



Luther's Small Catechism – First Commandment + JVA

This year I will spend time working through Luther's Small Catechism. I invite you to live more deeply with this small but rich summary of our faith in the coming year. It has been a source of challenge and comfort for me especially in the last four months. It is a gift to share with your family and congregation as well. Here is Luther explaining in his introduction why he is concerned. I would think we also have work to do in sharing our faith.

“Grace, mercy, and peace in Jesus Christ, our Lord, from Martin Luther to all faithful, godly pastors and preachers.

1 The deplorable conditions which I recently encountered when I was a visitor² constrained me to prepare this brief and simple catechism or statement of Christian teaching. 2 Good God, what wretchedness I beheld! The common people, especially those who live in the country, have no knowledge whatever of Christian teaching and unfortunately many pastors are quite incompetent and unfitted for teaching. 3 Although the people are supposed to be Christian, are baptized, and receive the holy sacrament, they do not know the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, or the Ten Commandments,³ they live as if they were pigs and irrational beasts, and now that the Gospel has been restored they have mastered the fine art of abusing liberty.”

² Luther made visitations of congregations in Electoral Saxony and Meissen between Oct. 22, 1528, and Jan. 9, 1529.

³ This is the order in which these materials appeared in late medieval manuals.