

FROM LUTHER'S PRAYERS:

O dear God and Father, keep us wide awake and active, eager and diligent in your word and service. May we not be overconfident, idle, and indifferent, as though we owned all things. May the enraged devil not capture us by his treachery, nor rob us of your precious word, nor cause discord and factions among us, nor somehow lead us into spiritual and bodily sin and shame. Give us wisdom and power through your Spirit, that we may bravely withstand him and triumph over him. Amen.

FROM LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM:

The Ten Commandments:

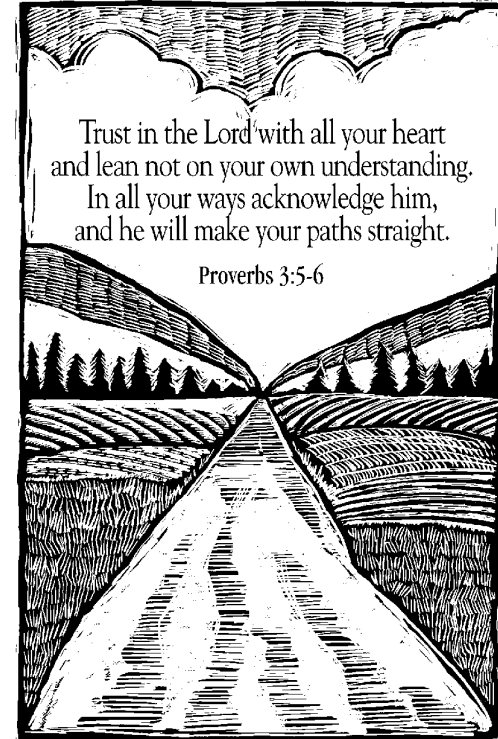
The Eighth Commandment

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

What is this?

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.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



*Lord God, use our lives to touch the world with your love.
Stir us, by your Holy Spirit, to be neighbor to those in*

*need, serving them with willing hearts, through your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord. .*

GOSPEL: Luke 10:25-37

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”²⁶ He said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?”

²⁷ He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as your self.”

²⁸ And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.”

²⁹ But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”³⁰ Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead.

³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.’

³⁶ “Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?”³⁷ He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN ?

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart . . . and thy neighbor as thyself.

Luke x. 27.

There you have the good works described all together. These we should practise towards one another as our heavenly Father has done towards us and is still doing unceasingly. You have often heard that we need no works to please God, but we need them for our neighbor. We cannot make God any more powerful or richer through our works, but we can make our neighbor stronger and richer by them. He needs them and they should be directed towards him and not to God. You have often heard this, and it is still ringing in your ears; would to God that it go into your hands and be expressed in works!

Faith is due to God alone; faith receives divine works which God alone can do, and these works of God we can receive alone through faith. Then we should be busy for our neighbor’s sake and direct our works towards him, that they may serve him.

My faith I must bring inwardly and upwards to God, but my works I must do outwardly and downwards to my neighbor.

Taken from the book:

Day by Day We Magnify Thee
by Martin Luther

Page 323