



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

April 2, 2025

Pastor David Ruddat

Lenten Midweek 4

Passion History: [Luke 23:1-25](#)

Reading: [1 Corinthians 13:1-13](#)

Devotion Text: 4th-6th Commandments ([see Exodus 20](#))

LORD, HAVE MERCY: FOR TREATING OTHERS LIKE TRASH, NOT TREASURE

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

The Fourth Commandment: *Honor your father and mother, that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.* What does this mean? We should fear and love God that we do not dishonor or anger our parents and others in authority, but honor, serve and obey them, and give them love and respect.

The Fifth Commandment: *You shall not murder.* What does this mean? We should fear and love God that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in their body but help and be a friend to him in every bodily need.

The Sixth Commandment: *You shall not commit adultery.* What does this mean? We should fear and love God that we lead a pure and decent life in words and actions, and that husband and wife love and honor each other.

Grace, mercy and peace are yours from God our Father through our Lord and our Savior Jesus Christ.

Alright kids, without looking at your Bulletin, who can tell me the 4th Commandment? Go ahead. "You shall not murder." Ooh, that's the 5th Commandment. What is the 4th Commandment? "You shall not steal." That's a different Commandment; that's the 7th; that's next week. "Honor your father and mother, that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." Yes, there you go. 5th Commandment we got. What is the 6th Commandment? Without looking at your Bulletin, what is the 6th Commandment? Steal is 7th, so what is the one right before it? "You shall not commit adultery." Very good; I think you looked at your Bulletin, but that's okay. We need to keep moving.

God is love. John says that in [1 John 4:8](#). What he means by that is that God isn't aspiring to love like love is some sort of idea over here and God is trying to be like that.

No, he is saying God is the architect. God is the original stamp as to what really is love. Love as we define it is doing what is best for someone else. It's delighting in someone else and what is best for them. It's an act of the will, wanting to do what is best, not for me, but for someone else.

If you read through all of the Gospel of John, you see Jesus do that when it talks about His Father and the Holy Spirit. You see Jesus saying, "I'm not coming here to do my will but the Father's will." Jesus delights in the Father. When Jesus is baptized, what happens? The Father speaks from heaven. He booms from heaven and says, "***This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.***" [\(Matthew 3:17\)](#) And then later on in the end of John, Jesus says, "It's sad that I'm going away because I have to suffer and die and rise again, but if I don't go away, the Holy Spirit can't come. When the Holy Spirit comes, it is going to be awesome when He comes because He is going to convict the world of sin, He is going to impart the righteousness of God to them, He is going to do this wonderful activity among you, and it's going to be awesome."

God is love. As you see the Triune God in the Gospel of John, you see a God whose relationship with each other is one of harmony. So when God created Adam and Eve, what does God seek to do to them? The two will become one flesh. They are going to be united to one another. They are also going to be showing love to each other, just like the Father showed love to the Son and the Holy Spirit. But of course, they sinned. A relationship like that is destroyed. Children of Israel sinned. God, when He comes and He rescues them out of Egypt, they demonstrate time and time again how they hate each other, they don't like each other, they don't like God. Then God sends them to Mount Sinai and He tells them, first of all, that He loves them. "I am the God who rescued you out of Egypt, and now here are ten words." We call them Commandments, but they are ten words in Exodus.

The Commandments we are looking at today (the 4th, 5th and 6th Commandments, which get recited for us) are to remind us that relationships are important to God. You see, interestingly enough, the circle of relationships that happen in the 4th, 5th and 6th Commandments. The 4th Commandment: honor your father and mother. You have the family; father and mother (that's the ideal setting) raising their children, children honoring their parents. Parents loving and delighting and doing what is best for their kids and kids doing the same thing. Then those kids get older and they learn that they are going to be in other relationships as well. They learn don't kill those other people. Learn to live with other people. Learn to respect that the other people that are breathing here on this earth are human beings, too. Then find that special someone among all those human beings; that Mr. or Mrs. Perfect, or Mr. or Mrs. Semi-perfect, get married and stay together. Then in that marriage, they produce children and then you've got this circle and you are back to the 4th Commandment. But in all of those Commandments, you are going to need, for the ideal, love. Not the emotion love that we think of, but God's version of love, the architect of love, that unselfish act of the will that delights in someone else.

When we look at these Commandments, we see what God is asking of us, why He is asking it of us, and the role of mercy in our relationships. The 4th Commandment: **honor your father and mother, that it may go well with you and that you may live a long life on the earth.** Martin Luther, in his explanation to that 4th Commandment, sees a greater relationship, a relationship of those in authority. And kids learn in confirmation or in Christ Light, "Oh yeah, who are those people in authority? They are not just my mom or my dad, but also those in my government, and also those in my church; pastors, teachers, church leaders." Those are God's authority, too. Luther saw that there was an authority beyond all of those, and that is God. For us to honor our parents, to honor church leaders, to honor our government, we are seeing behind all of those things God.

The 5th Commandment: **you shall not murder.** What is God protecting there? He is protecting that life of the community, protecting not just those who are close to you, not just those people that you like, but people that you don't like. Jesus takes it even further than you shall not murder. He says anyone who hates someone else is a murderer. In fact, on the Last Day, when Jesus makes this public announcement as to who is going where, who is going to heaven, who is going to hell, what is He saying? He could pick any of the Commandments and send people to heaven or hell based on that, but He picks the fifth one. "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was naked and you gave me some clothes to wear," so on and so forth. You and I know there is no way we can keep the 5th Commandment, and it's only through faith in Jesus that God will look at us and say we are perfect, that we are keeping the Commandments. But it is interesting. On the Last Day, Jesus tells us He is going to judge all of humanity on the 5th Commandment. ([Read 1 John 3:15-17, Matthew 5, Matthew 25:31-46](#))

The 6th Commandment: **you shall not commit adultery.** God is protecting the wonderful gift of marriage; that wonderful gift of devotion and fidelity to each other where two people are so intimately connected, not just physically or emotionally but even chemically. The social sciences tell us that what happens in the bedroom actually rewires your brain so that you are more close to that person that you are with. It's a wonderful gift God has given.

Why does God say you shall not murder or commit adultery, honor your father and mother? First, God understands human nature. We all have a sinful nature. As I went through the 4th, 5th and 6th Commandments you say, "Pastor, I got this. I got these. I'm glad Jesus is picking the 5th Commandment because I will never kill anybody." I have to ask you why? Why aren't you going to kill anybody? What keeps you from doing that? Do you actually love your neighbor? No, maybe it's because you don't want to kill someone because you know you'll get caught. What keeps you honoring your father and mother? What keeps you from calling your mother a stupid idiot? You would never

dream of doing that. Why? It's because you have the Law as a curb and you know what your mom is going to do if you call her a stupid idiot.

God knows our human nature. What is keeping us from breaking these Commandments is not a love of our neighbor. We are consistently de-humanizing our neighbor. We look at government and we start complaining about government. "They are a bunch of idiots" we say. We forget that behind that government (no matter whether we elected them or not or whether we voted for them or not) is our God. We should honor them. We don't want to harm our neighbor, but we know Jesus' strong words—whoever hates their neighbor, whoever is looking at another human being and saying "They're not worth as much as I am. I'm better..." We want to put some distance between us and these Commandments. We think of the 6th Commandment and how that is broken in today's society—looking at women, not as beautiful gifts that God has given to us but objects that will satisfy our desires.

God knows our sinful nature. God knows what we are capable of. God also knows the agony that happens when these relationships are broken.

A man can put up with a lot of disrespect at work. Co-workers can say all kinds of bad things to him. His boss can make his life miserable. But he knows he is providing for his family so all of that stuff just rolls right off his back. He enters his home and he greets his kids with joy. They have no idea the torment that he goes through. He is tough. That stuff will not stick to him at all. But then the minute that one of his children says to him, "I hate you," his heart just melts. The hurt is there.

A mom can watch terrible things on television. It can move her a little bit to see all the terrible things going on in this world, but it doesn't move her as much as the harsh words said to her by her husband.

God knows the potential for human agony. He knows how we can look at others and see them as **trash, not treasure**. We can look at others and think *what can they do for me?* Not what I can do for them.

During this Lenten journey, that phrase becomes so much more meaningful, **Lord, have mercy**, when we examine our lives according to those Ten Commandments and we say, "I am not treating others like treasure but I'm treating them like trash. Lord, have mercy on me."

While you and I might think that we are trash or we may even have people that make our lives feel like we're living like we are trash, Jesus does not think that you are trash. You are a treasure that He bought with His own blood. He lived a life in a loving relationship, not just with His Heavenly Father but also with His sinful human parents. He honored them.

Even in our Passion reading for today, all that disrespect that was shown to Jesus by Herod and by Pilate Jesus did not respond to in anger. He did not lash out. He still treated them with respect and honor. When people struck Jesus, He still treated them with respect. He did not de-humanize anyone but saw them all as ones for whom He was willing to die for.

Jesus wants a close relationship with you. He calls you His bride. Read [1 Corinthians 13](#) once again and instead of saying "love" just say "Jesus." ⁴*Jesus is patient, Jesus is kind. Jesus does not envy, Jesus does not boast, Jesus is not proud.* ⁵*He does not dishonor others, He is not self-seeking, He is not easily angered, He keeps no record of wrongs.* ⁶*Jesus does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.* ⁷*He always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.* ⁸*Jesus never fails.*

Jesus endured all things so that you and I would avoid the greatest pain of all, the greatest agony of all, and the greatest relationship hurt of all. On the cross Jesus was forsaken by God and said, ***"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*** ([See passages here](#)) He was separated from His God, that relationship that He had cherished throughout His life. He suffered that separation so that you would never have to say "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Jesus made you His treasure. Because Jesus loved you, because Jesus made you His treasure, you are free. You are free from looking to your relationships for your source of identity.

Parents, you know your children have a perfect Father in heaven. So as you are trying to parent your kids and you are trying to demonstrate love for them, cherishing them, doing what is right for them, you know that behind you is your Heavenly Father. Even if you would fail, your Heavenly Father is not going to fail them. Children, you can show honor to your parents. You are free to do so even if your parents don't deserve your respect because you know your Heavenly Father takes care of you.

You don't need perfect neighbors to love your neighbors, for Jesus is your perfect neighbor, watching out for you so that you can watch out for others. Jesus is the perfect spouse, so you should stop looking for that perfect spouse to fill your heart because you know your Bridegroom loves you, and He delights in you. So show some love to your Spouse because you are not trash. You are treasured by Jesus.

In Christ, you and I have been shown mercy for treating others like trash. Our deepest satisfaction comes in our relationship with God, a relationship where God, because of Christ, views us as His treasures. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ([Philippians 4:7](#)) Amen.