

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Greetings from the parsonage! I'd say that Lent is winding down except that it is truly winding up. Everyday new things come up to do, but many of them are in preparation for an explosion of blessings we'll have starting with the end of last month going into this summer. Baptisms, confirmations, weddings, and weather-providing we'll actually get to do our outdoor service! The spring has come and winter is on it's last legs as our Lord is on the last leg of His journey to the cross, and from there to the ground, to the earth again in three days, and ultimately, to heaven, where He is preparing a place for each of us! In the meantime, here's our next look at the Book of Concord!



It may sound like I'm repeating myself from the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer, but Luther uses a lot of the same concepts in his conclusion to his explanation of the First Commandment. "Although much that is good comes to us from human beings, nevertheless, anything received according to his command and ordinance in fact comes from God. Our parents and all authorities—as well as everyone who is a neighbor—have received the command to do us all kinds of good. So we receive our blessings not from them, but from God through them (Book of Concord (BoC), p.389)." Seems vaguely familiar to receiving our daily bread from markets and farmers and truckers with God managing it all from above. And so He does!

Everything we receive according to God's established methods is a gift from Him which should be cherished, and for these things we should give the proper thanks. It doesn't matter if it's a child receiving good things from his or her mother or father, or a person receiving medicine for a cold or allergies from a pharmacy—they should each thank God for them.

“No one, therefore, should presume to take or give anything unless God has commanded it. This forces us to recognize God's gifts and give him thanks, as this commandment requires. Therefore, we should not spurn even this way of receiving such things from God's creatures, nor are we through arrogance to seek other methods and ways than those God has commanded. For that would not be receiving them from God, but seeking them from ourselves (BoC, p.389).”

Ultimately, then, this command asks us to acknowledge that every good gift comes from God and to thank Him for it—not only acknowledge it, but expect it! Whether you are in a period of plenty or want, health or sickness, good amount of work or too little or much, you can and should expect good things from God, and to ask Him for them. He is our giving God—a God so intent on giving that He gives us His good gifts in the Divine Service every Sunday morning, and what is more, His own Son for your salvation. In the Name of our crucified and risen Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen!

Your brother and under-Shepherd in Christ,

Pastor Josh

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