

Worship the Lord

by Pastor Jeff Blain

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.” Exodus 20:2-3

These are the opening words of the covenant that God made with the Israelites at Mount Sinai, after He led Moses and the people across the sea. If you had any confirmation classes as a child, you will likely recognize this is also the beginning of what we call the 10 Commandments.

As God begins to lay out what it means to be His people, it starts with a reminder of who God is – I am the Lord, your God – and what God has done – brought out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. And the first thing that God spells out for them – and for us – is this command to have NO OTHER GODS!

If you were raised in a Lutheran congregation as a child, there’s a very good chance that somewhere along the way you did some memory work with Martin Luther’s Small Catechism. (Of course, the chance is probably not so good that you remember all the stuff you once had memorized – but maybe some of it is still locked away up there!!!) But unless your pastor was a real commandant – or unless you did a little “extra credit” – you may not have ever done much reading in Martin Luther’s Large Catechism. (Yes, there is a LARGE one, which is why there is also a “small” one!)

In his Large Catechism, Luther says that a “god” is whatever we look to in times of trouble and need. Your “god” is whatever you put your trust in. And from Luther’s vantage point, there is no such thing as an atheist. After all, everybody puts their trust into something. The question for Luther – and for us! – is what do you trust? Is your trust in the one, true God? Or is your trust in a false god or an idol?

Is your confidence placed in your job, your reputation, your marriage, your family, your income, your health, your savings, your mental capacity, your physical prowess, your good looks, your (fill-in-the-blank)? Notice that these are ALL good things! And if you were asked to make a list of the “blessings” God has given you, these are what most of us would write down! But sometimes, the good can try to take throne! And as the verse above points out, there is only room for one on the throne of our lives, and that one is our God.

Worship the Lord. That’s what we want to do here at Ascension. Will we do it perfectly? No. But we’re gonna try!

Holy God, help me to have nothing at the center of my life except You. I know how easy it is for me to put other things on the throne of my life – and many of them are really good

things – until I put them there! Open my eyes to see those people or things who compete for my affections and loyalty, and help me to keep them all in a heavenly and eternal perspective. In Jesus' name, AMEN.