



# LORD, HAVE MERCY

## FOR ABUSING YOUR COMMANDMENTS

### Service Notes

*How does one abuse God's Commandments? That seems like an easy question. You abuse God's Commandments by breaking them. However, there is another way to abuse God's Commandments—by striving to not break them in an effort to win God's favor and earn our place in heaven. The second abuse is infinitely worse than the first, as it sets aside God's perfect plan of salvation for a completely different plan that will never work. Satan often works by turning a blessing into a curse. God intended for his law to serve as a mirror, enabling us to see our sin and thus our need for a Savior.*

*Satan would have us believe the law is more like a ladder, and that with focused effort we can climb our way up to God. This misguided belief leaves us in one of two undesirable places. Either we are overwhelmed with guilt when we realize we cannot climb that ladder, or we are swelling with damnable pride because we think we are near the top rung. We conclude our Lenten series by calling out: "Lord, have mercy, for abusing your commandments!" We rest secure in the gospel truth that since Christ was lifted high on a cross, we don't need to try and lift ourselves up to God. God's favor, salvation, an eternity in heaven—these things are already ours! Our attempts to obey the Commandments can therefore flow from gratitude, not desperation.*

## 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.

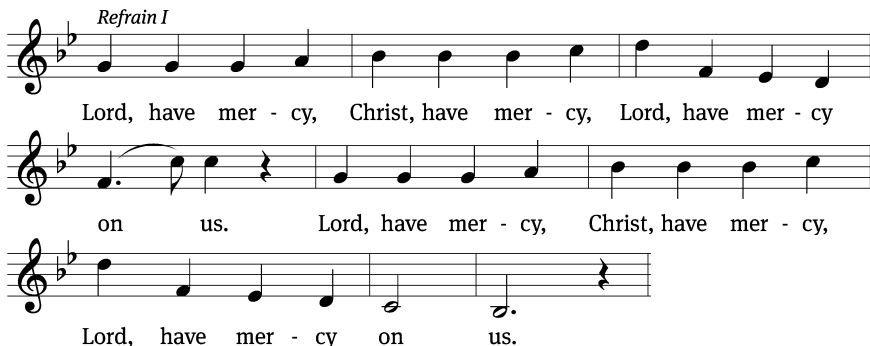
As disciples of the Lord Jesus, we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to confess your sins, ask our Father for forgiveness, and commit yourselves to this struggle.

## 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  $\text{T}$  and of the Holy Spirit.

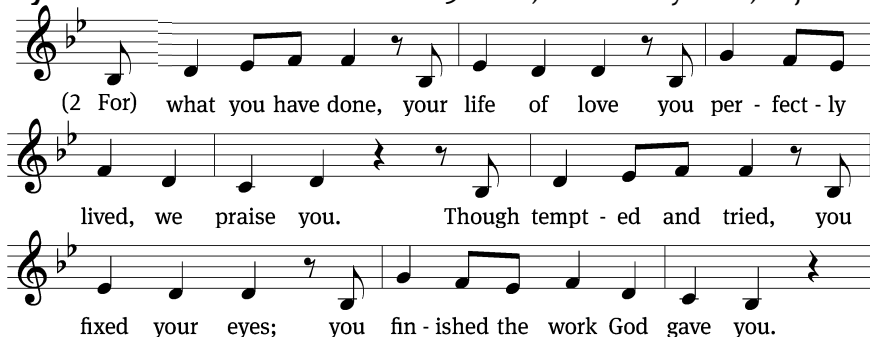
During these days of Lent, let us implore God to give us renewal and his Holy Spirit. May we continue to abide in the true faith and at the last be received by him through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**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. *Fine (last time)*

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## Prayer

Merciful God, with souls parched by sin and spirits withered by enemies within and without, we lift our hands to you. Lead us by your Spirit on the path of truth, and guard us from all harm, trusting in Jesus Christ, our refuge and our righteousness.

**Amen.**

## First Reading

*Isaiah 64:5–9*

*Isaiah teaches that even our righteous acts are tainted with sin and cannot help us. So, we run to our Father and ask for his mercy.*

<sup>5</sup>You meet anyone who joyfully practices righteousness, who remembers you by walking in your ways! But you were angry because we sinned. We have remained in our sins for a long time.

Can we still be saved?

<sup>6</sup>All of us have become like something unclean, and all our righteous acts are like a filthy cloth. All of us have withered like a leaf, and our guilt carries us away like the wind. <sup>7</sup>There is no one who calls on your name, who rouses himself to take hold of you. So you hid your face from us. You made us melt by the power of our guilt. <sup>8</sup>But now, LORD, you are our father. We are the clay, and you are our potter. All of us are the work of your hand. <sup>9</sup>Do not be angry, LORD, without limit. Do not remember our guilt forever. Please look closely. All of us are your people. (EHV®)

## **Second Reading**

Romans 3:19–25a

*The law can make us conscious of our sin, but it cannot make us righteous. In his mercy, God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement to make us righteous.*

<sup>19</sup>Now we know that whatever the law says is addressed to those who are under the law, so that every mouth will be silenced and the whole world will be subject to God's judgment. <sup>20</sup>For this reason, no one will be declared righteous in his sight by works of the law, for through the law we become aware of sin.

<sup>21</sup>But now, completely apart from the law, a righteousness from God has been made known. The Law and the Prophets testify to it. <sup>22</sup>This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all and over all who believe.

In fact, there is no difference, <sup>23</sup>because all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God <sup>24</sup>and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup>whom God publicly displayed as the atonement seat through faith in his blood. God did this to demonstrate his justice, since, in his divine restraint, he had left the sins that were committed earlier unpunished. (EHV®)

## **Passion Reading**

Luke 23:26–56

*Jesus willingly submits to death to atone for our abuse of his commandments.*

<sup>26</sup>As they led him away, they seized Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country. They placed the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. <sup>27</sup>A large crowd of people was following him, including women who were mourning and wailing for him. <sup>28</sup>Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.

<sup>29</sup>Be sure of this: The days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the childless women, the wombs that never gave birth, and the breasts that never nursed.' <sup>30</sup>Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us.' <sup>31</sup>For if they do these things to the green wood, what will happen to the dry?"

<sup>32</sup>Two other men, who were criminals, were led away with Jesus to be executed.

<sup>33</sup>When they came to the place called The Skull, they crucified him there with the criminals, one on his right and the other on his left.

<sup>34</sup>Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

They cast lots to divide his garments among them. <sup>35</sup>The people stood watching. The rulers were ridiculing him, saying, "He saved others. Let him save himself, if this is the Christ of God, the Chosen One!"

<sup>36</sup>The soldiers also made fun of him. Coming up to him, they offered him sour wine, <sup>37</sup>saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!"

<sup>38</sup>There was also an inscription written above him: "This is the King of the Jews."

<sup>39</sup>One of the criminals hanging there was blaspheming him, saying, "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!"

<sup>40</sup>But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God, since you are under the same condemnation? <sup>41</sup>We are punished justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for what we have done, but this man has done nothing wrong." <sup>42</sup>Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingdom."

<sup>43</sup>Jesus said to him, "Amen I tell you: Today you will be with me in paradise."

<sup>44</sup>It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, <sup>45</sup>while the sun was darkened. Then the curtain of the temple was torn in two. <sup>46</sup>Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" When he had said this, he breathed his last.

<sup>47</sup>When the centurion saw what had happened, he began to glorify God, saying, "This man really was righteous." <sup>48</sup>When all the groups of people who had gathered to see this spectacle saw what had happened, they returned home beating their chests. <sup>49</sup>All those who knew Jesus, and the women who followed with him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

<sup>50</sup>Now there was a man named Joseph, from the Jewish town of Arimathea, who was a member of the Council, a good and righteous man. <sup>51</sup>He had not agreed with their plan and action. He was looking forward to the kingdom of God. <sup>52</sup>This man went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. <sup>53</sup>He took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and placed it in a tomb that was cut out of rock, where no one had yet been laid. <sup>54</sup>It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was beginning. <sup>55</sup>The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed after Joseph, and they observed the tomb and how his body was laid there. <sup>56</sup>Then they returned and prepared spices and perfumes. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment. (EHV®)

## Hymn of the Day

637 *The Law of God Is Good and Wise*

## Confession of Faith

*from the Small Catechism*

The Conclusion: *What does God say about all these commandments?*

**He says, "I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments."**

*What does this mean?*

**God threatens to punish all who transgress these commandments. Therefore we should fear his anger and not disobey what he commands. But he promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments. Therefore we should love and trust in him and gladly obey what he commands.**

## Sermon

## 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  $\text{T}$  Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.  
**Amen.**

## **Hymn**

*434 Upon the Cross Extended*