

Large Catechism Lesson 5
Part 1: The Second Commandment

Opening Discussion

The Large Catechism discussion of the 1st Commandment revealed the 1st Commandment as preeminent among the other commandments. Everything comes back to, "You shall have no other gods." Why then do we need commandments 2-10 if the 1st covers them all?

The 2nd Commandment

¶49-52

-What is entailed in the Second Commandment?

¶53-58

-What are the two ways the Divine Name is misused?

1)

2)

-Dressing one's self with God's name

-How does the single lie become the double lie?

Excursus: Woodcuts in the Small Catechism

You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks. (Small Catechism)

-Read Leviticus 24:10-23

-Why would Luther pick this story for his Small Catechism?

¶59-64

-What is our "beautiful" virtue?

"It is still a great mercy that the earth bears and supports us" [I.60].

-Summary of the second commandment

a)

b)

c)

-What petition of the Lord's Prayer lies behind the commandment?

-The commandment seems to include more than just "OMG" sort of talk.

-Why is the commandment concerned with what we say about God's Word?

-Why is the commandment concerned not just with what we say but about our actions?

Excursus: The Fragility of Life | Our Desire for Control

Life was very fragile in Luther's day.

-Everything that happened had a supernatural cause

- Human desire to have control over one's life
- Pursuit of controlling the supernatural
 - Book of curses to discourage thievery
 - Beggar's curse

How fragile is life today?

- What are ways we pursue some sort of control over the supernatural – the divine?

¶65-70

- Especially in light of biblical examples, how does Luther address the topic of 'swearing' (taking oaths)?

Excursus: A sinful world is a sinful world.

"This is clear even now. The world is worse than it has ever been, and there is no government, no obedience, no loyalty, no faith, but only daring, unbridled people" [I. 69].

- Does it sound like Luther is speaking of today?
- I think this view of Luther's world is helpful in the face of talk that the world is getting worse.
 - The world is just as sinful as it has always been.
 - Tempers nostalgia
 - But do not downplay the great tragedy and evil that we witness and experience today.

¶71-77

- God's holy name must not be wielded about wantonly.
- God's holy name must always be in our mouths.
 - How do you navigate the distinction?
 - Ballplayer who crosses himself before coming to the plate
 - Using God like as a 911 god (Moralistic Therapeutic Deism) vs. the Psalms?
 - In prayer, faith trusts, "If it be your will."
 - Faith cannot force God like an incantation.
 - "God be praised" [I.74].*

-In ¶69 Luther says the God's wrath and punishment are displayed through the face of how terrible the world is. How can he make this move?

- First clear dig at monasticism (¶74)

Closing Discussion: The role of Habit in teaching children

- What is habituation? Any synonyms?
- The Large Catechism was written to instruct those who will instruct.
- How does Luther see instruction carried out? How do you carry it out?
 - Teaching

-Action

-lex orandi lex credendi