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"If you want Peace, seek Justice for all

Walk in Righteousness, depending on the Love and Spirit of Christ, as His servant forever"

February 26, 2015

Dear Friends in Christ,

I have known some who refuse ever to make a promise and refuse to trust anyone's promise to them. They have experienced bad things from broken promises. Keeping promises can be very costly. We all know of people who have paid a heavy price for keeping promises and have known folks who have walked away from them.

God Almighty, El Shaddai, made an everlasting covenant. God made a promise to you and me through His promise to Abraham. He promised to be our God forever. He already knew, to keep it, it would cost, the cosmic cost of the the eternal Son, one with the Father and the Spirit. The Divine being, divine essence would enter this world as son of Mary. Born to die, rejected, receive human hatred in exchange for His divine love.

The greatest miracle of all is that He loves us, divine Love, eternal mercy, Grace. Now considering all that, take a look in a different direction. God is the potter, we are the clay. He makes some to be fine vases holding flowers that make this world beautiful. It is nice to see beautiful people, intelligent, talented, attractive. We are drawn toward them. We try to look as good as we can, act with kindness, avoid being stupid. Life is better that way.

But we know that pretty, smart, sweet talking, folks do not count for much. God makes some who are not nice on the outside, just a useful pot. And He makes some who are smashed, lumpy, flattened. We sing about the Pot and Potter, "Mold me, shape me, use me". Are you, am I, willing to be used in any way the Lord God Almighty wills?

The Lord God Almighty creates some to need care and some to give care. We see His Love, we participate in His Love. It forces us to depend on His love and spirit. Forgiveness - we never do it all as we should. Praise and thanksgiving. When we stretch ourselves to keep our promises, struggle, go beyond ourselves, we realize that we do have the power of God's Spirit inside, God is living in us. The people around look at us and get a glimpse of the divine, His love as we love. That is a powerful witness. We bring God praise, deeper praise than the songs we sing. Keep your promise to love God and your neighbor as He kept His promise of Love to you. Do not mind the cost. Remember the cost He paid to keep His promise to be your God forever, your Redeemer, your Savior.

In the name of one called by God to proclaim His Love for all,

Stephen H. Funck

The Sign of Concord

He died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves,
but for him who died and was raised for them. 2 Cor. 5:15

The Ten Commandments

Martin Luther - 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.

The Second Commandment

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.

The Third Commandment

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

The Fourth Commandment

Honor your father and your mother.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

The Fifth Commandment

You shall not murder.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need.

The Sixth Commandment

You shall not commit adultery.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do, and husband and wife love and honor each other.

The Seventh Commandment

You shall not steal.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbor's money or possessions, or get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his possessions and income.

The Eighth Commandment

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way.

The Ninth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or get it in a way which only appears right, but help and be of service to him in keeping it.

The Tenth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not entice or force away our neighbor's wife, workers, or animals, or turn them against him, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

The Close of the Commandments

What does God say about all these commandments? He says: "I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments." [Ex. 20:5-6]

What does this mean? God threatens to punish all who break these commandments. Therefore, we should fear His wrath and not do anything against them. But He promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments. Therefore, we should also love and trust in Him and gladly do what He commands.

The text of the commandments is from
Ex. 20:3, 7, 8, 12-17.1

There are several ways to number the Ten. Luther used the standard numbering. Later Protestants invented the numbering that is common in the US. Cherubim and bulls were images in heathen Temples and God ordered them for His own House. The graven images He forbids are false gods or attempts to show His appearance. He has no image - invisible.

Note well, what Luther does with the meaning of the commandments. Some might keep the command not to murder or commit adultery, but God's will is much more. It is the will of God that we help others in their physical needs, that husbands and wives love each other - always, perfectly. It is not possible to "keep" any commandment. We always fall short of perfect righteousness.

The commandments show us how we are to live and lead us to repentance, confession, to build our lives on the redemption, given, won for us by the cross of Christ.