

“All that the Lord has spoken we will do.” All the people say this to Moses as they encamp beneath Mt. Sinai. Apparently, this is their Confirmation Day. Three months prior they were baptized in the Red Sea. And now, these people of God are standing in His presence, and they make this solemn vow promising to be faithful to Him. Not “some,” but *“all that the Lord has spoken”* they would do.

Oh really? Not long after saying these words they fashion a golden calf before which they bow down. After that, time and again we see them rebelling against God as they grumble and complain. “All that the Lord has spoken we will do?” More like, “None that the Lord has spoken will we do!” And the Lord becomes angry with them. Most all of them perish, their bodies falling throughout the wilderness.

Confirmation Day. It can be quite perilous. Glowing words are spoken. But there is no strength in our words, only in God’s words to us. And when His words are laid aside, no one, not us, not the Israelites, will keep the vows that were spoken.

You see, good intentions have never saved anyone. Oh, the people encamped before Mt. Sinai have very good intentions. They promise to obey. They promise to faithfully hear the Lord and faithfully fashion their lives according to what he says.

That’s what you and I promised when we were confirmed, or will promise one day. “All that the Lord has spoken we will do.” Not a Commandment here and there; all ten of them. We will obey. We will be faithful to the Lord. With good intentions we promised to hear His words faithfully and live His words faithfully.

Now I don’t think that any of us have fashioned a golden calf, having it somewhere in our house, before which we bow down. But do we not bow down before the golden calves of money and career, sex, even family – putting these, among other things, ahead of the Lord? And do we not grumble against Him when He doesn’t give us what we want? Which of the Ten Commandments have we ever obeyed? How are we any different from the people of Israel? Perhaps the Lord is just as angry with us for failing to obey Him. Is it any wonder that our bodies fall into this wilderness one after another? But will we perish as they did?

The Israelites encamped before Mt. Sinai. For an entire year they remained in this place. No wonder they fell into disobedience. No wonder they were unable to keep their solemn vow. Mt. Sinai is the giving of the Law. Here are the Ten Commandments of God. Here are the curses for failing to obey them. Here are God’s threats and punishments upon all who disobey.

If you encamp before Mt. Sinai, like them, you will fail. No one can measure up to the Law of God. No one can live a life faithful to God with Mt. Sinai looming over them. There is no power in the Law. No power to live as God’s obedient children. Living under the shadow of Mt. Sinai, we are unable to meet the demands of the Law.

But that is not your encampment. Not beneath that foreboding mountain. In your baptism God bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Mt. Calvary. And here He has made an encampment for you. Here in Christ Crucified for you, has God brought you to Himself. Do not seek Him in His Ten Commandments, or in your striving to obey them. Seek your God in the One hanging from the cross. This One keeps the Law, the entire Law, for you. This One dies for you, His blood covering you, forgiving you of all your disobedience.

I am not saying that we should ignore the Law. It has its purpose. For one thing, to constantly show us our sins. To point out how miserable we sinners are. But do not become fixated upon the Law of God. Do not make your encampment beneath Mt. Sinai. Walk, run, flee to Mt. Calvary and remain there. Dive again and again into the water of your baptism. Come with longing hearts to the meal of Jesus' body and blood for you. And be fixated upon His words of mercy toward sinners. When your pastor announces Jesus' absolution of your sins in the Divine Service, listen attentively with all your being.

Some, yes far too many, never hear these Gospel words. And so, they have no choice but to remain encamped beneath Mt. Sinai. Not hearing the good news that their sins are forgiven by the blood of Christ, they look to their own feeble efforts to appease God and win for themselves a place in heaven. "All that the Lord has spoken we will do." They live by these words. They see them as the way to heaven. But just like the Israelites, they will fall in this wilderness and perish.

Here are the words you must cherish in your heart: "All that the Lord has spoken **He** will do." All His words are fulfilled in Christ Jesus. All His promises to you He keeps. None of His words fail. God's word of mercy to you is sure and certain. You can stake your life, yes eternal life, upon His word that your sins are forgiven. Because they are. All your sins are forgiven. Each one of you is forgiven.

"All that the Lord has spoken **He** will do." There is no anger in these words. Only love and grace. You do not have an angry God. You have a loving God who forgives you for Jesus' sake. Yes, your body will fall in this wilderness one day because you are a sinner. But you are a forgiven sinner through Christ Jesus. You will not perish. You will live in heaven forever with Jesus. Amen.