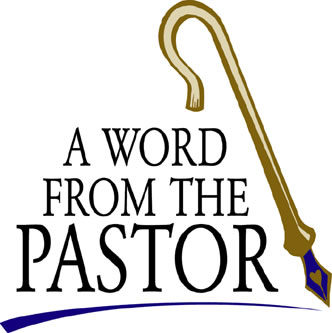
*“Then I said, Here I am...I delight in your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.”*

Psalm 40.7-8



This fall the Christian Education team will be studying and teaching the Ten Commandments. Everything we do and talk about this coming year will be based on the commandments God gave Moses underscored by the new commandments Jesus introduced. This will give us opportunity to refresh our memories and explore Martin Luther’s explanation of how this ancient law applies to us in the 21st century. Some of the commandments are no-brainers like thou shalt not steal, or kill or commit adultery but some are more obscure. In the next several months we will interpret the meaning of idols, check the rules and boundaries for coveting and review patterns for observing the ‘Sabbath.’ We will learn that some things are not as black and white as they once were. For example, Sundays have become just another day instead of a holy day set aside for worship. Stores were not open for business on Sundays back then; sports and other activities were never scheduled on Sunday. As society rapidly changed, however, numerous options evolved making it, now, even more crucial to remember that we are accountable. We are personally in charge of finding time for a Sabbath every week and it is in our best interest to find time with God on a daily basis which means we might have to schedule it in order to make it a habit – whatever it takes to squeeze God into our lives. It might mean carving out precious moments in the early morning hours or late at night just as long as we make it a daily discipline so that we gain inspiration and build a defense against evil. Martin Luther felt that if he failed to “spend two hours in prayer each morning the devil would gain victory.”

By focusing on Christ throughout the day, our prayers *will* become second nature. When our thoughts wander, or fill with worry, we can turn to God. Simply ask for help, then move on. God is more available than any technology can offer; God is instantaneous, always in range, always charged and requires no data or a service plan. Even though we have communication at our fingertips, let those fingers curl into prayerful posture so we are capable of fighting fatigue, frustration and failure. *“...the evils have encompassed...my iniquities have overtaken me, until I cannot see...and my heart fails me*.” Psalm 40:12 emphasizes the importance of consuming wholeheartedly the ancient tablets of right and wrong, and the significance of reevaluating the quality of our lives. While we search high and low for something to stimulate and strengthen our resolve let’s not miss the full presence of God already dwelling deep within our souls. God guarantees peace-filled days as we trust and truly believe God will never leave us or forsake us...and that God already has a plan. Psalm 40 reminds us to wait patiently for the Lord trusting that our cries *are* heard. We are firmly grounded in God’s commandments which promise to be a guide for every step. And though God is strong, mighty and powerful, God also has the desire to hear our every whisper, that which is quietly tucked within our hearts. We cannot lose and we will not waiver because we “fear, love and trust God above all things.”

*“May all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; may those who love Your salvation say continually,*

*“Great is the Lord!”* Psalm 40.16

***Pastor Cheri***