



Pause. Listen. Act. be You.

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MONDAY 6.12.22

Law and Gospel

Scripture: Exodus 19:1-6, 20:1-2

There are three major ways of dividing and numbering the Ten Commandments. Depending on whether you are Jewish, Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, or “other”, you might have a different understanding of what is counted as the first three commandments or the last two. Maybe this should remind us the point of the ten commandments is not necessarily to create strict rules as the only ten rules you need to follow, but to establish the values of a faithful person – one who loves God and loves their neighbor as themselves. Sound familiar?

- Do you think our motivation matters more than the details of our behavior? Why?
- God first establishes the importance of relationship, then gives the rules. In your day-to-day, which would you consider primary?

Prayer: Life-giving God, heal our lives, that we may acknowledge your wonderful deeds and offer you thanks from generation to generation through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

TUESDAY 6.13.22

Live like you are dying

Scripture: Psalm 116:1-2

Psalm 116 does not follow the “traditional” order of elements in thanksgiving psalms, where we typically hear a narration of the poet’s crisis before learning about the deliverance or share in the act of thanksgiving. It’s theme word is “Death”. the Israelite acknowledgment of death’s reality meant that they “set maximum value upon the God-given resources of this life, and so upon God himself.” – *from James K. Mead’s commentary on Psalm 116*

- Tim McGraw urges us to “live like you are dying.” Do you do that in your life? What would be the benefits? How might that be a problem?

Prayer: Faith giving God, help us remember we are valuable and important, even when the world tells us we are not. Enable to act out of security in your love, not the insecurity of our own vulnerability. Amen.

WEDNESDAY 6.14.22

Communion of Saints

Scripture: Psalm 116:12-19

This Psalm is read during Passover and on Maundy Thursday as a prayer of one person in a gathered worshipping community. It expresses the unity of the church, beyond the finite time and space of the here and now. It invites us to practice gratitude when we are in groups.

- When you are with your friends, do you spend more time complaining or rejoicing?
- The Psalmist is offering testimony of their answered prayers. What would be your testimony?

Prayer: God of all who wander in the wilderness, you go before us as beacon and guide. Lead us through all danger, sustain us through all desolation, and bring us home to the land you have prepared for us. Amen.

THURSDAY 6.15.22

Gift of Hope

Scripture: Romans 5:1-8

In his splendid book, *Standing on the Promises*, Lewis Smedes reminds us that our souls need hope the way our lungs need oxygen. Because we are temporal creatures who are forever moving into an unknown future, we need hope to keep us moving lest we become stuck, struck dumb with a paralyzing fear of the future. Hope is God's gift to us in this broken world—it keeps us moving.

- Hope seems in pretty short supply these days. Where do you find hope?
- What causes you worry today?

Prayer: Redeeming Sustainer, visit your people and pour out your strength and courage upon us, that we may hurry to make you welcome not only in our concern for others, but by serving them generously and faithfully in your name. Amen.

FRIDAY 6.16.22

Acts of God

Scripture: Matthew 9:35-38

Jesus' ministry is one of healing. In fact, Jesus spends more time healing than almost anything else in the gospel story. When Jesus sent out the twelve, he sent them out to heal and offer acts of compassion. I'm sure they didn't believe they could perform miracles like Jesus, but what if Jesus had simply told them to go out and be kind? Maybe then they wouldn't have been so scared to do it!

- Why do you think Jesus spent so much time healing? What does it say about who God is?
- Anna Carter Florence asks, "Do you think if we used different language for the tasks of ministry, the tasks of discipleship, that we would actually be empowered to do them?"

Prayer: Lord, sometimes we think we cannot do what is needed on our own. We studied for a test, but fear we don't know all the answers. We did not study and know we don't know the answers. We have been assigned a task we fear we cannot do. We are tempted to cheat or plagiarize. When we are scared, help us not to be tempted by the whispers of sin. Amen. - Prayer by Carolyn Brown

SATURDAY 6.17.22

Law and Order

Scripture: Matthew 10:1-8

Many churches, and many people, like having a rule for every action or direct instructions from God telling us how to respond in every situation. Jesus wasn't a rule person. In fact, the Pharisees and Sadducees main complaint about Jesus was how he kept breaking the rules about who you could talk to in the streets and when you could do certain things.

- How does our search for instructions detract from the values God tells us are important?
- In Matthew's gospel is more direct about its guidance to the young church. What do you think Matthew is saying to us about what the church should be?

Prayer: God of the unexpected, help us to see you in the uncertain of the not-quite-directed moments of our lives.