

And God spoke all of these words saying, "I am the Lord your God. You shall not kill.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Its all a test, a voice whispers in our heart. Its all a test. God sets us on this earth to see who is worthy for his team of moral, spiritual olympians. Day after day are the trials, to see who shall admitted into the kingdom. Just like the trials the athletes will go through this summer to see who shall be worthy to represent the United States of America, so our life is a trial, a test God deciding who shall be his forever.

Its a tempting thought that small voice proposed. And that sin sower pride within us <sup>of</sup> grabs hold its it. God wants the best, he gives us the ten commandments as the rule book for the game. The rest is up to us.

Before I go any further it might be a good thing to identify that small voice within our hearts that speaks in this way. We first meet him dressed as a serpent whispering to Eve, You will be like God. Eat the fruit. From then on he is with us, within us tempting, promising. Within the heart of a king named David he whispered, No one will know, Uriah is away at battle, his wife is beautiful, no one will know. Centuries later this voice puffed up a man named Peter so that he boasted, "Though they all fall away because of you I will never fall away." So how in your heart and mine the voice misleads us saying, Its all a test.

At the house in which I live is a device to protect the house from fire. It is called a circuit breaker. When the load on the electrical wires is too great and the heat starts to build up the circuit breaker trips and everything stops.

The Lord God almighty has commanded, "You shall not kill." The small voice, the Old Adam within me says, That's easy. I never have, and unless I go crazy I never will. I pass this test.

But Jesus says, "Whoever is angry with his brother has killed. Whoever insults his brother, who ever says to another, You Fool. All murderers.

Jesus says, You want to know what it is to keep this commandment? There was a man who was attacked, beaten, left along the road. And good, religious people came by and being responsible people had appointments to keep and people to help and had no time for the beaten man. But an outcast came along, whom the good responsible people would despise, and were sure God despised too, he the outcast took care of the beaten man. That's doing the commandment.

Today God looks down upon his creation, & he sees people living comfortable, responsible lives. They are people who make plans for tomorrow for themselves and their children, people to provide for their retirement, an inheritance for their descendants. *They say life is a test. Who's at the top.*

Today God looks down on his creation, he sees lands parched by drought, people poor, hungry. He sees cruel oppressors, attacking the weak and the helpless by night in El Salvador and Namibia. He sees torture and oppression people living in fear in Poland and Siberia.

You shall not kill. God commands. Luther teaches us this meaning: We are to fear and love God so that we do not hurt our neighbor in any way, but help him in all his physical needs. Who is our neighbor. Anyone, anywhere who we could help.

Now it is right here that that small voice within me senses that things are heating up, the wiring is in danger so he trips the circuit breaker. For the Old Adam knows that life is a test, a trial I must pass, but when everyone in the world is my neighbor and so many suffer the test is too hard, I will fail. So shut it all down, don't listen or all the circuits will get burned out.

Know this, God wants all those circuits burned up in me and in you. Right now he does not want us to turn off our minds, or to let them wander to other thoughts. He wants to take all that thinking that life is a test to see if we are good enough for God and burn it out of our hearts. And here is what he would teach us instead.

We are precious. You and I are precious to God. When we suffer he suffers with us. But not only with us. With every one. Every person on this

earth is his creation, his child. There are no tests and trials for us, but instead a great battle. God is fighting for his creation, for all of his creatures. Evil and hatred and unbelief, anger and greed and pride these are the enemies that leave casualties across the battlefield. The hungry, the homeless, the helpless, the poor.

You shall not kill. It is not test but our marching orders. Drafted into the battle in baptism, with this command God sends us out to ~~help~~ wage war against all that hurt life. And this is his promise. I will never pull back from you in this battle. I will enable you, empower you, strengthen you, encourage you as you fight for life for everyone.