2026-2027 Confirmation
Year 3: Early Church & Lutheran Christianity
The Tomorrow River Lutheran Parish

Lesson 2. The Small Catechism:
Introduction to the 10 Commandments and the First Commandment

From Exodus 20

20 *Then God spoke all these words:*
2 *I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery;* ***3*** *you shall have no other gods before me.* ***4*** *You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.* ***5*** *You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me,* ***6*** *but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.*

Originally given to Israel at Mt. Sinai.
- 10 of the 613 Commandments
- Lutherans think of the 10 Commandments as Natural Law

Uses of the Law
1. Standards of right and wrong. Guidance for the Prince.
2. Our inability to keep them brings us to our knees
3. ????? A path for the sanctified ?????

What is a God? "To whatever we look for any good thing and for refuge in every need." -- Martin Luther in the Large Catechism
- Money/property
- Education/Reputation/Power/Standing…
- My Own spiritual accomplishments

God will not play second to any of these. God commands us to recognize and acknowledge that all good things come from him and that he is the only ultimate refuge

V 4 – 5a:
We think is a restatement of the first commandment. We think this obvious when you look at verses 5b-6 which clearly refer to the entirety of what comes before…

Other traditions label this as the second commandment and change the counting going forward consolidating our 9 and 10 into one single commandment…. Ok. Hard to swallow textually but not worth a big fight…

In some places this has meant no icons, no representations, no paintings, no sculptures representing God in any way. We think that in light of the incarnation, we honor God by representing and remembering….

V 5b-6:
Is this a threat? A promise? Or a simple declaration of how things are?

1. Reading Scripture through the lens of Jesus. Who is God?

The old guy with lights and sirens

Vs.

John 3:16…
And the pleasure of the Father at Jesus' life and conduct…
And the repeated insistence that Jesus and the Father are one.

2. And here's a big idea: the wrath of God as a manifestation of the love of God!
    - 8 yr old who thought sneaking away from his parents at the MN state fair would be funny
    - Kid who wouldn't stay put at the Birkebeiner
    - Parents of a kid using drugs or dabbling in crime

Look! You get this wrong your grandchildren and great-grandchildren will pay the price! You get this right and your children's children's children will bless you!

Plus, children ALWAYS pay for the sins of the parents…. Always…

A Word about the explanations in the catechism:
"Fear, Love and Trust…." ???

- Real Standards
- Real Consequences
- A God of real power – from whom you can ask, but from whom you may not demand. A God who has locked himself in a room with you and who will not be ignored!

So on to the Small Catechism!
The First Commandment
You Shall have no other Gods

What does this mean?
We are to fear, love and trust God above all things

Can you do this?
As a type of civil righteousness…. Sure
Really? Consistently? Truly? NO…. It isn't even close!
Already we are diagnosed.
Already we acknowledge that this is beyond us.
Already we know that we need rescue and redemption