

Week of Epiphany 2

First recite the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the weekly section of the Small Catechism. Then read the Proper and assigned Scripture reading followed by the devotion. Conclude with singing the hymn of the week.



Weekly Catechism section: *Eighth Commandment and Meaning (Luther's Small Catechism)*

Hymn of the Week: *Rejoice, My Heart, Be Glad and Sing (TLH 535)*

Monday - Introit (Ps. 66:4; 92:1; 66:1-5, 20)

Read Psalm 66.

In the Epiphany season we observe how God has made his glory known through his Son. God makes himself known by his Word and by his work. His Word declares who he is. And his work proves who he is. His Word and his work cannot be separated. As his Word declares that he created the world so does all creation declare this to be true (Ps. 19:1). The resurrection of Christ proves that his gospel is true. When we speak of God as a merciful God, we are not simply referring to some invisible attribute, like what the Muslims do with their false god. No, we are referring to the works of God. As our *Introit* says, taken from Psalm 66, "Say to God, 'How awesome are Your works!' . . . Come and see the works of God; He is awesome in His doing toward the sons of men." God doesn't speak apart from works. He has always accompanied his Word with signs. This is why Jesus performed miracles, beginning with turning water into wine. He was revealing himself to be God the Creator of all the elements. He also showed himself to be the Creator of marriage by blessing a wedding with this miracle. He is a God who works and accomplishes what his Word declares. And in this way he reveals his glory.

Our *Introit* comes mainly from Psalm 66, which describes how God brought his people out of Egypt by drying up the Red Sea, and he led them into the promised land through the Jordan River, which he also parted. Again, God showed himself to be the Creator who controls his creation when he brought his people, Israel, through the wilderness, caused rocks to bring forth water, sent manna for them to eat, and caused the sea and river to dry up. The fact that he has done these things is for our assurance to rely on his Word. He did not perform these wondrous

deeds to entertain us. He performed them to establish his Word, just as his death in our place and his resurrection establish his promise of forgiveness and salvation to us. His work justifies his Word. And this is why we can assert confidently with the Psalmist that the Lord has not turned away our prayers or withheld his mercy from us.

+++

Tuesday - Old Testament Lesson (Exodus 33:12-23)

Read Exodus 33.

God refused to show his face to Moses. He told him that no one can see God's face and live. So he showed him only his backside. Nevertheless, he promised to dwell with his people. Now that Christ has come, God has revealed his face. His first sign, which he performed at a wedding in Cana, was how Jesus manifested his glory, the same glory Moses longed to see. But now God dwells in flesh and blood.

And yet, who among us has seen the face of Jesus? Yes, we have been baptized, and we regularly eat his body and blood, which was given up for our sins. But can we, with our eyes, see Jesus? No, we cannot. We can see water, bread, and wine. We can see a preacher preaching. Meanwhile, we can see that our lives are not without sin. Marriages and other relationships often fall apart. Where is the face of God in all of this? It may seem that we are, like Moses, being held in check under the law, the backside of God, which gives us good direction but does not actually show us our Father's mercy. Are we being led through the wilderness of Sinai? Did not the Son of God come in the flesh to make all things new? Did he not manifest his glory to his disciples? Yes, he did. Jesus revealed the face of God by blessing a marriage feast. He took water, which only washes outwardly, and made it wine, which gladdens the heart (Ps. 104:15). He made good wine, not the kind you just drink after your tastebuds are numbed from alcohol. It signifies his invitation to us that we taste and see that the Lord is good (Ps. 34:8), and that his mercies are new every morning (Lam 3:23). This miraculous wine was a sign that he would make all things new by his suffering and death for the sins of the world. The face of God publicly revealed at Cana is now publicly proclaimed among us. Though we continue to see the back of God showing us our sinful hearts, the Word of Christ promises that we shall see his face. In the meantime, though we cannot see it, he reveals his face to us in his Word and Sacraments. And we behold it by faith.

+++

Wednesday - Gradual (Psalm 107:20-21)

Read Psalm 107.

Our *Gradual* is from Psalm 107, a psalm about thanksgiving. Here, the psalmist continues to exclaim, "Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!" This refrain repeats throughout a litany God's works of deliverance. The theme is always the same. Man fell into danger. Man sinned. Man was helpless. God delivered him. As the Psalm concludes it says that those who are wise will recognize all of these gracious works of God. In other words, those who trust in God's Word, recognizing that all things hold together because of it, trembling before this Word -- these are those who are wise. As the Psalmist said, God sent his Word and healed them, delivering them from their destructions.

The one who is wise, whose eyes have been opened and whose spirit has been healed by the Word of God, will be able to recognize the glory of God. The season of Epiphany is about God revealing himself through his Son, Jesus Christ. On the second Sunday after Epiphany we hear of Jesus' first miracle in which he turned water into wine at a wedding feast. In this way he revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him. Jesus turned the water into wine by his own Word. This is very significant that Jesus does this at a wedding. The first thing to be attacked when Adam and Eve fell into sin was their marriage. When God confronted Adam about his sin, he blamed his wife, and he blamed God for giving her to him. Jesus comes as the pure Bridegroom of his church in order to restore what Adam and Eve destroyed. God's promise to Adam and Eve that the Offspring of the woman would destroy the power of the devil is what healed Adam and Eve's marriage. This is why Adam named his wife Eve, because through God's promise he could now see his wife again as a true blessing, the mother of the living. God sent his Word and healed them, and he delivered them from their destructions. Those who have trouble in their marriages or in their lives are wise when they recognize this healing Word of our Savior. Thank God, our gracious head, for his goodness and redemption!

+++

Thursday - Epistle (Ephesians 5:22-33)

Read Ephesians 5-6:9.

When I was in college I worked at a bar and grill. After my shifts I often ate dinner at the bar and talked to whomever also happened to be sitting there. I recall one conversation with a lady who was telling me that she

didn't like Lutherans, because every time she went to a Lutheran wedding the wife always vowed to submit to her husband. She didn't like that. I told her that it wasn't the Lutherans who came up with it. They got it from the Bible. She didn't seem to care. People don't like God's Word. It's that simple. This is especially true when we consider what the Bible says about husbands and wives. People would rather not hear about that. And this is understandable from the perspective of human reason. After all, it's not really fair for a woman whose husband is cruel, unintelligent, or incompetent to recognize him as her head and even to respect him. God certainly knows this. But this is part of why it is such a mystery.

St. Paul tells wives to submit to their husbands as the church submits to Christ. He tells husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church. This is a blow against all of human reason's tricks. Ever since the days of Moses, men have been looking for excuses to divorce their wives. She's lost her beauty, her smile, her sweet disposition, and she isn't that pleasant anymore. It's not fair that I have to love her, take care of her, and forsake all others for her. But the mystery of the gospel is not grasped by human reason trying to get a fair deal. It is grasped only by faith. When a Christian woman considers her duty toward her husband as a confession of her submission to Christ her Savior, she is living by faith. When a Christian man considers his wife to be as precious to him as the church is to Christ who shed his blood for her and cleansed her from sin in baptism, then he is living by faith. They both learn to rely on the gift of salvation in their baptism as faith clings to Christ in the most concrete situations. This is especially true in the station of marriage. In all blessings as well as struggles we have a picture of Christ and his church. And though the world cannot recognize it, we see through faith the most beautiful picture on earth.

+++

Friday - Alleluia (Psalm 148:2)

Read Psalm 148.

Alleluia means "Praise the Lord." This is why we can see our *Alleluia verse* for this week as simply an extended singing of Alleluia. We sing the second verse of Psalm 148: "Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts!" Psalm 148 invokes all of creation to praise God, because all of creation bears witness to the fact that he created the heavens and the earth. When we consider creation, we should see this as a constant doxology to God, a continual Alleluia. This is quite appropriate for us to consider immediately before the Gospel lesson for this week. In John 2

we hear of Jesus, the Lord and Creator of all things, attending a wedding. He shows himself to be the Creator and controller of the elements by performing his first miracle.. He also shows himself to be a Lord who cares about his creation. He cares about your marriage and your home. He has established this domestic estate in paradise. This means that he desires to bless it. He blesses it with children and all good things. He has redeemed all the members of your house with his own blood. And he sends his angels to attend you.

So we call on the angels, along with all of creation, to praise the Lord for his great works. He has not abandoned his creation, but he has exalted the horn of his people. In other words, he has raised up a horn of salvation from the house of his servant, David. The glory, which stands far above the heavens, is now revealed in the flesh and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

+++

Saturday - Gospel (John 2:1-11)

Read John 2.

Jesus blesses marriage. Turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana was his first miracle, and it is very significant, since it reveals that God has redeemed his creation. You see, marriage is the estate that God established in creation. Therefore, when Jesus blesses a marriage feast with wine, he is blessing his creation. He reveals his intent to redeem that which he has created. Jesus does not save us from a tyrannical creator who is out to get us. No, he saves us from our sins and the wrath that our righteous God reveals against those sins. He therefore reconciles us back to our Creator, who loves us.

He has claimed the church as his holy bride from whom he will never separate. Just as much as he hates divorce (Malachi 2:16), he will not separate from us, whom he has bought with his own blood and cleansed through Baptism (Eph 5:25-27).

So just as surely as our God has created us, he has also loved us. He has redeemed us by the blood of Christ, which he gives to us to drink. Just as surely as God makes a husband and wife one flesh (Gen 2:24; Matt 19:5), he has united us to the body of Christ (Eph 5:23, 30), having canceled the record of debt that stood against us (Col 2:14). He has condemned our sin in his own body (Rom 8:3), which he gives to us to eat.

Just as surely as God desires unity within marriage, he desires unity among the one body, the church. Both remain united when they submit to God's Word. And submission is not a burdensome and oppressive endeavor. While it evokes fear of God, it consists of love and trust in the kindness of the Lord. While we struggle against the pride and selfishness of our own flesh, our Lord continues to preserve his creation for whom he died, blessing us with the cup of salvation.

+++

535

Rejoice, My Heart, Be Glad and Sing

Ps. 56 : 8

Ich singe dir mit Herz und Mund

Paul Gerhardt, 1653, cento

Tr., John Kelly, 1867, alt.

C. M.

Ich singe dir

"Harmonischer Liederschatz"

Frankfurt, 1738



1 Re - joice, my heart, be glad and sing, A cheer-ful trust main-tain;
 2 He is thy Trea-sure, He thy Joy, Thy Life and Light and Lord,
 3 Why spend the day in blank de-spair, In rest-less tho't the night?
 4 Did not His love and truth and pow'r Watch o'er thy child-hood day?



For God, the Source of ev-'ry-thing, Thy Por-tion shall re-main.
 Thy Coun-sel - or when doubts an-noy, Thy Shield and great Re-ward.
 On thy Cre - a - tor cast thy care; He makes thy bur-dens light.
 Has He not oft in threat'ning hour Turned dreaded ills a - way? A-men.



5 He ever will with patience chide,
 His rod falls gently down,
 And all thy sins He casts aside
 And in the sea doth drown.

7 He knows how oft a Christian weeps
 And why his tears now fall;
 And in the book His mercy keeps
 These things are noted all.

6 When silent woe thy bosom rends,
 His pity sees thy grief,
 Supplies what to His glory tends
 And to thine own relief.

8 His wisdom never plans in vain,
 Ne'er falters or mistakes;
 All that His counsels did ordain
 A happy ending makes.

9 Upon thy lips, then, lay thy hand
 And trust His guiding love;
 Then like a rock thy peace shall stand
 Here and in heaven above.