 Shall give way to mirth hereafter.
 Jesus, here I share Your woe;
 Help me there Your joy to know.
- 3 Let us gladly die with Jesus.
 Since by death He conquered death,
 He will free us from destruction,
 Give to us immortal breath.
 Let us mortify all passion
 That would lead us into sin;
 And the grave that shuts us in
 Shall but prove the gate to heaven.
 Jesus, here with You I die,
 There to live with You on high.
- 4 Let us also live with Jesus.
 He has risen from the dead
 That to life we may awaken.
 Jesus, You are now our head.
 We are Your own living members;
 Where You live, there we shall be
 In Your presence constantly,
 Living there with You forever.
 Jesus, let me faithful be,
 Life eternal grant to me.

Text: Sigismund von Birken, 1626–81; tr. Lutheran Book of Worship, 1978, alt.

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Sermon

Grace, Mercy, and Peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

As we continue sequentially through Romans, the sermons may connect from week to week. Last week, Romans 6 focused on our redemption, our justification, our sanctification. In Baptism, we were baptized into Jesus's death and resurrection, set free to serve our Heavenly Father who calls us out of darkness into His own marvelous light. We serve God in righteousness and are made holy as He is holy. Justified by God's grace, we respond in love by serving God and our neighbor.

Romans 7 focuses on the Law and how the Law applies to the believer's life. From Confirmation Class, what are the three uses of the Law? Curb, mirror, and guide. First, the Law is a curb against gross immorality. For many years, the 10 Commandments were depicted on Courthouses across America. Even in today's "everyone does what is right in their own eyes" (Judges 21:25b) world, where evil is called good and good evil, murder is illegal. Stealing is illegal. God's Law protects lives and property, establishing boundaries for our interactions with one another. Second, the Law is a mirror to show us our sins and our need for a savior. And third, the Law is a guide, telling us how to live as children of God. Which is the greater use? Is it the curb, to keep the world from spiraling out of control into anarchy and disorder? Is it the mirror, so that we know we are sinners who fall short of the Glory of God and need the Gospel to do for us what the law and our own efforts to keep the Law cannot do? Luther's Catechisms show us our need for a savior in the Ten Commandments, then show us our savior in the Apostles' Creed, then how we are to ask our Dear Heavenly Father for our needs in the Lord's Prayer. Or is it the guide, showing us how we are to live as God's own dear children? And aren't all three good?

Yet when we interact with the Law, evil results. The Law exposes, convicts and arouses sin. The Law shows us where we have sinned. The Law shows those around us, where you and I have sinned. The Law points to how and how often we fail. The Law shows us God's intent for how life is to be lived, and we have not lived as God intended. The Law shows we have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God. But the Law offers us no hope for salvation. The Law shows us the problem without offering a solution. We are powerless to break the bonds of sin on our own. Instead, the Law drives us into despair. The Law cannot save us. Instead, we need a savior.

The Law convicts. We sin daily. Sometimes we know our sins. Sometimes our sins are known only to God. We haven't loved the Lord our God with all our hearts, minds, souls, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We place other gods before the one true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We sometimes despise God's Word. Sometimes, instead of being the foundation of our lives, our relationship with God becomes another activity, another event, a task to be attended to, to be worked into our busy lives. We stand convicted in our sin.

The Law arouses sin. Knowing what coveting is leads us to covet, to want what God has not given us, be that possessions, talents, or relationships. Too often, we focus on what we are told not to do instead of focusing on what we are to do. We focus on what we know we can't and don't have instead of focusing on what we can and do have. Instead of living as God's child, we live as a child of this world, one whose desire is to have what we want, when and how we want it. We live as we want instead of how God would have us live, loving God and our neighbor. We all know someone, and sometimes it is us, who always wants what they can't have and telling them what they can't have it makes them more desirous and determined to do or have what they shouldn't. For some, that is motivation like no other.

The Law itself is God's Will and Plan for His Creation. In and of itself it is good. But the Law was never intended to be our Lord. The Law was never intended to be our Savior. Listen carefully to Moses's words in Deuteronomy 30 ¹⁵ "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. ¹⁶ If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God^[a] that I command you today, by loving the Lord your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules,^[b] then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. ¹⁷ But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸ I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish." What comes first? Loving God, then walking in His ways and following His commandments. In response to God's Love. Not to earn God's love. Not to fulfill the Law for our own good. But in a loving response. How do the Ten Commandments begin? ² "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." (Exodus 20:2). God made the first move. God made it possible for Israel to be in relationship with Him. God made it possible for you to be in relationship with Him.

God gives us good gifts in the Ten Commandments. In the First Commandment, God gives us Himself, a loving and gracious God. In the Second Commandment, God gives us His Name, calling us into a personal relationship with Him. And so on. But when we interact with the Law, we are tempted to shape God's Law as we see fit. We bend and shape the Law to determine just how far we can go. We rationalize precise boundaries as the Jews did when they determined how many steps could be taken without violating the Sabbath. We delight in getting away with whatever we can. We sinfully attribute the Law with the power to save. But the full weight of the Law leads us to despair. Our best efforts to follow the Law perfectly fail.

The Law can't save. Only the Gospel saves. Jesus died for your sins, your known and unknown sins. For your sins of commission and omission. For the times you tried to keep the Law thinking that you could or that the Law could save you. For all the times you tried to "sneak in a sin", rationalizing and justifying your actions under the Law.

You are a baptized child of God. You died to sin in your baptism. You were baptized into Christ Jesus's death. You rose to new life. You live in righteousness as a justified child of God who grows in faith by God's Grace and the work of the Holy Spirit. You struggle with the Law, a curb against gross immorality, a mirror to show you your sin and your need for a savior, and a guide for living a Christian life. You are connected to Jesus and the Father for all eternity. The Holy Spirit keeps you in the one true faith to life everlasting, when you will be set free from the Law to love and serve God for all eternity. Amen.

And now, may the peace of God which surpasses all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.

Stand

Offertory

LSB 159

☩ What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me?

I will offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving and will call on the name of the Lord.

I will take the cup of salvation and will call on the name of the Lord.

**I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the presence of all His people,
in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.**

Stand

Prayer of the Church

In peace, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For all pastors and ministers of the Church, that they would be preserved in the pure doctrine of Christ's saving Word, defended against all adversaries, and thereby strengthened in faith and love, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For all who feel the sword of division brought about by the confession of Christ's truth, especially within their own families, that seeing as Christ also was rejected on earth by friends and relatives, they would be assured that their stand is necessary, be guarded from seeking a false or easier peace, and be turned in every earthly disappointment toward God's eternal and undivided Church Triumphant, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For homes filled with grace, that God would bring them peace and not a sword, fostering a common love and knowledge of His ways that nourishes our families in love for one another, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the authorities of our nation, that God would give them integrity and honor; and for all citizens, that God would bless them with charity and preserve them from sinful contempt of good order and godly laws, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those displaced from their homes by violence, war or persecution, that God would provide for their needs and foster in them the hope of an eternal home in Christ, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For true peace, that God would strengthen His people to hold fast to His Word in times of trouble; that He would preserve them from false messages of peace that do not remove sin; and that He would sustain them in the grace of Christ, [*especially _____*], let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

Lord God, heavenly Father, bless us in Christ, that we may bear much fruit. Receive our inadequate thanks for Your kindness, especially toward all who have died in the faith and now rest from their labors. Preserve us in the way of the Holy Spirit until we stand with them in glory; for You live and reign with the same Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

**☩ Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy 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 lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.**

Prayer

Almighty God, grant to Your Church Your Holy Spirit and the wisdom that comes down from above, that Your Word may not be bound but have free course and be preached to the joy and edifying of Christ's holy people, so that in steadfast faith we may serve You and, in the confession of Your name, abide unto the end; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Benediction

LSB 166

P The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

C Amen.

425 When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

- 1 When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.
- 2 Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
Save in the death of Christ, my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.
- 3 See, from His head, His hands, His feet
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?
- 4 Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a tribute far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all!

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748

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