

TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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(A member of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod)

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Epiphany 4

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Sometimes we hear of people suffering from an identity crisis. Such sufferers claim they are unsure of their role in life; they don't know "who" they are. Often, such individuals form their self-image on the basis of how others view them or their personal perceived value of worth in the opinions of others.

As Christians, God has demonstrated how much value He has for us. John records the Savior's loving assurance, which even a little child can comprehend: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). In short, "Jesus loves me [and died on the cross for me] this I know for the Bible tells me so." Truly, God in Christ has made us His "new creation" that we "should no longer live for [ourselves] but for him who died for [us] and was raised again" (2 Corinthians 5:17, 15).

HYMN: Amazing Grace—How Sweet the Sound (Insert Sheet)

P: In the name of the one true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

C: O COME, LET US WORSHIP AND BOW DOWN, LET US KNEEL BEFORE THE LORD, OUR MAKER.

P: Let us examine ourselves according to God's commandments.

Confession and Absolution

P: You shall have no others gods.

C: WE SHOULD FEAR, LOVE AND TRUST IN GOD ABOVE ALL THINGS.

P: You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

C: WE SHOULD FEAR AND LOVE GOD THAT WE DO NOT USE HIS NAME TO CURSE, SWEAR, LIE OR DECEIVE, OR USE WITCHCRAFT, BUT CALL UPON GOD'S NAME IN EVERY TROUBLE, PRAY, PRAISE AND GIVE THANKS.

P: Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

C: WE SHOULD FEAR AND LOVE GOD THAT WE DO NOT DESPISE PREACHING AND HIS WORD, BUT REGARD IT AS HOLY, AND GLADLY HEAR AND LEARN IT.

P: These are the first three commandment, the First Table of God's law. By them we confess our sins, and they move us to sorrow for our wrongs against God, and they guide us as Christian to live for God who made us and saved us through His Son, Jesus.

Old Testament - Micah 6:1-8: Listen now to what the LORD is saying. Get up. Plead your case to the mountains. Let the hills hear your voice. Listen, you mountains, to the accusation from the LORD. Pay attention, you enduring foundations of the earth, because the LORD is presenting a case against his people, and he is indicting Israel. My people, what have I done to you, and how have I made you weary? Answer me! I was the one who brought you up from the land of Egypt. I redeemed you from the place where you were slaves. I sent

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Moses, Aaron, and Miriam ahead of you. My people, remember what Balak

king of Moab planned, and how Balaam son of Beor responded to him when you were about to travel from Shittim to Gilgal, so that you may acknowledge the LORD's righteous acts. With what am I to appear before the LORD? How should I bow down to God on high? Should I appear before him with burnt offerings, with one-year-old calves? Will the LORD be delighted with thousands of rams, with tens of thousands of streams of oil? Should I give my firstborn for my rebellion, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has told you, mankind, what is good. What does the LORD require from you, except to carry out justice and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God? (EHV™)

P: The Second Table of God's Law begins: "Honor your father and mother, that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

C: WE SHOULD FEAR AND LOVE GOD THAT WE DO NOT DISHONOR OR ANGER OUR PARENTS AND OTHERS IN AUTHORITY, BUT HONOR, SERVE AND OBEY THEM, AND GIVE THEM LOVE AND RESPECT.

P: You shall not murder.

C: WE SHOULD FEAR AND LOVE GOD THAT WE DO NOT HURT OR HARM OUR NEIGHBOR IN HIS BODY, BUT HELP AND BE A FRIEND TO HIM IN EVERY BODILY NEED.

P: You shall not commit adultery.

C: WE SHOULD FEAR AND LOVE GOD THAT WE LEAD A PURE AND DECENT LIFE IN WORDS AND ACTIONS, AND THAT HUSBAND AND WIFE LOVE AND HONOR EACH OTHER.

Gospel - Matthew 5:1-12: When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up onto a mountain. When he sat down, his disciples came to him. He opened his mouth and began to teach them. He said these things: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, because theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, because they will be comforted. Blessed are the gentle, because they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, because they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, because they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, because they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, because they will be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, because theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven. In fact, that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (EHV™)

P: The Second Table of God's Law continues with the Seventh Commandment: "You shall not steal."

C: WE SHOULD FEAR AND LOVE GOD THAT DO NOT TAKE OUR NEIGHBOR'S MONEY OR PROPERTY OR GET IT BY DISHONEST DEALING, BUT HELP HIM TO IMPROVE AND PROTECT HIS PROPERTY AND BUSINESS.

P: You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

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C: WE SHOULD FEAR AND LOVE GOD THAT WE DO NOT TELL LIES ABOUT OUR NEIGHBOR, BETRAY HIM, OR GIVE HIM A BAD NAME, BUT DEFEND HIM, SPEAK

WELL OF HIM AND TAKE HIS WORDS AND ACTIONS IN THE kindest possible way.

P: You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

C: WE SHOULD FEAR AND LOVE GOD THAT WE DO NOT SCHEME TO GET OUR NEIGHBOR'S INHERITANCE OR HOUSE OR OBTAIN IT BY FALSE CLAIMS, BUT DO ALL WE CAN TO HELP HIM KEEP IT.

P: You shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his workers or his animals or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

C: WE SHOULD FEAR AND LOVE GOD THAT WE DO NOT FORCE OR ENTICE AWAY FROM OUR NEIGHBOR HIS WIFE, WORKERS OR ANIMALS, BUT URGE THEM TO STAY AND DO THEIR DUTY.

P: And who is our neighbor?

C: AS WE HAVE OPPORTUNITY, LET US DO GOOD TO ALL PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY TO THOSE WHO BELONG TO THE FAMILY OF BELIEVERS.

P: Having compared our lives with the perfect standard of God's Law, what must we confess?

ALL: I, A POOR SINNER, CONFESS TO GOD THAT I AM GUILTY OF MANY SINS. I HAVE SINNED IN THOUGHTS, WORDS AND ACTIONS. I AM TRULY SORRY FOR MY SINS, AND ASK FOR MERCY FOR JESUS' SAKE. O, HOLY SPIRIT, HELP ME TO CHANGE MY SINFUL LIFE.

P: Having heard your confession, and by the command of the Lord Jesus Christ, who have His life to pay for all sin, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

HYMN: #385, What a Friend We Have in Jesus

SERMON TEXT & THEME "KEEP PRESSING ON TOWARD THE GOAL

Philippians 3:12-21: Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus also took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it yet, but there is one thing I do: Forgetting the things that are behind and straining toward the things that are ahead, I press on toward the goal, for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, let all of us who are mature continue to think this way. And if you think differently about anything, God will reveal this to you too. Only let us think the same thing and walk in line with what we already have attained. Brothers join together in imitating me and in paying attention to those who are walking according to the pattern we gave you. To be sure, many walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. I told you about them often, and now I am saying it while weeping. Their end is destruction, their god is their appetite, and their glory is in their shame. They are thinking only about earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. We are eagerly waiting for a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. By the power that enables him to subject all things to himself, he will transform our humble bodies to be like his glorious body. (EHV™)

OFFERING, LORD'S PRAYER AND BENEDICTION

HYMN: How Great Thou Art (Insert Sheet)

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