Sermon: “We should Fear, Love, and Trust in God above all things”

There are only a few things in Christianity that most if not all of the people in modern society have heard about. The top thing that most heard is the name Jesus, then the Bible, and finally the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are accepted by almost every religion as a wonderful summary of the law and how you and I as human beings ought to treat ourselves, others, as well as God. In the Ten Commandments, God gave his people Israel a summary of the moral law. The Commandments offered a basic distinction between right and wrong. Their prohibitions did not merely apply to outward conduct. They began by pointing to the importance of reverence for the one true God, the only source of all good. They ended by calling attention to people’s inner desires, their act of coveting, as the source of all evil.

Today we will focus our time on the First Commandment. You shall have no other gods. As many of you memorized this commandment as a child, the natural question that you and I would ask then is this: What does that mean? To have no other gods means that we should fear the true God, love the true God, and trust in the true God above all things. Now of course we know what those three things mean in principle, but today we will see what they mean in great detail.

**Fear the true God!** Whenever someone today talks about fearing something, usually it has every bit of emphasis on the terrified nature of the word. For example, I fear that wolves might come and attack me, I fear that I will forget my sermon, I fear that I will do something silly, etc...this type of fear though is not the type of fear that God desires us to have. The type of fear that we have for the true God is a fear which glorifies only him. When God tells us that we are to fear him, he explicitly tells us that it means to give glory to God above all things by placing his word and command above the word and command of anything else.

In your mind I want you to scan over the law of the Lord and realize what is being said in the First Commandment. When the Lord commands us to have no other gods, he is telling us to fear him and him alone. We are to place his words over the words of this world; to place his command over the command of our boss; to even place his commands over our own selfish desires. Fearing the true God is a difficult task which we fail at regularly. How many times have we fallen into sin with the old excuse, “Just this once” or “I don’t do this all of the time.” We put
what we want to do; what we know we shouldn’t do over what God commands us to do.

The first sin committed in the existence of the world was breaking the First Commandment. Adam and Eve did not give glory to God in their temptation. They instead committed sin by listening to Satan instead of the Lord.

Love the true God.
I think it is safe to say that the definition of “love” is out there in our world today. But is the definition that is most widely used by our society in line with our love for God? Society will surmise that “love” is a mere feeling that one has for another. Others would also add that “love” shows commitment to one person. God, when he tells us to have no other gods, desires us to love him by giving him glory above all things, and considering him dearer to us than anyone or anything else.

So please notice the difference between fearing God and loving God. Fearing God is giving all glory and putting what God says above everything else; and loving God is giving all glory and considering God himself dearer to us than anything else.

Many people have a big problem with this one little part of Luther’s explanation of the First Commandment. In a small amount of time, if we thought about it, we could fill up an entire notebook with things people, like you and me, love more than God. Here’s the short list. My things, my money, my time. Every single one of us here mismanage and show our love to our things, our money as well as our time more than we do God. But these three things however own the exclusive rights to why we don’t always love the Lord our God above everything else.

How many of us have made statements like these: “God must really hate me right now.” “God must be punishing me.” “God is really letting me have it.” Sometimes it is thoughts like these that Satan creeps into our mind to have us think, “If God isn’t loving me, I won’t love God.” Like a child we simply play the tit for tat game with God and we blame him for the wrong things that happen in our life.

There is a problem in our line of thinking though. God is incapable of doing evil. God cannot do wrong. God does not make us suffer.
Sin however is evil, is wrong, and is sufferable. Sin is the reason that bad things happen to us. God isn’t. Sin is what makes our bodies suffer pain, not God. Sin is what destroys our relationships here on earth. The problem lies within sin, not God. If you have a problem with trouble in this world, understand it’s because of sin. Not God.

For God is good, his love and mercy endure forever. This leads us to our final point of the day. Trust in the True God!

What is trust? Today’s definition of trust is a bit cloudy in comparison to trusting God. When a person says that they trust another person here on earth, the trust only goes so far. Let’s say you are standing on the chair and I tell you to trust me and fall into my arms. Most of you would have no problem with that. Most of you would show your trust by falling back into my arms. But let’s say that you are on top of a building and I told you to jump off and trust me there will be something down there to break your fall. Again some of you will do it; others will begin backing away, and probably take the elevator instead. Finally let’s say that you are in a plane with me. We both have our parachutes on, and I tell you jump. Trust me your chute will open. Now all of a sudden you are basing your trust on something that I cannot control. You are basing your trust or lack of trust in the packing of that chute and the trustworthiness of your rip cord. Trust. In these three examples I think it’s clear that trust here on earth and amongst humans only goes so far. But with God? How much can we trust in him? When we hear the first commandment, "You shall have no other gods," means that we do not trust in anything but the Lord. We are to rely on God for help more than anyone or anything else.

When we say that, that we rely on God for help more than anyone or anything else, I think this is the most difficult thing for an American to do. Notice God wants us to rely on him even more than we rely on ourselves. Rely on God to provide for you. Rely on God to sustain you. Rely on God to take care of you. Rely on God for food, drink, clothes, home, job, everything. We are breaking the first commandment, the moment we begin to take credit for anything we have in this life. I am who I am because of God’s richest blessings on me. Others may say, “A pastor doesn’t make much money, or can’t afford to do much,” I say, The Lord has blessed me with all of the things that he said he would. I am a poor and wretched
sinner who has failed just as many times at keeping this commandment as the rest of you.

Yet we are forgiven in the Lord Jesus Christ. One of the neat things about Jesus’ temptation out in the wilderness is that if Jesus would have slipped once he would have broken the 1st commandment. So often we focus on Jesus’ perfection and just say it, give it lip service. But as human beings who may be sinning in thought at this very moment, Christ Jesus never sinned. To ever temptation that Jesus faced he Feared, loved, and trusted in his Heavenly Father above all things. When he was tempted with food, he feared loved and trusted in his heavenly Father. When he was tempted to test out his guardian angels, he feared, loved, and trusted in his heavenly Father above all things. When he was tempted to kneel down to Satan for a reward, Jesus feared, loved, and trust in God above all things.

When Jesus walked the road to Calvary, he feared, loved, and trusted in his Lord. When he was praying to his Father in heaven in the Garden of Gethsemane, he said not my will but your will be done. Jesus feared, loved and trusted in his Father above all things. As he sat in trial and he heard the lies said about him, as he saw the hatred in the Pharisee’s eyes. As lie after lie was told to convict him in a sham of a trial; Jesus feared, loved and trusted in God the Father above all things. When he was punished by the Jews, whipped, beaten, and ridiculed; when he was nailed to the cross for my sins; even when the Lord himself forsaken him, Jesus feared, loved and trusted in God the Father above all things.

I am saved by Jesus. I am saved because of Jesus’ death and resurrection. The countless times that we have broken the first commandment, the countless sins that are on my heart and soul, by Jesus’ perfect life, because Jesus feared, loved, and trusted in God the Father above all things, that is why I am saved. Through the obedience of one man, Jesus, the many will be made righteous. Jesus Christ gave me at my baptism a beautiful robe of righteousness that I wear every day. Because he lives I will live. Because he was perfect, through faith in him we are perfect. Because he feared, loved and trusted in God above all things, we too through faith have as well. Praise Jesus for his perfect life. Praise Jesus for his innocent death. Praise Jesus for his glorious resurrection. Praise Jesus because he is our God. Our Savior, the one whom we fear, love and trust above all things. AMEN