

FAMILY HOME DEVOTIONS

September 21-27, 2026



FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH-LCMS

2012 Sullivan Trail, Easton, PA 18040

(P) 610-253-1625 (E) faithlcms@outlook.com

(W) faithlcms.com (F) facebook.com/faithlcmseaston

Monday

Psalm 31

Into Your Hand I Commit My Spirit
To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

31 In you, O Lord, do I take refuge;
let me never be put to shame;
in your righteousness deliver me!

2 Incline your ear to me;
rescue me speedily!

Be a rock of refuge for me,
a strong fortress to save me!

3 For you are my rock and my fortress;
and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me;

4 you take me out of the net they have hidden for me,
for you are my refuge.

5 Into your hand I commit my spirit;
you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God.

6 I hate those who pay regard to worthless idols,
but I trust in the Lord.

7 I will rejoice and be glad in your steadfast love,
because you have seen my affliction;
you have known the distress of my soul,

8 and you have not delivered me into the hand of the enemy;
you have set my feet in a broad place.

9 Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress;
my eye is wasted from grief;
my soul and my body also.

10 For my life is spent with sorrow,
and my years with sighing;
my strength fails because of my iniquity,
and my bones waste away.

11 Because of all my adversaries I have become a reproach,
especially to my neighbors,
and an object of dread to my acquaintances;
those who see me in the street flee from me.

12 I have been forgotten like one who is dead;
I have become like a broken vessel.

13 For I hear the whispering of many—

terror on every side!—
as they scheme together against me,
as they plot to take my life.

14 But I trust in you, O Lord;
I say, "You are my God."

15 My times are in your hand;
rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors!

16 Make your face shine on your servant;
save me in your steadfast love!

17 O Lord, let me not be put to shame,
for I call upon you;
let the wicked be put to shame;
let them go silently to Sheol.

18 Let the lying lips be mute,
which speak insolently against the righteous
in pride and contempt.

19 Oh, how abundant is your goodness,
which you have stored up for those who fear you
and worked for those who take refuge in you,
in the sight of the children of mankind!

20 In the cover of your presence you hide them
from the plots of men;
you store them in your shelter
from the strife of tongues.

21 Blessed be the Lord,
for he has wondrously shown his steadfast love to me
when I was in a besieged city.

22 I had said in my alarm,
"I am cut off from your sight."
But you heard the voice of my pleas for mercy
when I cried to you for help.

23 Love the Lord, all you his saints!
The Lord preserves the faithful
but abundantly repays the one who acts in pride.

24 Be strong, and let your heart take courage,
all you who wait for the Lord!

Nehemiah 5:1-6:16

Nehemiah Stops Oppression of the Poor

5 Now there arose a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish brothers. 2 For there were those who said, "With our sons and our daughters, we are many. So let us get grain, that we may eat and keep alive." 3 There were also those who said, "We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards, and our houses to get grain because of the famine." 4 And there were those who said, "We have borrowed money for the king's tax on our fields and our vineyards. 5 Now our flesh is as the flesh of our brothers, our children are as their children. Yet we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters have already been enslaved, but it is not in our power to help it, for other men have our fields and our vineyards." 6 I was very angry when I heard their outcry and these words. 7 I took counsel with myself, and I brought charges against the nobles and the officials. I said to them, "You are exacting interest, each from his brother." And I held a great assembly against them 8 and said to them, "We, as far as we are able, have bought back our Jewish brothers who have been sold to the nations, but you even sell your brothers that they may be sold to us!" They were silent and could not find a word to say. 9 So I said, "The thing that you are doing is not good. Ought you not to walk in the fear of our God to prevent the taunts of the nations our enemies? 10 Moreover, I and my brothers and my servants are lending them money and grain. Let us abandon this exacting of interest. 11 Return to them this very day their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards, and their houses, and the percentage of money, grain, wine, and oil that you have been exacting from them." 12 Then they said, "We will restore these and require nothing from them. We will do as you say." And I called the priests and made them swear to do as they had promised. 13 I also shook out the fold of my garment and said, "So may God shake out every man from his house and from his labor who does not keep this promise. So may he be shaken out and emptied." And all the assembly said "Amen" and praised the Lord. And the people did as they had promised.

Nehemiah's Generosity

September 21

14 Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year to the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes the king, twelve years, neither I nor my brothers ate the food allowance of the governor. 15 The former governors who were before me laid heavy burdens on the people and took from them for their daily ration forty shekels of silver. Even their servants lorded it over the people. But I did not do so, because of the fear of God. 16 I also persevered in the work on this wall, and we acquired no land, and all my servants were gathered there for the work. 17 Moreover, there were at my table 150 men, Jews and officials, besides those who came to us from the nations that were around us. 18 Now what was prepared at my expense for each day was one ox and six choice sheep and birds, and every ten days all kinds of wine in abundance. Yet for all this I did not demand the food allowance of the governor, because the service was too heavy on this people. 19 Remember for my good, O my God, all that I have done for this people.

Conspiracy Against Nehemiah

6 Now when Sanballat and Tobiah and Geshem the Arab and the rest of our enemies heard that I had built the wall and that there was no breach left in it (although up to that time I had not set up the doors in the gates), 2 Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, "Come and let us meet together at Hakkephirim in the plain of Ono." But they intended to do me harm. 3 And I sent messengers to them, saying, "I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?" 4 And they sent to me four times in this way, and I answered them in the same manner. 5 In the same way Sanballat for the fifth time sent his servant to me with an open letter in his hand. 6 In it was written, "It is reported among the nations, and Geshem also says it, that you and the Jews intend to rebel; that is why you are building the wall. And according to these reports you wish to become their king. 7 And you have also set up prophets to proclaim concerning you in Jerusalem, 'There is a king in Judah.' And now the king will hear of these reports. So now come and let us take counsel together." 8 Then I sent to him, saying, "No such things as you say have been done, for you are inventing them out of your own mind." 9 For they all wanted to frighten us, thinking, "Their hands will drop from the work, and it will not be done." But now, O God, strengthen my hands.

10 Now when I went into the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, son of Mehetabel, who was confined to his home, he said, "Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple. Let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you. They are coming to kill you by night." 11 But I said, "Should such a man as I run away? And what man such as I could go into the temple and live? I will not go in." 12 And I understood and saw that God had not sent him, but he had pronounced the prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. 13 For this purpose he was hired, that I should be afraid and act in this way and sin, and so they could give me a bad name in order to taunt me. 14 Remember Tobiah and Sanballat, O my God, according to these things that they did, and also the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who wanted to make me afraid.

The Wall Is Finished

15 So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days. 16 And when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations around us were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem, for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God.

1 Timothy 4:1-16

Some Will Depart from the Faith

4 Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, 2 through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, 3 who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 5 for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.

A Good Servant of Christ Jesus

6 If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. 7 Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; 8 for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. 9 The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. 10 For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

11 Command and teach these things. 12 Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. 13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. 14 Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. 15 Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. 16 Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.

The Ten Commandments

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.

Tuesday

Psalm 32

Blessed Are the Forgiven

A Maskil of David.

32 Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.

2 Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

3 For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.

4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah

5 I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I did not cover my iniquity;

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,"
and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah

6 Therefore let everyone who is godly
offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found;
surely in the rush of great waters,
they shall not reach him.

7 You are a hiding place for me;

you preserve me from trouble;

you surround me with shouts of deliverance. Selah

8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

9 Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding,
which must be curbed with bit and bridle,
or it will not stay near you.

10 Many are the sorrows of the wicked,
but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord.

11 Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous,
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

Nehemiah 7:1-4; 8:1-18

7 Now when the wall had been built and I had set up the doors, and the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed, 2 I gave my brother Hanani and Hananiah the governor of the castle charge over Jerusalem, for he was a more faithful and God-fearing man than many. 3 And I said to them, "Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot. And while they are still standing guard, let them shut and bar the doors. Appoint guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, some at their guard posts and some in front of their own homes." 4 The city was wide and large, but the people within it were few, and no houses had been rebuilt.

Ezra Reads the Law

8 And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the Lord had commanded Israel. 2 So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month. 3 And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law. 4 And Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform that they had made for the purpose. And beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah on his right hand, and Pedaiiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam on his left hand. 5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it all the people stood. 6 And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground. 7 Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law, while the people remained in their places. 8 They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

This Day Is Holy

9 And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept as they heard the words of the Law. 10 Then he said to them, "Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." 11 So the Levites calmed all the people, saying, "Be quiet, for this day is holy; do not be grieved." 12 And all the people went their way to eat and drink and to send portions and to make great rejoicing, because they had understood the words that were declared to them.

September 22

Feast of Booths Celebrated

13 On the second day the heads of fathers' houses of all the people, with the priests and the Levites, came together to Ezra the scribe in order to study the words of the Law. 14 And they found it written in the Law that the Lord had commanded by Moses that the people of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month, 15 and that they should proclaim it and publish it in all their towns and in Jerusalem, "Go out to the hills and bring branches of olive, wild olive, myrtle, palm, and other leafy trees to make booths, as it is written." 16 So the people went out and brought them and made booths for themselves, each on his roof, and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim. 17 And all the assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in the booths, for from the days of Jeshua the son of Nun to that day the people of Israel had not done so. And there was very great rejoicing. 18 And day by day, from the first day to the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. They kept the feast seven days, and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly, according to the rule.

1 Timothy 5:1-16

Instructions for the Church

5 Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, 2 older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.

3 Honor widows who are truly widows. 4 But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God. 5 She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day, 6 but she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives. 7 Command these things as well, so that they may be without reproach. 8 But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

9 Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, 10 and having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work. 11 But refuse to enroll younger widows, for when their passions draw them away from Christ, they desire to marry 12 and so incur condemnation for having abandoned their former faith. 13 Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not. 14 So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander. 15 For some have already strayed after Satan. 16 If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her care for them. Let the church not be burdened, so that it may care for those who are truly widows.

The Ten Commandments

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.

Wednesday

Psalm 33

The Steadfast Love of the Lord

33 Shout for joy in the Lord, O you righteous!

Praise befits the upright.

2 Give thanks to the Lord with the lyre;
make melody to him with the harp of ten strings!

3 Sing to him a new song;
play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.

4 For the word of the Lord is upright,
and all his work is done in faithfulness.

5 He loves righteousness and justice;
the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord.

6 By the word of the Lord the heavens were made,
and by the breath of his mouth all their host.

7 He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap;
he puts the deeps in storehouses.

8 Let all the earth fear the Lord;
let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!

9 For he spoke, and it came to be;
he commanded, and it stood firm.

10 The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;
he frustrates the plans of the peoples.

11 The counsel of the Lord stands forever,
the plans of his heart to all generations.

12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,
the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!

13 The Lord looks down from heaven;
he sees all the children of man;

14 from where he sits enthroned he looks out
on all the inhabitants of the earth,

15 he who fashions the hearts of them all
and observes all their deeds.

16 The king is not saved by his great army;
a warrior is not delivered by his great strength.

17 The war horse is a false hope for salvation,
and by its great might it cannot rescue.

18 Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him,
on those who hope in his steadfast love,

19 that he may deliver their soul from death
and keep them alive in famine.

20 Our soul waits for the Lord;
he is our help and our shield.

21 For our heart is glad in him,
because we trust in his holy name.

22 Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us,
even as we hope in you.

Nehemiah 9:1-21

The People of Israel Confess Their Sin

9 Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the people of Israel were assembled with fasting and in sackcloth, and with earth on their heads. 2 And the Israelites separated themselves from all foreigners and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. 3 And they stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the Lord their God for a quarter of the day; for another quarter of it they made confession and worshiped the Lord their God. 4 On the stairs of the Levites stood Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani; and they cried with a loud voice to the Lord their God. 5 Then the Levites, Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said, "Stand up and bless the Lord your God from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed be your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.

6 "You are the Lord, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you. 7 You are the Lord, the God who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and gave him the name Abraham. 8 You found his heart faithful before you, and made with him the covenant to give to his offspring the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite, and the Girgashite. And you have kept your promise, for you are righteous.

9 "And you saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt and heard their cry at the Red Sea, 10 and performed signs and wonders against Pharaoh and all his servants and all the people of his land, for you knew that they acted arrogantly against our fathers. And you made a name for yourself, as it is to this day. 11 And you divided the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on dry land, and you cast their pursuers into the depths, as a stone into mighty waters. 12 By a pillar of cloud you led them in the day, and by a pillar of fire in the night to light for them the way in which they should go. 13 You came down on Mount Sinai and spoke with them from heaven and gave them right rules and true laws, good statutes and commandments, 14 and you made known to them your holy Sabbath and commanded them commandments and statutes and a law by Moses your servant. 15 You gave them bread from heaven for their hunger and brought water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and you told them to go in to possess the land that you had sworn to give them.

September 23

16 “But they and our fathers acted presumptuously and stiffened their neck and did not obey your commandments. 17 They refused to obey and were not mindful of the wonders that you performed among them, but they stiffened their neck and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. But you are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and did not forsake them. 18 Even when they had made for themselves a golden calf and said, ‘This is your God who brought you up out of Egypt,’ and had committed great blasphemies, 19 you in your great mercies did not forsake them in the wilderness. The pillar of cloud to lead them in the way did not depart from them by day, nor the pillar of fire by night to light for them the way by which they should go. 20 You gave your good Spirit to instruct them and did not withhold your manna from their mouth and gave them water for their thirst. 21 Forty years you sustained them in the wilderness, and they lacked nothing. Their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell.

1 Timothy 5:17-6:2

17 Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. 18 For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer deserves his wages.” 19 Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. 20 As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear. 21 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality. 22 Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor take part in the sins of others; keep yourself pure. 23 No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments. 24 The sins of some people are conspicuous, going before them to judgment, but the sins of others appear later. 25 So also good works are conspicuous, and even those that are not cannot remain hidden. 6 Let all who are under a yoke as bondservants regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled. 2 Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers; rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved.

The Ten Commandments

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.

Thursday

Psalm 34

Taste and See That the Lord Is Good

Of David, when he changed his behavior before Abimelech, so that he drove him out, and he went away.

34 I will bless the Lord at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

2 My soul makes its boast in the Lord;
let the humble hear and be glad.

3 Oh, magnify the Lord with me,
and let us exalt his name together!

4 I sought the Lord, and he answered me
and delivered me from all my fears.

5 Those who look to him are radiant,
and their faces shall never be ashamed.

6 This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him
and saved him out of all his troubles.

7 The angel of the Lord encamps
around those who fear him, and delivers them.

8 Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!
Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!

9 Oh, fear the Lord, you his saints,
for those who fear him have no lack!

10 The young lions suffer want and hunger;
but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

11 Come, O children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

12 What man is there who desires life
and loves many days, that he may see good?

13 Keep your tongue from evil
and your lips from speaking deceit.

14 Turn away from evil and do good;
seek peace and pursue it.

15 The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous
and his ears toward their cry.

16 The face of the Lord is against those who do evil,
to cut off the memory of them from the earth.

17 When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears
and delivers them out of all their troubles.

18 The Lord is near to the brokenhearted
and saves the crushed in spirit.

19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
but the Lord delivers him out of them all.

20 He keeps all his bones;
not one of them is broken.

21 Affliction will slay the wicked,
and those who hate the righteous will be condemned.

22 The Lord redeems the life of his servants;
none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.

Nehemiah 9:22-38

22 "And you gave them kingdoms and peoples and allotted to them every corner. So they took possession of the land of Sihon king of Heshbon and the land of Og king of Bashan. 23 You multiplied their children as the stars of heaven, and you brought them into the land that you had told their fathers to enter and possess. 24 So the descendants went in and possessed the land, and you subdued before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gave them into their hand, with their kings and the peoples of the land, that they might do with them as they would. 25 And they captured fortified cities and a rich land, and took possession of houses full of all good things, cisterns already hewn, vineyards, olive orchards and fruit trees in abundance. So they ate and were filled and became fat and delighted themselves in your great goodness.

26 "Nevertheless, they were disobedient and rebelled against you and cast your law behind their back and killed your prophets, who had warned them in order to turn them back to you, and they committed great blasphemies. 27 Therefore you gave them into the hand of their enemies, who made them suffer. And in the time of their suffering they cried out to you and you heard them from heaven, and according to your great mercies you gave them saviors who saved them from the hand of their enemies. 28 But after they had rest they did evil again before you, and you abandoned them to the hand of their enemies, so that they had dominion over them. Yet when they turned and cried to you, you heard from heaven, and many times you delivered them according to your mercies. 29 And you warned them in order to turn them back to your law. Yet they acted presumptuously and did not obey your commandments, but sinned against your rules, which if a person does them, he shall live by them, and they turned a stubborn shoulder and stiffened their neck and would not obey. 30 Many years you bore with them and warned them by your Spirit through your prophets. Yet they would not give ear. Therefore you gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands. 31 Nevertheless, in your great mercies you did not make an end of them or forsake them, for you are a gracious and merciful God.

September 24

32 “Now, therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love, let not all the hardship seem little to you that has come upon us, upon our kings, our princes, our priests, our prophets, our fathers, and all your people, since the time of the kings of Assyria until this day. 33 Yet you have been righteous in all that has come upon us, for you have dealt faithfully and we have acted wickedly. 34 Our kings, our princes, our priests, and our fathers have not kept your law or paid attention to your commandments and your warnings that you gave them. 35 Even in their own kingdom, and amid your great goodness that you gave them, and in the large and rich land that you set before them, they did not serve you or turn from their wicked works. 36 Behold, we are slaves this day; in the land that you gave to our fathers to enjoy its fruit and its good gifts, behold, we are slaves. 37 And its rich yield goes to the kings whom you have set over us because of our sins. They rule over our bodies and over our livestock as they please, and we are in great distress. 38 “Because of all this we make a firm covenant in writing; on the sealed document are the names of our princes, our Levites, and our priests.

1 Timothy 6:3-21

3 If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, 4 he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, 5 and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain. 6 But godliness with contentment is great gain, 7 for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. 8 But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. 9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

Fight the Good Fight of Faith

11 But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 13 I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, 14 to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

17 As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. 18 They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, 19 thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

20 O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called “knowledge,” 21 for by professing it some have swerved from the faith.

The Ten Commandments

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.

Friday

Psalm 35

Great Is the Lord

Of David.

35 Contend, O Lord, with those who contend with me;
fight against those who fight against me!

2 Take hold of shield and buckler
and rise for my help!

3 Draw the spear and javelin
against my pursuers!

Say to my soul,
“I am your salvation!”

4 Let them be put to shame and dishonor
who seek after my life!

Let them be turned back and disappointed
who devise evil against me!

5 Let them be like chaff before the wind,
with the angel of the Lord driving them away!

6 Let their way be dark and slippery,
with the angel of the Lord pursuing them!

7 For without cause they hid their net for me;
without cause they dug a pit for my life.

8 Let destruction come upon him when he does not know it!
And let the net that he hid ensnare him;
let him fall into it—to his destruction!

9 Then my soul will rejoice in the Lord,
exulting in his salvation.

10 All my bones shall say,
“O Lord, who is like you,
delivering the poor
from him who is too strong for him,
the poor and needy from him who robs him?”

11 Malicious witnesses rise up;
they ask me of things that I do not know.

12 They repay me evil for good;
my soul is bereft.

13 But I, when they were sick—
I wore sackcloth;
I afflicted myself with fasting;

I prayed with head bowed on my chest.

14 I went about as though I grieved for my friend or my brother;
as one who laments his mother,
I bowed down in mourning.

15 But at my stumbling they rejoiced and gathered;
they gathered together against me;
wretches whom I did not know
tore at me without ceasing;

16 like profane mockers at a feast,
they gnash at me with their teeth.

17 How long, O Lord, will you look on?
Rescue me from their destruction,
my precious life from the lions!

18 I will thank you in the great congregation;
in the mighty throng I will praise you.

19 Let not those rejoice over me
who are wrongfully my foes,
and let not those wink the eye
who hate me without cause.

20 For they do not speak peace,
but against those who are quiet in the land
they devise words of deceit.

21 They open wide their mouths against me;
they say, “Aha, Aha!
Our eyes have seen it!”

22 You have seen, O Lord; be not silent!
O Lord, be not far from me!

23 Awake and rouse yourself for my vindication,
for my cause, my God and my Lord!

24 Vindicate me, O Lord, my God,
according to your righteousness,
and let them not rejoice over me!

25 Let them not say in their hearts,
“Aha, our heart's desire!”

Let them not say, “We have swallowed him up.”

26 Let them be put to shame and disappointed
altogether
who rejoice at my calamity!

Let them be clothed with shame and dishonor
who magnify themselves against me!

27 Let those who delight in my righteousness
shout for joy and be glad
and say evermore,

“Great is the Lord,
who delights in the welfare of his servant!”

28 Then my tongue shall tell of your righteousness
and of your praise all the day long.

Malachi 1:1-14

1 The oracle of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi.

The Lord's Love for Israel

2 “I have loved you,” says the Lord. But you say, “How have you loved us?” “Is not Esau Jacob's brother?” declares the Lord. “Yet I have loved Jacob 3 but Esau I have hated. I have laid waste his hill country and left his heritage to jackals of the desert.” 4 If Edom says, “We are shattered but we will rebuild the ruins,” the Lord of hosts says, “They may build, but I will tear down, and they will be

September 25

called ‘the wicked country,’ and ‘the people with whom the Lord is angry forever.’” 5 Your own eyes shall see this, and you shall say, “Great is the Lord beyond the border of Israel!”

The Priests' Polluted Offerings

6 “A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. But you say, ‘How have we despised your name?’ 7 By offering polluted food upon my altar. But you say, ‘How have we polluted you?’ By saying that the Lord’s table may be despised. 8 When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favor? says the Lord of hosts. 9 And now entreat the favor of God, that he may be gracious to us. With such a gift from your hand, will he show favor to any of you? says the Lord of hosts. 10 Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand. 11 For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts. 12 But you profane it when you say that the Lord’s table is polluted, and its fruit, that is, its food, may be despised. 13 But you say, ‘What a weariness this is,’ and you snort at it, says the Lord of hosts. You bring what has been taken by violence or is lame or sick, and this you bring as your offering! Shall I accept that from your hand? says the Lord. 14 Cursed be the cheat who has a male in his flock, and vows it, and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished. For I am a great King, says the Lord of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations.

Matthew 3:1-17

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

3 In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2 “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” 3 For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord;
make his paths straight.’”

4 Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. 5 Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, 6 and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. 9 And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. 10 Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

11 “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

The Baptism of Jesus

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. 14 John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” 15 But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. 16 And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; 17 and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

The Ten Commandments

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.

Saturday

Psalm 36

How Precious Is Your Steadfast Love

To the choirmaster. Of David, the servant of the Lord.

36 Transgression speaks to the wicked
deep in his heart;

there is no fear of God
before his eyes.

2 For he flatters himself in his own eyes
that his iniquity cannot be found out and hated.

3 The words of his mouth are trouble and deceit;
he has ceased to act wisely and do good.

4 He plots trouble while on his bed;
he sets himself in a way that is not good;
he does not reject evil.

5 Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the clouds.

6 Your righteousness is like the mountains of God;
your judgments are like the great deep;
man and beast you save, O Lord.

7 How precious is your steadfast love, O God!
The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

8 They feast on the abundance of your house,
and you give them drink from the river of your delights.

9 For with you is the fountain of life;
in your light do we see light.

10 Oh, continue your steadfast love to those who know you,
and your righteousness to the upright of heart!

11 Let not the foot of arrogance come upon me,
nor the hand of the wicked drive me away.

12 There the evildoers lie fallen;
they are thrust down, unable to rise.

Malachi 2:1-3:5

The Lord Rebukes the Priests

2 “And now, O priests, this command is for you. 2 If you will not listen, if you will not take it to heart to give honor to my name, says the Lord of hosts, then I will send the curse upon you and I will curse your blessings. Indeed, I have already cursed them, because you do not lay it to heart. 3 Behold, I will rebuke your offspring, and spread dung on your faces, the dung of your offerings, and you shall be taken away with it. 4 So shall you know that I have sent this command to you, that my covenant with Levi may stand, says the Lord of hosts. 5 My covenant with him was one of life and peace, and I gave them to him. It was a covenant of fear, and he feared me. He stood in awe of my name. 6 True instruction was in his mouth, and no wrong was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many from iniquity. 7 For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. 8 But you have turned aside from the way. You have caused many to stumble by your instruction. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says the Lord of hosts, 9 and so I make you despised and abased before all the people, inasmuch as you do not keep my ways but show partiality in your instruction.”

Judah Profaned the Covenant

10 Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the covenant of our fathers? 11 Judah has been faithless, and abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem. For Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the Lord, which he loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god. 12 May the Lord cut off from the tents of Jacob any descendant of the man who does this, who brings an offering to the Lord of hosts!

13 And this second thing you do. You cover the Lord's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. 14 But you say, “Why does he not?” Because the Lord was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. 15 Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth. 16 “For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the Lord, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the Lord of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless.”

The Messenger of the Lord

17 You have wearied the Lord with your words. But you say, “How have we wearied him?” By saying, “Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delights in them.” Or by asking, “Where is the God of justice?”

September 26

3 “Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. 2 But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. 3 He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the Lord. 4 Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

5 “Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.

Matthew 4:1-11

The Temptation of Jesus

4 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” 4 But he answered, “It is written,

“‘Man shall not live by bread alone,

but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple 6 and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

“‘He will command his angels concerning you,’

and

“‘On their hands they will bear you up,

lest you strike your foot against a stone.’”

7 Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” 8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” 10 Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written,

“‘You shall worship the Lord your God

and him only shall you serve.’”

11 Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

The Ten Commandments

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.

Sunday

Psalm 25:1-10

Teach Me Your Paths

Of David.

25 To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

2 O my God, in you I trust;

let me not be put to shame;

let not my enemies exult over me.

3 Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame;
they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

4 Make me to know your ways, O Lord;
teach me your paths.

5 Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all the day long.

6 Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love,
for they have been from of old.

7 Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
according to your steadfast love remember me,
for the sake of your goodness, O Lord!

8 Good and upright is the Lord;
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.

9 He leads the humble in what is right,
and teaches the humble his way.

10 All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

Ezek. 18:1-4, 25-32

The Soul Who Sins Shall Die

18 The word of the Lord came to me: 2 “What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge’? 3 As I live, declares the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. 4 Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die.

25 “Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? 26 When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it; for the injustice that he has done he shall die. 27 Again, when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he shall save his life. 28 Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions that he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die. 29 Yet the house of Israel says, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ O house of Israel, are my ways not just? Is it not your ways that are not just?

30 “Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. 31 Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? 32 For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord God; so turn, and live.”

Matt. 21:23-32)

The Authority of Jesus Challenged

23 And when he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” 24 Jesus answered them, “I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. 25 The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?” And they discussed it among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ 26 But if we say, ‘From man,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet.” 27 So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

The Parable of the Two Sons

28 “What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ 29 And he answered, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he changed his mind and went. 30 And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but did not go. 31 Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.

September 27

Christian Questions with Their Answers

Prepared by Dr. Martin Luther for those who intend to go to the Sacrament

Christians may ask themselves these questions:

1. Do you believe that you are a sinner?

Yes, I believe it. I am a sinner.

2. How do you know this?

From the Ten Commandments, which I have not kept.

3. Are you sorry for your sins?

Yes, I am sorry that I have sinned against God.

4. What have you deserved from God because of your sins?

His wrath and displeasure, temporal death, and eternal damnation. See Rom. 6:21, 23.

5. Do you hope to be saved?

Yes, that is my hope.

6. In whom then do you trust?

In my dear Lord Jesus Christ.

7. Who is Christ?

The Son of God, true God and man.

8. How many Gods are there?

Only one, but there are three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

9. What has Christ done for you that you trust in Him?

He died for me and shed His blood for me on the cross for the forgiveness of sins.

10. Did the Father also die for you?

He did not. The Father is God only, as is the Holy Spirit; but the Son is both true God and true man. He died for me and shed His blood for me.

11. How do you know this?

From the holy Gospel, from the words instituting the Sacrament, and by His body and blood given me as a pledge in the Sacrament.

12. What are the words of institution?

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

13. Do you believe, then, that the true body and blood of Christ are in the Sacrament?

Yes, I believe it.

14. What convinces you to believe this?

The word of Christ: Take, eat, this is My body; drink of it, all of you, this is My blood.

15. What should we do when we eat His body and drink His blood, and in this way receive His pledge?

We should remember and proclaim His death and the shedding of His blood, as He taught us: This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.

16. Why should we remember and proclaim His death?

First, so that we may learn to believe that no creature could make satisfaction for our sins. Only Christ, true God and man, could do that. Second, so we may learn to be horrified by our sins, and to regard them as very serious. Third, so we may find joy and comfort in Christ alone, and through faith in Him be saved.

17. What motivated Christ to die and make full payment for your sins?

His great love for His Father and for me and other sinners, as it is written in John 14; Romans 5; Galatians 2; and Ephesians 5.

18. Finally, why do you wish to go to the Sacrament?

That I may learn to believe that Christ, out of great love, died for my sin, and also learn from Him to love God and my neighbor.

19. What should admonish and encourage a Christian to receive the Sacrament frequently?

First, both the command and the promise of Christ the Lord. Second, his own pressing need, because of which the command, encouragement, and promise are given.

Continued

Christian Questions with Their Answers continued

20. But what should you do if you are not aware of this need and have no hunger and thirst for the Sacrament?

To such a person no better advice can be given than this: first, he should touch his body to see if he still has flesh and blood. Then he should believe what the Scriptures say of it in Galatians 5 and Romans 7. Second, he should look around to see whether he is still in the world, and remember that there will be no lack of sin and trouble, as the Scriptures say in John 15–16 and in 1 John 2 and 5. Third, he will certainly have the devil also around him, who with his lying and murdering day and night will let him have no peace, within or without, as the Scriptures picture him in John 8 and 16; 1 Peter 5; Ephesians 6; and 2 Timothy 2.

Note: These questions and answers are no child's play, but are drawn up with great earnestness of purpose by the venerable and devout Dr. Luther for both young and old. Let each one pay attention and consider it a serious matter; for St. Paul writes to the Galatians in chapter six: "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked."



Family Home Devotions are also
available online at **faithlcms.com**