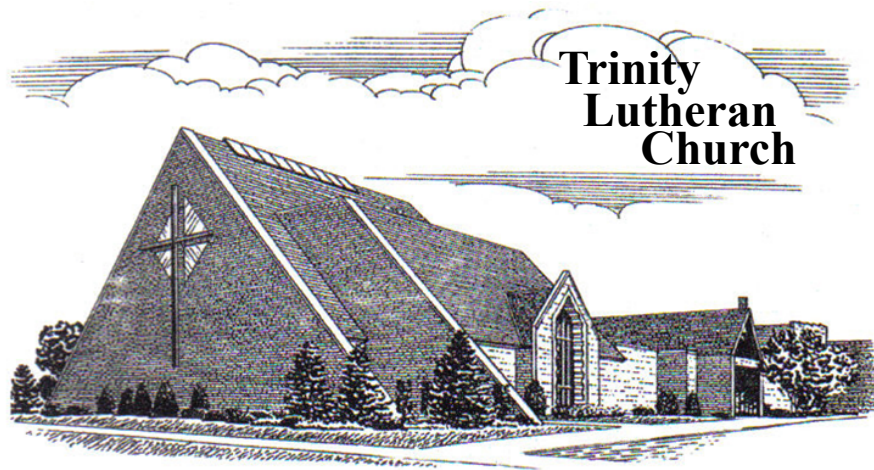


The Third Commandment



Sept. 28-Oct. 3, 2026

Weekly Outline

Invocation

L: In the way of your testimonies I delight.

C: I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways.

L: Let us pray:

O Lord, take away from me all coldness, all wanderings of the thoughts, and fix my soul upon thee and thy love, O merciful Lord and Saviour, in this hour of prayer.

C: Amen.

Scripture

Sept. 28: Jeremiah 6:16-19

Sept. 30: Hebrews 4:1-13

Oct. 2: Matthew 11:25-30

Devotion

Closing Prayer

L: Ever blessed Trinity, to thy mercy I commit this day, my body and soul, together with all my ways and undertakings. I beseech thee to be gracious unto me; enlarge my heart and open my lips, that I may praise and magnify thy name which alone is holy. And as thou hast made me for the praise of thy holy name, grant that I may yield my life a sacrifice to thy honor in humble love and fear.

C: Amen.

Monday

Many Christians connect the Sabbath with rest. But there are many different ways to rest. We can physically rest of course, but we can also rest from worry; we can rest from anger; we can rest from sorrow; we can rest from sin. Rest is a spiritual reality just as much as a physical one. In fact, the need for physical rest is not the main point of the Third Commandment. Rather, it points us toward the deeper need we all have for spiritual rest.

That is the kind of rest God invites Israel to experience through the prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah 6:16 says, "Thus says the Lord: 'Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.' " The Lord pictures his people standing at a fork in the road. One fork is the "ancient paths." This is the way of faith and righteousness, the path taken by the Old Testament saints, such as Noah, Abraham, and Moses. The other path is the path of sin. It is the way taken by the world. One path leads to spiritual rest. The other leads to God's judgement. Which way would you take? The choice seems obvious, but it's not easy. Israel took the path of sin. They said about the path of righteousness, "We will not walk in it."

Because we all have a sinful nature, we are all tempted to leave the path that leads to true rest because of some sinful desire. Often, the path of sin appears as though it will lead to spiritual rest, but it never does. It only leads to more pain, more anxiety, more evil, and ultimately, to God's judgement. Though the path of faith and righteousness often appears laborious, it always leads to rest because it ends in salvation. Those who walk it experience peace, joy, hope, and love because Christ walks that path with them. Each of us stands at a fork in the road. Led by our Savior, let us take the ancient path. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Wednesday

Many people believe they have kept the Third Commandment if they simply do nothing. But while rest on the Sabbath was commanded in the Old Testament law, we ought to remember that the Old Testament is a shadow of what was to come. The fulfillment is found in Christ. The author of Hebrews points us toward the true Sabbath in chapter 4.

He starts in a strange place, not with the commandment, "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy," but with Israel wandering in the wilderness. So long as Israel wandered in the wilderness, they did not have rest. Every Sabbath they kept during those forty years was meant to point them toward the rest God would give them in the Promised Land. But out of the entire multitude that left Egypt, only two people experienced that rest. Everyone else died in the wilderness because of unbelief (4:2). But even those who entered the Promised Land looked forward to a more perfect rest that God would give all believers in heaven. There remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. It is not found on earth, but in eternity.

Every Sunday, we go to church and receive the promise of rest once more. We even experience it in part, as we set aside our work for a time and give room for God to work in us through the Word and Sacraments. But as good as that rest is, it's not yet perfect. It is a sign, a promise, of greater things to come. As long as we find ourselves in the wilderness of this life, let us strive to enter that greater rest through faith in our Savior, who has gone before us to prepare the way. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Friday

When most people think of rest, they think of inactivity. And that is a good starting point, but it doesn't cover all that we call rest. If rest were simply inactivity, then how could it be said that a person is resting on his day off even though he is golfing? Rather, we often connect rest with something we do willingly. A man golfs willingly, so he feels at rest even though he is doing something. But he often goes to work unwillingly. He'd rather be somewhere else, so everything he does at work feels burdensome.

Now we can understand this verse. Jesus said, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." At first, Jesus seems to promise inactivity (Come to me, all who labor...and I will give you rest), but then we find out that we are actually prepared for work (my yoke is easy). How can we both work and be at rest? In the same way that man can rest and golf at the same time. Christ takes our unwilling hearts and makes them willing through God's grace. He turns us from Israelites who grumble over every hardship in the wilderness of this life and makes us into saints who carry every cross willingly from love for him. The difference is not in the external life, but in the state of the heart.

That isn't as strange as it sounds. All of us know two people. The first grumbles about everything. For him, life is nothing but a litany of complaints. Even when he does nothing, his heart is not at rest. But the second bears everything easily. The problems for the second person may even be worse from a human standpoint, but they aren't burdensome because they are carried with faith. Christ is the only one who can give us rest because he is the only one who can change our hearts. May we all become such people. May we all know Christ's rest. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Evening Prayer

You may pray one or more of the following after dinner or before bed:

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have graciously kept me this day; and I pray you that you would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.



Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep; if I should die before I wake, I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take; and this I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.



Visit, O Lord, our home, and drive from it all the snares of the enemy; let your holy angels dwell in it to preserve us in peace, and may your blessing be upon us evermore; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

A Parent's Blessing

You may place your hand on the head of your child before kissing them goodnight and say:

My loved one, rest securely,
for God this night will surely
from peril guard your head.
Sweet slumbers may he send you
and bid his hosts attend you
and through the night watch o'er your bed. Amen.

Memory Verse

MEMORY VERSE

*The Lord is good, a
stronghold in the day
of trouble; he knows
those who take
refuge in him.*

NAHUM 1:7



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