



LORD, HAVE MERCY

FOR FAILING TO LIVE WITH INTEGRITY

Service Notes

We use the word “integrity” to refer to something being in good condition. So, we talk about the structural integrity of a building or of a ship’s hull. We mean those things are “sound” and “whole.” We use “integrity” in reference to people too. Generally, if we speak of someone having integrity, we mean that there’s a wholeness to their character. Their morals are sound. If someone lives with integrity, it is not simply that they talk and behave decently. We would say the reason their behavior is proper is because their values and desires are proper.

The first six Commandments deal with our relationships with others: God and our fellow man. The final four Commandments get at the question of personal integrity. When someone steals, lies, or covets, it is a clear indication that their values and desires are highly improper. Such a person lacks honesty, empathy, and contentment. They say and do bad things because they are bad, not “sound and whole.” It is harsh, yet unflinchingly true. Thus, when we break one of these Commandments, it is pointless to make excuses. Let us simply cry out, “Lord, have mercy, for failing to live with integrity!” And let us trust the Christ, who died so that we might be made “sound and whole.”

Opening Sentences

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

Who made heaven and earth.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, during the days of Lent, we fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God.

The time of Lent reminds us that to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, we must also know the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.

As disciples of the Lord Jesus, we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to confess your sins, ask our Father for forgiveness, and commit yourselves to this struggle.

Response

652 Lord, Have Mercy sts. 1, Refrain 1

1 For what we have done and left un - done we fall on your
count - less mer - cies. For sins that are known and
those un - known we call on your name so ho - ly.
For en - vy and pride, for clos - ing our eyes; for
scorn - ing our ver - y neigh - bor. In
thought, word, and deed we've failed you, our King; how
deep - ly we need a Sav - ior. Refrain 1

Refrain I

Lord, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy
 on us. Lord, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy,
 Lord, have mer - cy on us.

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Absolution

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not desire the death of sinners but rather that they turn from their wickedness and live. Therefore, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

During these days of Lent, let us implore God to give us renewal and his Holy Spirit. May we continue to abide in the true faith and at the last be received by him through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hymn

652 Lord, Have Mercy sts. 2, Refrain II

(2 For) what you have done, your life of love you per - fect - ly
 lived, we praise you. Though tempt - ed and tried, you
 fixed your eyes; you fin - ished the work God gave you.

And there on the tree, a King a - mong thieves, you
 bled for a world's be - tray - al. You
 loved to the end, our mer - ci - ful friend; how
 pure and for - ev - er faith - ful. *Refrain II*
Refrain II
 Lord, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy
 on us. Lord, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy,
 Lord, have mer - cy on us. on us.

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Prayer

Lord, we dare not come into your holy presence with our own righteousness. But because your Son lived the perfect life in our place—because his walk was blameless and he always did what was righteous—we will never be shaken. Make our walk be blameless too, so that our lives are a sacrifice of thanksgiving to him for all he has accomplished for us. In his name we pray.

Amen.

First Reading

Proverbs 6:12–19

Solomon explains how the Lord feels about those who live without integrity.

- ¹²A worthless, wicked scoundrel,
 who goes around with a corrupt mouth,
¹³who winks with his eye, signals with his foot,

and gestures with his fingers,
¹⁴who plots evil with a deceitful heart—
he always spreads conflict.

¹⁵Therefore his disaster will come upon him suddenly.
All at once he will be broken, and there will be no remedy.

¹⁶These are six things the LORD hates,
seven things that really disgust him:

¹⁷arrogant eyes, a lying tongue,
hands that shed innocent blood,

¹⁸a heart that devises wicked plans,
feet that run quickly to do evil,

¹⁹a false witness who breathes lies,
and a person who spreads conflict between brothers. (EHV®)

Second Reading

1 Timothy 6:6–10

St. Paul warns against the harmful desires that demonstrate a lack of integrity and choke off contentment.

⁶But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷For we brought nothing into the world, and we certainly cannot take anything out.

⁸But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be satisfied.

⁹Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge them into complete destruction and utter ruin. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evils. By striving for money, some have wandered away from the faith and have pierced themselves with many pains. (EHV®)

Passion Reading

Luke 23:1–25

Pontius Pilate declared Jesus to be a man of integrity who had done no wrong. Still, Jesus was punished in our place, so that we might be mercifully spared.

¹The whole group of them got up and brought him before Pilate.

²They began to accuse him, saying, “We found this fellow misleading our nation, forbidding the payment of taxes to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king.”

³Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?”

“It is as you say,” Jesus replied.

⁴Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, “I find no basis for a charge against this man.”

⁵But they kept insisting, “He stirs up the people, teaching all through Judea, beginning from Galilee all the way here.”

⁶When Pilate heard this, he asked if the man was a Galilean. ⁷When he learned that he was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem during those days.

⁸When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad. For a long time, he had wanted to see him, because he had heard many things about him. He hoped to see some miracle performed by him. ⁹He questioned him with many words, but Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰The chief priests and the experts in the law stood there, vehemently accusing him. ¹¹Herod, along with his soldiers, treated him with contempt and ridiculed him. Dressing him in bright clothing, he sent him back to Pilate. ¹²Herod and Pilate became friends with each other on that day. Before this they had been enemies of each other.

¹³Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, ¹⁴and said to them, “You brought this man to me as one who is misleading the people. Look, I have examined him in your presence. I have found in this man no basis for the charges you are bringing against him. ¹⁵Herod did not either, for he sent him back to us. See, he has done nothing worthy of death. ¹⁶So I will have him flogged and release him.”

¹⁷Pilate needed to release one prisoner to them at the Festival. ¹⁸But they all shouted together with one voice: “Take him away! Release Barabbas to us!” ¹⁹Barabbas had been thrown in prison for a rebellion in the city and for murder.

²⁰Pilate addressed them again, because he wanted to release Jesus. ²¹But they kept shouting, “Crucify! Crucify him!”

²²He said to them the third time, “Why? What evil has he done? I have found no grounds for sentencing him to death. So I will whip him and release him.” ²³But they kept pressuring him with loud voices, demanding that he be crucified. And their voices were overwhelming. ²⁴So Pilate decided that what they demanded would be done. ²⁵He released the one they had asked for, who had been thrown in prison for rebellion and murder, but he handed Jesus over to their will. (EHV®)

Hymn of the Day

634 *These Are the Holy Ten Commands*
(sts.1,11-13,3,4)

Confession of Faith

from the Small Catechism

The Seventh Commandment: You shall not steal.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not take our neighbor's money or property, or get it by dishonest dealing, but help him to improve and protect his property and means of income.

The Eighth Commandment: You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, or give him a bad name, but defend him, speak well of him, and take his words and actions in the kindest possible way.

The Ninth Commandment: You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or obtain it by a show of right, but do all we can to help him keep it.

The Tenth Commandment: You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, workers, animals, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not force or entice away our neighbor's spouse, workers, or animals, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

Sermon

Mirror Integrity?

Offering

Prayer

For the leaders of our synod and district, for all pastors in Christ, for all who are servants of the Church, and for all the people of God, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For all who govern our nation and for all public servants, that they may be upheld and strengthened for every good deed, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For those who work to bring peace, justice, health, and protection in this and every place, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For those who bring offerings, those who do good works in this congregations, those who toil, those who sing, and all who await from the Lord great and abundant mercy, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For favorable weather, for an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger, and need, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For the faithful who have gone before us and are with Christ, let us give thanks to the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Rejoicing in the fellowship of all the saints, let us commend ourselves, one another, and our whole life to Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Blessing

The grace of our Lord † Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Amen.

Hymn

397 My Song Is Love Unknown

