



Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church
Sunday, March 7th 2021

Dear Lake Toxaway family and friends,

The Old Testament lesson this week is a reading of the Ten Commandments. I will confess to you preaching from a list of laws can be as equivalent and exciting for me as preaching from genealogy. (I hope a few of you understand my humor.) I do not want anyone to hear me as one who has a pointing, shaking finger in your face as we consider these Laws from God for His people. I also do not want to re-hash things you already know. So, I invite us to consider how these Commandments describe the Kingdom of God.

To many church folks, these words are simply a base level from which we build a better sense of law and order or a greater responsibility for working beside the Spirit to build eternity that God has envisioned for us. What do all these words have to do with life and death and covenant and commitment, with promises and community?

These laws are about drawing lines. Yes, I said lines: boundary lines. We talk about life and death when we gather for a funeral or memorial service. We reflect on the weaving of a covenant when we stand before the altar and perform a wedding. We re-define family when we welcome new members taking a commitment to live and learn among us. We are stretching the circle around a table of sacrifice and grace when we will cease our fast and gather for the sacrament of Communion. We are drawing lines.

The problem is we usually see "lines" as a negative. For many, drawing lines is about limitation; right and wrong, in and out. Some people will complain and state, "don't fence me in" or "don't cramp my style." Drawing lines goes against our value of freedom. I continue to see bumper stickers and embroidery with "no limits." These are not just a slogan; these words are how we define ourselves and how we understand ourselves.

Yet in our rational minds, we know boundaries and rules are good things. And that is why we reluctantly accept them. Like a child who wants to play late into the night but trudges up to bed anyway, we say that the lines are good for us... like broccoli or beets.

Sometimes we find the Ten Commandments, these rules, well limiting. We suppose it is for our own good. Is God a God to bring the whole nation of Israel out into the wilderness for a divine "time out." Is this conversation started with a wag of the divine finger and a slow shake of the holy head, displaying disappointment and a prelude to punishment? Are the people being grounded by these words? Restricted? Chastened? Reproved?

Or is there something else going on here? What if we took a different approach to the "lines?" What if we hear them not as limitations but as definitions? What if we looked at this moment in the history of the people of God not as punishment for less than stellar behavior, but as gift because of a greater than imagined love?

Certainly, there are boundaries in the covenant of marriage, but who would call them punishment? Instead, it is a new way of being, a new way of living and loving. We are redefined when we make that commitment to love and to cherish. We make promises that do not constrain us so much as set us free to love. We are not hampered by the lines drawn so much as we are encouraged to go deeper and higher, to love more profoundly.

Baptism and confirmation are about making vows to love as well. The lines that are drawn are about finding your way into the fellowship and family of the Church. It is about making a commitment to serve and to participate and gather with the community of faith. It is about claiming that in this journey that is life and faith, we acknowledge we need support; we need companionship; we need a community to surround us as we make our pilgrim way.

The Ten Commandments are not so much commandments we ought to follow reluctantly or not, as they are descriptions of the kind of people we can choose to be by the power of the Holy Spirit. The people who love God (Commandments 1-4) and who love neighbor (Commandments 5-10). My Hebrew theology professor said we should re-translate them not as "Thou shall" or "Thou shall not" but as "You are the people who have one God" and "You are not the people who kill, steal, and bear false witness." This is who we Christians are and who we are not. God did not say, "jump through these hoops and I will love you." Instead, God says, "My love for you will shape you into these kinds of people, this kind of community."

These words are a description of the kingdom of God! How long? Into eternity! God draws lines at a funeral, the lines of welcome into the heavenly home. And what we thought was a line, the line dividing life and death, was only a doorway, only a corner to turn, which brings us into a new reality. The lines of God's people define us here and there! God announces where the lines are for us to live well now, but also so we will be at home in eternity with God. We go on living the lines God has drawn, now and in eternity. All these words draw a picture that sees beyond our vision. May it be so. Thanks be to God!

Yes, I know, you can call this a sermon and I jokingly give you a pass to take a nap during the sermon this week. Please know how frequently I pray for you (authors of devotionals are a special focus of my prayers on the days your devotional is published). "The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places as I serve among you and at the hospital. I cherish each of you as my special family of God!"

Marcus

**Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church
Community Worship Service
Third Sunday of Lent, March 7th**

9:30 A.M. Livestream link: <https://youtu.be/hvc18sVN0TU>

GREETING

*God of the covenant,
in the glory of the cross
your Son embraced the power of death
and broke its hold over your people.
In this time of worship and preparation,
draw all people to yourself,
that we who confess Jesus as Lord
may put aside the deeds of death
and accept the life of your kingdom. **Amen.***

PRELUDE

Wondrous Love arr. David N. Johnson

CALL TO WORSHIP *(Please stand)*

*All heaven and earth proclaim the majesty of God's creative power!
Praise God for the amazing and awesome beauty.
God has given to us codes by which to live together in harmony and peace.
In these commandments, God has summed up the ways we must respect one another.
Rejoice in the goodness of God.
Praise God for God's complete and steadfast love for us. Amen.*

HYMN #77

How Great Thou Art

Located in the back of the bulletin - (Printed w/ permission)

OPENING PRAYER *(Please be seated)*

God, prepare us to be tried and true, pure and holy sanctuaries. And, with thanksgiving, Holy One, we'll live as Spirit-filled, healed and transformed sanctuaries just for you. As we gather before you, Wonderful and Magnificent God, reveal yourself to us as you did to Moses on Mt. Sinai. Speak to us in ways that illumine our darkness and enliven our steps. Come alive in us, call

us by name and give us the commandments of new life that will order our steps in this time of worship and as we leave this place. Move our hearts closer to yours and center our thoughts on worshiping you alone. Wherever you find us, whether on bended knee, seated, or standing, transform us into your image of perfect love; create within us clean hearts and renew a right spirit within us! Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Exodus 20:1-17

- 20:1 Then God spoke all these words:
- 20:2 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery;
- 20:3 you shall have no other gods before me.
- 20:4 You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.
- 20:5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me,
- 20:6 but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.
- 20:7 You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.
- 20:8 Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy.
- 20:9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work.
- 20:10 But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work--you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns.
- 20:11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.
- 20:12 Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.
- 20:13 You shall not murder.
- 20:14 You shall not commit adultery.

- 20:15 You shall not steal.
- 20:16 You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
- 20:17 You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Psalm 19 (Please read the bold text responsively)

- 19:1 The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.
- 19:2 Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.**
- 19:3 There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard;
- 19:4 yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun,**
- 19:5 which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy, and like a strong man runs its course with joy.
- 19:6 Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them; and nothing is hid from its heat.**
- 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the LORD are sure, making wise the simple;
- 19:8 the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is clear, enlightening the eyes;**
- 19:9 the fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.
- 19:10 More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and drippings of the honeycomb.**
- 19:11 Moreover by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.
- 19:12 But who can detect their errors? Clear me from hidden faults.**
- 19:13 Keep back your servant also from the insolent; do not let them have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.
- 19:14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.**

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

- 1:18 For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.
- 1:19 For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."
- 1:20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?
- 1:21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe.
- 1:22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom,
- 1:23 but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,
- 1:24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.
- 1:25 For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

John 2:13-22 (Please stand for the Gospel)

- 2:13 The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.
- 2:14 In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables.
- 2:15 Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.
- 2:16 He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!"
- 2:17 His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."
- 2:18 The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?"
- 2:19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."
- 2:20 The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?"

2:21 But he was speaking of the temple of his body.

2:22 After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

L: This is the word of the Lord for the people of Christ.

P: Thanks be to God.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

(Let us offer our silent confessions.)

***God gave us the covenant of the law
to guide us and help us live with our neighbors in love.***

***When we break God's law,
we leave our neighbors hurt and bruised.***

***God's law is a gift to us,
showing us how to keep our part of the covenant.
Even through old pain and wounds,
may we embrace the new life that Christ can bring. Amen***

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

*May the God of the law guide us in living lives
that keep the covenant of love.*

***May Christ's forgiveness grant us new life,
even when we break God's law.***

May the Holy Spirit of conviction lead us to confession and renewal.

May we respond in love to the God of covenant and change. Amen.

HOMILY

STATEMENT OF FAITH *(Please stand for the Nicene Creed)*

***We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is seen and unseen.***

***We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.***

***For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit, he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.***

***For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.***

***On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.***

***We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.***

***With the Father and the Son, he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.***

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

***We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.***

GLORIA PATRI (UMH #70)

***Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end.***

Amen. Amen.

OFFERING

<https://www.wnccumc.org/online-donations-to-churches>

OFFERTORY

Prelude on "Distress" Gilbert M. Martin
(Early American hymn tune)

DOXOLOGY

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

God of holiness and grace, we know the words of your commandments. In our hearts, we know that following them makes life easier, not harder; fuller, not more restricted. We know there is no God greater than you, yet we have made the silliest things our gods and have thrown our money and resources after them. As we offer our gifts this day, we are reminded that only you have given the gift of a savior and the redemption of our rebellious lives. In Christ's name, we trust and pray. Amen.

PASTORAL PRAYER AND PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN #295

In the Cross of Christ I Glory
Located in the back of the bulletin - (Printed with permission)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Prelude in A minor Johann Krebs

STAFF & LAY VOLUNTEERS

Pastor: Marcus Dodson: 828-553-0282, marcus61dodson@gmail.com

Organist: Charlie Steele: cwsorgan@comporium.net

Church Administrator: Saunders Grommesh, 469-569-2314, administrator@laketoxawayumc.org

Lay Leaders: Barbara Kline: 828-862-5585 and Paula Markert: 828-553-9434

Audio/Visual for Livestream Chair: Andy Harvill

Soloist/Vocalist: Jacolyn Campbell

Liturgist: Fred Markert

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Worship Committee announces open worship – March 7th

Starting March 7th, we can increase our attendance to 32.

Masks and social distancing will still be in effect. However, if some folks have been gathering with others socially and feel comfortable they could sit together in church. No reservations required.

DAILY LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

We pray you are enjoying the daily Lenten devotionals on our website:

[https://www.laketoxawayumc.org/index.php/communications/lenten- ?](https://www.laketoxawayumc.org/index.php/communications/lenten-?)

We have 32 devotionals and still need 8 more volunteers. If you are interested in writing a Lenten devotional please email **Nancee Salyer and Scott Walter** nsalyer331@aol.com and Scott at scotlaw@aol.com.

Scholarship Committee needs volunteers to interview students

Are you excited about education and helping future student scholars? Volunteer interviewers are needed to help identify LTUMC student scholars for 2021-2022. Please reach out to Cathie Fussell at linguafrog@gmail.com or 910-572-2167 to learn more.

PRAYER CONCERNS OF THE COMMUNITY

Please pray for Marcus' nephew Steven Hudson, Dell Rearden, Marty Young, Chad & Anne Zimmerman, Thos Blackstock Madison Coleman & the Jeter family, Frank Hardin and Cathie Fussell's family members: Jeff Tilley and Ellen Gause, who is having surgery March 10 in Wilmington.

Please continue to pray for those who have had the death of a loved one in the recent weeks and months.

Please pray for those with illness, upcoming surgery and recovery.

Please pray for our student scholars in their Spring semester.

How Great Thou Art

1. O Lord my God! when I in awe-some won - der
 2. When through the woods and for - est glades I wan - der,
 3. And when I think that God, his Son not spar - ing,
 4. When Christ shall come with shout of ac - cla - ma - tion

con - sid - er all the worlds thy hands have made,
 and hear the birds sing sweet - ly in the trees;
 sent him to die, I scarce can take it in;
 and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart.

I see the stars, I hear the *roll - ing thun - der,
 when I look down from loft - y moun-tain gran - deur
 that on the cross, my bur - den glad - ly bear - ing,
 Then I shall bow in hum - ble ad - o - ra - tion,

thy power through - out the un - i - verse dis - played.
 and hear the brook, and feel the gen - tle breeze;
 he bled and died to take a - way my sin;
 and there pro - claim, my God, how great thou art!

Refrain:

Then sings my soul, my savior God to thee; how great thou art, how great thou art!
 Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee; how great thou art, how great thou art!

WORDS: Stuart K. Hine, 1953

MUSIC: Stuart K. Hine, 1953

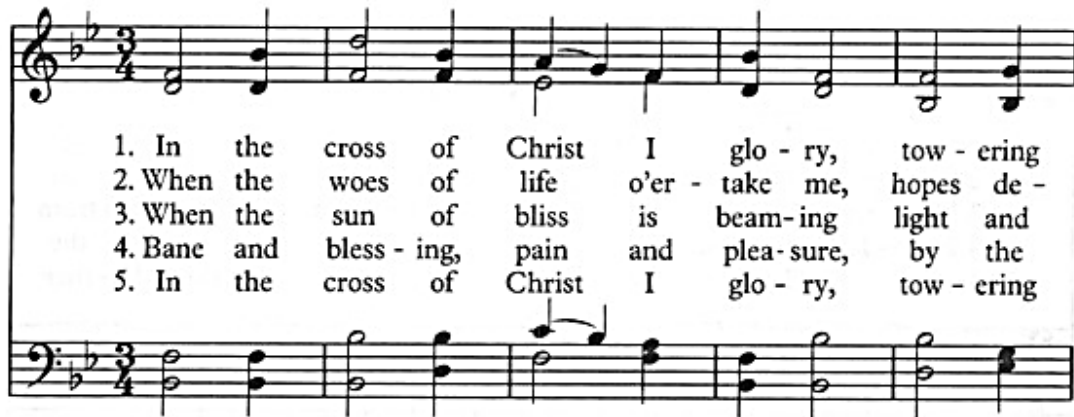
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HOW GREAT THOU ART

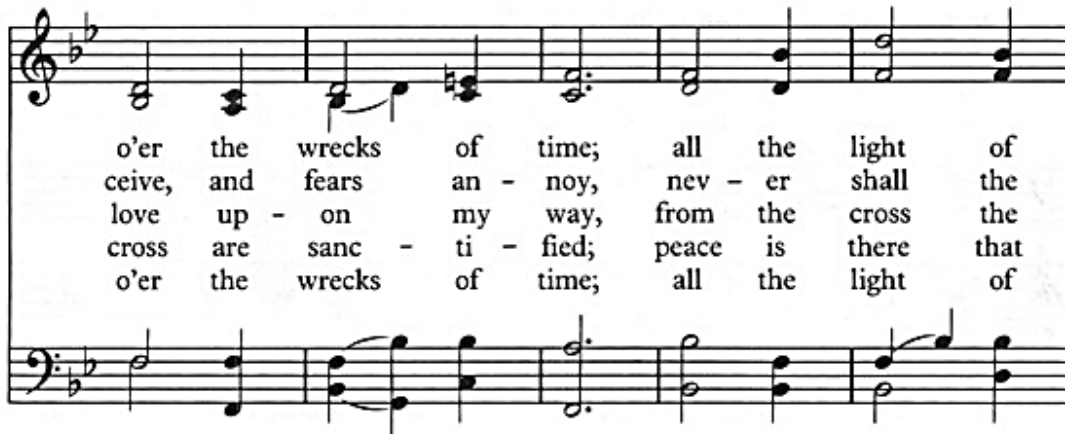
Irr. with Refrain

In the Cross of Christ I Glory

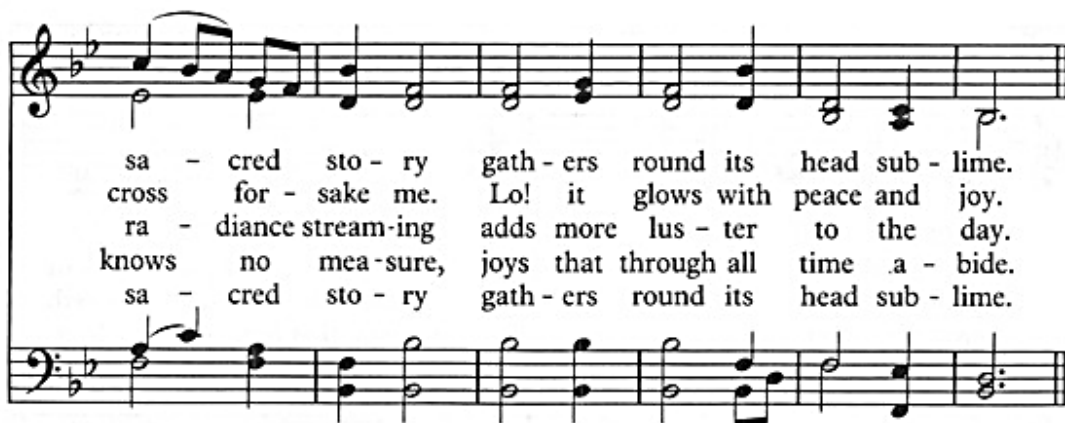
295



1. In the cross of Christ I glo - ry, tow - ering
 2. When the woes of life o'er - take me, hopes de -
 3. When the sun of bliss is beam - ing light and
 4. Bane and bless - ing, pain and plea - sure, by the
 5. In the cross of Christ I glo - ry, tow - ering



o'er the wrecks of time; all the light of
 ceive, and fears an - noy, nev - er shall the
 love up - on my way, from the cross the
 cross are sanc - ti - fied; peace is there that
 o'er the wrecks of time; all the light of



sa - cred sto - ry gath - ers round its head sub - lime.
 cross for - sake me. Lo! it glows with peace and joy.
 ra - diance stream - ing adds more lus - ter to the day.
 knows no mea - sure, joys that through all time a - bide.
 sa - cred sto - ry gath - ers round its head sub - lime.

WORDS: John Bowring, 1825
 MUSIC: Ithamar Conkey, 1849

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