



10 Commandments

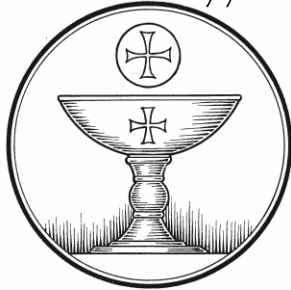


Apostles Creed



Holy Baptism

Lord's Supper



Keys & Confession



Lord's Prayer



Confirmation Essays

**St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church
Class of 2020**

The Bible Is God's True Word

By Ethan Peterson

The Bible is God's True Word. That's a pretty big statement but we teach it because the Bible clearly says: men wrote the words as God gave them. That means the Bible has no errors and no unkept promises.

First, the Bible was written by men through the works of the Lord. Men through God wrote as it says in 2nd Timothy 3:16, "*All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking correcting, and training in righteousness.*" By faith, I know that men wrote the Bible as God gave it to them. This is called verbal inspiration. God gave the writers the exact words He wanted them to record for us.

Which leads me to my next point, the Bible has no errors because God made it and He is holy and perfect. John 10:35 says, "*scripture can't be broken.*" In other words, all of God's word is true. By faith, I know that the Bible has no errors, because if there were any, God's Word would contain a lie. Something God and therefore His Word cannot do.

Finally, my third point, if the Bible doesn't contain any errors then everything it says is true. The Bible says in John 17:17, "*Sanctify them by the truth your word is truth.*" God keeps all of His promises so His Word also keeps its promises. That is incredibly important because God promises that Jesus' life, death, and resurrection have earned us eternal life with Him in Heaven and that all this has been given us through faith.

In conclusion, The Bible tells me exactly what it is, God's true word. For that reason, I know and feel in my heart that the Bible is God's true Word, the basis of my faith, and proof that I am a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ.



Modern Society's False Gods

By Grace Abraham

Though we as Christians know there is only one true God, the world around us seems to point out other false gods. Through His Word, God warns us about these false gods and tells us to stay away from them. As the world changes so do the things within it, and false gods become more modern. We could be falling into the trap of a false god without even noticing it. So, what are the modern day's false gods and how does God warn us about them through His Word.

In the First Commandment, God clearly points out that we shall have no other Gods than Him. However, there are many teachings that would seek to change God or who He is. Matthew 7:15 states, "*Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in Sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.*" Through this commandment, we learn that a false god can be hidden, and we may not know that we are worshipping them. Some will even claim to be Christs, one of His prophets, or even to have better knowledge than what we have learned from the Bible. Matthew 24:24 says, "*For false christs and false prophets will arise and preform great signs and wonders so as to lead astray, if possible, even elect.*" Matthew explains how false prophets can do wonderful things and can pull you into a very deadly trap. There is only one Jesus and God's Word is the source that tells us about Him. Anything that departs from that is a wolf in sheep's clothing.

As we learn about false gods, we may think the First Commandment is easy to keep. However, simply putting a person or object above God puts you at risk for breaking the First Commandment. If listing what's most important to least important in your life, God should always come first, nothing like money or a fancy sports car. It's very easy to put an earthly object above God and His Word. We can even worship people. Yes, God should be more important than a famous singer or a movie star but He is also more important than friends or even family. Jeremiah 17:5 tells us, "*Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD.*"

So, how does God tell us to avoid these false prophets? Isaiah 45:5 reads, "*I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God, I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me.*" As we read God's Word, we realize that He simply points out that He is the one and true God, and we should trust in Him. Another passage that shows us this is 1 Corinthians 8:6, "*Yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.*" So, instead of putting our trust in money, items or other people, God says to love and trust in Him with all our heart, which will keep us away from false prophets. God's Word repeatedly points this out so we will listen to His message and stay true to Him. Of course, our greatest reason is His love shown to us. John 17:3 says, "*And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*"

In total, our modern-day society tempts us with many idols, and we may not even realize when we are breaking the First Commandment. God's Word tells us over and over again that He is the only true God. As we trust in Him, all other false prophets fade away. John 14:6 says, "*Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*" Love, trust, and fear in God and modern society's false gods will matter nothing to you.

Why Is Church Important for the Christian

By Logan Gudex

Why should we go to church? God inspired David to write, *I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD (Psalm 122:1)."* God obviously wants us to rejoice, or be glad, as we go to His house. He also says that we should *"not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching"*, in Hebrews 10:25. Again, it's pretty clear that God wants us to seek out more opportunities to spend time together in the Word rather than less.

God wants us to go to church for three major reasons: that we might grow together in the faith as we study God's Word, young and old, gathered in the family of believers, that we might encourage one another as we worship and pray together, and that we might then work together to share the gospel in the world around us.

How is our faith strengthened? The Holy Spirit strengthens our faith through the means of grace (the Gospel in Word and Sacraments). Paul tells the Romans *"faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the Word of Christ (Romans 10:17)."* We should strive to come into contact with God's Word at least weekly as we go to church, but all the more as we worship at home, read the Bible, and many other ways. No wonder God says in the third commandment to *"Remember the sabbath day by keeping it holy (Exodus 20:8)."* As we do all of this we are encouraged and strengthened.

But why will we want to preach the good news? Jesus commands everyone to go and preach his word at the end of Mark, *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. ¹⁶ Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned (Mark 16:15-16)."* We don't want people to be condemned but rather saved and so each generation passes the disciples pass on the torch to the next and we all work together to go and preach the good news.

These are just the big reasons we will want to attend church often. There are tons of other reasons too, including seeing friends, forming relationships with one another, socializing and the list could go on and on. None however are more important than gathering around the means of grace: God's pure Word and Sacraments and then holding it out in our communities and world. May we always thank God that we all have the ability to come here and worship together weekly.



St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran

Church • School • Preschool

God Wants Us to Honor Our Authorities

By Lara Mueller

In the Fourth Commandment, God tells us to “*Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you* (Exodus 20:12).” In this commandment we study how God wants us to honor our authorities and all others that watch over us. God actually writes many things about us honoring our authorities. God gives authorities to us to bless us in many ways, for example, to teach or to discipline us.

God says in Hebrews 13:7,17, “*Remember your leaders, who spoke for the Word of God to you... They keep watch over you as those who must give an account.*” God want us to honor our authorities because He gave them to us as people who help us either physical, like our governments, or spiritually, like our church, which holds God’s Word in front of us. It’s all included in the office of parent which actually has the responsibility of caring for both the physical and spiritual wellbeing of the child.

But how can we honor them? We can obey all people who have authority. God wants us to listen and do as they say. We should honor them by serving them and obeying them in love and respect. In Romans 13:1-3, it states. “*Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. ³ For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended.*”

We should strive to listen and do as they say unless they ask us to sin against God’s Word. When the Jewish leaders told Peter and the other Apostles they had to stop talking about Jesus, their answer was clear, “*We must obey God rather than human beings* (Acts 5:29)!” This is really the only time God tells us to willfully disobey our authorities but even here we do so with love and respect.

There are many ways God wants us to obey our authorities and through them, Him as well. As we do so God gives us another way to show our faith by obeying Him and the guardians He has placed over us.



Human Life Is a Precious Gift to Protect

By Benson Nebl

Human life is a precious gift to protect. That's because it's the time God has given to us and all others to learn about what He has done for us. Therefore, God's gift of life should be used in ways to serve and praise him.

The life God has given to you is a time for you to come to faith in Him in order that you would live eternally as it says in 1 Timothy 2:3-4 *"This is good and pleases God our savior who wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."* God wants everyone to be saved and that happens as He gives His gift of faith through His means of grace. We call this the "time of grace". The time when we have the opportunity to learn about God's love for us and about all the blessings He has promised to all who believe.

The Lord God created us that we might know His grace and spread the Word of Christ to all the world. It says in Mark 16:15, *"He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.'" God allows us to remain in this world after we have been given the gift of faith that we might tell others about Him, whether in word or in deed. Remember He wants everyone to be saved and so He allows us to be a part of that work.*

For that reason, ending a person's life is not what God wants us to do. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 reminds us, *"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body."* So, our bodies are really not ours. They belong to God and He wants you protect His gift of life both for us and for others. Ending any life, young or old, is something that God takes very seriously. It is to be his decision and not our own.

Just remember none of you would be here today, if God had not given you His gift of life. That alone should be enough for us to treat this gift with respect and use it the way God asks us to but He has also saved us giving up His own life for ours. That is a message worth proclaiming to all as God gives us opportunity throughout our times of grace.

Using Earthly Possessions in a God Pleasing Way

By Austin Grassel

God has blessed us with many possessions. As it is written in James 1:17, *"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."* But what are these possessions and how does God want us to use them?

Martin Luther recalls all God blesses us with in the explanation of the 1st Article of the Apostles' Creed: I believe God still preserves me by richly and daily providing clothing and shoes, food and drink, property and home, spouse and children, land, cattle, and all I own, and all I need to keep my body and life.

God wants us to use these possessions in ways that please him. Paul tells the Corinthians, *Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful* (1 Corinthians 4:2). Some of these ways are providing for our families (1 Timothy 5:8), giving to the needy (1 John 3:17), being content with what we have (1 Timothy 6:6-8), giving to the church (1 Corinthians 16:2), and so much more.

God has been very good to His creation and has provided for our every need. Therefore, we want to use these possessions in the ways God asks us to. And our motivation to do it all is God's love through Christ. *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich* (2 Corinthians 8:9).

The Human Tongue: A Tool for Good and Evil

By Ella Morenzien

When asked what our most prized possession is, you might think your family, or maybe even money. But when God answers this question for us, he says a good name. He's right, our good name can mean everything.

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. Though that's what the Eighth Commandment says, we've all done it. We've whispered something under our breath or said something that we weren't supposed to that harmed another. Many don't think the things we say in private, or even in public for that matter, are a big deal. However, people will look back on the things that you say and do, whether they are good or bad, and these things will affect for the way others think about you.

God doesn't want us to ruin our good name or the good name of others, and we do that by spreading gossip or saying anything to give someone a bad name or make them look bad. IN fact, Proverbs 19:5 tells us, *"A false witness will not go unpunished, and whoever pours out lies will not go free."* We sin when we betray a person's confidence or tell lies about them. That's not what we want to be remembered for. It can ruin our reputation as well if try to give false testimony, or break someone's trust.

When you come to these people who talk badly, *"Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. For, 'Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech (1 Peter 3:9-10).'"* God wants us to be a blessing to others and their reputations. Instead of tearing others down, we will speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves.

God loves us and is able to forgive us of the sins that we do. *Love is not easily angered, and keeps no record of wrongs. ... It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always preserves (1 Corinthians 13:5-7).* While we struggle to do this throughout the day, Jesus was perfect for us. Knowing that He could forgive us for the wicked things we did helps us live as He directs us, *if your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them (Luke 17:3).* Yes, God would urge us to continue loving them. *But if your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over (Matthew 18:15).* So as we reflect he love that was shown to us, when given the choice, do not harm instead, help.



The Bible's Two Main Doctrines

By Adelyn Kemnitz

Martin Luther tells us in the Small Catechism that many people have lost their faith due to not understanding both Law and Gospel and not knowing its purpose. Law and Gospel are the two main doctrines or teachings of the Bible. Let's talk about Law and Gospel to get a better understanding.

What is Law? The chief purpose of the Law is to show us our sin so that we see our need for our Savior. It does this by showing us how we deserve eternal death because of sin. Isaiah does this by showing us how sin has affected our relationship with God? In Isaiah 59:2 we hear "*your iniquities have separated you from you God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.*" Law separates us from God. No one, unless you can be completely perfect, can earn anything from God. Luckily, there is the second main teaching of the Bible, and that is the Gospel.

What is Gospel? The Gospel shows us our Savior. Our Savior, Jesus, died on the cross so He could save us from our sins. As Paul says in Romans 4: 25 "*Jesus our Lord was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.*" On the cross, Jesus took His perfection and gave it to us so that we could say He had fulfilled the Law for us. There, Jesus also took our sins and put them on Himself. He dies as the perfect payment for all our sins committed under the law. That is known as the Great Exchange. And because of what Jesus did for us, God sees Jesus' perfection on us and welcomes us with open arms into heaven.

It's important to understand both Law and Gospel and their distinct purposes. I hope if you find someone who doesn't understand Law and Gospel, you can explain it to them because "*this is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth* (1 Timothy 2: 3,4)."

Why Can I Be Confident that Heaven Is Mine?

By Lauren Stettbacher

I can be confident that Heaven is mine because I have faith in Jesus Christ and God reassures me of my eternal life through the Scriptures.

I am confident of my eternal life in Heaven because *God loved me so much that he sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for me* (John 3:16). Jesus lived, died on the cross and then rose from the dead to take the punishment that I deserve for my sins. God gives us faith as well that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and His resurrection from the dead served as forgiveness for my sins. God's Son makes us His own. "*You did not choose me, but I chose you.*" (John 15:16)

I am also confident that Heaven is mine because I am a child of God through my faith. Faith in Jesus Christ is the key to going to Heaven. "*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith.*" (Ephesians 2:8-9) Through faith, God connects us to Christ and all he did. By placing my faith in Jesus Christ and what He did for me, I know that I will receive the promise of eternal life in Heaven.

What My Baptism Means to Me?

By Olivia Haack

Jesus commanded, *“Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).”* Baptism isn’t something that God just suggests we do, He commands us to do it. God does this because He wants us all to be with Him in His heavenly kingdom someday.

By nature, sin controlled us. *“Surely, I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me (Psalm 51:15),”* David laments. Baptism breaks that control. Baptism does this because the Holy Spirit uses it to give us true faith in our Savior Jesus Christ. So really, Baptism isn’t something we do. It’s something God does for us.

“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned (Mark 16:16).” Baptism comes with many blessings. Because of our baptism we are connected to Jesus through faith, and we receive all of the blessings He earned for us: forgiveness of sins, a new life we can live for Him each day, and Eternal life when our time has come to leave the earth.

It is also a comfort for us to know that we are baptized. Without baptism and the saving faith God gives through it, we would all go to hell when we die. We are not perfect and do not deserve this love. *“He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ, our Savior, so that having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life (Titus 3:5-7).”* It is through Baptism that our sinful selves can be drowned daily in repentance and arise in the gift of forgiveness. Paul told the Romans, *“We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³ Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life (Romans 6:2-4).* Because of the work of Christ, to which we are connected in baptism, sin no longer controls us. We can live new lives before God.



Why I'm Looking Forward to Holy Communion

By Kaitlyn Kampman

After we are confirmed, all of us get to take part in Holy Communion. Communion is something that I am looking forward to. But, why is it such an exciting opportunity? The two main reasons I am excited for communion are what it is, and the blessings it offers.

Communion is not just bread and wine, but it is also Jesus' body and blood. Martin Luther wrote, "It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ for us Christians to eat and to drink (Small Catechism: The Institution of the Lord's Supper)." That means that not only am I eating and drinking bread and wine, but also miraculously receive Jesus' precious body and blood, which He willingly gave up for me. It is a great comfort to be reminded of God's great love for us, and that Communion is an instrument to strengthen faith. 1 Corinthians 10:16 gives us a reminder of what communion is. "*Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?*" Jesus also said in Matthew 26, "*Take and eat this is my body (Matthew 26:26)*" and "*Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:27,28).*"

The blessings that communion offers are also a great comfort. Every time communion is taken, I actually receive the forgiveness of sins. I also receive the gift of new life and salvation through Christ Jesus our LORD. In the account of the first communion in Matthew 26:28, Jesus says, "*this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins.*" Again, this reminds us of the fact that in communion we receive the actual body and blood of our Savior even as we are reminded of the sacrifice that body and blood of Christ made on the cross. Luther lovingly reminds us of not only the gifts we receive but also how we receive them in communion. He says, "What blessing do we receive through this eating and drinking? That is shown to us by these words: "Given" and "poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins" Through these words we receive forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation in this sacrament. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation" Second Communion.

All in all, communion is a precious gift for all believers. This sacrament not only is the miracle of body and blood with the bread and wine, but also offers the many blessings that we as sinners need every day.



Why Is It Important to Know and Share What We Believe?

By Jenna Krupp

It is important to know and share what we believe because knowing God's Word will Not only will strengthen our faith, which will keep us in the faith, but it will also give us confidence to share our faith and the message of Christ with other believers and non-believers.

Romans 10:17 tells us *"Faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the Word of Christ."* As we go to church, and hear the message from other Christians, and read our Bibles, the Holy Spirit strengthens our faith in God's promise to bring us to Heaven. If we know God's Word well, we are more confident in what we believe. When you know something well, it is also easier to live your life the way God says is good for each and every one of us. If we are confident in what we know and believe it is easier to share it with others. When we share God's promise with others, the Holy Spirit goes to work in their hearts and helps more come to faith.

Matthew 28:19-20 says, *"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."* We can share God's Word and the message of Jesus with others to help them learn that He has saved us from our sins and the Holy Spirit will work through God's Word which we share to bring them to faith.

Romans 10:14 says, *"How then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?"* If we share what we believe with our children and other loved ones it will get passed on from generation to generation. When the word gets spread from generation to generation, we can be glad, and thank God for bringing our families to be with us in heaven. It is also good to share our faith with people of the same faith. Then they can share the Word with us as we share it with them so we can stay strong in our faith and also strengthen their faith too. As we do all of this, God will let us see other people's perspectives helping us to grow in our knowledge of His Word and even have fun sharing it with them.

I have been blessed with faith through hearing God's Word throughout my life from my family and church and school. I have learned and studied God's Word and my faith has been strengthened which will help keep me in the faith. It also allows me to share it with others so God's word can be spread throughout generations to come.

