

# Sermon for A Year with the Catechism The Fourth Commandment

**Date:** October 3, 2021

**Location:** St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

**Old Testament:** Deuteronomy 6:1-9

**Epistle Reading:** Romans 13:1-7

**Gospel Reading:** John 19:1-11



**Sermon Text:** Exodus 20:12

**Sermon Title:** The Fourth Commandment

**Introit:** Psalm 119:74-80; Antiphon Psalm 119:73

## Hymns:

LSB 605 – Father Welcomes

LSB 581 – These are the Holy Ten Commands  
(v. 1,5, 11-12)

LSB 722 – Lord Take My hand and Lead Me

LSB 623 – Lord Jesus Christ, We Humbly Pray

LSB 966 – Before You, Lord, we Bow

## Liturgy:

Divine Service I, p. 151

## Songs:

Child of Love - We The Kingdom

Agnus Dei

Yes I Will - Vertical Worship

He Knows My Name -

Francesca Battistelli

The Blessing

## Liturgy:

Creative Worship



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**Text: Exodus 20:12**

Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live for a long time in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

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Pronunciation for difficult words are contained in { }

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In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Open, please, your Catechisms to p. 81.

Today we are exploring the commandment about honoring your father and mother. You find it there on page 81 as you would have learned it in Confirmation:

### **The Fourth Commandment**

Honor your father and your mother.

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents, and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

I want to have you take note of the psalm we used for our Introit today which contained these words:

Your hands created me,  
and made me what I am.<sup>1</sup>

The psalm speaks as though God were our parent. It is, in fact, God who made you, through your parents, which is why parents are so honored. Because though them, God has made an eternal being. You are one who will never end. This places a huge responsibility on the shoulders of those who are to teach, lead and guide you in the way that leads to eternal life in Heaven rather than in Hell. That is why we honor God by honoring our parents and those in authority over us, and that is why there is a commandment telling us to do just that.

The psalm goes on to say:

Help me understand  
so that I may learn your commandments.<sup>2</sup>

We ask God to help us learn and understand His commandments because He has given these to us, not because He hates us, not because He wants to make life difficult, not because He wants to keep good things from us, but because He loves us and wants only the best for us. These Commandments are given to protect us, to keep us safe, to ensure that we do get home to Heaven, and not end up in a place called Hell, forever. These Commandments teach us how to live. Starting with this Commandment they teach us how to live together.



1 Psalm 119:73a

2 Psalm 119:73b

The First Table, the first three Commandments, teach us about life with God. It begins with the most important, “No other gods.” The Second Table, the last seven Commandments, teach us about life with others, starting with the most important, our parents who brought us into the world, raise us, and guide us along life’s way, with God’s good and gracious help.

To understand this Commandment we need to understand its place. It was put here for a reason. This is the Commandment that links the first group, that deal with our relationship with God, to the second group, which deals with our relationship with each other. This is the Commandment that links us to both God and to the people around us. It does that by placing our parents, and others authorities, in the position of (in part) God over us. It is their job to teach us, it is their job to keep us safe, it is their job to provide for us, and pass on to us the truths of God’s love, salvation and life eternal. Their place is “In the stead of, and by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ...”

As a child you were, in a way, a servant to your parents. As a child you did not make the rules in your house, your parents did. They decided when you would go to bed, and when you would get up. They decide when you would eat, and what you would eat. They also provided what you needed. They paid the mortgage or rent. They paid the electric bill. They paid the heating bill. They bought the bed you slept in, and the covers that kept you warm in the Winter. Your parents provided what you needed.

Your parents also sometimes gave you what you wanted, not just what you needed. When you asked your parents for something they may, at times, have given that to you. They provided what you wanted for the same reason they provided what you needed, because they love you. So it is with all whom God has placed in authority over you. They stand in the place of God over you. Their responsibility is an awesome one, regardless of how well they may have wielded it.

Now this Commandment goes against a lot of what we learn in our American culture. It goes against all the stuff we see on Television. On TV parents, and those in authority, are stupid, foolish, ignorant and naive. They are generally worthless and useless. On the other hand the children are the ones who often come through to save the day.

Is that true? Are all parents really useless? Did your house function because you, as a child, were there protecting your parents from their own stupidity? Did you go to work to pay the rent or mortgage? Did you have a job so that you could pay the electric bill or the gas bill? Did you pay the insurance or buy the groceries? What did you do to keep your home safe? What did you do to keep you home

warm? Did you ever worry about such things? How often did you have to think about such things as a child?

The truth most of you as children did none of those things. Your parents did all of them. They didn't have to. They could have put you up for adoption and got rid of you. Then they could go out and have a lot more fun with all the money and time they, otherwise, were spending on you. As a child you couldn't stop them if they chose to do that. They have all the authority and you have none. They are the parents, you are the child. They stand in the place of God, you stand in the place of one loved by God; loved by your parents, if they are good parents.

You are God's child first. Your parents, and all in authority, were given the awesome responsibility to care for you, protect you, and ensure that you learn all that God has commanded them to teach you. The truth is many parents run away from that heavy responsibility, so you should be thankful for parents even if they make mistakes, or seem to be overly protective. They just want to make sure you become a good adult. They just want to keep you safe. If they are good parents they want you to get home to Heaven.

This Commandment doesn't stop with parents. It also includes: pastors, teachers, police, judges, your boss, and all those who have been given a position of leadership over us. That is true whether they do a good job or not. For example: your political view of the current, and last, president probably elicits opposite emotions, depending on which side you align yourself. The one who holds the office, however, is due respect, whether they do a good job or not.

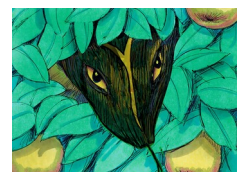
So what about careless talk concerning those over you? It's really unkind talk about those whom God has put over you. You might think, 'but they do it on the news everyday.' That's the problem. We become desensitized to sin. We see it all the time, then we start to do it, and then it festers and grows in our hearts. Soon we look just like the world.

We should expect the world to act that way. We should never be surprised that the world acts contrary to God's Word. That is what the world does. We, as the faithful, should hold each other accountable. We should gently help and support each other see sin when it is growing in, or on, our

brother or sister in Christ. By doing that we are showing Christian love for our neighbor, and helping them remain true to God's Word.



We do that because there are only two camps. You are either a child of God, or a



child of the serpent. The world is sinful; full of sin. The world hates God. Listen to Jesus, He said:

If the world hates you, know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.<sup>3</sup>

The world is not the example we should follow. (Look through the rest of that chapter in John and you will hear Jesus explain it in more detail.) So what about careless talk concerning those over you? Just because: ‘they do it on the news everyday,’ or ‘everybody else is doing it,’ doesn’t mean we should. Careless talk about those whom God has put over you is showing contempt for God, and God’s Holy Word. The Bible says:

There is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.<sup>4</sup>

Think about it. You are alive because of your parents. You would not exist if it were not for them. By God's hand, working through your parents, you have life. In fact you have an eternal life, a life that will never end. Those whom God has put in authority over you are also there to guide you to eternal life, whether they do a good job or not; whether they shirk that responsibility or not. So for that reason you must honor them even if they do a bad job. Jesus says:

I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven.<sup>5</sup>

God says:

Vengeance is mine, I will repay. For the time when their foot shall slip; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly. For the Lord will vindicate His people and have compassion on His servants.<sup>6</sup>

Remember the words of the psalm:

3 John 15:18-19

4 Romans 13:1-2

5 Matthew 5:44-45

6 Deuteronomy 32:35-36

“Help me understand  
so that I may learn your commandments.”<sup>7</sup>”

Your job, as you grew and become an adult, was to learn how to be what God expects you to be for your own children and those under your authority. Position and titles are not about prestige they re about responsibility, awesome and weighty responsibility. There is a price to leadership.

So if your parents made mistakes learn from those mistakes and don't repeat them. Become something better. In doing so you will make them proud of you. In doing so, good parents will be proud of you because you will be something closer to what they wish they had been for you.

That is always true for good parents but what about bad parents? What about parents that sell drugs to people, or to other kids, or to their own kids? What about parents that treat their children badly or tell their children to do things that are wrong? What about them? What about anyone in authority who abuses their office to do harm to others. Do you have to honor them too?

The answer is yes, but how do you honor them? You honor them by showing them the respect that is due them, but you do not ever do anything that God has said should not be done. You do have the right to refuse to do anything that goes against God's will and God's Word. That is why you need to learn God's Word, God's Commandments, so that you know what is right and what is wrong.

That is true not only for children but as adults too. You have the right to refuse to obey anyone who tells you to do anything that is against God's Word. For example suppose the government came in here and said, “pastor, you are forbidden to teach about the Bible.”

Well what does God's Word say?

Take to heart these words that I give you today. Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you're at home or away, when you lie down or get up. Write them down, and tie them around your wrist, and wear them as headbands as a reminder. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.<sup>8</sup>

The Bible says we must teach, so if someone says, “you must not teaching” what should I do? I should say, “God says I must teach, so I'm going to teach.”<sup>9</sup> No

7 Psalm 119:73b

8 Deuteronomy 6:6-9

9 Acts 4:19-20

authority exists except that which God puts in place.<sup>10</sup> Those who do not do what God commands are sinning against God.

Will there be repercussions for obedience to God? There might be. That, however, does not allow us to shirk our responsibility to do what our heavenly Father, our holy Parent, has told us to do.

Your parents, and all people who have authority over you, have a great responsibility on their shoulders. They are commanded by God to do the best they can to ensure that you become a good Christian. That is why you are to respect and honor them. Because their job is hard. This command teaches us that all authority is put in place by God, and as such, we should respect that authority just as if God Himself were standing there.

May God help us all to understand that correctly, in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Proclaim God's Word,  
Encourage one another in faith,  
Witness to God's love and  
Serve all people**



<sup>10</sup> Romans 13:1