

I Have Kept The Faith

Psalm 119:4-6 - You have commanded Your precepts to be kept diligently. Oh that my ways may be steadfast in keeping Your statutes! Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all Your Commandments.

As we run the race of faith, we too pray that we will be steadfast on the path of God's commands. But we also keep our eyes on the finish and on the One who ran that path before us, Jesus our Lord. We often stray from the path of God's commands, but Jesus did not. In Him the psalmist's prayer finds its fulfillment. Jesus obeyed His Heavenly Father, even to the point of death. Through His blood shed on the cross, we are washed clean from our willful and stumbling sins along the path. By God's grace through faith in Jesus, "the righteous requirement of the Law" is fulfilled in us (Romans 8:4b). In the sight of God we are not put to shame. God does not see our stumbling falls and our failure to keep His precepts. Rather, God looks at us and sees that we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ Jesus, dressed in the perfect obedience of His beloved Son. By faith we have been "created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God pre-pared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10b). How do we know the good works we are to do? Look to God's Commandments! We are to love and worship God alone. We are to honor our parents. Those who are married are to live in faithfulness and honor with one another. We are to respect our neighbor's personal well-being, property, and reputation, to love our neighbor as we love our-selves. These God-pleasing works stretch out like a path before us, to be followed by faith and in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is not an easy path. We will be tempted to stray and to take our eyes from Jesus, but He is with us from start to finish. We find strength in the forgiveness He won for us through His death and resurrection. We are nourished by His Word and through His body and blood in the bread and wine of His holy Supper. With the help of God, we join the psalmist in praying for steadfast faith until, at the time God has appointed for us, we reach the finish line. Then, by God's grace, we will say with the apostle Paul, "I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Hence-forth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

Submitted by Bethany Lutheran Church Elders
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