

In the **HOUSE** *of the* **LORD**

LESSON #4 – HOMEWORK



Background on The Word

There are two high points – two mountains – in the worship service. They are the Word and the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Everything we do in our worship leads to these great mountains where God speaks to us in His Word and He comes to us personally in His Sacrament.

The First Lesson is usually a Scripture reading from the Old Testament. We hear the history of God working in the lives of His Old Testament children. Or we hear a portion of prophecy that points to Christ and the Christian Church. Or we hear a portion of poetry or wisdom.

At the end of the First and Second Lessons, the pastor says, “This is the Word of the Lord.” This sentence very simply, but very importantly, carries the message that these are not the words of humans, but the very words of God.

The Psalm of the Day serves as a response to the First Lesson. The Psalms are the hymnal of the Old Testament and are now usually sung within our churches.

The Second Lesson is from one of the New Testament letters or epistles of Paul or another apostle. Epistle means “letter.” The Epistles are letters sent by an apostle to an individual or a congregation. The Epistles stress Christian faith and Christian living as a response to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. At the end of the lesson, the pastor again says, “This is the Word of the Lord.”

The Verse of the Day is a single Bible verse that carries the theme for the worship service. The Verse of the Day serves as a bridge between the Second Lesson and the Gospel.

The Gospel is the account of Jesus’ life, words and works. Though the congregation remains seated for the Psalm and the other Scripture lessons, they stand out of respect for the words of Jesus contained in the Gospel. In the past, soldiers put down their weapons and kings removed their crowns when the Gospel was read. The faithful have waited for this moment, this particular Scripture reading. They stand in reverence.

After the Gospel lesson, the pastor announces, “This is the Gospel of the Lord.” The congregation, refreshed spiritually by the Gospel, responds in praise and joyful acclamation, “Praise be to you, O Christ.”

There may not be many Lutheran churches who use a Children’s Devotion as part of their weekly worship service. The Children’s Devotion is not a historical portion of the Divine Service. However, it allows children to understand that God’s Word is for them also.

The Hymn of the Day, more than any of the other hymns that are sung that day in worship, carries the theme of the Scripture readings and worship service.

In the Sermon, the pastor explains and applies one of the Scripture lessons for his people. He is God’s mouth for the congregation. Though it is the pastor’s voice you hear, it is really the voice of God speaking through His chosen servant. The pastor applies both Law and Gospel to God’s people in the sermon.

Digging Deeper

Let's examine the Scriptures to see why it is so important that we make constant and consistent use of them for our spiritual growth.

Read Luke 10:38-42. What is the one thing that is needed?

Read Psalm 27:4. Where is this one needful thing offered on a regular basis?

Read Matthew 13:1-9 and 13:18-23. What is the point that Jesus is teaching in this parable?

Read John 15:1-11. The vine is an ancient symbol of the Christian's relationship to Christ. How do we stay connected to Christ, who is the Vine of our Christian faith?

Read Matthew 19:13-15. Why is it important that little children be instructed in God's Word?

Read Psalm 119. This psalm is structured on the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The psalm's length presents God's Word like a diamond with 22 facets, each displaying a distinct light. By examining every letter of the alphabet, the psalmist demonstrates how God's Word commands every part of language and life. Is God's Word as important to you as it is to the psalmist?

Suggestions on getting more acquainted with your Bible.

- Use a fitting translation. Pick one and stick with it. The use of one specific Bible all the time can help in remembering where passages are located.
- Set aside a specific, quiet time each day for Bible study.
- Begin with a prayer asking the Holy Spirit for guidance. Close with prayer concerning the truths you learned.
- Focus – Ask, “What is God teaching me about himself. What does God want me to do?”
- Meditate on God's Word throughout the day. (Memorization is indispensable!)
- Study the Bible by books. (Good starters – Genesis, John, Acts, Romans, Galatians). Don't be afraid to skip around.
- Sometimes read long sections quickly to get the big picture. Sometimes read short sections and think them through more carefully.
- Mark your Bible! Use a pen/highlighter to mark key verses. Write in the margins any ideas and/or insights which you have.
- Just keep reading!

The Bible proclaims about itself: “For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21). Since the Bible is the Word of God, it is vitally important that we keep reading and studying God’s Word.

Daily Bible Reading: Matthew 23-28

Memorize the following passage: John 20:31 *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

Digging Even Deeper

We study and follow the Ten Commandments because they still summarize God’s law very well. Each commandment logically flows into the next. Each commandment defends a certain gift of God. For further study on the law, read Luther’s Large Catechism concerning the Ten Commandments and Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). For our study, you will find Martin Luther’s summary explanation following each commandment, as contained in Luther’s Small Catechism.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT: You shall have no other gods.

What does this mean?

We should fear, love and trust in God above all things.

This commandment defends God’s glory.

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT: You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not use his name to curse, swear, lie or deceive, or use it superstitiously, but call upon God’s name in every trouble, pray, praise and give thanks.

This commandment defends God’s name.

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT: Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

What does this mean?

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.

This commandment defends God’s Word.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT: Honor your father and mother, that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.

What does this mean?

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.

This commandment defends God’s representatives (family, church, society).

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT: You shall not murder.

What does this mean?

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.

This commandment defends God's gift of life.

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT: You shall not commit adultery.

What does this mean?

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.

This commandment defends God's gift of sexual purity.

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT: You shall not steal.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we 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.

This commandment defends God's gift of possessions.

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT: You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

What does this mean?

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.

This commandment defends God's gift of a good reputation.

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT: You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

What does this mean?

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.

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

What does this mean?

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.

These last two commandments defend God's gift of contentment and pure desires.