

Heidelberg Catechism Study
Sunday
March 29, 2015

A. Prayer

B. Start at the beginning: facts about the Heidelberg Catechism

- 1. We have talked a few times about “confessions” and “catechisms” through the years. Since we have the Scriptures why do we need confessions and catechisms?**
 - a. Confessions simply are putting in to an academic form what we believe for many reasons but not the least of which for maintaining unity and a standard for correct interpretation within the church.
 - b. Catechisms are simply teaching tools. A “short” manual (the term “short” as used in the church is almost as relative as the term “soon” used by Jesus) in the form of questions and answers on the essential of Christian doctrine.
 - (1) In fact, the original subtitle of this catechism, was “Heidelberg Catechism: a catechism in our Christian Religion.”
 - (2) Scripture makes it clear that, especially our children, but we as well, ought to constantly be indulging in ways to counter the inborn wickedness and the external wickedness that surround us and are constantly seeking to win us over.
 - (3) It is the continual assessment of Christian doctrine from the Scriptures, through the preaching and teaching of the Word publically and privately that will help us by God’s grace through the work of the Spirit of God to endure and grow unto our salvation.
 - (4) The teaching of the Word of God and the doctrines of God requires different forms to aid our learning experience. This form has proven highly affective as we train our little ones, the way the Scriptures command, and as well we remind ourselves of the truths of God’s word daily for our lives.
 - c. Historically confessions and catechisms were put together to re-train God’s people after leaving the Roman catholic Church in the essentials of the Christian religion as outlined in the Scriptures. And it also served as a liturgy for the church that even some Reformed Churches still use today to constantly teach God’s people. (Like: United Reformed Church, Reformed Church in America, Christian Reformed Church, the Protestant Reformed Church...churches primarily that were influenced by the Dutch reformed traditions)
 - d. The catechism, whether this one or the Westminster Shorter catechism, teaches us the gospel...the A to Z of the Christian Religion.
 - e. Also, it helps us to confess Christ properly and clearly.
- 2. It was written in Heidelberg, Germany, under the direction of Elector Frederick III (1516-1579).**
 - a. Frederick was a ruler in Germany at the time with an anti-Catholic bent. So he commissioned the writing of a catechism to instruct the citizens of his realm in the true Christian religion which at that time was seen as a deviant position by the Catholic Church called the Reformed faith.
 - b. The catechism was written by 2 men: Zacharius Ursinus (1534-1583) and Caspar Olevianus (1536-1587). It was completed in 1563. It wasn’t officially adopted by the Reformed Church until the Synod of Dort in 1618-1619).
 - c. Remember the Westminster Confession of Faith with it Larger and Shorter Catechisms were not completed until sometime after 1648.
 - d. Calvin had written a catechism for the church of Geneva in 1545 ...so catechisms were a popular form of teaching children and adults who needed to be disciplined in the faith.

3. Its form.

- a. It is made up of 129 questions.
 - b. Split up into 52 Lord's days so that it would be taught in the church on the Lord's Day. So obviously some Sundays the church deals with more than one Q and A.
 - c. The catechism can be divided into 4 parts:
 - (1) Q and A, 1-2- Introduction to God and the relationship He has granted to us by His grace.
 - (2) Q/A 3-11- Sin and misery
 - (3) Q/A 12-85- Salvation/Deliverance= Grace
 - (4) Q/A 86-129- Gratitude revealed in our lives
 - d. It uses as its example the book of Romans.
 - e. A very personal document unlike the Westminster:
 - (1) The Heidelberg Catechism is often referred to as a book of "comfort", since many have identified this as its main theme...comfort or rest in God. And just to make this point the first 2 questions begin with dealing with this "comfort".
 - (2) The catechism likes to ask its readers other questions as well as if you are having a personal conversation...questions like ..."what is thwe comfort, what is the profit, or what iis the advantage of a certain doctrine to the believer.
 - (3) The Heidelberg uses personal pronouns throughout like you, your, my, me...
 - (4) It seeks to teach by using such words that being a Christian is more than knowing and doing certain things but also that it is about enjoying a personal, living relationship with God through Jesus Christ.
 - (5) It seeks to provoke within us as we say the catechism further questions like Can I also say this? Is this my confession?
4. I do not wish to dissuade your study of the Westminster Larger and Shorter catechism by presenting this teaching time...but merely to give you an additional option with which to train yourself and your family as we grow up into this salvation that God has given us.

C. Heidelberg catechism Q?A

1. HC Q/A 1 - Q. What is my only comfort in life and in death? A. *That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins, and redeemed me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me, that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must work together for my salvation. Wherefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me heartily willing and ready henceforth to live unto Him.*
2. HC Q/A 2- Q. How many things are necessary for you to know, that you, in this comfort may live and die happily? A. *Three things: first, the greatness of my sin and misery. Second, how I am redeemed from all my sins and misery. Third, how I am to be thankful to God for such redemption.*
3. These first 2 speak of "comfort". Why does the catechism seem to imply that comfort is one of our greatest needs?

- a. Because we are descendants of Adam and Eve and are fallen which means, just as the Westminster Shorter Catechism says, we are in a condition of sin and misery whether we fully know that or not.
 - b. The world is dangerous and messy and uncomfortable. It is hard to find rest and satisfaction within it especially since God cursed the world and commanded that we would not find the kind of comfort and rest that we desire.
 - c. Because of our fallenness we seek “comfort” from all the wrong places that this world has to offer.
 - d. In other words because the misery of man is so great we seek “comfort”.
4. What is meant by this word and what kind of comfort is this?
- a. The comfort of which these 2 questions speak is not a material or physical comfort. It has nothing to do with good food, warm clothes, cozy furniture or a fancy car.
 - b. The comfort spoken of here is a spiritual comfort. It is the comfort of having one’s sins forgiven, of being adopted as a son or daughter of God, of being made an heir of eternal life. It is the comfort of being saved by Christ.

Heidelberg Catechism Study
Sunday
April 5, 2015

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What were the purposes that you remember for the writing of the Heidelberg Catechism?
 - a. To re-train the people of Frederick III's realm away from Catholicism.
 - b. To train children and adults who come into the church so that they know the basics of Christian doctrine.
2. Since we have our own catechism...the Westminster Shorter and larger Catechism...why study this one?
 - a. Keeps us connected not only with the thought of other Reformers...but more importantly keeps us connected with fellow believers from around the Reformed community.
 - b. It is part of our heritage that we need to be aware of.
 - c. And even though the WCF and its catechisms were also part of our nation's history...can be found at the back of the New England Primer... this catechism has shaped the youth and adults of many nations as well.

C. Heidelberg catechism Q and A 1 and 2

1. HC Q/A 1 - Q. What is my only comfort in life and in death? A. *That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins, and redeemed me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me, that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must work together for my salvation. Wherefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me heartily willing and ready henceforth to live unto Him.*
2. HC Q/A 2- Q. How many things are necessary for you to know, that you, in this comfort may live and die happily? A. *Three things: first, the greatness of my sin and misery. Second, how I am redeemed from all my sins and misery. Third, how I am to be thankful to God for such redemption.*
3. These first 2 speak of "comfort". Why does the catechism seem to imply that comfort is one of our greatest needs?
 - e. Because we are descendants of Adam and Eve and are fallen which means, just as the Westminster Shorter Catechism says, we are in a condition of sin and misery whether we fully know that or not.
 - f. The world is dangerous and messy and uncomfortable. It is hard to find rest and satisfaction within it especially since God cursed the world and commanded that we would not find the kind of comfort and rest that we desire.
 - g. Because of our fallenness we seek "comfort" from all the wrong places that this world has to offer.
 - h. In other words because the misery of man is so great we seek "comfort".
4. What is the essence of this comfort according to the questions in front of us?

It is knowing that I am not my own but belong, body and soul, in life and death, to Jesus Christ. In other words, it is having a living relationship with Jesus Christ.

5. How is it possible for sinners who by nature are enemies of Christ to “belong” to Christ? This is only possible through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Hence our Catechism says “He [i.e. Christ] has fully paid for all my sins with His precious blood”.
6. What are the benefits of “belonging” to Christ according to the Catechism?
There are several:
 - a. He pays the penalty for our sins (1 John 1: 7)
 - b. He delivers us from the power of the devil (Heb. 2: 14)
 - c. He preserves us (John 10: 28)
 - d. Through His Holy Spirit He assures me of eternal life and makes me heartily willing and ready to live unto Him
 - e. When we belong to Christ, He takes care of a guilty past, He comforts us in an insecure present, and He promises us a glorious future.
7. Why is this comfort necessary?
 - a. On account of our salvation...so that we can live assured in this otherwise messy life. So many temptations come our way that we can often struggle under the wonder of what to do...also, we have been commanded to engage in the proclamation of the Word of God thus opening ourselves up to persecution.
 - b. On account of praising and worshiping God...if we are unassured our ability to trust, to praise and to true worship in Spirit and in Truth will be hampered..
 - c. So God’s comfort is absolutely necessary!
8. How can this comfort become mine? What three things do we have to know according to the catechism questions? (Q/A 2)
 - a. How great my sins and miseries are.
 - b. How I am delivered from all my sins and misery.
 - c. How I am to be thankful to God for such deliverance.
 - d. In other words, we have to know something of guilt, grace and gratitude.
 - e. NOTE: This is the basic outline for the entire Catechism. The rest of the Catechism is devoted to an explanation of each one of these three things.
9. Where do we have to turn to learn about these three things?
 - a. To the Bible which is God’s Word. The Bible contains everything we need to know in order to be saved and to grow into our salvation granted to us by the grace and great mercy of God. (1 Peter 1:3)
 - b. Therefore if you want to know more about these things you must read, study the Bible and listen to it preached. For this catechism is given only to for training concerning what God teaches in His Word.
10. What truth must we keep in mind with reference to these three things?
 - a. There is a certain order to these three things. Guilt precedes grace and grace precedes gratitude.
 - b. We do not come to a full and complete understanding of these three things all at once. This kind of knowledge requires a lifetime to gain. Even then, what we know of these three things will always be imperfect.

D. HC Q &A 3-5- Lord’s Day #2- Section 1- Man’s Sin and Misery

1. Why are so many people so miserable? If you asked the average person why they “feel” so unsettled so much of the time what would you think some answers would be?
2. Readings that would go with the day
 - a. Deut. 5:6-21;

- b. Matthew 22:34-40
- c. Romans 7:7-12

3. What do these Bible passages have in common?
 - a. They reveal to us the Law of God
 - b. They reveal that the Law binds all men to obedience.
 - c. They reveal what the Law of God requires of us.
 - d. They reveal immediately that we are guilty of not keeping the Law of God.
 - e. They also reveal to a certain extent that we can't keep this Law of God and as such are condemned.
 - f. Therefore, the Law binds all men to eternal condemnation.
 - g. The Law reveals how desperate our condition is....and the fact that we need something/someone...even the non-believer knows right and wrong... see Rom. 2:14-15. It is written into our DNA.
4. WSC Q17 says, "Into what estate did the fall bring mankind? A17-The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery. Q18: Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate where into man fell? A18: The sinfulness of that estate where into man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called Original Sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it. Q19: What is the misery of that estate where into man fell? A19: All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever. Q20. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery? A20. God having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.
5. Children's, Children's, Children's Catechism (First Catechism) says this: QA 35: How did Adam and Eve change when they sinned? Instead of being holy and happy, they became sinful and miserable.
6. Q&A #3- *How do you know of your misery? Out of the Law of God. (Duet. 27:26; Rom. 3:20)*
7. Q&A #4- *What does the Law of God require of us? Christ teaches us in sum, Matthew 22:37-40, "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first and great commandment; and the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."*
8. Q&A #5- *Can you keep all this perfectly? No: for I am by nature prone to hate God and my neighbor.*
9. How are these 2 sets of catechism questions similar and different? (What are they each seeking to focus on? Which one does it better in your opinion? Why?)
10. What is the most heinous sin that can be committed? Not loving the Lord with all our mind, heart, soul, and strength and our neighbor!

Heidelberg Catechism Study
Sunday
April 12, 2015

A. Prayer
B. Review

1. HC Q/A 1 - Q. What is my only comfort in life and in death? A. *That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins, and redeemed me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me, that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must work together for my salvation. Wherefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me heartily willing and ready henceforth to live unto Him.*
2. HC Q/A 2- Q. How many things are necessary for you to know, that you, in this comfort may live and die happily? A. *Three things: first, the greatness of my sin and misery. Second, how I am redeemed from all my sins and misery. Third, how I am to be thankful to God for such redemption.*
3. What was the purpose (s) for the first two catechism questions?
 - a. To start us where we need to be...considering the person of God and what He has done for us....the comfort that being in Him guarantees.
 - b. Telling us the things we need to know so that we can be comforted...
 - (1) How great me sins and miseries are.
 - (2) How I am delivered from all my sins and miseries.
 - (3) How I am to be thankful to God for such deliverance...knowing and understanding these enables us to be comforted in this life.
 - c. Sets us up for the outline of the catechism.
4. Q&A #3- *How do you know of your misery? Out of the Law of God. (Duet. 27:26; Rom. 3:20)*
5. Q&A #4- *What does the Law of God require of us? Christ teaches us in sum, Matthew 22:37–40, “Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first and great commandment; and the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”*
6. Q&A #5- *Can you keep all this perfectly? No: for I am by nature prone to hate God and my neighbor.*
7. These catechism questions highlight what is required of us as Christians...loving the Lord with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind and all our strength and loving our neighbor as ourselves. What does this look like? Why is this so important?
 - a. True submission and total obedience!
 - b. All our heart= that we make nothing equal to Him, much less that we should prefer anything to Him.
 - c. All our soul= that we would always willfully chose to love God above all things
 - d. All our mind= that we would with everything in us seek to “know” God and to understand all that He allows or choose for us to know about Him.

- e. All our strength= that all our actions, external and internal...all things done would be done in accordance with the Law of God...we will strive to endure ...to pour forth all blood sweat and tears for the cause of Christ in all that we do, think and say.
- f. With the emphasis of how we are to love God coming before loving our neighbor... *"...and the second is like unto it..."* we are obviously to think of others more highly than ourselves.

8. How did Jesus love "His neighbor?"

- a. He accepted them ...
- b. He healed them...
- c. He touched them...
- d. And He held them accountable...from his disciples to the ones He healed to the religious leaders and false teachers...His "love" was broad...broader than we even think about most of the time.

9. How do you feel about the bluntness of the answer to HC #5?

C. Lord's Day #3

1. Q/A #6- Did God create man wicked and perverse? *No, but God created man good, and after His own image, that is, in righteousness and true holiness; that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love Him, and live with Him in eternal blessedness, to praise and glorify Him.*

- a. Where do you go to PROVE this statement true? Genesis 1&2
- b. According to this catechism question for what end...for what purpose did God create man? *...that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love Him, and live with Him in eternal blessedness, to praise and glorify Him.*

2. Q/A #7-From where then comes this depraved nature of man? *From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise, whereby our nature became so corrupt, that we are all conceived and born in sin.*

- a. Where specifically do we go to PROVE this statement? Genesis 3.
- b. Is there anything left of the former "goodness" of man? The ruin of man is NOT so complete that there is nothing human left...we are still made in the image of God...that has not been lost.
- c. How corrupt is "so corrupt" according to the Scriptures?
 - (1) There is not a part of man's nature as it is now that has not suffered corruption. The whole man body and soul according to Genesis has been fatally damaged.
 - (2) According to the Scriptures, there is nothing in fallen man that can save them from the wrath of God. Each and every one of us deserve the fires of hell from the time we are conceived.
- d. Why are all the descendants of Adam and Eve also corrupt?

3. Q/A #8- But are we so depraved, that we are wholly unapt/ unable to any good and prone to all evil? *Yes; unless we are born again by the Spirit of God.*

- a. In answering this statement this way, what claims are the authors making about man?
 - (1) That his will is not free to obey God while he remains in this state.
 - (2) That he can do nothing "good" in relation to God.
 - (3) That he is only inclined to do what pleases him.
 - (4) That he is by no means free to do anything but evil...either in his heart or in his actions.
 - (5) And all of his actions are done freely as defined by his nature.
 - (6) That without the special work of the Spirit to regenerate a man's nature we are totally and completely lost.

- b. How do most Churches/Christians approach this subject? Why are they offended by such biblical truths?**
- (1) Everyone has a point system...if they all add up at the end of the day... I get in...and
 - (2) Everyone wants to be in control and because they so want this the idea of God's control offends even those who claim to be Christian.

Heidelberg Catechism Study
Sunday
April 19, 2015

A. Prayer

B. Review

4. Q/A #6- Did God create man wicked and perverse? *No, but God created man good, and after His own image, that is, in righteousness and true holiness; that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love Him, and live with Him in eternal blessedness, to praise and glorify Him.* Where do you go to PROVE this statement true? Genesis 1&2
5. Q/A #7-From where then comes this depraved nature of man? *From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise, whereby our nature became so corrupt, that we are all conceived and born in sin.*
 - e. Where specifically do we go to PROVE this statement? Genesis 3.
 - f. Is there anything left of the former “goodness” of man? The ruin of man is NOT so complete that there is nothing human left...we are still made in the image of God...that has not been lost.
6. Q/A #8- But are we so depraved, that we are wholly unapt/ unable to any good and prone to all evil? *Yes; unless we are born again by the Spirit of God.*
 - c. Where can we go in the Scriptures to PROVE the final point of #8, about the Holy Spirit’s work? (John 3:7-8; John 5:25; Acts 1:1-8; Eph. 1:11-14; Rev. 20:5...the first resurrection...the coming of the Spirit to regenerate God’s people)
 - d. Why does the Bible and the catechism use what seems like harsh language on this subject? Because they both want to be clear that there is nothing in fallen man that can bring about the necessary change that is needed to glorify God. If man is to be saved at all it will have to be and it only can be by God’s almighty power and mercy...by His grace alone!
7. Thinking about the places in the Bible we can go to PROVE man’s creation and man’s fallenness...How important then is it that Genesis be absolutely true? That creation was a real time and space event? That man was created holy and good? That the fall was a real time and space event? That Adam and Eve were real people? If Adam and Eve are, in fact, real people and were created somewhat perfect (I say “somewhat perfect” because they were obviously created with the ability to fall away from God... something that His children now are incapable of) and then disobeyed God, and if we are their descendants, then there should be no great difficulty in understanding why we are like them and like one another...sinful in need of deliverance.
8. Now if the human race simply evolved from a lower life form into what we are what would be some of the implications surrounding this theory?
 - a. No sin...only instinct...
 - b. No judgement for instinct...no standard or law...man would be “free” to do whatever came to mind...or whatever drove him...no right or wrong for a creature that operates on instinct...
 - c. Man would be no different than the animals...
9. Why is macro evolution totally incompatible with Christian faith?

10. According to what we have talked about...is peace in the Middle East possible? Is peace that is sought on human terms... by human hands ever really fully achievable? Is that what we are to be seeking for in this life?

C. Lord's Day #4

1. In the previous part OF THE Catechism, we learned that we are not able to keep God's commandments and yet God requires us to be perfect. This makes us all want to say loudly and for all to hear... "This isn't fair!" So the conversation continues...Someone may ask...
2. Q/A #9-Does not God then wrong man, by requiring of him, in His law, that which he cannot perform? *No: for God so made man, that he could perform it; but man, through the instigation of the devil, and his own by willful disobedience, deprived himself and all his posterity of this power.*
 - a. This is not an uncommon question...even today. The statement that is often made is this: He who requires or commands that which is impossible...is unjust! God requires in His law perfect obedience, which is impossible for man to perform...Therefore, God is unjust.
 - b. Why, then, is it truly "fair" for God to demand of man what He is unable to perform?
 - (1) God would be unjust if He hadn't first given man the ability to perform all that He required...
 - (2) Also, God would be unjust if He hadn't warned and told man what the consequence would be if he failed to follow God's commands...
 - (3) Man by his own fault and free will cast aside that gift and brought himself into the state of sin and misery in which he exists on his own...
 - (4) Thus making it his fault that he cannot any longer, on his own, keep God's Law in anyway close to what God expects and commands....
 - (5) And as such God is within His rights to condemn and judge all mankind justly.
3. Q/A #10. Will God suffer such disobedience and apostasy to go unpunished? *By no means; but He is terribly displeased with our inborn as well as our actual sins, and will punish them in just judgment in time and eternity, as He has declared: "Cursed is everyone who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them." (Deut. 27:26).*
 - a. In our culture over the last few decades we have begun to move away from corporal punishment or even the scolding of our children. And yet, many people will still talk about the need for discipline in our lives to be healthy and whole. How does this make sense?
 - b. If it is true that we need discipline, and I believe it is...especially our little ones...why do we consider God's judgements and His subsequent disciplines unfair?
 - (1) We are fine with God's judgments when they are being carried out on other people.
 - (2) If you believe in such things as God, then the conversation has to go to the depth of such punishment...
 - It seems most severe...and it is because it is a sin against the Most High God...against the infinite good.
 - It seems too just...and it is because every sin no matter how small is still cosmic treason... an equal violation of God's law which He said deserves death and eternal punishment.
 - It is most certain...hence the quote from Deut. 27:26.

(3) The difference it is said is this: As parents we punish but we forgive and bring back into the fold... nothing is permanent in the case of those we are in relationship with...

4. Then in our despair over these answers we are brought to this next question: Q/A #11. Is then God not merciful? *God is indeed merciful, but He is likewise just; wherefore His justice requires that sin, which is committed against the Most High Majesty of God, be also punished with extreme, that is, with everlasting punishment both of body and soul.*
- a. What do you suppose would be the result if God let just one sin slip through the cracks...just let one cosmic traitor “off the hook” without the penalty for that sin(s) being paid for?
 - b. If God is merciful, (and He is (Ex. 34:6-7; Ps. 103:8-9) why must the full penalty for sin nevertheless be paid?
 - (1) God will never compromise His justice because of His mercy. God’s justice is just as great and unchangeable as His mercy.
 - (2) God’s sense of justice must be satisfied and His mercy will be as well... II Tim 2:11-13.
 - (3) The extent of the treason is SO great...that God’s hand of judgment is equally great against sin...payment must be made for the sins that we have committed, and that payment must be the infinite punishment demanded for perfect justice.

Heidelberg Catechism Study
Sunday
April 26, 2015

A. Prayer

B. Review- Lord's Day #4

1. Q/A #9-Does not God then wrong man, by requiring of him, in His law, that which he cannot perform? *No: for God so made man, that he could perform it; but man, through the instigation of the devil, and his own by willful disobedience, deprived himself and all his posterity of this power.*
2. Q/A #10. Will God suffer such disobedience and apostasy to go unpunished? *By no means; but He is terribly displeased with our inborn as well as our actual sins, and will punish them in just judgment in time and eternity, as He has declared: "Cursed is everyone who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them." (Deut. 27:26).*
3. Q/A #11. Is then God not merciful? *God is indeed merciful, but He is likewise just; wherefore His justice requires that sin, which is committed against the Most High Majesty of God, be also punished with extreme, that is, with everlasting punishment both of body and soul.*
 - c. If God is merciful, (and He is (Ex. 34:6-7; Ps. 103:8-9) why must the full penalty for sin nevertheless be paid?
 - (4) God will never compromise His justice because of His mercy. God's justice is just as great and unchangeable as His mercy.
 - (5) God's sense of justice must be satisfied and His mercy will be as well... II Tim 2:11-13.
 - (6) The extent of the treason is SO great...that God's hand of judgment is equally great against sin...payment must be made for the sins that we have committed, and that payment must be the infinite punishment demanded for perfect justice.
 - d. What is the point of these 3 for us to understand and to teach to other?
 - e. To stay with the theme of comfort started in Q/A #1-2, how is this information comforting?

C. Lord's Day #5- Deliverance

1. Q/A #12. Since then, by the righteous judgment of God, we deserve temporal and eternal punishment, what is required that we may escape this punishment and be again received into favor? *God wills that His justice be satisfied, therefore we must make full satisfaction to the same, either by ourselves or by another.*
2. Q/A #13. Can we ourselves make this satisfaction? *By no means: on the contrary, we daily increase our guilt.*
3. Q/A #14. Can any mere creature make satisfaction for us? *None: for first, God will not punish, in any other creature, that of which man has made himself guilty; and further, no mere creature can sustain the burden of God's eternal wrath against sin, and redeem others therefrom.*
4. Q/A #15. What manner of mediator and redeemer then must we seek? *One who is a true and sinless man, and yet more powerful than all creatures, that is, one who is at the same time true God.*

- a. **How do we prefer to think of God, generally?**
 - (1) We prefer to think of God in terms of His goodness and mercy.
 - (2) We would like Him to be the kind of God that is willing to bend the “rules” sometimes... without always insisting on justice.
 - (3) We wish He would answer our prayers exactly as we ask them.
- b. **If these things were true of God, what would he really be? An idol...a false god made in our own image...**
- c. **But instead, what is true of the One true God?**
 - (1) He is Holy...
 - (2) He is righteous...
 - (3) And He will not...cannot compromise justice. (Ex. 23:7)
- d. **What is this “satisfaction” spoken of?**
 - (1) A punishment sufficient for the sin committed.
 - (2) The law binds all to obedience or punishment.
 - (3) The payment of either is perfect righteousness which God alone approves as sufficient.
- e. **Who, in all of Scripture, speaks about eternal condemnation the most?**
- f. **Why is this satisfaction necessary?**
 - (1) Because God’s law demands it... just like all true laws.
 - (2) Because of God’s mercy towards His own....and interestingly enough... against those to be punished, in that they know that there will be a day of reckoning and God’s mercy doesn’t leave them to wonder.
 - (3) We must cease in offending a Holy God for satisfaction to be complete.
- g. **Why can’t we make satisfaction for our sin?**
 - (1) No, because our past obedience is already impaired, and
 - (2) That which follows cannot make satisfaction for past infraction to the law...we cannot do enough to balance the ledger.
 - (3) We are to give perfect obedience to the Law at all times and we cannot because our while self is depraved.
 - (4) We cannot cease in offending a Holy God so we are constantly going further and further in debt...just like the man who constantly adds to his accounts will never release himself from the bondage to debt.
 - (5) Since we cannot make satisfaction, another must do it.
- h. **If this be true, and I say it is; can we then participate in any way in our own deliverance? Why or Why not?**
- i. **Why cannot any other creature be sufficient in our deliverance?**
 - (1) Any created thing would not be able to stand up to the scrutiny of God. (Psalm 130:3)...as in the case of angels (JW’s teach that an angel became a man to atone for our sins) they are not made in the image of God and in the grand scale of things are lesser beings than man.
 - (2) Or it is fallen or is affected by our fallenness...all creation awaits our restoration moaning until that day (Rom. 8:19-25; Heb. 10:4).
- j. **So what sort of deliverer must he be who is able to satisfy the requirements of God’s Law and enable us to be delivered?**

Heidelberg Catechism Study
May 3, 2015

A. Prayer

B. Review- Lord's Day #5- Deliverance

1. Q/A #12. Since then, by the righteous judgment of God, we deserve temporal and eternal punishment, what is required that we may escape this punishment and be again received into favor? *God wills that His justice be satisfied, therefore we must make full satisfaction to the same, either by ourselves or by another.*
2. Q/A #13. Can we ourselves make this satisfaction? *By no means: on the contrary, we daily increase our guilt.*
3. Q/A #14. Can any mere creature make satisfaction for us? *None: for first, God will not punish, in any other creature, that of which man has made himself guilty; and further, no mere creature can sustain the burden of God's eternal wrath against sin, and redeem others therefrom.*
4. Q/A #15. What manner of mediator and redeemer then must we seek? *One who is a true and sinless man, and yet more powerful than all creatures, that is, one who is at the same time true God.*
 - k. What is this "satisfaction" spoken of?
 - (4) A punishment sufficient for the sin committed.
 - (5) The law binds all to obedience or punishment.
 - (6) The payment of either is perfect righteousness which God alone approves as sufficient.
 - l. Why is this satisfaction necessary?
 - (4) Because God's law demands it... just like all true laws.
 - (5) Because of God's mercy towards His own...and interestingly enough... against those to be punished, in that they know that there will be a day of reckoning and God's mercy doesn't leave them to wonder.
 - (6) We must cease in offending a Holy God for satisfaction to be complete.
 - m. Why can't we make satisfaction for our sin?
 - (6) No, because our past obedience is already impaired, and
 - (7) That which follows cannot make satisfaction for past infraction to the law...we cannot do enough to balance the ledger.
 - (8) We are to give perfect obedience to the Law at all times and we cannot because our while self is depraved.
 - (9) We cannot cease in offending a Holy God so we are constantly going further and further in debt...just like the man who constantly adds to his accounts will never release himself from the bondage to debt.
 - (10) Since we cannot make satisfaction, another must do it.
 - n. Why isn't animal sacrifice good enough to appease and satisfy God?
 - o. So what sort of deliverer must He be who is able to satisfy the requirements of God's Law and enable us to be delivered? God and man!

C. Lord's Day #6

1. Q/A #16- Why must He be a true and sinless man? *Because the justice of God requires, that the same human nature which has sinned should make satisfaction for sin; but no man, being himself a sinner, could satisfy for others.*

- a. The catechism says that a sinner cannot pay for the sin of others? Why not? And then why can't we pay for our own?
 - b. To uphold the law of God, the mediator must be born of the woman, so to be truly human body and soul....yet without sin. He alone could satisfy God's law and appease God's wrath against man.
 - c. Yet another reason why Eve must be a real person in time and space...otherwise there would be no fulfilling of Gen. 3:15.
 - d. The Council of Chalcedon in 451 said this that Christ is *verus homus, verus Deus*...truly man and truly God. These 2 natures are in perfect unity and harmony, without mixture, division, confusion or separation.
 - e. What does it mean when we speak of Christ as being sinless?
 - (1) Christ's sinlessness does not merely serve as an example to us.
 - (2) It is fundamental and necessary for our salvation. Had Christ not been the "lamb without blemish" He not only could NOT have secured anyone's salvation, but He would have needed a savior Himself.
 - (3) The multitude of sins that Christ bore on the cross required a perfect sacrifice.
 - (4) Christ was completely free of any transgression...He completely obeyed and He even learned obedience.
 - (5) He delighted in obeying His own law.
2. Q/A #17- Why must He be at the same time true God? *That by the power of His Godhead He might bear in His manhood the burden of God's wrath and so obtain for and restore to us righteousness and life.*
- a. Phil. 2:5-8 speaks of Christ this way; "*He made Himself nothing*" or "*He emptied Himself.*" What is meant by this? Did He become less than God?
 - (1) If you listen real closely today you will hear Christian talking about Christ and how He changed from deity into humanity. The thinking often goes like, "There was this great eternal God who suddenly stopped being God for a time to become man."
 - (2) The Bible doesn't teach this. What it teaches is that the divine person took to Himself a human nature...a human nature without sin. That He deliberately cloaked His glory in His humility which is His humanity...giving us an example of how we are to cloak our own need for glory and our perceived rights.
 - b. In John 14:28, Jesus says, "*...the Father is greater than I.*" What does He mean in light of the above catechism Q/A? While being equal and fully God in His role as God the Son He makes Himself subordinate to the Father...not inferior. For the purpose of Glorifying Him through the salvation of His chosen elect the Father sends the Son forth to do the work.
 - c. Can you think of any other reason(s) why He must by necessity be God and man?
 - (1) Is. 43:11...so that He could BE the Savior...for there is no Savior except God.
 - (2) He would be called upon to suffer such immeasurable pain and suffering on behalf of His people to satisfy the just judgment of God the Father.
 - d. With all of this in mind, can we participate in any way in our own deliverance? Why or Why not? If, this be true, why do so many churches teach otherwise? What is the basis for their teaching?
 - e. Just so we are clear, what important fact was made self-evident by the vast number of animal sacrifices under the Old Testament?

Heidelberg Catechism Study
May 10, 2015

A. Prayer

B. Review- Lord's Day #6

1. **Q/A #16- Why must He be a true and sinless man?** *Because the justice of God requires, that the same human nature which has sinned should make satisfaction for sin; but no man, being himself a sinner, could satisfy for others.*
 - a. **The catechism says that a sinner cannot pay for the sin of others? Why not? And then why can't we pay for our own?**
 - b. **What did the Council of Chalcedon say about Christ and why is it important to our conversation here?**
2. **Q/A #17- Why must He be at the same time true God?** *That by the power of His Godhead He might bear in His manhood the burden of God's wrath and so obtain for and restore to us righteousness and life.*
 - f. **Can you think of any other reason(s) why He must by necessity be God and man?**
 - (3) **Is. 43:11...so that He could BE the Savior...for there is no Savior except God.**
 - (4) **He would be called upon to suffer such immeasurable pain and suffering on behalf of His people to satisfy the just judgment of God the Father.**
 - g. **Just so we are clear, what important fact was made self-evident by the vast number of animal sacrifices under the Old Testament?**

C. Lord's day #6 continued:

1. **Q/A #18- But who now is that Mediator, who is at the same time true God and a true, sinless man?** *Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is freely given unto us for complete redemption and righteousness.*
 - a. **If the Only One who can satisfy God's law and appease God's wrath is Jesus Christ thus granting and securing salvation for His own, does it necessarily follow that all other religions and faith systems that profess other ways and means to eternal life are false? Why isn't that harsh?**
 - b. **Why must such an exclusive claim be made? Isn't there room for more than one way to heaven? Why or why not?**
 - c. **Does it bother you that Christianity must make such an exclusive statement? Why or why not?**
2. **Q/A #19- How do you know this?** *From the Holy Gospel: which God Himself first revealed in Paradise; afterwards proclaimed by the holy Patriarchs and Prophets, and foreshadowed by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law; and finally fulfilled by His well-beloved Son.*
 - a. **So how important is the Bible just from the perspective of this question?**
 - b. **What is the gospel?** Turn to Acts 13:16b-41 (See specifically vs. 32)...

- (1) The gospel is NOT: "that God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life...that the gospel is that Jesus can change your life if you ask Him into your heart"...good news perhaps, but NOT The Good News!...and it is NOT, "the gospel is that you can have a personal relationship with Jesus." We forget, everyone already has a relationship with Jesus...it may be a negative one, but everyone alive today is in a personal relationship with Jesus whether they want to be or not as He is God the Son and all things happen as He has ordained.
- (2) The gospel is:
 - Literature...hence the Gospels...Matthew, Mark, Luke and John...an overview of the life of Christ
 - It is the kingdom of God as taught by John the Baptist and the other Prophets and then from Jesus...Jesus' Gospel if you will was the gospel of the Kingdom...the King had arrived.
 - The apostles and all of us after Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ...what Jesus has done in doing the will of His Father...Appeasing God's Wrath, satisfying God's law, redeeming the people of God the elect...those appointed to eternal life.
 - The gospel that Paul preaches is this: the seed of David, the incarnate Jesus Christ, who was put to death on the cross and raised from the dead, who ascended into heaven will come again at the end of the age. Jesus has won for us our forgiveness and our justification, which is by faith alone. If we remove any of these elements we no longer have the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - The gospel in short form: The gospel is who Jesus is, what Jesus did, what Jesus is still yet to do, and how we receive for our own all that He has done.
- (3) ***"The glory of the gospel is this: The one from whom we need to be saved is the one who has saved us."*** - R.C. Sproul

c. **And what is the result of the gospel being preached, taught and proclaimed? Acts 13:48...**

- (1) Not that we choose...Not that God made it possible for me to choose... NOT the reason why some believe and others do not is because some exercise their free will to believe.
- (2) In fact, it is God alone who chooses...who chose me before the foundation of the world...He appointed me to salvation and because of His appointment to eternal life...I believe! This is the result of the gospel for those who have been appointed to believe...
- (3) And those who are not appointed???...They DO NOT believe and will NOT believe.

d. **How and where did God reveal the gospel in paradise...the Garden of Eden?**

- (1) By coming to Adam and Eve...God with us...the Immanuel principle ...God's grace shown to Adam and Eve...is evident in that He didn't just leave them in their sin...
- (2) God listening to them...in their arrogance and their confession
- (3) The Promise of a deliverer...
- (4) Providing skins for them...also supplying the first sacrifices as substitutionary atonement for their sin
- (5) Putting them out of the Garden...not just a judgment...but God's grace...the gospel... for if man had stayed and eaten of the tree of life we would have forever been cursed...forever and eternally in our sins...no salvation possible.

e. **What is the difference between the law and the gospel?**

- (1) The law is known naturally...everyone has the law written on their hearts...this is not true of the gospel for it is divinely revealed in God's time...and it is revealed alone to the church by the Son...you remember Matt. 11:27.

- (2) The law teaches us what we ought to be and what God requires of us but it does not give us the ability to perform that which it requires. (See Gal. 2:15-21, 3:10-14) But the gospel by the promise of grace enables us to live as God prescribes through the righteousness of Christ imputed to each that belong to Him.
- (3) The law promises life to those who are righteous and are perfect in their obedience...a requirement again that fallen man can never meet. The gospel, on the other hand, promises life to those only who are justified by faith in Christ.

D. Lord's Day #7

1. Q/A #20- Are all men then saved by Christ, as they have perished in Adam? *No; only such as by true faith are ingrafted into Him, and receive all His benefits.*

a. Based on your understanding of the catechism so far and what you know of the Bible, why is this a true statement?

- (1) As the catechism has said...fallen men are unable to save themselves because they are fallen and have rejected God in Adam and so perish by their own fault.
- (2) Christ's work is not insufficient to save; for it is surely sufficient to save all who are His...that non-countable number from Rev.7
- (3) Christ's work satisfies God's Law and appeases God's wrath on those who have been before the foundation of the world chosen by God.

b. *"There is an element in the Gospel narratives that stresses that the coming of Jesus is a disturbing event of the deepest proportions. It had to be thus, for He did not come merely to add something extra to life, but to deal with our spiritual insolvency and the debt of our sin. He was not conceived in the womb of Mary for those who have done their best, but for those who know that their best is 'like filthy rags' (Isa. 64:6) — far from good enough — and that in their flesh there dwells no good thing (Rom. 7:18). He was not sent to be the source of good experiences, but to suffer the pangs of hell in order to be our Savior."*— Sinclair B. Ferguson

c. Once again, why is this "fair and just"?

- (1) For God to go against His own law would put everything into chaos.
- (2) If God went against His own Word He would cease to be God.
- (3) He must be just for the benefit of all!

d. With all that we have talked about so far, how is it that Christian brothers and sisters disagree on this seemingly most important doctrine?

Heidelberg Catechism Study
May 17, 2015

A. Prayer

B. Review

3. **Q/A #18- But who now is that Mediator, who is at the same time true God and a true, sinless man?** *Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is freely given unto us for complete redemption and righteousness.*
4. **Q/A #19- How do you know this?** *From the Holy Gospel: which God Himself first revealed in Paradise; afterwards proclaimed by the holy Patriarchs and Prophets, and foreshadowed by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law; and finally fulfilled by His well-beloved Son.*
- f. **Just so we are clear, how important is the accuracy of the Bible just from the perspective of this question?**
- g. **How and where did God reveal the gospel in paradise...the Garden of Eden?**
- (6) By coming to Adam and Eve...God with us...the Immanuel principle ...God's grace shown to Adam and Eve...is evident in that He didn't just leave them in their sin...
- (7) God listening to them...in their arrogance and their confession
- (8) The Promise of a deliverer...
- (9) Providing skins for them...also supplying the first sacrifices as substitutionary atonement for their sin
- (10) Putting them out of the Garden...not just a judgment...but God's grace...the gospel... for if man had stayed and eaten of the tree of life we would have forever been cursed...forever and eternally in our sins...no salvation possible.

C. Lord's Day #7

1. **Q/A #20- Are all men then saved by Christ, as they have perished in Adam?** *No; only such as by true faith are ingrafted into Him, and receive all His benefits.*
- e. **Based on your understanding of the catechism so far and what you know of the Bible, why is this a true statement?**
- (4) As the catechism has said...fallen men are unable to save themselves because they are fallen and have rejected God in Adam and so perish by their own fault.
- (5) Christ's work is not insufficient to save; for it is surely sufficient to save all who are His...that non-countable number from Rev.7
- (6) Christ's work satisfies God's Law and appeases God's wrath on those who have been before the foundation of the world chosen by God.
- f. **Once again, why is this "fair and just"?**
- (4) For God to go against His own law would put everything into chaos.
- (5) If God went against His own Word He would cease to be God.
- (6) He must be just for the benefit of all!
2. **Q/A #21- What is true faith?** *It is not only a certain knowledge, whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in His Word; but also a hearty trust, which the Holy Ghost works in me by the Gospel, that not only to others, but to me also, forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness and salvation, are freely given by God, merely of grace, for the sake of Christ's merits.*
- a. **What are some of the various ways people understand and use the word "faith"?**

- (1) *"I just somehow have faith that everything will work out right."* is this the right use of the word...or would a better word here be "I hope"? This person really is hoping all will be well.
 - (2) *"If you believe a thing strongly enough then it will surely happen."* This isn't faith either ...this more correctly would be "want or desire or a wish".
 - (3) These would seem to indicate that faith comes from within...
- b. How does true faith differ from these?
- (1) It comes from the outside of us...it comes from somewhere/someone else. I love this quote from G. I. Williamson- *"You see, in actual fact there is only one reality, and it is not what we may imagine it to be, but what God has actually made it to be. So what I need to have true faith is reliable information about this reality...And this is what God has given in His Holy Word"*
 - (2) But not knowledge alone but the work of the Spirit with me.
- c. The saving power resides exclusively, NOT in the act of faith nor the attitude of faith nor the nature of faith; BUT in the object of faith; and in this the whole biblical representation centers, is attributed in the Scriptures solely to Christ Himself. - The place of faith in the process of salvation, as biblically conceived is perhaps best described as an instrumental cause.
- d. *"The Reformers were unanimous and explicit in teaching that justifying faith does not justify by any meritorious or inherent efficacy of its own, but only as the instrument for receiving or laying hold on what God has provided in the merits of Christ. They regarded this faith primarily as a gift of God and only secondarily as an activity of man in dependence on God."* (Louis Berkhof's Systematic Theology)
- e. Hebrews 11:1-2 is one of the best definitions for true faith in the whole of the Bible. How does it go along with the lengthy definition we have here for "true faith"?
- (1) It is produced in me by the input that comes to me through God's revelation in the Bible.
 - (2) Vs. 2 points to how important the content of the Bible is to the faith of those who came before us, hence for us as well.
 - (3) I do not find this from within; God reveals this to me through His Word and the working of His Spirit.
 - (4) Great earthly example of what we are saying. Think of the mother child relationship. Does the child trust the mother because something inside of the child that produced trustworthiness in the mother? No, of course not. It is because of what the mother has done for and to the child that the child trusts. Knowing his mother the child trusts and runs to her...but not having comparable data about others the child might be shy toward others...at least until the mother tells her the other person is okay and based on their trust for the mother they may or may not get close to the new person.
 - (5) This is why Christians can say with assurance that Christianity alone provides a source for true faith, because there is only one reality and that reality is what God has provided in His Word.
- f. So before we move forward, why is it that some men believe when they hear the Gospel and other men do not? At least, 2 things are essential for faith since it does not come from within:
- (1) God's revelation to us in the Bible.
 - (2) The capacity for us to receive this revelation and be changed by it...1 Peter 1:3. This capacity is not present in us by nature. John 3:3-5; 1 Cor. 2:14...

- (3) It is for this reason, the Bible says, that we must be made alive by the power of the Holy Spirit...Eph. 2:5; Phil 2:13...when a man is regenerated only then will he be ready, willing and able to receive the truth of God's Word.
- (4) It is at the time of our regeneration that we receive knowledge of God. We begin to see the real reality of what God has. We see the reality of what we have done and we become convicted.
- (5) So true Faith...saving faith...always includes knowledge, conviction and then trust.

3. Q/A #22- What is then necessary for a Christian to believe? *All that is promised us in the Gospel, which the articles of our catholic, undoubted Christian faith teach us in sum.*

a. What very specifically is this Q/A saying to us today?

- (1) That Christians are those who believe everything that is written in God's word...for it alone gives us the true reality of life, death and the afterlife.
- (2) Human traditions, the decrees of men...Popes or elders or councils...are excluded as objects that are necessary for faith...

b. So, if you do not believe all that is written in the Bible can you be considered a Christian? Why or why not?

- (1) Think Mark 1:14-15.
- (2) Phil. 2:14-16

Heidelberg Catechism Study
May 24, 2015

A. Prayer
B. Review

1. Q/A #21- What is true faith? *It is not only a certain knowledge, whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in His Word; but also a hearty trust, which the Holy Ghost works in me by the Gospel, that not only to others, but to me also, forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness and salvation, are freely given by God, merely of grace, for the sake of Christ's merits.* So before we move forward, why is it that some men believe when they hear the Gospel and other men do not? At least, 2 things are essential for faith since it does not come from within:
 - a. God's revelation to us in the Bible.
 - b. The capacity for us to receive this revelation and be changed by it...1 Peter 1:3. This capacity is not present in us by nature. John 3:3-5; 1 Cor. 2:14...
 - (1) It is for this reason, the Bible says, that we must be made alive by the power of the Holy Spirit...Eph. 2:5; Phil 2:13...when a man is regenerated only then will he be ready, willing and able to receive the truth of God's Word.
 - (2) It is at the time of our regeneration that we receive knowledge of God. We begin to see the real reality of what God has. We see the reality of what we have done and we become convicted.
 - (3) So true Faith...saving faith...always includes knowledge, conviction and then trust.
2. Q/A #22- What is then necessary for a Christian to believe? *All that is promised us in the Gospel, which the articles of our catholic, undoubted Christian faith teach us in sum.*
 - c. So, how can we be confident that the Bible is the Word of God and is reliable for us to believe?
 - d. In 1978, after years of controversy that had rocked the church from the late 19th Century, The "Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy" was produced at an international Summit Conference of evangelical leaders many who would be known to us...J.I. Packer, Francis Schaeffer, James Montgomery Boice, R.C. Sproul among many others. This document presented the church with 5 affirmations:
 - (1) *God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself.*
 - (2) *Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms: obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.*
 - (3) *The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.*
 - (4) *Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.*

(5) *The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.*

e. How does believing that the Bible is God's Word to bring us comfort, especially in these last days?

3. Q/A #23- What are these Articles? *I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.*

a. What is this? The Apostle's Creed

b. Where did this creed come from?

- (1) A 4th Century compilation of the apostles teaching. It is widely used by a number of Christian denominations, including the Roman Catholic Church, Lutheranism, Anglicanism, and Western Rite Orthodoxy. It is also used by Presbyterians, Methodists, Episcopalians and Congregationalists. It contains all the fundamental articles of the Christian faith necessary to salvation, in the form of facts, in simple Scripture language, and in the most natural order—the order of revelation—from God and the creation down to the resurrection and life everlasting. It is Trinitarian, and divided into three chief articles, expressing faith—in God the Father, the Maker of heaven and earth, in his only Son, our Lord and Savior, and in the Holy Spirit. Then the Creed professes us to believe in 'the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the remission of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.' It is by far the best popular summary of the Christian faith ever made within so brief a space. It still surpasses all later symbols for catechetical and liturgical purposes, especially as a profession of candidates for baptism and church membership.
- (2) As to the origin of the Apostles' Creed, it no doubt gradually grew out of the confession of Peter, Matt. 16: 16, which furnished its nucleus (the article on Jesus Christ), and out of the baptismal formula, which determined the Trinitarian order and arrangement. It cannot be traced to an individual author. It is the product of the Western Catholic Church (as the Nicene Creed is that of the Eastern Church) within the first four centuries. It is not a word of God to men, but a word of men to God, in response to His revelation.
- (3) It was originally and essentially a baptismal confession, growing out of the inner life and practical needs of early Christianity. It was explained to those preparing to be baptized and join the church as adults at the last stage of their preparation, professed by them at baptism, often repeated, with the Lord's Prayer, for private devotion, and afterwards introduced into public service. It was called by the early Church fathers 'the rule of faith,' 'the rule of truth,' 'the apostolic tradition,' 'the apostolic preaching,' afterwards 'the symbol of faith.'
- (4) In brief then, it signifies a brief summary of the Christian faith, which distinguishes the Church from all other religions and sects and cults.

c. Why so much authority given to a non-biblical document?

- (1) In most Reformation Churches this Creed was essential to "proving" your belief....proving that you were a Christian.
- (2) It was a tool used by all but the Eastern Church which best summarized the basics of biblical doctrines and if one could not in good conscience receive this creed they could not receive and believe the Scriptures.

C. Lord's Day #8

1. **Q/A #24-How are these articles divided? *Into three parts: the first is of God the Father, and our creation; the second, of God the Son, and our redemption; the third, of God the Holy Ghost, and our sanctification. Why are they divided?***
 - a. Giving each person of the Godhead His due
 - b. Speaks of each role of the Godhead
 - (1) The creation by the Father
 - (2) The redemption by the Son
 - (3) The sanctification by the Holy Spirit
 - (4) But just so we are clear, while these are separate roles attributed to each they all work in unison... in communion...in each act.
2. **Q/A #25- Since there is but one Divine Being, why do you speak of three; Father, Son and Holy Ghost? *Because God has so revealed Himself in His Word, that these three distinct Persons are the one, true, eternal God.***
 - a. What does I Kings 8:60; Is. 45:5 communicate to us about what God says about Himself?
 - b. Look at Psalm 115:1-8. What does this add to the conversation concerning God? It shows a clear contrast between the One True God and idols.
 - c. When do we first see all of the persons of the Godhead? Gen. 1:1-3. What does this text have to say to us about the Godhead?
 - d. What does I Peter 1:1-2 and texts like it reveal to us about the Godhead?

Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy

- A. In 1978, after years of controversy that had rocked the church from the late 19th Century, The "Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy" was produced at an international Summit Conference of evangelical leaders many who would be known to us...J.I. Packer, Francis Schaeffer, James Montgomery Boice, R.C. Sproul among many others.
- B. We offer this Statement in a spirit, not of contention, but of humility and love, which we purpose by God's grace to maintain in any future dialogue arising out of what we have said. We gladly acknowledge that many who deny the inerrancy of Scripture do not display the consequences of this denial in the rest of their belief and behavior, and we are conscious that we who confess this doctrine often deny it in life by failing to bring our thoughts and deeds, our traditions and habits, into true subjection to the divine Word. The short statement below affirms 5 truths that have been held by the church as created by God since time began:
 1. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself.

2. Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms: obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.
3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.
4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.
5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.

C. Articles of Affirmation and Denial

1. Article I.
 - a. **WE AFFIRM** that the Holy Scriptures are to be received as the authoritative Word of God.
 - b. **WE DENY** that the Scriptures receive their authority from the Church, tradition, or any other human source.
 - c.
2. Article II.
 - a. **WE AFFIRM** that the Scriptures are the supreme written norm by which God binds the conscience, and that the authority of the Church is subordinate to that of Scripture.
 - b. **WE DENY** that Church creeds, councils, or declarations have authority greater than or equal to the authority of the Bible.
3. Article III.
 - a. **WE AFFIRM** that the written Word in its entirety is revelation given by God.
 - b. **WE DENY** that the Bible is merely a witness to revelation, or only becomes revelation in encounter, or depends on the responses of men for its validity.
4. Article IV.
 - a. **WE AFFIRM** that God who made mankind in His image has used language as a means of revelation.
 - b. **WE DENY** that human language is so limited by our creatureliness that it is rendered inadequate as a vehicle for divine revelation. We further deny that the corruption of human culture and language through sin has thwarted God's work of inspiration.
5. Article V.
 - a. **WE AFFIRM** that God's revelation within the Holy Scriptures was progressive.
 - b. **WE DENY** that later revelation, which may fulfill earlier revelation, ever corrects or contradicts it. We further deny that any normative revelation has been given since the completion of the New Testament writings.

6. Article VI.
 - a. **WE AFFIRM** that the whole of Scripture and all its parts, down to the very words of the original, were given by divine inspiration.
 - b. **WE DENY** that the inspiration of Scripture can rightly be affirmed of the whole without the parts, or of some parts but not the whole.
7. Article VII.
 - a. **WE AFFIRM** that inspiration was the work in which God by His Spirit, through human writers, gave us His Word. The origin of Scripture is divine. The mode of divine inspiration remains largely a mystery to us.
 - b. **WE DENY** that inspiration can be reduced to human insight, or to heightened states of consciousness of any kind.
8. Article VIII.
 - a. **WE AFFIRM** that God in His work of inspiration utilized the distinctive personalities and literary styles of the writers whom He had chosen and prepared.
 - b. **WE DENY** that God, in causing these writers to use the very words that He chose, overrode their personalities.
9. Article IX.
 - a. **WE AFFIRM** that inspiration, though not conferring omniscience, guaranteed true and trustworthy utterance on all matters of which the Biblical authors were moved to speak and write.
 - b. **WE DENY** that the finitude or fallenness of these writers, by necessity or otherwise, introduced distortion or falsehood into God's Word.
10. Article X.
 - a. **WE AFFIRM** that inspiration, strictly speaking, applies only to the autographic text of Scripture, which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy. We further affirm that copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the original.
 - b. **WE DENY** that any essential element of the Christian faith is affected by the absence of the autographs. We further deny that this absence renders the assertion of Biblical inerrancy invalid or irrelevant.
11. Article XI.
 - a. **WE AFFIRM** that Scripture, having been given by divine inspiration, is infallible, so that, far from misleading us, it is true and reliable in all the matters it addresses.
 - b. **WE DENY** that it is possible for the Bible to be at the same time infallible and errant in its assertions. Infallibility and inerrancy may be distinguished, but not separated.
12. Article XII.
 - a. **WE AFFIRM** that Scripture in its entirety is inerrant, being free from all falsehood, fraud, or deceit.

- b. **WE DENY** that Biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious, or redemptive themes, exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science. We further deny that scientific hypotheses about earth history may properly be used to overturn the teaching of Scripture on creation and the flood.

13. Article XIII.

- a. **WE AFFIRM** the propriety of using inerrancy as a theological term with reference to the complete truthfulness of Scripture.
- b. **WE DENY** that it is proper to evaluate Scripture according to standards of truth and error that are alien to its usage or purpose. We further deny that inerrancy is negated by Biblical phenomena such as a lack of modern technical precision, irregularities of grammar or spelling, observational descriptions of nature, the reporting of falsehoods, the use of hyperbole and round numbers, the topical arrangement of material, variant selections of material in parallel accounts, or the use of free citations.

14. Article XIV.

- a. **WE AFFIRM** the unity and internal consistency of Scripture.
- b. **WE DENY** that alleged errors and discrepancies that have not yet been resolved vitiate the truth claims of the Bible.

15. Article XV.

- a. **WE AFFIRM** that the doctrine of inerrancy is grounded in the teaching of the Bible about inspiration.
- b. **WE DENY** that Jesus' teaching about Scripture may be dismissed by appeals to accommodation or to any natural limitation of His humanity.

16. Article XVI.

- a. **WE AFFIRM** that the doctrine of inerrancy has been integral to the Church's faith throughout its history.
- b. **WE DENY** that inerrancy is a doctrine invented by scholastic Protestantism, or is a reactionary position postulated in response to negative higher criticism.

17. Article XVII.

- a. **WE AFFIRM** that the Holy Spirit bears witness to the Scriptures, assuring believers of the truthfulness of God's written Word.
- b. **WE DENY** that this witness of the Holy Spirit operates in isolation from or against Scripture.

18. Article XVIII.

- a. **WE AFFIRM** that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammatico-historical exegesis, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture.
- b. **WE DENY** the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claims to authorship.

19. Article XIX.

- a. **WE AFFIRM** that a confession of the full authority, infallibility, and inerrancy of Scripture is vital to a sound understanding of the whole of the Christian faith. We

further affirm that such confession should lead to increasing conformity to the image of Christ.

- b. **WE DENY** that such confession is necessary for salvation. However, we further deny that inerrancy can be rejected without grave consequences, both to the individual and to the Church.
- D. There was also much exposition provided by the council that I have not included. If you are interested on reading the rest it may be found at <http://www.bible-researcher.com/chicago1.html> as well as other sights.

Heidelberg Catechism Study
May 31, 2015

A. Opening Prayer

B. Review

1. Q/A #22- What is then necessary for a Christian to believe? *All that is promised us in the Gospel, which the articles of our catholic, undoubted Christian faith teach us in sum.*
 - a. So, how can we be confident that the Bible is the Word of God and is reliable for us to believe?
 - b. How will believing that the Bible is God's Word bring us comfort, especially in these last days?
2. Q/A #23- What are these Articles? *I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.* The Apostle's Creed

C. Lord's Day #8

3. Q/A #24-How are these articles divided? *Into three parts: the first is of God the Father, and our creation; the second, of God the Son, and our redemption; the third, of God the Holy Ghost, and our sanctification.* Why are they divided?
 - c. Giving each person of the Godhead His due
 - d. Speaks of each role of the Godhead
 - (5) The creation by the Father
 - (6) The redemption by the Son
 - (7) The sanctification by the Holy Spirit
 - (8) But just so we are clear, while these are separate roles attributed to each they all work in unison... in communion...in each act.
4. Q/A #25- Since there is but one Divine Being, why do you speak of three; Father, Son and Holy Ghost? *Because God has so revealed Himself in His Word, that these three distinct Persons are the one, true, eternal God.*
 - e. How can the Bible at the same time affirm the Oneness of God and the Trinity or tri-unity of the Godhead?
 - f. What benefits do we receive from knowing and believing that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit alone are the one true God and that there is no other?
 - (1) Salvation...being declared righteous!
 - (2) Since it is our highest good to know God, then it is only through our knowing Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that we will know and be assured of our salvation granted to us by Him.
 - (3) When we pray we actually know to whom we are praying...the One True God who is always truthful in His promises, who alone can help and be a refuge in times of trouble.

- (4) With this knowledge then we will not be tempted to worship false gods and/or idols.
- g. If we do not worship and serve this triune God, what do we worship and serve?
- (1) An idol. Which means for those groups that do not believe in the Trinity...even though they may call themselves Christians... they are not.
 - (2) We are the only religion that speaks of God this way...and we are considered polytheists by some...
 - (3) Interesting that Islam calls us blasphemers because we believe in the Trinity...and in their view the Trinity is the Father, The Son and Mary.
- h. Is this doctrine of the Trinity easy to understand and communicate? If not, then why do we believe it? This is NOT something that men have come to believe because it is reasonable to do so because it is not...the reason we believe it is because Scripture allows no others explanation for these and many other references. To make it up would have been absurd but we must believe it because it is what is revealed.

D. Lord's Day 9

1. Q/A #26- What do you believe when you say: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth? *That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of nothing made heaven and earth, with all that in them is, who likewise upholds and governs the same by His eternal counsel and providence, is for the sake of Christ His Son my God and my Father; in whom I so trust, as to have no doubt that He will provide me with all things necessary for body and soul; and further, that whatever evil He sends upon me in this vale of tears He will turn to my good; for He is able to do it, being Almighty God, and willing also, being a faithful Father.*
 - a. Why do we call Him Father? Why is this helpful and comforting?
 - (1) Because as our creator He is our Father
 - (2) Because Jesus calls Him Father...thus giving us an example...
 - b. What do you understand by the fact that He is "Almighty"?
 - (1) His omnipotence is powerful, effective and active...His upholds all things with His powerful right hand...
 - (2) He regulates everything by His providence
 - (3) His power no one can withstand...
 - c. When the Heidelberg Catechism was written the doctrine of creation was not being argued against. Most people assumed its validity. Not so today. So, what do we (believers) mean when we say, "*Maker of heaven and earth*"?
 - (1) In considering our Creator God we know that the covenant we have is with the known God...one who daily gives Himself to us Ps. 34:8; John 1: 16
 - (2) If He is not...than everything else is also a lie...
 - (3) Also, maker in this sense means that He stays involved like a "good" parent, not being too far off, but rather always being close at hand...knowing each sparrow and knowing the count of every hair on the head of His children...not leaving His creation to fend for ourselves...as an "evil" parent would.
 - d. What does having a correct view of God do to the discussion concerning macro-evolution? Theistic evolution?
 - (1) If evolution be true then God is not... macro-evolution is incompatible with belief in God.

- (2) Theistic evolution is an attempt to blend evolution with creation.
- (3) Evolution basically states; the material universe is seen as something eternal, and as constantly changing. Vast amounts of time...plus chance...will produce the present form of our universe.
- (4) Children in our schools are often taught routinely, that their life is the result of a cosmic accident, that human life emerge through the chance collision of atoms and is moving relentlessly towards an abyss of nothingness. That a person's two poles of existence start and end in meaninglessness...
- (5) This is as RC Sproul postulates, "the grand folly of humanism." A philosophy that he states openly that deserves no answer by us but only ridicule. Christian physicist and Anglican lay leader Regis Nicoll has stated, *"Evolution and Humanism screams out against all forms of logic and truth. Something else that we teach our children in school is that once upon a time, all matter was comprised into one tiny, infinitesimal point, and for eternity that point remained in a state of absolute inertia. The law of inertia states that bodies at rest tend to remain at rest unless acted upon by an outside force, and bodies that are in motion tend to remain in motion unless acted upon by an outside force....Some people have the audacity to state that from all eternity matter and energy were in a singular state of inertia, and then one day after eons of time, by chance, one day it all blew up and moved from an organization toward disorganization, all without an outside source. If any theory of origins ever screamed for and demanded the idea of a self-existent eternal being, it is the Big Bang theory. Without God...the outside force...the Big Bang theory is absolute folly, pure nonsense."*
- (6) But rather than all of this garbage...we need to know and teach our children...that life is rooted and grounded in God our creator! All life came into being by the creative act of an intelligent, eternal being...God Almighty!

Heidelberg Catechism Study
June 7, 2015

A. Opening Prayer

- B. Review- Lord's Day #9- Q/A #26- What do you believe when you say: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth? *That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of nothing made heaven and earth, with all that in them is, who likewise upholds and governs the same by His eternal counsel and providence, is for the sake of Christ His Son my God and my Father; in whom I so trust, as to have no doubt that He will provide me with all things necessary for body and soul; and further, that whatever evil He sends upon me in this vale of tears He will turn to my good; for He is able to do it, being Almighty God, and willing also, being a faithful Father.*

1. Why is calling the God of the whole universe Father helpful and comforting?
Reminds us of the intimate relationship we have with God.
2. Can time times chance produce anything? Why or why not?
3. If you found a carefully crafted and intricately designed watch in a remote desert, would you be inclined to believe that it was produced by the operation of wind upon the sand over eons of time? Why then do you suppose that some people then are inclined to believe that the universe just happened? Because the only other alternative would be God did do it...
4. What does having a correct view of God do to the discussion concerning macro-evolution? Theistic evolution? One last thought here: Evolutionist say we came from apes or maybe dolphins...but our own accounts says we came from even more humble beginnings...THE DIRT! And then God breathed life into us...
5. Now just so we are clear, is it the Christian or the evolutionist who takes things on faith?

C. Lord's Day #10

1. Q/A #27- What do you understand by the Providence of God? *The almighty everywhere present power of God, whereby, as it were by His hand, He still upholds heaven and earth, with all creatures; and so governs them, that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, all things, come not by chance, but by His fatherly hand.*
 - a. Let's flesh this out a bit, how would you describe the providence of God?
 - (1) God's preserving and sustaining of the universe...everything from the smallest neutron particle to the atmosphere surrounding the planet even the planetary alignment hundreds and thousands of light years away.
 - (2) God's controlling and/or governing of this universe so that all things work together to the end that God has determined from before the beginning.
 - (3) Since God is self-existent and nothing else is... He needs to keep it all together and functioning in the way it was created to function.
 - (4) God rules over all things in such a way that He always remains pure and free from all sin. Often the end and/or goal that one has in mind determines whether an action is good or

evil. God has in all His works an end/goal that is always in keeping with His eternal and immutable righteousness.

- (5) God has taken freedom from Satan and his minions...and so they can only do what He allows them to do. Interestingly, it is in resisting His will that they fulfill it.

- (6) Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3, 11:3

b. Today there is a renewed interest in ecology...which is a good thing...one that Christians would do well in taking a bit more seriously. However, this good and necessary discipline of stewardship has been redefined to basically say that man is the reason for the earth's issues. That the existence of man upsets the balance of that nature had under control very well until we showed up. What is the main point that an argument like this misses...even if we are the source of some of the planets woes...for sake of argument?

- (1) The God may have made a mistake.

- (2) This kind of thinking seeks to give us a lot more power than we truly have since...

- (3) The main thing is that this is God's world...He created it and He maintains it...God controls the ecology of this world. He uses it to curse us and He used it to bless us when we turn back to Him.

- (4) Second, that we have been called upon to be stewards of creation...Gen. 1:28-29, 2:5, 8, 15... God gave us the garden to work it and keep it... Work then is a creation mandate that is given to man to bring God glory... Keeping it= guarding it, watching over it, protecting it or exercising care for it...We have been given the mandate to watch over and keep safe all that the Lord has put under our care. Adam was not only to make creation fruitful but he was also to keep it safe. Likewise our basic mandate as Christian men is to cultivate, build and grow (both things and people, i.e. the Kingdom of God), but also to stand guard so that people and things are kept safe...

- (5) We are part of creation's eco-system, if you will...if we were gone the system would be upset...something that most ecologists are unwilling to admit even while they speak of the smallest problems as bringing imbalance to an eco-system. And the fact that we are not doing our job well doesn't mean that somehow the world is in our control... Just not stewarding...not taking care of it as God would...but even so since God is in control we can't do anything more to the world than the Lord will allow.

- (6) There is a time when all things will be made new...Rom. 8:19-22; II Peter 3:10-13; Rev. 21:1-5

2. Q/A #28- What does it profit us to know that God has created, and by His providence still upholds all things? *That we may be patient in adversity; thankful in prosperity; and for what is future, have good confidence in our faithful God and Father, that no creature shall separate us from His love; since all creatures are so in His hand, that without His will they cannot so much as move.* Specify in your own words what comfort providence gives to us?

- a. Patience in all circumstances...good and bad...Phil. 1:29...(12, 20, 22 and 28)

- b. We can be thankful in all things.

- c. Contentment

- d. John 10:28-30; Rom. 8:28-29

- e. We can trust God. Our greatest comfort, perhaps, in this messy world is that God does in fact uphold and govern all that He has created.

- f. Or maybe our greatest comfort in this life is this...Rom. 8:28, *"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who have been called according to His purpose."*

Heidelberg Catechism Study
June 14, 2015

A. Opening prayer

B. Review- Lord's Day #10

1. Q/A #27- What do you understand by the Providence of God? *The almighty everywhere present power of God, whereby, as it were by His hand, He still upholds heaven and earth, with all creatures; and so governs them, that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, all things, come not by chance, but by His fatherly hand.*
 - a. Using your own words, how would you describe the providence of God?
 - (1) God's preserving and sustaining of the universe...everything from the smallest neutron particle to the atmosphere surrounding the planet even the planetary alignment hundreds and thousands of light years away.
 - (2) God's controlling and/or governing of this universe so that all things work together to the end that God has determined from before the beginning.
 - b. The next thing we talked about was the environment. According to Scripture what is to be the Christians role concerning the environment? Since God is sovereign and it is by His providence that all things are held together by His hand, then how would you answer the modern day issues raised by many so called environmentalist that we ...that is mankind...is the earth's main problem?
2. Q/A #28- What does it profit us to know that God has created, and by His providence still upholds all things? *That we may be patient in adversity; thankful in prosperity; and for what is future, have good confidence in our faithful God and Father, that no creature shall separate us from His love; since all creatures are so in His hand, that without His will they cannot so much as move.* Specify in your own words what comfort providence gives to us?
 - a. We can trust God. Our greatest comfort, perhaps, in this messy world is that God does in fact uphold and govern all that He has created.
 - b. Or maybe our greatest comfort in this life is this...Rom. 8:28, *"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who have been called according to His purpose."*

C. Lord's Day #11

1. Q/A #29- Why is the Son of God called Jesus, that is, Savior? *Because He saves us from our sins; and no salvation is to be either sought or found in any other.*
 - a. According to all that we have seen thus far, how bad is our sin?
 - b. This is another very straight forward statement from the catechism. So if you believe this statement to be true can there ever be or has there ever been any other way to be saved, in the OT or now, than through Jesus as Savior? Why?
 - c. How many ways to God are there, really? Support your answer from Scripture. John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Rom. 10:8-13; Heb. 10:12, 14; 1 John 5:12
2. Q/A #30- Do such, then, believe in the only Savior Jesus, who seek their salvation and welfare of saints, of themselves, or anywhere else? (Can anyone have true faith in Jesus as Savior if they are putting their faith in themselves or anywhere else?) *No; although they may make their boast of Him, yet in act*

they deny the only Savior Jesus. For either Jesus is not a complete Savior, or they who by true faith receive this Savior, must have in Him all that is necessary to their salvation.

a. What are some ways that people who call themselves Christians actually deny Christ in the way they live their life?

- (1) Some believe they are more righteous than others...Luke 18:9
- (2) God will accept me because I keep the golden rule...because I do "good" things for my family and my fellow man...or because I do the "best" that I can. Rom. 3:20- no salvation in works.
- (3) When we need more than the Scriptures...when we need signs and wonders to prove God's word...if only God would show me ___then my faith would be stronger. Christians too often look for a sign...when the only sign we need has already been given... the Word of God.
- (4) We live with one foot in the world and one foot in the Word of God . . . and wonder why the life we are living leaves us wanting.
- (5) Jesus said, *"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you."* (Matthew 6:33)- For far too many, Jesus is just another item in a long list of things-to-do that we attempt to check off each day. At this level of living, our lives careen from wall to wall, going back and forth between being Savior-focused to self-focused. It is only when we make Jesus our first priority that we begin to make measurable forward progress in reflecting God's goodness for His glory.
- (6) Mary worship...or even saint worship.

b. Why do people easily put their trust in themselves or others but not in God?

Heidelberg Catechism Study
June 21, 2015

A. Opening Prayer

B. Review- Lord's Day #11

1. Q/A #29- Why is the Son of God called Jesus, that is, Savior? *Because He saves us from our sins; and no salvation is to be either sought or found in any other.*
 - a. How many ways to God are there, really? Support your answer from Scripture. John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Rom. 10:8-13; Heb. 10:12, 14; 1 John 5:12
 - b. Why aren't people satisfied with the one way described in Scripture?
2. Q/A #30- Do such, then, believe in the only Savior Jesus, who seek their salvation and welfare of saints, of themselves, or anywhere else? (Can anyone have true faith in Jesus as Savior if they are putting their faith in themselves or anywhere else?) *No; although they may make their boast of Him, yet in act they deny the only Savior Jesus. For either Jesus is not a complete Savior, or they who by true faith receive this Savior, must have in Him all that is necessary to their salvation.*
 - c. What is meant by calling Jesus the ONLY Savior? In other words, can Jesus be the Savior if He has to share salvation with anyone or anything else? Why would I ask such an obvious question? If I have to bring anything to this salvation equation...even if it is just a decision to follow Christ...I am saying that Jesus isn't enough...that His work on the Cross was not sufficient...that God needs something from me... His creation...to complete His work...which means that God isn't enough... that we have to, in some way, add to Him so He can finish His work.
 - d. Bottom line: Can a person "really believe" in Jesus Christ while at the same time trusting in himself, or anyone or anything else?
 - (1) Not according to the Bible; this says that it is either the one or the other. For the Scriptures say... *"But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace."* Rom. 11:6. In other words, if you are going to have salvation as a free gift of God, then you cannot have salvation by merit. (Rom. 4:4-5)
 - (2) It has been said that one of the central issues that is missing in the Church today is the recognition of this: *"For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!"* (Rom. 11:36)
 - e. Why should it matter to us what or how people believe, as long as they say they believe in Jesus? In other words, what does it matter how they live their lives as long as they say they believe in Jesus?

C. Lord's Day #12

1. Q/A #31- Why is He called Christ, that is, Anointed? *Because He is ordained of God the Father, and anointed with the Holy Ghost, to be our chief Prophet and Teacher, who fully reveals to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption; and our only High Priest, who by the one sacrifice of His body has redeemed us, and ever lives to make intercession for us with the Father; and our eternal King, who governs us by His Word and Spirit, and defends and preserves us in the redemption obtained for us.*
 - a. What comfort comes to us with this knowledge concerning Jesus being the Christ...the Anointed One?
 - (1) Should cause us to trust Him more...knowing that He has been sent by God the Father to fulfill all that had been prophesied about Him.

- (2) He comes to guard and keep us by His kingly power...to be our eternal sacrifice; making intercession for us in His priestly power...revealing to us the revealed will of God as God's prophet...
- (3) This anointing communicates His mission...to bring God glory by redeeming all the elect through His sacrifice.
- (4) We know to whom we belong...we also know in what Kingdom we exist...the Kingdom of God. Assurance is given to us...

b. Most Reformed literature speaks of Jesus being the ultimate Prophet, Priest and King...fulfilling all these offices that had been divided up in the Old Testament to other fallen and/or redeemed men. But here we are given yet another designation...teacher. What would be significant in breaking this title out and connecting it as they have done with the office of Prophet?

- (1) Possibly to clarify the dual role of the Prophet...one of proclaiming God's word and one of forth-telling of future events. (Hebrews 1:1-2)
- (2) And in proclaiming God's Word He has revealed to us whom we belong to and what our purpose is. So that we will always know how our heavenly Father feels about us...
- (3) Also, as our teacher He proclaims a complete wisdom...everything necessary for our on-going salvation so we can be content with this teaching alone without need of any or all human attempts to legislate this faith as from the devil. God the father told us to listen to Him alone...See Matt. 17:5.
- (4) As a teacher His desire is to share...to distribute the Word and the power of the Spirit to His whole church by revealing the will of His father to each member of His church.

2. Q/A #32- But why are you called a Christian? *Because, by faith, I am a member of Christ, and thus a partaker of His anointing; in order that I also may confess His name; may present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to Him; and may with free conscience fight against sin and the devil in this life, and hereafter, in eternity, reign with Him over all creatures.*

a. In reading this general "testimony" of why I am a Christian, how does it differ from the average Christian's spoken testimony?

- (1) The average Christian begins with the choice he made to become a Christian...then what he has done to follow Christ since...decided to get baptized...join the church ...do works of ministry...thus proving the salvation that he chose days, months, or years ago...
- (2) This testimony places the emphasis on God's work:
 - First I have been made a member of Christ by faith...faith comes from God be His grace, through the work of Jesus ... *"By God's great mercy, he caused me to be born again into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead..."* Not, ever something that I decide...
 - Because of God's great work on my life I am now a "partaker" of Christ's anointing...
 - And it these things that God has done to me and for me that ii am THEN able to confess Him as LORD and Savior and live as He has prescribed and as He has directed...so that in all things He gets the glory...
 - It is never about me...because without His work in my life I could do nothing more than stay in rebellion against Him.

b. Interesting phrase here in this question; *"Because, by faith, I am a member of Christ, and thus a partaker of His anointing..."* What does *"I am a member of Christ"* mean?

- (1) We belong to Christ...as His spouse...
- (2) Or as the Bible uses the word member...a part...like a hand, an eye, an ear...
- (3) I am one with Christ which means I am one with the Father
- (4) Do you think of yourself that way?
 - I think we are so individualistic that we don't often enough think this way...

- We have a hard time thinking of ourselves as a part of a greater whole of the local church and then the greater church. That our gifts are at all worthy of anyone else if we really have one...
 - We have a hard time considering that without us the Body doesn't function as it should...we have a hard time thinking team...when we are told to do it on our own...that we shouldn't depend upon others (we shouldn't depend on them to do it for us...but we need to find that team that has each other's back so we can depend upon them to extend the kingdom.)
- c. Breaking this down some more, what does it mean when it says as a member of Christ that I am also a “*partaker of His anointing*”? (Hint: it relates back to the last question when it is said that Christ is anointed with the Holy Spirit.)
- (1) Not all Christians have the same measure of Christ anointing...
 - (2) John the Baptist said of Jesus in John 3:34, “*For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure(to Him).*” This tells us that Christ did not receive the Spirit by measure...when God anointed His Son as the Messiah, the Holy Spirit was not given to Him in a partial fashion. God The Father did not measure out a little of the Spirit at a time...rather He poured out the Spirit on the Son in His fullness since they all share from each other totally in the Godhead.
 - (3) Paul speaks of all Christians in Eph. 4:7 when he says, “*To each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.*” There is a difference between us and the Lord and a difference between one Christian to another. This is not an inferiority-superiority kind of thing...we are all given different gifts...and with that different measures of God's Spirit so that we fit together in a unified whole the way God intended.
 - (4) That we have all (believer's that is) been given the Holy Spirit...John 14:16-17, 27

Heidelberg Catechism Study
July 5, 2015

A. Opening Prayer

B. Review

1. Why should it matter to us what or how people believe, as long as they say they believe in Jesus?
2. Also, what does it matter how they live their lives as long as they say they believe in Jesus?
3. Lord's Day #12-- Q/A #31- Why is He called Christ, that is, Anointed? *Because He is ordained of God the Father, and anointed with the Holy Ghost, to be our chief Prophet and Teacher, who fully reveals to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption; and our only High Priest, who by the one sacrifice of His body has redeemed us, and ever lives to make intercession for us with the Father; and our eternal King, who governs us by His Word and Spirit, and defends and preserves us in the redemption obtained for us. What comfort comes to us with this knowledge concerning Jesus being the Christ...the Anointed One?*
 - a. Should cause us to trust Him more...knowing that He has been sent by God the Father to fulfill all that had been prophesied about Him.
 - b. He comes to guard and keep us by His kingly power...to be our eternal sacrifice; making intercession for us in His priestly power...revealing to us the revealed will of God as God's prophet...
 - c. This anointing communicates His mission...to bring God glory by redeeming all the elect through His sacrifice.
 - d. We know to whom we belong...we also know in what Kingdom we exist...the Kingdom of God. Assurance is given to us...
4. Q/A #32- But why are you called a Christian? *Because, by faith, I am a member of Christ, and thus a partaker of His anointing; in order that I also may confess His name; may present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to Him; and may with free conscience fight against sin and the devil in this life, and hereafter, in eternity, reign with Him over all creatures.*
 - d. Interesting phrase here in this question; *"Because, by faith, I am a member of Christ, and thus a partaker of His anointing..."* What does *"I am a member of Christ"* mean?
 - (5) We belong to Christ...as His spouse...
 - (6) Or as the Bible uses the word member...a part...like a hand, an eye, an ear...
 - (7) I am one with Christ which means I am one with the Father
 - (8) Do you think of yourself that way?
 - I think we are so individualistic that we don't often enough think this way...
 - We have a hard time thinking of ourselves as a part of a greater whole of the local church and then the greater church. That our gifts are at all worthy of anyone else if we really have one...
 - We have a hard time considering that without us the Body doesn't function as it should...we have a hard time thinking team...when we are told to do it on our own...that we shouldn't depend upon others (we shouldn't depend on them to do it for us...but

we need to find that team that has each other's back so we can depend upon them to extend the kingdom.)

- e. Breaking this down some more, what does it mean when it says as a member of Christ that I am also a "*partaker of His anointing*"? (Hint: it relates back to the last question when it is said that Christ is anointed with the Holy Spirit.)

- (5) Not all Christians have the same measure of Christ anointing...
- (6) John the Baptist said of Jesus in John 3:34, "*For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure(to Him).*" This tells us that Christ did not receive the Spirit by measure...when God anointed His Son as the Messiah, the Holy Spirit was not given to Him in a partial fashion. God The Father did not measure out a little of the Spirit at a time...rather He poured out the Spirit on the Son in His fullness since they all share from each other totally in the Godhead.
- (7) Paul speaks of all Christians in Eph. 4:7 when he says, "*To each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.*" There is a difference between us and the Lord and a difference between one Christian to another. This is not an inferiority-superiority kind of thing...we are all given different gifts...and with that different measures of God's Spirit so that we fit together in a unified whole the way God intended.
- (8) That we have all (believer's that is) been given the Holy Spirit...John 14:16-17, 27

C. Lord's Day #13

1. Q/A #33- Why is He called God's only begotten Son, since we also are the children of God? *Because Christ alone is the eternal, natural Son of God; but we are the children of God by adoption through grace for His sake.*

- a. How does this comfort us as a believer?

- (1) 1 John 4:9
 - (2) We learn from this and the passage that we just looked at God deals with us not only with promises and with His precious oath but also with His deeds: He sent His one and Only Son into this world, He has Him to become human and then gives Him up to death, even death on a cross, taking away all our sins...past, present and future.
 - (3) God the Father always does as he says He will do.
- b. There are 2 types of children. The children born naturally into a family and those that may have been adopted by them.
- (1) Adoption is truly a wonderful thing...giving a child hope who has little or no hope...or in the case of many of the orphans throughout the world...guaranteeing them life. A child who had nothing now suddenly has it all...a home, parents who want them, and legal rights as the naturally born children would have.

- (2) "only begotten Son"-or "the One and Only Son" (John 1:14, 18 NKJV, KJV) ...

- "homousios"= of the same nature = one Greek word that speaks of the eternal generation of the Son in the Trinity, as well as speaking to His uniqueness and the supreme worth of the Christ above any and all since He is God as well. God's only "natural" Son. Isaac is classified in the Hebrew OT as Abraham's only Son even though Ishmael had been born to Hagar...though was not the fruit of Abraham and Sarah...God's chosen one. Isaac was Abraham's "natural" son as God had planned it. This term does not ever have in mind and does not ever speak about Christ's conception or birth as a human...though we may use similar analogies.
- Interesting the God has John after witnessing the Transfiguration of Christ declared Jesus to be the One and Only Son...the only begotten Son...because of the glory they witnessed at that wonderful event.
- A distinction had to be made between Christ and all believers.
- There never was a time in eternity that Jesus wasn't begotten...in that He has always been...He is the exact image of the Father...not a mirror image but the expressed image of God because He is God...His divine nature was eternally generated by the Father.

Hebrews 1:1-3. Jesus is the locus of God...personal being of God dwelling with man...there is no one like Him...as He has eternally been generated by the Father, He took on various theophany's in the OT, but Jesus of Nazareth in the New who came to die for God's elect.

2. Q/A #34. Why do we call Him our Lord? *Because, not with silver and gold, but with His precious blood, He has redeemed and purchased us, body and soul, from sin and from all the power of the devil, to be His own.*

a. What do you mean when you say, "Jesus is Lord"?

- (1) Defines His sovereignty.
- (2) That the Son of God is Creator of all things, and therefore has a RIGHT over all things.
- (3) He is the defender and preserver of His Church...His Body...the Bride of Christ.
- (4) I have been redeemed/purchased by His blood and continually am preserved by Him, so that I am bound to be grateful to Him.
- (5) His Lordship over me is for His glory and for my good.
- (6) Rom. 10:9, Phil. 2:11
- (7) In the New Testament, Lord is the most frequently used title for Jesus Christ. Although we rarely use this term in our daily lives, we are all quite familiar with another word: boss. That is basically what Lord means—one possessing authority, power, and control. The Word of God describes Jesus as the head of the church, the ruler over all creation, and the Lord of lords and King of kings (Col. 1:15–18; Rev. 3:14, 17:14).
- (8) The realm of Christ's reign covers everything that happens in heaven and on the earth. No one—not even those who deny His existence—can be free of His rule or outside His sphere of authority. Although Satan tries to convince us that liberty is found in doing what we want, true freedom is acquired only through submission to Christ's loving lordship.
- (9) Even death cannot release anyone from the authority of God's Son. He is Lord of both the living and the dead.

b. Why does the Bible and, now, the catechism speaks so often about the precious blood of Christ?

- (1) Precious speaks of "its" unique status...the One and Only sacrificial blood that would work to satisfy God's law and appease His wrath.
- (2) God's own law required blood sacrifice for the remission of sin...all of the sacrifices of the OT were not sufficient to cover the sins of all God's adopted children...so the Son...the One and Only from the Father came as that sacrificial Lamb...God's own first born, for it was the first born lamb, unblemished that was required for the sacrifice.
- (3) Blood is messy...blood reminds us of a cost...when someone's blood is shed his life is poured out...when someone's blood is shed it is obvious...blood is of greater value than money...so being redeemed by His blood tells us a couple of things:
 - We have already seen that God's firstborn had to be sacrificed...the precious first born... the One of greatest value... His One and Only Son...
 - What God in Christ was shedding His blood for, was valuable as well...no one would shed blood for nothing...but we as God's elect are valuable enough for God the Father to have God the Son shed His blood for us...
 - And as such grants Him the right of possession since He shed His own blood for us...ransoming us from sin...making us servants of Christ. "doulos"= purchased slaves...slaves purchased by His blood.
 - Interesting "FUN FACT" about the word "servant": Slaves were first called "*servi*" by the Romans, from the word "*servando*", which properly meant "*preserved*", because, being taken captives by their enemies, they were said to have been preserved, when they could have been put to death!
- (4) On this 4th of July weekend (2015), it is important for us to remember:

- Our spiritual liberty was purchased with the blood of Christ.
 - Also, our political liberty as a nation, under God, was purchased with the blood (their sacred honor) of thousands in the Revolutionary War.
 - Our liberty as a nation has been maintained through the years by the blood of hundreds of thousands willingly laying down their lives for their countrymen and women.
 - We must remember then that the shedding of blood has been extremely important to all our lives...our whole life.
- (5) Listen to the voice of a wiser man than me...Horatius Bonar- *Scottish evangelist/pastor of the mid-19th Century from his book The Blood of Christ- "Though it was not possible that the blood of bulls or of goats could take away sin, or could have any value in the sight of God, yet even that blood was looked upon as sacred and holy, because prefiguring the blood of the better sacrifice."*
- (6) And again, *"If a sinner of old might come into the courts of the Lord as an accepted worshipper, simply because presenting to God the blood of bulls and goats, may not a sinner now come into the real, the immediate presence of Jehovah, with still greater certainty of acceptance, simply making mention of that divine blood which has flowed from the Lamb of God—the Word made flesh—who made His soul an offering for sin, and gave His life a ransom for the sins of many (Isa 53:10; Mat 20:28)?"*
- (7) One more, *"So precious does He esteem it, that He makes it the answer to the various doubts and perplexing sophistries with which self and Satan would entangle the soul, either when coming to God, or after it has come. Do the sins of past years lie heavy on it? He says, Behold the blood! Does a sense of personal unworthiness darken it? He says again, Behold the blood; and in it, that which fully makes up in My eyes for all such unworthiness! Do iniquities prevail—rushing in like a flood through every avenue of the soul? He says again, Behold the blood; it 'cleanses from all sin' (Eph. 1:7; 1John 1:7). No amount of defilement can dilute the efficacy of that blood, or make it less free to the polluted soul."*
- c. What did Thomas mean in John 20:28? We often call him "Doubting Thomas", but how much doubt is there in this statement?

Heidelberg Catechism Study
July 12, 2015

A. Prayer

B. Review- Lord's Day #13

1. Q/A #33- Why is He called God's only begotten Son, since we also are the children of God? *Because Christ alone is the eternal, natural Son of God; but we are the children of God by adoption through grace for His sake.* How does this comfort us as a believer?
2. Q/A #34. Why do we call Him our Lord? *Because, not with silver and gold, but with His precious blood, He has redeemed and purchased us, body and soul, from sin and from all the power of the devil, to be His own.*
 - d. What did we say we meant when we say, "Jesus is Lord"?
 - (10) That the Son of God is Creator of all things, and therefore has a RIGHT over all things.
 - (11) He is the defender and preserver of His Church...His Body...the Bride of Christ.
 - (12) I have been redeemed/purchased by His blood and continually am preserved by Him, so that I am bound to be grateful to Him.
 - (13) His Lordship over me is for His glory and for my good.
 - (14) Rom. 10:9, Phil. 2:11
 - (15) In the New Testament, Lord is the most frequently used title for Jesus Christ. Although we rarely use this term in our daily lives, we are all quite familiar with another word: boss. That is basically what Lord means—one possessing authority, power, and control. The Word of God describes Jesus as the head of the church, the ruler over all creation, and the Lord of lords and King of kings (Col. 1:15–18; Rev. 3:14, 17:14).
 - (16) The realm of Christ's reign covers everything that happens in heaven and on the earth. No one—not even those who deny His existence—can be free of His rule or outside His sphere of authority. Although Satan tries to convince us that liberty is found in doing what we want, true freedom is acquired only through submission to Christ's loving lordship.
 - (17) Even death cannot release anyone from the authority of God's Son. He is Lord of both the living and the dead.
 - e. Why does the Bible and, now, the catechism speak so often about the precious blood of Christ?
 - (8) Precious speaks of "its" unique status...the One and Only sacrificial blood that would work to satisfy God's law and appease His wrath.
 - (9) God's own law required blood sacrifice for the remission of sin...all of the sacrifices of the OT were not sufficient to cover the sins of all God's adopted children...so the Son...the One and Only from the Father came as that sacrificial Lamb...God's own first born, for it was the first born lamb, unblemished that was required for the sacrifice.
 - f. What did Thomas mean in John 20:28? We often call him "Doubting Thomas", but how much doubt is there in this statement?

C. Lord's Day #14-

1. Q/A #35- What is the meaning of: Conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary? *That the eternal Son of God, who is and continues true and eternal God, took upon Him the very nature of man, of the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary, by the operation of the Holy Ghost; so that He also might be the true seed of David, like unto His brethren in all things, sin excepted.*
 - a. What does the Bible mean when it says, as the catechism, that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit?
 - (1) That Jesus was miraculously conceived in the womb, by the immediate action, or operation of the Holy Spirit...

- (2) And without the seed and/or substance of man so Jesus was conceived without sin...since the sin comes through the line of the man from a generational perspective.
- (3) That the hypostatic union of the two natures...God and man...was formed by the Holy Spirit.
- (4) So, the plain truth is this; that the Holy Spirit is the immediate author of the miraculous conception of the flesh of Jesus the Christ.

b. Is the doctrine of the virgin birth essential for salvation?

- (1) No, if you come at this from the perspective of how much you need to know and believe to be saved. The thief on the cross probably didn't KNOW that Jesus had been born by a virgin.
- (2) Yes, if you are talking about Christ's nature. From this standpoint it is essential to salvation...since our Savior had to be man to enter into our human condition yet without sin and having infinite power to do the work of salvation...no virgin birth as described in the Bible then Jesus is only another man...and a man cannot atone for men.
- (3) Yes, as well, in that it points to the validity of God's own word as it is fulfilled in the birth and then life of this One prophesied so long before His conception and birth.

c. Why do you suppose some have a problem with totally accepting this doctrine?

- 2. Q/A #36- What comfort or benefit do you receive from the holy conception and birth of Christ? *That He is our Mediator, and with His innocence and perfect holiness covers, in the sight of God, my sin, wherein I was conceived.* Is this really enough? Is His holiness sufficient?

Heidelberg Catechism Study
July 19, 2015

A. Prayer

B. Review- Lord's Day #14- Q/A #35- What is the meaning of: *Conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary? That the eternal Son of God, who is and continues true and eternal God, took upon Him the very nature of man, of the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary, by the operation of the Holy Ghost; so that He also might be the true seed of David, like unto His brethren in all things, sin excepted.*

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- c. Yes, as well, in that it points to the validity of God's own word as it is fulfilled in the birth and then life of this One prophesied so long before His conception and birth.

2. Why do you suppose some have a problem with totally accepting this doctrine?

C. Lord's Day #15- discussing: *He suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, died and was buried; He descended into hell.*

1. Q/A #37- What do you understand by the word: Suffered? Or, What does it (the Confession) mean when it says, *"He suffered"? "That all the time He lived on earth, but especially at the end of His life, He bore, in body and soul, the wrath of God against the sin of the whole human race; in order that by His passion, as the only propitiatory sacrifice, He might redeem our body and soul from everlasting damnation, and obtain for us the grace of God, righteousness, and eternal life."*

- a. What was the compelling cause of the Passion (sufferings) of Christ? The cause which moved God to give His Son over to such sufferings were:
 - (1) To uphold His Law...His Word...
 - (2) His own glory
 - (3) Fulfillment of His promise to His elect from the beginning of time...
 - (4) His love and compassion towards His own who were fallen...I Peter 1:3; Titus 3:5
 - (5) A full knowledge of what the results will be...
 - (6) The desire and purpose of God to deal with the devil and all His enemies...another promise made at the beginning.
- b. Why do so many hold to the false idea the Christ intended to die for all men?
 - (1) Because it fits with their thinking that they can choose their own salvation...they think that all people can be saved...even worse...all will be saved in the end...except for maybe the worst of us and many aren't sure about that any more.
 - (2) It also fits with their thinking that all men are basically good...and that God being a grandfatherly type would not condemn any to hell.
 - (3) Because it fits their limited and misunderstanding of what is fair...or from their perspective what "should" be fair.
 - (4) The Catechism is not saying that He bore the sins of all people without exception. The Catechism has already begun to make the distinction between God's elect and the rest of the world... and that will continue to be explained as we go further. Jesus took upon Himself the same wrath that is due all people for their sin...wrath is wrath. But Jesus only died and was an actual sacrifice for those the Father gave Him. (See John 17: 9)

(5) Christ died as a substitute for the Elect...not all people. The "us" in the rest of the answers speaks of His children alone.

2. Q/A #38- Why did He suffer under Pontius Pilate, as judge? *"That He, being innocent, might be condemned by the temporal judge, and thereby deliver us from the severe judgment of God, to which we are exposed."* Why did His death have to be carried out by the civil authorities?
- 11 Chr. 19:5-7
 - Rom. 13:1...Pontius Pilate was there by God's sovereign appointment. It was no "accident" that Rome was in charge in those days.
 - He had to suffer just as any other man...but since He was not to be brought before God's holy throne He must be brought to the authorities He had established over His people.
 - It was in the public record of the day. That He was flogged and crucified...and that no fault was found in Him, but He was still given a death sentence reserved for only the worst criminals. (11 Cor. 5:21)
 - Now none who are His will ever be brought before the judgment seat of God as Christ stood there by standing before Pilate...representing God's judgment seat.
3. Q/A #39- Is there anything more in His having been crucified, than if He had died some other death? *Yes: for thereby I am assured, that He took on Himself the curse which lay upon me; because the death of the cross was accursed of God.* Do any other reasons come to mind?
- Deut. 21:22-23- *"...a hanged man is cursed (accursed) by God."* The context speaks of someone who is executed for a capital crime. Also, His corpse was not to be left hanging over night so that the land would not be defiled.
 - His death represents the worst of deaths...the wrath due us because of our cosmic treason...our infidelity towards the God who created us...against whom Adam sinned and we have ever since sinned. Because we are all sinful by Adam's sin we cannot be the sacrifice to bring about the salvation that God covenanted to bring about for His own...so that was given to Christ and upon Him was laid the wrath of God due us...he was accursed on our behalf...
 - It was through the providence of God that Jesus was subjected to the execution reserved for the worst offenders. Since we see God's hand in all of this we come away understanding that Jesus died as a substitute...since He had no sin and our sin was extremely odious to God. And again, knowing this we can rest assured that what He did on the cross for us was more than efficient for our salvation.
 - The DESIGN of the suffering and death of Jesus was not the salvation of all men. But the VALUE of Jesus' sacrifice is absolutely infinite. What Christ suffered was more than sufficient for the whole human race but it is only effective for the elect. For this reason no one of the elect ever needs to worry about whether enough was done...the precious blood of Jesus is that powerful.
 - When considering this catechism question and answer we must also understand how far the church had fallen by the time of the Reformation. The Roman Catholic Church was saying that one's salvation was dependent upon the Church's say so as its members worked through the many sacraments towards salvation. In the commentary written by one of the original authors of this catechism there are multiple pages with questions and answers to objections put forth on this question and the question of the virgin birth of Christ because of how the church at the time had moved so far away from the Scriptures and what the scriptures clearly taught. The authors felt that they needed to break everything down to its lowest common denominator to make sure that the people who had been heavily influenced by the teaching of the day would come away with at least a glimpse of the magnitude of Christ's sacrifice for His elect...that it was Christ alone ...not the church who decides these matters...and to what degree His death secured our salvation with NO NEED for anything else. This explanation would not be necessary for all people but especially for those who wander and are prone to wonder.
 - Jesus fully accomplished what He intended by going to the cross...the salvation of ALL who are His...who have been given Him by the Father.

- g. All of this should bring about in us, who know we are saved by grace, such a great thankfulness causing us to give God all the glory, praise and honor for His work through Christ.**

Heidelberg Catechism Study
July 26, 2015

A. Prayer

B. Review- Lord's Day #15- discussing: *He suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, died and was buried; He descended into hell. Q/A #39- Is there anything more in His having been crucified, than if He had died some other death? Yes: for thereby I am assured, that He took on Himself the curse which lay upon me; because the death of the cross was accursed of God.*

1. How are we supposed to understand this?

- h. Deut. 21:22-23- *"...a hanged man is cursed (accursed) by God."* The context speaks of someone who is executed for a capital crime. Also, His corpse was not to be left hanging over night so that the land would not be defiled.
- i. The DESIGN of the suffering and death of Jesus was not the salvation of all men. But the VALUE of Jesus' sacrifice is absolutely infinite. What Christ suffered was more than sufficient for the whole human race but it is only effective for the elect. For this reason no one of the elect ever needs to worry about whether enough was done...the precious blood of Jesus is that powerful.
- j. Jesus fully accomplished what He intended by going to the cross...the salvation of ALL who are His...who have been given Him by the Father.
- k. All of this should bring about in us, who know we are saved by grace, such a great thankfulness causing us to give God all the glory, praise and honor for His work through Christ.
- l. For more on this topic...go to website... www.cpcvictoria.com Go to Resources and look up July 19,2015 class on the Heidelberg Catechism Study.

2. A couple of final thoughts...

- a. It's true that John and the catechism both speak of Christ's death relative to the whole world or human race. Christ's death is sufficient for every human who ever lived. The question is what He and His Father intended by the atonement. We don't confess a universal atonement.
- b. We do not need to choose between atonement and common grace. In other words...His spectacular and horrendous death...the taking on of all God's wrath against the whole human race guaranteed both, common grace for the unbeliever and atonement for the His elect.

C. Lord's Day #16-Mark 9:38-50; Rom. 3:19-28; II Thess. 1:3-12

1. Q/A #40- Why was it necessary for Christ to suffer death? *Because, by reason of the justice and truth of God, satisfaction for our sins could be made no otherwise than by the death of the Son of God.*

a. Was there really no other way than this, why or why not?

- (1) Because God is holy and righteous, there was no other way to bypass the demands for justice that stems from His Law.
- (2) Sin must be punished in order that His own might go free...crimes must be atoned for if there is true justice...to allow sin to go unpunished God would have to deny His own nature which He cannot do.
- (3) His law required that the covenant breaker be punished...die for sins committed...(the wages of sin have been death since the beginning... or that a suitable substitute (as defined by the just judge) be provided to stand in the place of the covenant breaker to receive the punishment due to them.
- (4) We are the covenant breakers since the Fall... Jesus Christ, God's One and Only Son is our substitute.

b. And what was the punishment required by God's law? In other words, what has always been the wages of sin?

- (1) Death...God had promised Adam and Eve this would be the consequence of covenant breaking. (Gen. 2:16-17)
- (2) Death does not mean...nonexistence in the Bible but rather, eternal existence away from God and away from the blessings that come from God.

- (3) Jesus paid the penalty equivalent to eternal damnation...therefore He can save His own from eternal death.

2. Q/A #41- Why was He buried? *To show thereby that He was really dead.*
3. Q/A #42- Since then Christ died for us, why must we also die? *Our death is not a satisfaction for our sin, but only a dying to sins and entering into eternal life.* How would you answer this question?
- We still live in the fallen world and as such our physical bodies still having a fallen nature within them decays and dies...Rom. 7:24
 - But our soul lives on waiting for the promised day that God gives us a new body at our resurrection in the new heavens and new earth. (See Rev. 20:6)
 - If God renewed our bodies at the same time as our natures/souls then we would be perfect and really wouldn't be able to live among the fallen...the dead
4. Q/A #43- What further benefit do we receive from the sacrifice and death of Christ on the cross? *That by His power our old man is with Him crucified, slain and buried; that so the evil lusts of the flesh may no more reign in us, but that we may offer ourselves unto Him a sacrifice of thanksgiving.* How would you put this in your own words?
- See Heb. 2:14-15
 - We can now approach the throne as subjects of God.
 - We receive the promised justification...remission of our sins.
 - We receive regeneration
 - So death for the believer is no longer a punishment for sin...Christ took care of the punishment due us. Death is simply the next to the last phase in our progress out of this life of death into life eternal.
 - WCFSC-Q37: What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death? *The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection.*
5. Q/A #44- Why is it added: He descended into Hell? *That in my greatest temptations I may be assured that Christ, my Lord, by His inexpressible anguish, pains and terrors, which He suffered in His soul on the cross and before, has redeemed me from the anguish and torment of hell.*
- The term "Hell" is used 3 particular ways in the Scripture:
 - It is used for the grave. Ps. 16:10... This, it seems, is how it was originally intended. For "He was buried" was replaced in the 4th Cent. with "He descended" thus connecting the 2 in meaning and so it was seen as redundant language. Originally "He descended" meant "He was buried." Then sometime in the 6th Cent. both clauses were included possibly to add clarity. "He was buried" was put back in because it is a necessary doctrinal truth for the Christian...but then "He was descended" came to mean "the place of the dead or the place of the suffering".
 - It is used to represent the place of the damned. Luke 16:23
 - It is used to signify the most extreme distress and anguish. 1 Sam. 2:6; Ps. 116: 3
 - Excerpt from a Study on the Apostles Creed by Mark Johnson;
 - That said we cannot help but wonder at what seems like an unusual choice of words in this particular clause: 'He descended into hell'. It is made all the more intriguing when we realize that this third line of the triplet was a much later addition to the Creed - most likely in the latter part of the Fourth Century AD. Not surprisingly it is an addition that has sparked no small measure of controversy and debate as to its precise meaning. But at the*

same time there have been little to no reputable theologians or pastors that wish to take it out.

- *Some have argued cogently on the basis of its Greek form as being 'Hades' that it speaks of his descent into the realm of the dead for the period between his death and resurrection. This view is argued by a shining galaxy of theologians and preachers and cannot be dismissed lightly. (Also, Jesus told the thief on the cross that the two of them would be together that day. See Luke 23:43)*
 - *Others have said that Jesus descended into the place of the dead to announce His victory and preach the gospel to those there or further...to defeat Satan and deliver the dead from hell (which is the Anglican and Lutheran View)...all this speculation is based on a misinterpretation of 1 Peter 3:18ff. Biblical and reformed teaching from before the time of the confession has taught as I did, that this passage deals with Christ preaching through Noah, him serving as a prophet to Noah's contemporaries.*
 - *However, it seems more sensible to follow John Calvin (as he in turn followed expositors of the Creed itself before him) and see its inclusion in the Creed as a summary of the two clauses about the death of Christ that precede it. So on the one hand it sums up the full horror of what is stated almost in a matter-of-fact way in those lines; but on the other hand it provides us with the key to seeing all that the cross accomplished for God's people.*
 - *There was a magnitude to the events played out that day in the drama of Calvary that had eternal proportions. This was nothing less than the drama of the Day of Judgment being played out in human history to show where sin ultimately leads. Christ's cry of abandonment is the preview of the final and eternal alienation of hell - permanent separation from God.*
- (2) *'He descended into hell' is the starkest and yet most accurate way of summing up what happened on cross that there is. The Blessed One who, for all eternity had known nothing but the highest heaven of intimacy with God, on the cross plumbed deepest depths of the anguish of hell in order to secure salvation for all his people. The intensity of what that meant is distilled into the words that pierced darkness when Jesus cried out, 'My God, why have you forsaken me?' (Mt 27:46).*
- (3) *It stands as a sobering warning to all who think that keeping God at a distance in this life is a choice worth making. But at the same time it is proof of God's promise to save all those who dare to put their hope and trust in his grace and mercy. God has not only made a promise, but has fulfilled its own requirements by satisfying the demands of his perfect justice to the full, so that he can justly throw open floodgates of his love.*
- (4) *The cross means that God is able to save with clean conscience! It is nothing less than the One who will one day be the Judge of all mankind taking full force of final judgment so that sinners might be spared.*
- (5) *'He descended into hell' may be the most controversial clause in the Apostles' Creed, but when seen this way, it becomes the most glorious, because it speaks most eloquently about the justice and grace of God's salvation!*
- c. Most agree that we are talking about the kind of terror, anguish and pain that the damned will experience in hell...
- (1) Matt. 26:38- talking about the exceeding sorrowfulness He was experiencing
- (2) Even Luke 22:44 tells us of the hellish anguish He is experiencing even in the garden...drops of blood which had never happened to anyone before
- (3) Then Matt. 27:46 when He cries out concerning His forsakenness.
- d. Why do you suppose that it was necessary that Christ not only suffer outwardly but also inwardly such hellish anguish and distress?
- (1) Both our bodies and our souls deserved God's just wrath...so,
- (2) Christ suffered as we would have. Is. 53:6

- (3) This suffering was of sufficient value in the sight of God to exempt His own from needing to go through such pain.
 - (4) All such hellish anguish and distress was experienced by Him so as to fulfill the punishment... to be our complete substitute...
 - (5) The catechism itself points to Christ's suffering as part of the grounds of our assurance as Christians. When we are tempted we are to think of Christ's suffering...because when we suffer we often are tempted to think that God no longer loves us or whether we are numbered among His elect or not and that LIE only leads to more sin. He did not endure such suffering that we might be lost, but to make secure the salvation of those who are His. So that no one would be lost...that was given Him by His Father. When the devil tries to convince that we have somehow "Done it Now!"...we are to remember our suffering Savior. Our salvation isn't lost....because it didn't depend on us or our work in the first place. It is as certain as the empty tomb and the eloquent scars on the true, glorified humanity of our Lord Jesus.
 - (6) All of this takes us back to Q/A #1- What is my only comfort in life and in death? *That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins, and redeemed me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me, that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must work together for my salvation. Wherefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me heartily willing and ready henceforth to live unto Him.*
- e. **What comfort is there in this doctrine: He suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, died and was buried; He descended into hell?**
- (1) His death was sufficient...
 - (2) He said, "It is finished"... and He meant it...
 - (3) He took upon Himself all the Wrath of God due us...He suffered the anguish and horror of separation from God for us...as our substitute.
 - (4) We can't do anything except reap the benefits spoken of above.

Heidelberg Catechism Study
August 2, 2015

A. Prayer

B. Review- Lord's Day #16-Mark 9:38-50; Rom. 3:19-28; II Thess. 1:3-12

1. Q/A #40- Why was it necessary for Christ to suffer death? *Because, by reason of the justice and truth of God, satisfaction for our sins could be made no otherwise than by the death of the Son of God.* Was there really no other way than this, why or why not?
2. Q/A #41- Why was He buried? *To show thereby that He was really dead.*
3. Q/A #42- Since then Christ died for us, why must we also die? *Our death is not a satisfaction for our sin, but only a dying to sins and entering into eternal life.*
4. Q/A #43- What further benefit do we receive from the sacrifice and death of Christ on the cross? *That by His power our old man is with Him crucified, slain and buried; that so the evil lusts of the flesh may no more reign in us, but that we may offer ourselves unto Him a sacrifice of thanksgiving.* How would you put this in your own words?
5. Q/A #44- Why is it added: He descended into Hell? *That in my greatest temptations I may be assured that Christ, my Lord, by His inexpressible anguish, pains and terrors, which He suffered in His soul on the cross and before, has redeemed me from the anguish and torment of hell.*
 - a. Why do you suppose that it was necessary that Christ not only suffer outwardly but also inwardly such hellish anguish and distress?
 - (1) Both our bodies and our souls deserved God's just wrath...so,
 - (2) Christ suffered as we would have. Is. 53:6
 - (3) The catechism itself points to Christ's suffering as part of the grounds of our assurance as Christians. When we are tempted we are to think of Christ's suffering...because when we suffer we often are tempted to think that God no longer loves us or whether we are numbered among His elect or not and that LIE only leads to more sin. He did not endure such suffering that we might be lost, but to make secure the salvation of those who are His. So that no one would be lost...that was given Him by His Father. When the devil tries to convince that we have somehow "Done it Now!"...we are to remember our suffering Savior. Our salvation isn't lost....because it didn't depend on us or our work in the first place. It is as certain as the empty tomb and the eloquent scars on the true, glorified humanity of our Lord Jesus.
 - (4) All of this takes us back to Q/A #1- What is my only comfort in life and in death? *That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins, and redeemed me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me, that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must work together for my salvation. Wherefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me heartily willing and ready henceforth to live unto Him.*
 - b. What comfort is there in this doctrine: *He suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, died and was buried; He descended into hell?*
 - (5) His death was sufficient...
 - (6) He said, "It is finished"... and He meant it...
 - (7) He took upon Himself all the Wrath of God due us...He suffered the anguish and horror of separation from God for us...as our substitute.
 - (8) We can't do anything except reap the benefits spoken of above.

C. The next part of the Apostles creed reads: “The third day He rose again from the dead.”

1. What is being communicated by this that is essential for our faith?

- a. That God the Father keeps His promises...and so does God the Son.
 - b. A verification the God accepted His sacrifice.
 - c. That the Son could not be held by the grave because while He is man He is also God and was not meant to stay in the grave and decay...since death and decay are products of sin entering in the world and He came to conquer these.
 - d. The Bible's definitive statement about the resurrection is found in 1 Corinthians 15. It is the chapter that begins with Paul identifying those elements of the gospel that are “*of first importance*” (1 Cor. 15:3). Tamper with any of these and we destroy the hope of salvation. He refers explicitly to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (1 Cor. 15:3-4) and then implicitly to His ascension/enthronement in His post-ascension appearance to Paul on the Damascus Road (1 Cor. 15:8). He speaks of them all as historical events that happened “*according to the Scriptures*” but which in turn form the basis of salvation past, present and future.
 - e. The resurrection is firmly embedded in the creed because it lies at the very heart of redemption history.
 - f. That when I say this... I actually believe this happened!
- 2. This is a good time to ask this question. This is a question that Jesus asked His disciples. “Who do you say that I am?” How do you answer this question away from church? Is He God? Is He man? A good teacher? The Messiah? All of these and more...or none? Why does your answer to these questions matter more than anything else in life?**
- a. If we truly do not know Christ we are not numbered among His people and are above all else to be pitied above all people.
 - b. If we don't know who Jesus is we will believe anything.
 - c. If we do not really know Jesus then the truth is that we are not known by Jesus. The issue isn't really whether we know Jesus or not...the devil knows Jesus... the issue is whether He knows us. Matthew 7:21-23.
 - d. If we claim Jesus and don't know Him there is no way we can really serve Him...and all true believers serve Him because to belong to Christ is to serve Christ since He purchased us with His precious blood.

D. Lord's Day #17- Q/A #45- What benefit do we receive from the Resurrection of Christ? First, by His resurrection He has overcome death, that He might make us partakers of the righteousness which by His death He has obtained for us. Secondly, we also are now by His power raised up to a new life. Thirdly, the resurrection of Christ is to us a sure pledge of our blessed resurrection.

1. What does the term “resurrection” mean to you?

- a. Some theologians say that science has proven that men cannot rise from the dead... so in their minds His resurrection becomes mythical, symbolic or metaphorical. A theologian in a TV interview was expressing his understanding this way, he said, “I believe in the resurrection of Jesus.” So far so good, but the interviewer knew something that the people listening may not have known so he asked the theologian this question. “Would you also say that Karl Marx is raised?” And the theologian said yes. Resurrection to him meant that the spirit of the man and his teaching would live on long after he is dead and buried in other people.
- b. But the Bible's understanding of this teaching is much different. What the word means and what we are proclaiming is this: Dead bodies stand up again! And the apostles wrote and preached on this because it actually happened and they were eye witnesses to it!
- c. According to the Bible there can be no authentic Christian faith if one cannot truly believe in the simple biblical definition of Christ's resurrection....He got up and walked about! If He did

not rise from the dead...then as Paul says our faith is futile and we are to be pitied above all people...for we would be the biggest of fools.

2. Why is this so important?

- a. John 5:19-29
- b. John 10:17-18
- c. John 11:25-27
- d. Since Jesus did in fact get up the problem of death is solved...and since Jesus promised His elect that His experience would be ours then death does not get the final word...the curse has been cast off...and we will be resurrected unto eternity.
- e. Rom. 4:24-25; 1 Cor. 15:17- God sees us as just and righteous as the Body of Christ...we are no longer under the control of sin because of Christ's resurrection.
- f. Perhaps a 4th clause could be added to the catechism when we think about it: Because of the other 3 that we can accept with joyful hearts whatever adversity comes our way. We do so with a sure confidence that we will overcome because Christ overcame and because He promised we would overcome. *"In this life you will have tribulation, but take heart, I have overcome the world."* John 16:33

3. How and when do we experience the blessing of this resurrection?

- a. The 1st resurrection is more often than not called "regeneration". It is the act of God, through the work of the Holy Spirit, by which we become new creatures. In this 1st resurrection the believer begins experiencing the blessing of the new life that was secured for us by Christ by virtue of His death and resurrection.
- b. The 2nd resurrection comes on the Last Day at the return of Christ when our physical bodies are raised...no matter their condition at the time of His return...from the grave and they will be transitioned/changed so we can once again stand on the new earth that Christ is bringing with Him at His return. Our souls already participate in the resurrection.
- c. WCFSC-Q37: What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death? *The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection.*
- d. WCFSC- Q38: What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection? *At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgement, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.*

Heidelberg Catechism Study
August 9, 2015

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. Lord's Day #17- Q/A #45- What benefit do we receive from the Resurrection of Christ? *First, by His resurrection He has overcome death, that He might make us partakers of the righteousness which by His death He has obtained for us. Secondly, we also are now by His power raised up to a new life. Thirdly, the resurrection of Christ is to us a sure pledge of our blessed resurrection. What does the term "resurrection" mean to you?*
2. Why is the resurrection so important?
 - a. Since Jesus did in fact get up the problem of death is solved...and since Jesus promised His elect that His experience would be ours then death does not get the final word...the curse has been cast off...and we will be resurrected unto eternity.
 - b. Rom. 4:24-25; 1 Cor. 15:17- God sees us as just and righteous as the Body of Christ...we are no longer under the control of sin because of Christ's resurrection.

C. Lord's Day #18- Acts 1:1-11; 1 Cor. 15:25-28; Col. 1:13-23- AC next says- *"He ascended into heaven..."*

1. Q/A #46- How do you understand the words: *He ascended into Heaven? That Christ, in sight of His disciples, was taken up from the earth into heaven; and in our behalf there continues, until He shall come again to judge the living and the dead.*
 - a. Is this what you mean when you confess, "He ascended into heaven"?
 - (1) That He did truly ascend...it was not a show...He was not a con artist...but in fact bodily rose from the dead and bodily ascended to Heaven and is now there.
 - (2) That He has ascended for the sake of His church to make continuous intercession for us.
 - (3) And since He ascended ...since He fulfilled what He came to do...I can rest assured that He will come and take me/us home to be with Him when He returns.
 - (4) Having completed everything He came to do on earth He went home as had been prophesied.
 - (5) That He went into heaven with His earthly body...and He awaits the time of His 2nd Coming.
 - (6) Acts 1:11
 - (7) Cyprian (3rd Cent.) said, *"The Lord ascended into heaven, not where the Word of God had not been before, because He was always in heaven, and remained in the Father; but where the Word made flesh did not sit before."* What is he communicating here with this phrase?
 - b. Why does it matter that we believe this?
 - (1) We diminish the Word of God...Luke 24:51; John 14:28, John 16:28; Acts 1, Acts 3:21; Heb. 9:24, Heb. 10:12
 - (2) We diminish the ascension...
 - (3) We seek to monopolize Jesus for ourselves...
 - (4) We diminish the work and presence of the Holy Spirit...
 - (5) If I say I believe this...then I must...for I am taking a vow and publically confessing this to be true...as a conviction...not a preference.
 - (6) The ascension is far more than just the next step in Jesus' journey home: it is nothing less than the guarantee of homecoming for all who put their trust in him.
2. Q/A #47- Is not then Christ with us even unto the end of the world, as He has promised? *Christ is true Man and true God: according to His human nature, He is now not on earth; but according to His Godhead, majesty, grace, and Spirit, He is at no time absent from us.* What does this say to you?

- a. Jesus is not with us in the way He was with the disciples between His resurrection and ascension (40 days)...
 - b. But He is with us and will continue to be until the end of the age through His Spirit. We are not orphans ...but family members. John 14:18-20
 - c. Some people will say about the resurrected and ascended Lord that He is "living in my heart" in the same way people will say that a departed loved one has not really left us since he is still and always in our heart. The problem with this type of speaking is that it is confusing and does not communicate the truth well. Speaking figuratively about Jesus walking with us or living in our hearts, is that it can turn the reality of Jesus' ascension into a figure of speech. It threatens to turn Jesus into a metaphor. Unless your theology is such that you know what you are saying and the people around you know what you are saying it is an unhelpful use of language.
3. Q/A #48- But are not, in this way, the two natures in Christ separated from one another, if the Manhood be not wherever the Godhead is? *By no means; for since the Godhead is incomprehensible and everywhere present, it must follow that it is indeed beyond the bounds of the Manhood, which it has assumed, but is yet nonetheless in the same also, and remains personally united to it.* How do we understand this?
- a. As God...He is omnipresent
 - b. But as human/Man...He cannot be present everywhere at the same time. That is why He sent the Spirit...which is a actual advantage for us since He can be in all places all the time....and since Jesus, in His divine nature, is of one substance with the Holy Spirit, He is with us through the Spirit.
 - c. Lutherans have a doctrine called "the ubiquity of the body of Christ". According to this doctrine, since the ascension, the human nature of Christ has actually been present everywhere. That is why they can claim that Christ's physical body and blood are present in, with, under and alongside of the sacramental elements of the Lord's Supper. They don't go so far as to say that these elements transform into Christ actual body and blood as the Roman Catholics teach...but it is certainly very close. **Now what is wrong with this understanding?**
 - (1) It contradicts Scriptures plain teaching that Christ ascended bodily and now sits at the right hand of God. Acts 1:11
 - (2) The resurrected...physical body cannot be in more than one place at a time...God created this law and Jesus in His physical form was bound to adhere to it.

Heidelberg Catechism Study
August 16, 2015

A. Prayer

B. Review- Lord's Day #18

1. Q/A #46- How do you understand the words: *He ascended into Heaven? That Christ, in sight of His disciples, was taken up from the earth into heaven; and in our behalf there continues, until He shall come again to judge the living and the dead.*
2. Q/A #47- Is not then Christ with us even unto the end of the world, as He has promised? *Christ is true Man and true God: according to His human nature, He is now not on earth; but according to His Godhead, majesty, grace, and Spirit, He is at no time absent from us.*
3. Q/A #48- But are not, in this way, the two natures in Christ separated from one another, if the Manhood be not wherever the Godhead is? *By no means; for since the Godhead is incomprehensible and everywhere present, it must follow that it is indeed beyond the bounds of the Manhood, which it has assumed, but is yet nonetheless in the same also, and remains personally united to it.*
4. Q/A #49- What benefit do we receive from Christ's ascension into heaven?
First, that He is our Advocate in the presence of His Father in heaven. Secondly, that we have our flesh in heaven, as a sure pledge, that He, as the Head, will also take us, His members, up to Himself. Thirdly, that He sends us His Spirit, as an earnest, by whose power we seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God, and not things on the earth.
 - a. An overriding benefit not spoken of here is that by ascending, Christ glorified Himself and being glorified He can now fulfill all that the catechism says.
 - b. Rom. 8:34; Hebrews 9:24...speak of Christ as our advocate before the Father. Having someone else act in our place is a wonderful benefit. He is our Advocate. 1 John 2:1-2 . As our Advocate He is the one who satisfies the law for us...the effect of which is 2 fold: to expiate (put away) our sins and to propitiate (turn away) God's wrath against us. Rom. 8:33-34.
 - c. John 14:1-3, John 17:24...speak of Christ as our pledge, assurance, promise in heaven who will come again to receive us to Himself...hence bringing our glorification.
 - d. John 14:16, John 14:26-28, John 16:7; II Cor. 1:21-22, 5:5; Eph. 1:11-14- the purpose of sending the Holy Spirit for us...Without the ascension, the Holy Spirit would not have been poured out. That is why our Lord said it was necessary for Him to go away...that's why the Spirit is the comforter. He communicates Christ to us, He strengthens us, He renews us, He sanctifies us and assures us that , despite our sin and doubts...all of this really is true.
 - e. Eph. 2:5-6 is an interesting verse as we are described as those who not only await heaven with a great hope but already possess it in Christ.
 - f. And so as the rest of the NT says no one who is truly His can ever be cut off from Him...so just as He is raised, ascended and seated at the right hand, so too shall we.
 - g. What other benefits might you think of?
 - (1) His ascension is proof that remission of sins is fully granted to all who believe...in as much as He wouldn't be finished had He not fulfilled all the requirements of the law.
 - (2) His ascension is proof positive that He has conquered death, sin and the devil.
 - (3) It is evidence that we would never be alone...because it was one of His great concerns that He would send the Holy Spirit so that we would never be alone who believe.
 - (4) It is an assurance as well that Christ will ever defend us, since we know that He is our Head and is exalted above all principalities and powers.

C. Lord's Day #19-Apostle's Creed- "...and (He) is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there He will come to judge the living and the dead."

1. Q/A #50- Why is it added: And sits at the right hand of God? *Because Christ ascended into heaven for this end, that He might there appear as Head of His Church, by whom the Father governs all things.*

a. What does "sitting at the right hand of God" communicate about Christ and His position?

- (1) He is equal in authority and power...for He speaks in the name of His Father.
- (2) Everything runs through Him as Advocate Mediator and Intercessor of His people and as Ruler of all the Cosmos.
- (3) Think Joseph and his position with Pharaoh...in a limited way a picture of Christ's place at the Father's right hand.
- (4) This talks of His function...not of His person.

b. How would you answer this question?

- (1) He is sitting there now because His work on earth is done!
- (2) Because all authority has been given Him in heaven and earth...and just where else to do you reign from except from the Father's right hand as a co-regent!
- (3) Matt. 26:63-68; Mark:62; Luke 22:69; Eph. 1:19-23; Col. 3:1; Hebrews 1:8-9, 8:1, 12:2; Rev. 5:1, 7

c. Does this mean that He has nothing to do? Why or why not?

- (1) Reigning over all the universe...as He had been prior to being born in human form. Ps. 2; Hebrews 1:8-9
- (2) Reigning by the very nature of the word is active...now...
- (3) Full time job directing the plan of redemption.
- (4) He is right now bringing about the destruction of His enemies as He promised.
- (5) To historic Pre-millennials, Jesus isn't reigning yet with the Father... they say... Christ's greatest work is yet to be done. For He is not reigning yet...that will happen at the millennium.
- (6) Dispensational Pre-millennials agree with the above along with this: David's throne has to be re-claimed, the Temple is rebuilt, and then Christ returns to inaugurate His literal 1000 year reign and all the temple sacrifices start up again. Now to be fair not every Dispensational Pre-Mil believes all of this stuff...but the big thing is that Christ is not yet reigning in their view.

d. Think with me now a minute: Hasn't Christ always sat at the right hand of the Father? Yes and No!

- (1) Yes, in respect to His place in the Godhead...for His divine nature has been from forever and it is to forever.
- (2) Yes, in that he has always been the head of the Church as the 2nd person of the Godhead.
- (3) No, in that the human nature of Christ came to sit at the Father's right hand after His ascension. John 17:5
- (4) This is so in an "incomprehensible sense"... to our feeble minds that is!

Heidelberg Catechism Study
August 23, 2015

A. Prayer

B. Lord's Day #19- review and continued

1. Q/A #50- Why is it added: And sits at the right hand of God? *Because Christ ascended into heaven for this end, that He might there appear as Head of His Church, by whom the Father governs all things.*

e. What does "sitting at the right hand of God" communicate about Christ and His position?

- (5) He is equal in authority and power...for He speaks in the name of His Father.
- (6) Everything runs through Him!st as Advocate Mediator and Intercessor of His people and as Ruler of all the Cosmos.
- (7) Think Joseph and his position with Pharaoh...in a limited way a picture of Christ's place at the Father's right hand.
- (8) This talks of His function...not of His person.

f. What specifically is He doing?

- (7) Reigning over the entire universe...as He had been prior to being born in human form. Ps. 2; Hebrews 1:8-9
- (8) Reigning by the very nature of the word is active...now...
- (9) Full time job directing the plan of redemption.
- (10) He is right now bringing about the destruction of His enemies as He promised.
- (11) To historic Pre-millennials, Jesus isn't reigning yet with the Father... they says... Christ greatest work is yet to be done. For He is not reigning yet...that will happen at the millennium.
- (12) Dispensational Pre-millennials agree with the above along with this: David's throne has to be re-claimed, the Temple is rebuilt, and then Christ returns to inaugurate His literal 1000 year reign and all the temple sacrifices start up again. Now to be fair not every Dispensational Pre-Mil believes all of this stuff...but the big thing is that Christ is not yet reigning in their view.

g. Think with me now a minute: Hasn't Christ always sat at the right hand of the Father? Yes and No!

- (5) Yes, in respect to His place in the Godhead...for His divine nature has been from forever and it is to forever.
- (6) Yes, in that he has always been the head of the Church as the 2nd person of the Godhead.
- (7) No, in that the human nature of Christ came to sit at the Father's right hand after His ascension. John 17:5
- (8) This is so in an "incomprehensible sense"... to our feeble minds that is!

2. Q/A #51- What benefit do we receive from this glory of our Head, Christ? *First, that by His Holy Spirit He sheds forth heavenly gifts in us, His members; then, that by His power He defends and preserves us against all enemies.*

a. What kind of heavenly gifts does He give us as he sits at the Father's right hand?

- (1) Gives us the Spirit
- (2) Gives us faith
- (3) Rom. 8:34; Hebrews 7:25- Christ intercedes on our behalf.
- (4) Eph. 4:8-12- Faithful shepherds and other leaders are a gift from God...
- (5) II Tim. 3:16-17; II Peter 1:19-21- His Word is given to us as power that enables us.
- (6) Rom. 12 and I Cor. 12- He gives us gifts to glorify God and to edify the Body.

b. How does His power defend and preserve us against our enemies?

- (1) John 10:28, 17:24- He preserves us to the end.

- (2) Eph. 1:22- being overall things in charge nothing happens outside of His will.
 - (3) He has the authority to save His own.
 - (4) His Word, through the Spirit, gives us power and it enables us to overcome the world.
 - (5) He keeps His promise to make an end to all His enemies so that while they may “win” in this life...they do not win in the next.
- c. Which truth is most important in making clear the biblical teaching here: “Jesus lives in me” or “Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father and from there rules in me by His Spirit”? Why?
3. Q/A #52- What comfort is it to you, that Christ shall come again to judge the quick and the dead? *That in all my sorrows and persecutions, with uplifted head, I look for the selfsame One, who has before offered Himself for me to the judgment of God and removed from me all curse, to come again as Judge from heaven; who shall cast all His and my enemies into everlasting condemnation, but shall take me, with all His chosen ones, to Himself into heavenly joy and glory.*
- a. An interesting way to begin the answer to this question: “*That in all my sorrows and persecutions...*” What are the authors communicating with this opening?
- (1) This is a recognition that nowhere in the Bible does it say that our life is going to be all rosy...
 - (2) In fact, the Bible tells us the exact opposite...speaking of persecution, mocking, hatred, hardship, sufferings and affliction in this life...
- b. When you think of Christ’s 2nd Coming what comes to mind? (This is not a subject that many actually think about...no wonder that people succumb to false teaching in this area...they would rather be “taught about it” than read and meditate on it for themselves most often.)
- (1) There are some that use this phrase as just a symbol...to them it simply means that the “ideals” of Christ have triumphed in a situation or within the culture...so that the world is finally Christianized. When this ideal state of society comes that will be the 2nd Coming of Jesus. Some forms of post-millennialism.
 - (2) Matt. 24:30; Acts 1:11- the return of Jesus is quite literal...as literal as His first coming...just not as a baby. And it will be plainly visible...
 - (3) Matt. 16:27, 17: 2- He will come arrayed in the glory of the Father and with His divine majesty.
 - (4) 1 Thess. 4:13-17- we will meet a real person and then we will immediately descend with Him to the new earth...this will be the 2nd Coming. 13- *“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.”*(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 ESV) A great passage concerning the end times/ the Last Day specifically...
 - First thing we see does God not want us to be uninformed about the basics of life and death...and also life after death...so He tells us through Paul.
 - God tells us that it is right and proper to grieve when loved ones die...though we are to grieve as people with hope in a brighter tomorrow and with the knowledge that His elect are being cared for by Him.
 - Since Jesus has died and risen all who are His will be raised as well.

- Also, there will be an order...the honored/elect dead will rise first, and then we will go to be with Him...for they have waited the longest...for this Day.
- Jesus will descend bodily and everyone everywhere will know He is here and it is Him.
- We will all be “caught up” to meet Him in the air...this speaks of us going out in procession to welcome the victorious king back from battle and then immediately returning to the “castle” for a huge celebration banquet. We do not stay and wait for 7 years or a 1000 years we go immediately into the new earth and new heavens that was being burb=ned and purified in the time it took to meet Him and return.
- We are always with the LORD of Glory...
- We are to encourage one another with this truth as the false teachers seek to lead us astray.

Heidelberg Catechism Study
September 20, 2015

A. Prayer

B. Review- Lord's Day #19-

4. Q/A #50- Why is it added: *And sits at the right hand of God? Because Christ ascended into heaven for this end, that He might there appear as Head of His Church, by whom the Father governs all things.*
 5. Q/A #51- What benefit do we receive from this glory of our Head, Christ? *First, that by His Holy Spirit He sheds forth heavenly gifts in us, His members; then, that by His power He defends and preserves us against all enemies.*
 6. Q/A #52- What comfort is it to you, that Christ shall come again to judge the quick and the dead? *That in all my sorrows and persecutions, with uplifted head, I look for the selfsame One, who has before offered Himself for me to the judgment of God and removed from me all curse, to come again as Judge from heaven; who shall cast all His and my enemies into everlasting condemnation, but shall take me, with all His chosen ones, to Himself into heavenly joy and glory.*
- c. The confession says, "He will judge the quick and the dead" what does this refer to?
- (1) The final judgment will be universal ... it will include all people.
 - (2) "The Quick" means the living...His elect. "The dead"...the non-elect. The article "the" makes us understand that the confession is talking about real people groups...and there is only 2.
 - (3) John 5:24- Believers are not condemned men, waiting for the cell block to unlock. We are not dead men walking to judgment. We have been declared righteous and a righteous man cannot fear judgment because it has no hold on him.
 - (4) Rom. 2:15-16...the gospel means "good news" and it is always used in the context of joy... at least from the point of the messenger...Isaiah 52:7. This is "good news" for us...that God is doing to the wicked what He said he would do...But this gospel is also "bad news" for the wicked.
 - (5) II Cor. 5:10- the reason for this is not that there is any uncertainty as to the outcome. The Day of Judgment is not needed in order that God can make up His mind about us as some suggest. No. its purpose is the public vindication of all of God's prior decisions. He already knows those who belong to Him...the ol' "*before the foundation of the world He predestined us.*" thing! But on that Day everyone will know God's justice is just...Phil. 2:10-11.
 - (6) John 5:22, 27; Acts 10:39-42, 17:30-3- And it is Jesus that administers that justice.
- d. How can we actually believe that Christ does in fact rule over all things in view of all the apparent evil on the earth to day? Hebrews 2:8
- e. What is the practical value of believing all of this section of the Creed?
- Repeatedly we are made to see that the cross only has saving significance in conjunction with three other events. The creed reflects this in the next clause that speaks of Christ as not only being crucified but who 'on the third day rose again from the dead...ascended into heaven and is sitting on the right hand of God the Father Almighty'. The crucifixion is inextricably bound up with the resurrection, ascension and enthronement of Christ in his work of salvation. Take any one of those four elements out of the equation and the whole structure of redemption collapses. If there was no resurrection, then the atonement is redundant. If there is no ascension, redeemed humanity is abandoned to a sin-cursed world. If there is no enthronement, the Savior lacks the authority to save.

C. The next section of the Apostle's Creed- "*I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life*

everlasting. Amen.” - Note: In the original Greek it probably would have been written this way.../ *Believe in the Holy Spirit, a holy catholic church, the communion of saints, a forgiveness of sins, a resurrection of the body, and a(the) life everlasting...*...the definite article “the” was usually reserved for a person or for people or a proper noun as in the case of the communion of the saints...the Greek is unclear when talking about everlasting life...sometime the definite article is used...other times not. In English we don’t make this distinction which caused some struggle over the holy catholic church specifically!

- D. The 1st part of the Apostle’s Creed taught about God the Father and creation and how out of His great love He accepted us beforehand as His children. The 2nd part showed how the Son was sent into this world by the Father, became human, without ceasing to be God, accomplish on earth what was necessary for our salvation, and is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father on our behalf until He comes again to judge. However, so that the love of God the Father and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be shed abroad in our hearts (Rom. 5:5), the Father through the Son gives us the Holy Spirit, who makes us participants in the mercy of the Father and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. This 3fold operation is summed up by Paul with these words, *“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen”* (II Cor. 13:14).
- E. Lord’s Day #20- Q/A #53-What do you believe concerning the Holy Ghost? *First, that He is co-eternal God with the Father and the Son. Secondly, that He is also given unto me; makes me by a true faith partaker of Christ and all His benefits; comforts me; and shall abide with me forever.*
- a. What other things do the Scripture say about the Spirit?
 - (1) Creator
 - (2) Helper
 - (3) Communicator
 - (4) Guarantee- Eph. 1
 - (5) He is revealed as hovering over the face of the deep in the acts of creation (Gen 1:2). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of life.
 - (6) He manifested Himself in the history of redemption in the glory cloud, the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night (Exodus 13:21).
 - (7) That same Holy Spirit inspired and sustained the prophets. Our Lord Jesus was “full of the Holy Spirit” (Luke 4:1) was led by the same Spirit who led the church through the wilderness for forty days. He communed with the Spirit and the Spirit sustained and co-operated with the Son in Christ’s ministry (e.g., Luke 4:14, 18; 10:21).
 - (8) Our Savior promised that His disciples would be baptized in the Spirit (Acts 1:5, 8) and they were.
 - (9) He empowered them to speak known, natural foreign languages supernaturally (not known to them before) (Acts 2:4, 7) and to perform apostolic miracles.
 - (10) By His power they healed the lame (Acts 3:7), raised the dead (Acts 9:41), and even put to death the disobedient (Acts 5). These were not “healing services” in which the miracle was contingent upon one’s faith (or lack thereof). The prophecies they gave, the revelations they received were not “fallible.” They were Spirit-inspired, holy, inerrant words from God’s Spirit. When a viper bit the Apostle Paul (Acts 28:4) he was unhurt. He was no Arkansas snake-handler. He was an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (11) The salvation of His people has always been the work of all three persons of the holy Trinity. (I Cor. 10:1–14).

- (12) The Apostles had a divinely instituted office, an objective authority, and power by the Spirit that ended when they died. Every attempt to replicate their ministry or to claim a restoration is completely different from what was given to the Apostles and the Apostolic Church.
- b. Some creedal history:
- (1) The Apostles' Creed, was substantially complete by the middle of the 4th century, says only *"I believe in the Holy Spirit"* (*Credo in Spiritum sanctum*). This completes the fundamentally Trinitarian structure to the most basic creedal account of the faith. Under the doctrine of the Spirit is the doctrine of the church, which is the locus (place) and the institution where the Spirit ordinarily operates, in which and through which the Spirit applies salvation to his people.
 - (2) The Nicene Creed (325) ended with *"And the Holy Spirit"* and with an anathema against heresy. The clauses after *"And the Holy Spirit"* were added at Constantinople (381) and recognized at Chalcedon (451). One, external stimulus for expanding the Nicene Creed was the need to reply to those who, as the Arians had denied the consubstantiality of the Son, denied the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son. The Synod of Alexandria (362) had explicitly declared the Holy Spirit co-equal and consubstantial. Those who denied the consubstantiality of the Spirit came to be known as the *Pneumatomachi* (πνευματομάχοι; "Spirit-fighters") or "the Macedonians."
 - (3) Athanasian Creed (late fifth or early sixth century AD – at least 100 years after Athanasius) explains the Trinity more completely. The essence of the Trinitarian faith may be summarized in one sentence: "And the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity." The Holy Spirit is a distinct person whose essence (substance) is indivisible from that of the Father and the Son. The Athanasian says that the deity of the Father, Son, and the Spirit "is all one." Their glory and majesty is "coeternal." Whatever it is that makes Father and the Son God is what makes the Spirit God. All the persons of the Trinity are "uncreate." They have no beginning and no end. They are immutable (they do not change) and they are immense (they fill all that can be filled with all of themselves all the time). The Spirit, like the Father and the Son, is "incomprehensible." The Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son. With respect to their being none of the Trinitarian persons, including the Holy Spirit may be said to be "afore or after" because "none is greater, or less than another."
 - (4) Reformed church's confess that the Holy Spirit brings us into a most intimate and wonderful union and communion with Christ. As John Owen (1616–83) reminded us in Communion With God (1657) the Apostle John declared (1 John 1:3) that not only do we have fellowship with one another but *"indeed the communion (κοινωνία) is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ."* We have been *"called into the communion (κοινωνία) of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord"* (1 Cor. 1:9). The apostolic benediction (blessing) declares that believers are recipients of the *"grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion (κοινωνία) of the Holy Spirit...."* (2 Cor. 13:13). So closely are we united to Christ that Paul warns that believers who participate in holy communion, in the Lord's Supper, may not then also

become communicants (κοινωνός) with demons by participating in a pagan feast (1 Cor. 10:20).

c. What are some of the different views concerning the Spirit floating around?

- (1) The Reformed theology and piety begins with the sufficiency of Scripture. Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement begin explicitly or implicitly with the insufficiency of Scripture since one of the main characteristics of Pentecostalism is continuing revelation from neo-Apostles.
- (2) Pentecostalism tends to de-emphasize doctrine and the objective work of Christ...giving more authority often to modern day revelation spoken by modern day “apostles”. Because of the emphasis placed on the spontaneity of the Spirit in continuing revelation there is no real need for doctrines or the objective work of Christ.
- (3) In the Westminster Shorter Catechism 88...speaking of the means of grace, we see these words, “*due use of ordinary means*” this is essential to Reformed theology and piety but it is not in the Pentecostal and the Charismatic movements.
- (4) Confessional Reformed Christianity rejects Montanism (It was a prophetic movement that called for a reliance on the spontaneity of the Holy Spirit and a more conservative personal ethic. Parallels have been drawn between Montanism and modern-day movements such as Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement. This view was determined to be a heresy by the church in the mid-2nd Century and it has been a constant heresy that has been with the church up to today.) Anabaptism, revivalism and existential encounters with the Word fall into this category as well.

- (5) Biblical view of the Spirit is simply that He is given to us enabling us to enjoy the benefits of life in Christ. Pentecostalism teaches that the Spirit is given to Christians only after they believe in Christ as an additional or 2nd blessing...thus causing a class distinction between those Christians who have had the 2nd blessing and those who haven’t. In my own experience, if you never received the 2nd blessing, which meant speaking in tongues, one could not stay a Christian long. And it is usually only the ones that have received the 2nd blessing that can “hear from God”. Thus in essence setting up a One True church mentality...that being the Pentecostal Church.
- (6) Many in the Church today would say that they get or have gotten a special “word” from the Spirit either for individuals or for the church as a whole. This extra “word” from the Spirit in and of itself sets up a falsehood between those who have or do “hear” and those who do not. Also, unless it is simply explaining what you read today to an individual or a time given during the worship service to declare God’s word in the midst of what He has done for you (think testimony), it might be adding to Scripture in the way we have talked about above. A people who are seeking “extra” Words from God are not satisfied with His Word as is... “it is not enough” and are rejecting the clear teaching of Scripture on the fact that it isn’t to happen any longer.

- Deut. 4:2, 12:32
- Hebrews 1 :1-2
- Revelation 22:18-19

- (7) Reformed Christians need to stop feeling ashamed that they are not Charismatics or Pentecostals. This is especially true for those who’ve grown up in Reformed congregations and who wonder whether they might be “missing out” on something special. I’ve been there. I’ve done that. Trust me. You’re not missing out on anything.

d. How do we receive those benefits which the Father bestowed on his only-begotten Son—not for Christ’s own private use, but that he might enrich poor and needy men?

- (1) First, we must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that He has suffered and done for the salvation of His elect remains useless and of no value for us.
- (2) Free gift of grace, through faith, for His glory.

- (3) Therefore, to share with us what He has received from the Father, He had to become ours and to dwell within us. For this reason, He is called *“our Head”* (Eph. 4:15), and *“the first-born among many brethren”* (Rom. 8:29). We also, in turn, are said to be *“engrafted into Him”* (Rom. 11:17), and to *“put on Christ”* (Gal. 3:27); for, as I have said, all that He possesses is nothing to us until we grow into one body with Him. It is true that we obtain this by faith. Yet since we see that not all indiscriminately embrace that communion with Christ which is offered through the gospel, reason itself teaches us to climb higher and to examine into the secret energy of the Spirit, by which we come to enjoy Christ and all his benefits.
- e. The 2nd part of the catechism answer (*makes me by a true faith partaker of Christ and all His benefits*) must now be dealt with a little: How do we obtain all that Christ has purchased for us? We are made partakers because of this Spiritual, mystical union and communion with Christ by faith. A living trust that rests in and receives Christ and His benefits is not only the sole instrument of our justification (*sola fide*) but we confess: *for faith is only the instrument by which we embrace Christ, our righteousness...faith is the instrument that keeps us in communion with him and with all his benefits* (Belgic Confession, art.22)
 - f. How do we come to faith? Who gives us new life and with it true faith by which we are united to Christ?
 - (1) The Holy Spirit. Paul encouraged the Philippians to continue growing by reminding them of the reality they possessed in Christ: *“So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any communion (κοινωνία) in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy....”* (Phil 2:1) There is encouragement (ὑπακλήσις), there is consolation (παραμύθιον), and there is communion in the Holy Spirit.
 - (2) How does the Spirit bring the spiritually dead to life? Our Lord Jesus appealed to the analogy of the wind. As we experience the wind it blows one way, then the other. So it is with the Spirit. He operates mysteriously. That’s not to say that he has not chosen to operate through means and instruments to accomplish his purposes. He certainly has. That’s why we confess in Heidelberg Catechism 65 that the *“The Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the Holy Gospel, and confirms it by the use of the Holy Sacraments.”* The way to communion with God, in Christ, by the Spirit is by what we call *“the due use of ordinary means”* (Westminster Confession 1.7).
 - (3) We understand that God the Spirit communicates (shares) Himself and His blessings with us through these means. It’s through hearing the Gospel preached that the Spirit creates faith and it is through the gospel made visible in the sacraments—we do call the Lord’s Supper, Holy Communion— that our faith is strengthened. There is a direct correlation to periods of spiritual “dryness,” i.e., those seasons during which God may seem remote and our attendance to the means of grace. The WCF is quite helpful here when it says: *“...a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of [infallible assurance]: yet, being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto.”* (WCF 18.3)

Heidelberg Catechism Study
September 27, 2015

The last section of the Apostle's Creed reads- "*I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.*"- Note: In the original Greek it probably would have been written this way...*I Believe in the Holy Spirit, a holy catholic church, the communion of saints, a forgiveness of sins, a resurrection of the body, and a(the) life everlasting...*the definite article "the" was usually reserved for a person or for people or a proper noun as in the case of the communion of the saints...the Greek is unclear when talking about everlasting life...sometime the definite article is used...other times not. In English we don't make this distinction which caused some struggle over the holy catholic church specifically!

A. Prayer

B. Review from last week- Lord's Day #20- Q/A #53- Q/A #53-What do you believe concerning the Holy Ghost? First, that He is co-eternal God with the Father and the Son. Secondly, that He is also given unto me; makes me by a true faith partaker of Christ and all His benefits; comforts me; and shall abide with me forever.

1. What are some of the different views concerning the Spirit floating around?
 - a. The Reformed theology and piety begins with the sufficiency of Scripture. Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement begin explicitly or implicitly with the insufficiency of Scripture since one of the main characteristics of Pentecostalism is continuing revelation from neo-Apostles.
 - b. Biblical view of the Spirit is simply that He is given to us enabling us to enjoy the benefits of life in Christ. Pentecostalism teaches that the Spirit is given to Christians only after they believe in Christ as an additional or 2nd blessing...thus causing a class distinction between those Christians who have had the 2nd blessing and those who haven't. In my own experience, if you never received the 2nd blessing, which meant speaking in tongues, one could not stay a Christian long. And it is usually only the ones that have received the 2nd blessing that can "hear from God". Thus in essence setting up a One True church mentality...that being the Pentecostal Church.
 - c. Reformed Christians need to stop feeling ashamed that they are not Charismatics or Pentecostals. This is especially true for those who've grown up in Reformed congregations and who wonder whether they might be "missing out" on something special. I've been there. I've done that. Trust me. You're not missing out on anything.
2. Given all the discussion today in the Church about the Holy Spirit why do you think the writers of the Apostles Creed and the Catechism have so little to say about Him? (I have already given more time to Him than they have in their writings.)
 - a. The Catechism has already spent a considerable amount of time discussing His person and work.
 - b. Because quite frankly He is not the focus of Scripture...even if some faith traditions seem to make Him the focus. Now, don't get me wrong, this is not to say that the Holy Spirit is not as equally important as the rest of the God head.
 - c. The Spirit has come to glorify the Son and the Father...the Son came to glorify the Father.
3. How do we know that we have the Holy Spirit within us if we do not hold particularly to a Pentecostal understanding of the Spirit?
 - a. The prophets said so...Ps. 51:11; Joel 2:28-32; Is. 63:10-11
 - b. Jesus says so... Luke 24:49; John 14:15-27, 15:26, 16:7-15; Acts 1:1-8,16, 2:1-4
 - c. From His effects...just as you do not see the wind but feel its affects ... the Holy Spirit is known by His effects. See Paul on this:

- (1) Rom. 5:1-5...we have hope when we should...or it doesn't make since.
 - (2) Rom. 7:5-6 (See also, Rom. 7:19-20 and 24-25, 8:1-2)... we have a hatred for sin that is evident most of the time....and a love for righteousness. The struggle against sin is a sure indicator of being possessed by the Spirit of God...no struggle ...no Spirit.
 - (3) Rom. 8:15, 26-27...in our child-like desire to pray to our heavenly Father.
 - (4) Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 12:3; Eph. 5:18-21.... Our desire to confess and give thanks to Christ for what He has done for us.
4. Why is it important to have a “correct” view of the work and person of the Holy Spirit? We confess that we do experience the presence of the Spirit, that we are “enabled by the Spirit” to perceive the riches that we have in Christ and that we come to a renewed sense of these things *“without extraordinary revelation, but in the right use of ordinary means....”* We don't need a second blessing. There are not two classes of Christians. Rather, there is only one head, one baptism, and one body united in communion with the one Holy Spirit.

C. Lord's Day # 21

1. Q/A #54- What do you believe concerning the Holy catholic Church? *That, out of the whole human race, from the beginning to the end of the world, the Son of God, by His Spirit and Word, gathers, defends and preserves for Himself unto everlasting life, a chosen communion, in the unity of the true faith; and that I am, and forever shall remain, a living member of the same.*
 - a. What is the Church?
 - (1) The catechism question presupposes the existence of the Church. So that means there has always been one...not a new concept but maybe it looked different in different times.
 - (2) The total communion (catholic/universal) chosen by God (made holy by His in His choice...no other way are we made holy but by God's justifying decree towards His own), before the foundations of the earth unto eternal life.
 - The word “catholic” has 3 meanings... *first*, with respect to place...spread over the entire world...it is not restricted as it was in the OT; *second*, with respect to men...church is gathered from all classes of men from every nation of men; *third*, with respect to time...because it has and will endure throughout every period of the world.
 - The words “a chosen communion” is singular and plural in meaning...plural in that the number of this assembly is not countable according to Rev. 7...singular in that the Church is one...the Body of Christ is made up of the whole number of the elect that God chose before the beginning of time and that Christ has purchased with His blood. In the original Greek version of this line many say that the definite article “the” wasn't there... so it would have read... “a Holy Catholic Church,” meaning “One”(= the sum of the whole) Holy catholic Church. “The” works okay to our modern sensibilities as long as we recognize that though the church may be splintered into many ...the true church is one body of Christ.
 - (3) The Church is and is expected to be:
 - “Visible” in that all those who claim that Jesus is Lord that they would endeavor to link themselves with the visible church and submit to its leadership as well as be people who clearly proclaim what they believe.
 - And at the same time it is “invisible” in the sense that it is made up of all those from beginning to end who are the elect of God and belong to the visible church, but are the actual true church in the midst of the visible church which is made up of the true church and those who aren't the true church. Those who belong to this church never perish.

- b. When speaking of the Church it can get a bit fuzzy physically. So the Bible gives us marks of a true church for us to see and experience so we will know. What do you understand to be the marks of a true church?**
- (1) Correct teaching of God's Word.**
 - (2) Correct administration and participation in the Sacraments.**
 - (3) Correct understanding and application of Church discipline.**
 - (4) Correct desire for God's mission and mercy. (20th Century practical addition)**

Heidelberg Catechism Study
October 4, 2015

The last section of the Apostle's Creed reads- *"I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen."*

A. Prayer

B. Review-

1. Lord's Day #20- Q/A #53- Q/A #53-What do you believe concerning the Holy Ghost? *First, that He is co-eternal God with the Father and the Son. Secondly, that He is also given unto me; makes me by a true faith partaker of Christ and all His benefits; comforts me; and shall abide with me forever.*
 - a. How do we know that we have the Holy Spirit within us if we do not hold particularly to a Pentecostal understanding of the Spirit?
 - (1) The prophets said so...Ps. 51:11; Joel 2:28-32; Is. 63:10-11
 - (2) Jesus says so... Luke 24:49; John 14:15-27, 15:26, 16:7-15; Acts 1:1-8,16, 2:1-4
 - (3) From His effects...just as you do not see the wind but feel its affects ... the Holy Spirit is known by His effects. See Paul on this:
 - Rom. 5:1-5...we have hope when we should...or it doesn't make since.
 - Rom. 7:5-6 (See also, Rom. 7:19-20 and 24-25, 8:1-2)... we have a hatred for sin that is evident most of the time....and a love for righteousness. The struggle against sin is a sure indicator of being possessed by the Spirit of God...no struggle ...no Spirit.
 - Rom. 8:15, 26-27...in our child-like desire to pray to our heavenly Father.
 - Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 12:3; Eph. 5:18-21.... Our desire to confess and give thanks to Christ for what He has done for us.
 - b. Why is it important to have a "correct" view of the work and person of the Holy Spirit? We confess that we do experience the presence of the Spirit, that we are "enabled by the Spirit" to perceive the riches that we have in Christ and that we come to a renewed sense of these things *"without extraordinary revelation, but in the right use of ordinary means...."* We don't need a second blessing. There are not two classes of Christians. Rather, there is only one head, one baptism, and one body united in communion with the one Holy Spirit.
2. Lord's Day # 21-Q/A #54- What do you believe concerning the Holy catholic Church? *That, out of the whole human race, from the beginning to the end of the world, the Son of God, by His Spirit and Word, gathers, defends and preserves for Himself unto everlasting life, a chosen communion, in the unity of the true faith; and that I am, and forever shall remain, a living member of the same.*
 - c. What is the Church?
 - (4) The catechism question presupposes the existence of the Church. So that means there has always been one...not a new concept but maybe it looked different in different times.
 - (5) The total communion (catholic/universal) chosen by God (made holy by His in His choice...no other way are we made holy but by God's justifying decree towards His own), before the foundations of the earth unto eternal life.
 - The word "catholic" has 3 meanings... first, with respect to place...spread over the entire world...it is not restricted as it was in the OT; second, with respect to men...church is gathered from all classes of men from every notion of men; third, with respect to time...because it has and will endure throughout every period of the world.

- The words “a chosen communion” is singular and plural in meaning...plural in that the number of this assembly is not countable according to Rev. 7...singular in that the Church is one...the Body of Christ is made up of the whole number of the elect that God chose before the beginning of time and that Christ has purchased with His blood. In the original Greek version of this line many say that the definite article “the” wasn’t there... so it would have read... “a Holy Catholic Church,” meaning “One”(= the sum of the whole) Holy catholic Church. “The” works okay to our modern sensibilities as long as we recognize that though the church may be splintered into many ...the true church is one body of Christ.

(6) The Church is and is expected to be:

- “visible” in that all those who claim that Jesus is Lord that they would endeavor to link themselves with the visible church and submit to its leadership as well as be people who clearly proclaim what they believe.
- And at the same time it is “invisible” in the sense that it is made up of all those from beginning to end who are the elect of God and belong to the visible church, but are the actual true church in the midst of the visible church which is made up of the true church and those who aren’t the true church. Those who belong to this church never perish.

d. When speaking of the Church it can get a bit fuzzy physically. So the Bible gives us marks of a true church for us to see and experience so we will know. What do you understand to be the marks of a true church?

- (5) Correct teaching of God’s Word.
- (6) Correct administration and participation in the Sacraments.
- (7) Correct understanding and application of Church discipline.
- (8) Correct desire for God’s mission. (20th Century practical addition)

C. Lord’s Day #21 continued:

1. Let’s look a minute at one of the classic “church” texts in the Gospels, Matt. 16:13-28. Jesus’ enemies were seeking His downfall. Opposition on all fronts was increasing... so He asked His disciples, “*Who do people say that the Son of Man is?*” and they answered that Jesus was given various titles by the people...just like today. But Peter’s answer when the question was put to them was most emphatic, “*You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!*” Then Jesus said the He would go on building His church on “this rock” and that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. What or who is “the rock”...was it Peter himself or was it Peter’s confession...or might it be both?
 - a. The NT church was actually founded upon Peter’s confession...a confession by the way, that would have never been able to have been made had God the Father not revealed that to Peter. Jesus deems him blessed because Peter had been given such a gift from God as to the certainty of who Jesus is... and the rest of the Church would build upon this sincere confession...not on his being called a good prophet, teacher or even John the baptist come back from the grave.
 - b. At the same time the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:20)
 - c. The church is living stones... “*...being built up a spiritual house..*” - 1 Peter 2:4-5)
 - d. The foundation then of the Church is God’s Word revealed to and proclaimed by the prophets and then through the apostles (of whom Peter was the representative) and then through His ministers of the Word and then His people...But it is Christ that builds the Church from every corner of the earth from the beginning to the end of the world.
 - e. And so the Church is “catholic” or “universal” ...it cannot be tied to a nation for it must always stand apart from a nation as God’s representative to hold a nation accountable to fulfill the job God gave the nation to do.

2. Is the church just a mystical, invisible body to which we can belong regardless of any actual connection with a particular congregation? (Some people call themselves Christian though they have never joined a church...or even in some cases have never seen the need to repent of any sins.) Why or why not?
3. Some say...in fact, many say... that the church began on the day of Pentecost. What reasons would you give to support the statement of the catechism that the church “*from the beginning to the end of the world...*” has been gathered, defended and preserved by the Godhead?
4. What started at Pentecost if the church has always existed? The church as we know it today.
5. How is the NT church different from the OT church?
 - a. OT...looked forward to Christ coming...NT...looked backwards on His finished work.
 - b. It was not made totally clear as to how catholic/universal the church would be in the OT...it is there but not like in the NT.
 - c. God’s prophecy and guidance and discipline was primarily for one group of people, who later became a nation...Israel... of which only an actual remnant represents the true body of Christ
 - d. The church was small in number in comparison with other peoples in the world.
 - e. It is Apostolic...built also on the continued teachings of God through the Apostles.
 - f. How is the church the same?
 - (1) One faith, one baptism, One Spirit...
 - (2) One Word above all ...
 - (3) One confession...like the Apostle’s creed...or like peter’s confession sincerely confessed.
 - (4) It is holy...think Leviticus
 - (5) It is catholic/universal...
6. So then, with all of this background, what is it to believe in “*a Holy catholic Church*”? It is to believe that there always has been, is and always will be, to the end of time such a church in the world that is true to God, and that within the congregation of the visible church there are always some who are not truly converted and those who are truly converted, and I am one of those latter ones, and as such a member of the invisible and visible church that will last forever.

D. Q/A #55- What do you understand by the Communion of Saints? *First, that believers, all and every one, as members of Christ have part in Him and in all His treasures and gifts; secondly, that each one must feel himself bound to use his gifts, readily and cheerfully, for the advantage and welfare of other members.*

1. How does this answer measure up with what we do and say today?
 - a. One of the great benefits of being an American is that we say, in the Declaration of Independence (1776), that there are “self-evident” truths, among which are that “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness....” Americans take as basic civil liberties that which are denied to people in other nations, to which other people aspire, and which still others hate and hope to extinguish even by force and terror. As wonderful as this charter is for civil life it is vital to the life of the visible church and to the Christian faith and life... that American believers learn to distinguish between their civil liberties, which traditionally have been defined as something like the relative absence of restraint, and their relationship to the visible, institutional church.
 - b. Typically and historically, however, American Christians have had considerable difficulty making this distinction. However valuable self-reliance is in civil life or, more broadly, in the secular sphere (and it is to be highly valued), that same spirit of independence must be severely curbed when it comes to the life of the church or, more broadly, in the sacred sphere. Believers were

not redeemed to live their Christian lives in isolation or independence from other believers. They are redeemed with the intention that they should become part of the visible expression of the catholic church, the Christ-confessing covenant community.

- c. All that they have been given has been given by God for the expressed purpose of glorifying the Father but also for the edification of God's people. We have nothing that is uniquely ours. All that we have is for one another in the Body of Christ.
 - d. The Scriptures everywhere assume and teach that believers are ordinarily redeemed in community and for community and that community is called the church. The history of redemption in Scripture is also a church history. Adam and Eve and their children not only formed a civil society but also a church. Sometimes the visible church has been great (millions cross the Red Sea) and sometimes almost invisible. Only 8 people were in the Ark. Our Lord Jesus gave the keys of his kingdom to a representative of officers in his visible church (Matt 16:19). To his visible, Christ-confessing covenant community he gave the responsibility of church discipline.² When he said "tell it to the church" he was assuming, as we should, the divinely ordained covenant community gathered around the Word and sacraments. Acts describes the apostolic period of the history of the visible church. The Epistles were written to known, visible assemblies, congregations, churches gathered around the ministry of the Word and sacraments.
2. Let's look at Rom. 12:3-18. What is Paul saying here in this text concerning the communion of the saints?
- a. Pointing out our need for unity in Christ and how we are to be humble and devoted to service towards one another.
 - b. Paul did not send those words originally to individuals but to a congregation meeting at one time, in one place where they were read to the congregation. 1 Corinthians 11 and 14 describe public worship services held by the congregation. One might make an entire study of Paul's "one another" language in Galatians, Ephesians, and Colossians. Surely the clear assumption in those cases is that he's writing to congregations with members to instruct them about the gospel, about grace, and the moral and spiritual consequences of the gospel.
 - c. How can we "encourage one another" (1 Thess. 4:18; 5:11) as Paul exhorted the Thessalonian congregation unless they are gathered together? To put it briefly, membership matters.
 - d. It was against this great backdrop that the early medieval church confessed the "communion of the saints" (*communio sanctorum*). Though it did not appear in the Apostles' Creed until c. 550 AD it expressed was long believed and taught by the post-apostolic church.³ Like the New Testament, many of the earliest documents in the early church were letters to congregations offering guidance and instruction. The fathers did not know about a Christian faith formed or a Christian life lived in isolation from the Christ-confessing covenant community. Cyprian may or may not have said the words, "*outside the church there is no salvation*," (*extra ecclesiam nulla salus est*) though he said things like it. Nevertheless, that maxim captures well biblical, catholic, apostolic... doctrine and piety.
 - e. The Belgic Confession explains that truth when it says in Article 28: *We believe that since this holy assembly and congregation is the gathering of those who are saved and there is no salvation apart from it, no one ought to withdraw from it, content to be by himself, regardless of his status or condition. But all people are obliged to join and unite with it, keeping the unity of the church by submitting to its instruction and discipline, by bending their necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ, and by serving to build up one another, according to the gifts God has given them as members of each other in the same body. And to preserve this unity more effectively, it is the duty of all believers, according to God's Word, to separate themselves from those who do not belong to the church, in order to join this assembly wherever God has established it, even if civil authorities and royal decrees forbid and death and physical punishment result. And so, all who withdraw from the church or do not join it act contrary to God's ordinance.* This reflects all of the biblical/Reformed understandings.

3. So then, with all of this background, what is it to believe in the “*the communion of the saints*”? The holy catholic church is the communion of the saints. Believers are bound together by the Spirit, into a visible assembly. In that assembly they give up their autonomy, their independence. How do you “feel” about an answer like this?
4. With this doctrine squarely in place... “*a holy catholic church, the communion of the saints*”, what does this tell you about the rise of individualism in our culture... and in the church? What does this say to all those non-denominational churches that seek at their beginning to be autonomous? How can they truly recite this Creed, if they do, with a straight face?

Heidelberg Catechism Study
October 11, 2015

A. Prayer

B. Review- Lord's Day #20

1. Q/A #53-What do you believe concerning the Holy Ghost? ***First, that He is co-eternal God with the Father and the Son. Secondly, that He is also given unto me; makes me by a true faith partaker of Christ and all His benefits; comforts me; and shall abide with me forever.*** Why is it important to have a "correct" view of the work and person of the Holy Spirit? We confess that we do experience the presence of the Spirit, that we are "enabled by the Spirit" to perceive the riches that we have in Christ and that we come to a renewed sense of these things *"without extraordinary revelation, but in the right use of ordinary means...."* We don't need a second blessing. There are not two classes of Christians. Rather, there is only one head, one baptism, and one body united in communion with the one Holy Spirit.
2. Q/A #54- What do you believe concerning the Holy catholic Church? ***That, out of the whole human race, from the beginning to the end of the world, the Son of God, by His Spirit and Word, gathers, defends and preserves for Himself unto everlasting life, a chosen communion, in the unity of the true faith; and that I am, and forever shall remain, a living member of the same.*** So then, with all of this background, what is it to believe in *"a Holy catholic Church"*? It is to believe that there always has been, is and always will be, to the end of time such a church in the world that is true to God, and that within the congregation of the visible church there are always some who are not truly converted and those who are truly converted, and I am one of those latter ones, and as such a member of the invisible and visible church that will last forever.
3. Lord's Day #21
 - a. Q/A #55- What do you understand by the Communion of Saints? ***First, that believers, all and every one, as members of Christ have part in Him and in all His treasures and gifts; secondly, that each one must feel himself bound to use his gifts, readily and cheerfully, for the advantage and welfare of other members.*** So then, with all of this background, what is it to believe in the *"the communion of the saints"*? The holy catholic church is the communion of the saints. Believers are bound together by the Spirit, into a visible assembly. In that assembly they give up their autonomy, their independence. How do you "feel" about an answer like this?
 - b. Q/A #56- What do you believe concerning the Forgiveness of Sins? ***That God, for the sake of Christ's satisfaction, will no more remember my sins, neither the sinful nature with which I have to struggle all my life long; but graciously imputes to me the righteousness of Christ, that I may nevermore come into condemnation.***

(1) Why is forgiveness so hard for us when we have been wronged?

- First, when a wrong has been done, quite apart from its effect for us (and its affect in us), justice itself has been violated.

- Second, to be wronged is to be hurt in some way or perhaps in multiple ways. Hurt fogs the brain (through anger and depression) so that we cannot see or think clearly.
- Third, we think of this as advice...something we can choose for ourselves and we forget that it is a command and a gift to give, especially to other believers that we can give it to.
- Imagine a legal system in which every transgression is met with immediate and utterly just retribution. Under such a system that rolling stop (which was not actually a stop) you made last week while glancing at your phone would have been met with a ticket. That murderous thought ("I wish he were dead!") would be met with the just punishment for murder: death. There is a great lot of careless talk about justice but what it typically means is something like, "I want justice when it is in my favor." Few of us really want true, absolute, relentless, perfect justice. In that system none of us would fare well.

(2) With this in mind, however, why is it so easy to believe in the forgiveness of sins?

- Have to or we would have no hope.
- Given that God is utterly holy (Isa 6:3) and righteous (Ps 7:11) it is not a small thing to confess that Christians believe in the forgiveness of sins.
- God is not obligated to forgive. He chooses freely to forgive freely and to make it possible to forgive us without compromising His justice. Think about that. Not only does the righteous God, who is, in Himself, a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29) forgive but, in Christ, He has satisfied His righteousness for us that He might be just and *"the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus"* (Rom 3:26).

(3) Does the progression of this phrase suggest anything to us?

- In the [Apostles' Creed](#) we confess *"I believe in the Holy Spirit"* and under that heading we confess *a Holy catholic (universal) church*. It is important to realize that it is under the doctrine of the church that the creed moves to *the forgiveness of sins* only after it has us confess that we *believe in the communion of the saints*.
- Though the church has no power or authority to create anything it does, however, it has the authority and the duty to announce the truth and to recognize reality and act accordingly (church discipline). The church is a minister, i.e., a servant of the Word. The church, however, is also the place where that truth is ordinarily announced and where the benefits of the gospel are received.

(4) The answer to this question places Reformed churches often in a different place than other churches.

- When the Reformed churches say we believe in the forgiveness of sins we begin not with the church (as some obvious traditions do) but with God. "That God..." It is He alone who forgives sins. This is why it seemed so scandalous for our Lord Jesus to announce *"Your sins are forgiven."* He was falsely accused of blasphemy. He demonstrated that He had (and has) the right and authority and power to forgive sins by healing the paralytic. Only God heals paralytics, raises the dead, and forgives sins and those are the things Jesus did because He is God the Son.
- The next phrase, *"...for the sake of Christ's satisfaction..."* means- The ground or legal basis for God's forgiveness of our sins is "Christ's satisfaction." This is shorthand for what we have already discussed under Heidelberg Catechism 37, that Jesus actively suffered all his life and that all his active, righteous, suffering is credited to all those who believe. That phrase, "for Christ's sake" is an axis of Reformed theology.
- It is a good thing that Christ was our righteous substitute and remains our righteous mediator because, even after we are given new life and faith and through it union with Christ, we remain sinners. So when the answer says, *"...will no more*

remember my sins, neither the sinful nature with which I have to struggle all my life long...” He is not saying that He forgets as is often stated today. But rather in His remembrance all He sees and thinks about is Christ’s righteousness since it has been imputed to us. He remembers no more...means...that he does not hold any of it against us any longer...as if it is all gone.

(5) So then, with all of this background, what is it to believe in “*the forgiveness of sins*”?

- I believe that all that is sin...sins of omission and sins of commission are contrary to God’s Commandments...
- I believe that all of this sin that is so woven through and touches every aspect of my being has been remitted and pardoned and will remain pardoned forever...as if I had never sinned in the first place...
- And all of this happened because of Christ sacrifice on the Cross. His blood shed on my behalf and the behalf of His whole church past, present and future.
- I believe that all the punishment due me on account of my sin has been removed...erased from God’s ledger... since Christ that perfect sacrifice paid the price...paid the penalty... became accursed for His church...to satisfy the wrath of God. (1 John 1:7)
- Psalm 32:1, 103:10-12

Heidelberg Catechism Study
October 25, 2015

A. Prayer

B. Review- Lord's Day #23 continued

1. Q/A #59- But what does it profit you now that you believe all this? *That I am righteous in Christ before God, and an heir of eternal life.*
 - a. To understand this more fully we must ask ourselves this question. What are the chief benefits that our faith receives from Christ?
 - (1) One is made right with God through faith alone, without works.
 - (2) By grace and without works we are regenerated or renewed in Christ unto good works. Good works means those works that God has ordained beforehand for us to do that bring Him glory. (See Eph. 2:10)
 - (3) We are able to give thanks and to live as God prescribes which gives us freedom.
 - (4) We are able to repent and be forgiven each time we sin for we have been forgiven once for all time.
 - b. After all this study and spending all this time with the Apostle's Creed (32 Q/A's in all) why are creeds and confession helpful, dare I say, necessary? They provide us a baseline summary of the biblical/Reformed understanding of God's Word against which to measure the shifting scene around us. Biblical theology, piety, and practice are not like an ever shifting mass of jello and it isn't whatever the desires of the months are for it.
2. Q/A #60- How are you righteous before God? *Only by true faith in Jesus Christ. That is: although my conscience accuse me, that I have grievously sinned against all the commandments of God, and have never kept any of them, and that I am still prone always to all evil, yet God, without any merit of mine, of mere grace, grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ, as if I had never committed nor had any sin, and had myself accomplished all the obedience which Christ has fulfilled for me, if only I accept such benefit with a believing heart.*
 - a. It has been said that it is no coincidence that this question is so near the center of the catechism when this doctrine is so near the heart of Biblical/Reformed theology.
 - b. What does righteous mean for us?
 - (1) Righteousness is necessarily a legal category. We shall always have laws and where there are laws there is either righteousness (conformity to the law) or unrighteousness (transgression of the law).
 - (2) So we need righteousness. And in our own condition we can receive this righteousness by faith through Christ.. We cannot undo what we, in Adam, did. You and I cannot make expiation (make payment for sin) or propitiation (to turn away God's wrath) because whatever we do, we do as sinners. All our desires, our thinking, and our will are corrupted by sin. Everything we touch is corrupted by sin. To paraphrase Cornelius Van Til, we are like man of sin, in a sea of sin, trying to climb a ladder of sin. It's utterly futile. So without Christ righteousness, we are toast.
 - c. What does *"true faith in Jesus Christ"* mean?
 - (1) Calvin called the doctrine of justification by faith alone (sola fide) the *"principal axis"* of the Christian religion. As sola Scriptura (according to Scripture alone) was the formal cause of the Reformation, the material cause was justification... sola fide.
 - (2) Where the Roman Catholic Church confesses that faith is the *"beginning of human salvation, the foundation, and the root of all justification"* (Council of Trent, Session 6, chpt. 8) the church of old and the church at the Reformation confessed that we are justified by grace alone (sola gratia), through faith alone.

- d. Just so we are clear the catechism question and answer is dealing with justification...how God's children are justified before him...declared acquitted of our crimes before Him. In order to understand the teaching of the catechism on justification we must remember that it is explaining to believers how justification works and what it means for our assurance and our spiritual life. This is why it turns next to a highly realistic account of the believer's struggle with sin. *"That is: although my conscience accuse me, that I have grievously sinned against all the commandments of God, and have never kept any of them, and that I am still prone always to all evil..."* Why do we need to talk about this thing called sin so much?
- (1) Because it is the experience of every Christian and it is important to put that experience into its biblical framework to keep believers from giving up. This is what I do, still... *"I have grievously sinned against all the commandments of God, and have never kept any of them, and am still prone always to all evil..."* Our conscience does not lie when it says that believers remain, in themselves, terrible sinners.
 - (2) So your conscience will continue to testify against you all your life. That's just the way it is. If your conscience does not so testify then you are an unbeliever or confused.
- e. But then you have to love the next section... *"yet God, without any merit of mine, of mere grace, grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ, as if I had never committed nor had any sin, and had myself accomplished all the obedience which Christ has fulfilled for me, if only I accept such benefit with a believing heart."* What is being said here?
- (1) Jesus did not die to make it possible for you to be right with God so long as you are sufficiently sanctified....He died and was resurrected to secure salvation and justification for all His elect only!
 - (2) The gospel is that by God's free favor alone (*sola gratia*), Christ's perfect righteousness has been imputed to us and we receive and rest in and lean upon Christ for our righteousness. Our standing with God is not like the stock market. It does not rise and fall with our actual, gradual sanctification.
 - (3) Scripture does not say, "Since we have begun to be justified" nor does it say "since your justification has been inaugurated." It says "we have been justified..." (See Rom. 5:1,8; 1 Cor. 1:27; Gal. 3:8; Eph. 2:14) This is why it is so important that the gospel says to us: *"of mere grace, grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ ..."* When, in Ephesians 2:8, Scripture says *"For by grace you have been saved through faith"* grace signifies divine favor toward sinners merited for us by Christ. It's important that we do not think that grace is a substance or a medicine with which we are infused toward sanctification/justification.
 - (4) Sinners whose sins (lawless deeds) are forgiven, whose sins are covered... are blessed. The second clause explains the first. Forgiveness and covering of sins are logically related. Those who sins are not covered, are not forgiven. It's not that the sins are not actually present but that they are covered. The blood of the sacrifice: covered" the judgement seat of the Ark of the Covenant and then later the altar. The next sentence explains the first: the basis of forgiveness is reckoning, counting, or imputing.
 - (5) The basis of our standing with God is not within us but it is real and it is outside of us, it is objective. It is Christ's. He has satisfied God's righteous law and endured His holy and just wrath for us. In justification, when God looks at us, He does not see our sins. He sees only Christ's perfect righteousness for us. Christ's real and perfect righteousness does not belong properly to us and yet we must lay hold of it.
 - (6) That is why we confess, *"if only I accept such benefit with a believing heart."* We cannot earn God's favor. Stop trying. Christ has earned God's favor for all His people. Confess your sins and sinfulness and put your trust in Christ and His finished work. That's why Jesus said, "It is finished," because it is. Every time you try to earn favor with God and refuse to

put your trust solely in Christ and in His finished work you insult Him by suggesting that Christ's work for us is not sufficient. It is.

- (7) When we find ourselves asking how are sinners justified before God? Satan may whisper that we have not done enough but we have a short reply: it is finished, because Christ finished it. To that we may only add "It is mine by faith alone."

3. Q/A# 61- Why do you say, that you are righteous only by faith? *Not that I am acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of my faith; but because only the satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ is my righteousness before God, and I can receive the same and make it my own in no other way than by faith only.* This sums up what we have considered at so far.

C. Lord's Day #24

1. Q/A #62- But why cannot our good works be the whole or part of our righteousness before God? *Because the righteousness which can stand before the judgment-seat of God must be perfect throughout and wholly conformable to the divine law; whereas even our best works in this life are all imperfect and defiled with sin.*
 - a. What does this mean in your own words?
 - b. Historically speaking this was written to combat the Roman Catholic position of works...and the salvific nature on all the sacraments that they claim as well as other works that have been legislated through the years.
 - c. Why does the church today have a hard time with this doctrine?
 - (1) In this life...OUR reality is that nothing is "free". We have to work for everything we have so we have a hard time getting our minds around the free gift of faith from God...the free act of justification from God...these are just so foreign to our way of thinking...the fleshly/ worldly thinking...and that is the problem it is only after we set this aside that we can begin to see the truth of God's reality which is completely different from the world's.
 - (2) Because the Bible says that God is love and that is where a large portion of the Church today stops when describing God. The Bible also says that God is light and that in Him darkness cannot dwell (1 John 1:5). Today's church's teaching of God has been unbalanced at best, emphasizing love to the exclusion of His holiness. Yet the fact of the Scriptures and God's actions is that the true and living God has never compromised with evil, therefore the only righteousness that counts is perfect righteousness.
 - (3) Perfect righteousness is required, so the church still missing the point says, *"Well, no one is perfect."* Which is a true statement ...so God must be unfair or God has another plan to deal with the need for perfect righteousness, which much of the church today can't get their heads around because of our need to have a unbiblical "free will"...
 - d. Scripture proofs- Luke 17:7-10; Eph. 2:9
2. Q/A #63- What? Do our good works then merit nothing, while God will yet reward them in this life and in that life which is to come? *The reward comes not of merit, but of grace.*
 - a. What does this answer mean? For God does indeed "reward the "good works" of His people (Matt. 25:31-46).
 - b. But why does God reward His people for the imperfect good we do? Because it pleases Him to do so...it is His grace to us. Our "good works" do not merit a reward...for these are works that God prepared beforehand for us to do...(Eph. 2:10)... do not merit a reward but rather it is by grace that He rewards us.
 - c. So are our "good works" useless?

- (1) They do not serve to MAKE us right with God...but they do serve to show that we have been MADE right with God. And our good works are means to show how thankful we are for what God has done and is doing and will do in our lives.
- (2) Good works are also useful because by them it is proved outwardly that we have a true faith so others in the family may know and be edified.
- (3) Also, they can be useful because by the example of our good works God may be pleased to win others to Christ and keep those already one from falling away...not losing their salvation but maintaining their witness for Christ.

3. Q/A #64- But does not this doctrine make men careless and profane? *No, for it is impossible that those who are implanted into Christ by true faith should then not bring forth fruits of thankfulness.*

a. How do you like this answer? What does it say to you concerning God's grace for His own?

- (1) The Bible everywhere in making its distinction between believers and non-believers makes it abundantly clear that believers are the ones who do His will and produce fruit for His glory and the unbelievers are those who do not do His will and do not produce fruit for His glory.
- (2) There is no union with Christ without some form of "good" fruit being produced. Even the thief who died on the cross next to Jesus began as soon as he trusted in Christ to bear witness to the unbeliever left on the other cross. The fruit was there as soon as he was in a living union with Christ.

b. How would you describe the difference in the way the believer looks at his works and the unbeliever looks at his?

- (1) The true believer understands that there is nothing meritorious in the works he does since they were already prepared for him to do them before by God Himself... The true believer says look at God for what I have done and praise Him.
- (2) The unbeliever seeks to think of his works as deserving merit from someone just because he did them. We need recognition because look at what we have done. Look at me.

c. I said at least by inference that a man cannot be saved without good works flowing from him. What amount of good works must the believer have to be saved? His "good works" do not save him...they are in fact, evidence of His salvation.

Heidelberg Catechism Study
November 1, 2015

A. Prayer

B. Review- Lord's Day #24

1. Q/A #62- But why cannot our good works be the whole or part of our righteousness before God? *Because the righteousness which can stand before the judgment-seat of God must be perfect throughout and wholly conformable to the divine law; whereas even our best works in this life are all imperfect and defiled with sin.* Why does the church today have a hard time with this doctrine?
 - a. In this life...OUR reality is that nothing is "free". We have to work for everything we have so we have a hard time getting our minds around the free gift of faith from God...the free act of justification from God...these are just so foreign to our way of thinking...the fleshly/ worldly thinking...and that is the problem it is only after we set this aside that we can begin to see the truth of God's reality which is completely different from the world's.
 - b. Today's church's teaching of God has been unbalanced at best, emphasizing love to the exclusion of His holiness. Yet the fact of the Scriptures and God's actions is that the true and living God has never compromised with evil, therefore the only righteousness that counts is perfect righteousness.
2. Q/A #63- What? Do our good works then merit nothing, while God will yet reward them in this life and in that life which is to come? *The reward comes not of merit, but of grace.*
3. Q/A #64- But doesn't this doctrine make men careless and profane? *No, for it is impossible that those who are implanted into Christ by true faith should then not bring forth fruits of thankfulness.* How would you describe the difference in the way the believer looks at his works and the unbeliever looks at his?
 - a. The true believer understands that there is nothing meritorious in the works he does since they were already prepared for him to do them before by God Himself... The true believer says look at God for what I have done and praise Him.
 - b. The unbeliever seeks to think of his works as deserving merit from someone just because he did them. We need recognition because look at what we have done. Look at me.

C. Lord's Day #25- Gen. 17:1-4; Rom. 10:17; I Cor. 1:26-32; Col. 2:11-12

1. Q/A #65- Since then we are made partakers of Christ and all his benefits by faith only, from where comes this faith? *The Holy Ghost works it in our hearts by the preaching of the Gospel, and confirms it by the use of the Holy Sacraments.*
 - a. In the catechism question we read about being partakers of Christ. What is that and how would you explain that to others? There are three aspects to the doctrine of union with Christ.
 - (1) Believers may be said to have been united to Christ in the divine decree from all eternity;
 - (2) Believers are represented federally by Christ;
 - (3) Believers are brought into union with Christ by the Holy Spirit through the instrument of faith alone (sola fide).
 - b. According to this catechism answer, how important is the true preaching of God's Word to the work of the Spirit in salvation and the on-going sanctification of God's people? Explain your answer simply. See John 6:63; Rom. 8:13-17, 10:17; Gal. 4:4-7; Phil. 1:6

- c. If this is true, why is it then that some hear the good news of the gospel and believe while others refuse to do so?
- (1) The elect of God will be regenerated by the Holy Spirit and seek God's ways by the leading of the Holy Spirit and the unregenerate will continue to seek the ways of men. Many people want to find ultimate purpose in the "goodness and brotherhood" of mankind. Of course, the problem with this thinking is that the Bible says there is none who are good...no not one. In and of ourselves we only seek our own good to the exclusion of others...that is our "natural" condition.
 - (2) I like this illustration that I came across once: Imagine a man who sits in pitch darkness...you know that kind of darkness where you cannot even see your hand in front of your face. The man sits in darkness for 2 reasons. 1st, because there is no light, and 2nd, because his eyes are blinded. What does he need to be able to see? He needs 2 "gifts" to be given to him by someone else. He needs someone to turn on the light and then someone to restore his sight. The preaching of the Word of God is like turning on the light. Everyone who hears the Word is exposed to the light. However, regeneration is like restoring the man's eyesight...enabling us to understand spiritual things (1 Cor. 2:13-16). Both preaching the Word of God and regeneration are essential. The Holy Spirit regenerates those whom God has elected. And because of His work the elect are then and only then able to respond to the gospel through faith.
 - (3) WSC Q/A #30. How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ? *The Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.* The Holy Spirit uses instruments. He uses the preaching of the Holy Gospel to bring us to new life and those who have new life believe.
- d. What, if anything, does this say about the "innocent native" that never hears the gospel? There is no such thing as an innocent native...and if God keeps them from hearing the 'Good News' then they are not of the elect.
- e. Now just so we are clear, what can man do to ensure his own salvation? Is this just the doctrine of man speaking? Can you give me any supporting texts for your answer? John 6:43-47,64-65
- f. Why should the gospel be preached to all men indiscriminately, if not all men are elect? The official preaching of the gospel in the churches is not magic. The Spirit works when and where He wills (John 3:1-21) but He has promised to work through that message in a unique and powerful way. This is one reason why it is so important to get the gospel right (versus moralism) and to get it out. The visible, institutional church has a mission from our Lord. The church has been sent (Matt 28:18-20). This is why we preach the gospel freely, indiscriminately (or as some have said promiscuously), and seriously to all. *"Whosoever will may come"* indeed and it is God the Holy Spirit, working through and with the preaching of the gospel who determines in any given time whosoever will. He gives new life. He gives faith and through that faith He creates a living, spiritual union with Christ.
2. Whereas The Spirit of God uses the preaching of the gospel to bring His people to life and to faith, and through faith into vital, spiritual union with Christ, He also uses the gospel made visible, the sacraments to confirm His promises and thereby to strengthen and nourish their faith.
3. Q/A #66- What are the Sacraments? *The Sacraments are visible, holy signs and seals, appointed by God for this end, that by the use thereof He may the more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the Gospel: namely, that He grants*

us out of free grace the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life, for the sake of the one sacrifice of Christ accomplished on the cross. In your own words, what is a sacrament and what is it for?

- a. They are visible and tangible representations and testimonies to the gospel. They are also and promises or seals that what the gospel declares is really true for the believing recipient.
 - b. When we call the sacraments *holy* we are saying that they have been set aside as distinct or for holy use just like the vessels and the show bread of the Passover celebration of the OT. In the Reformed liturgy we have a prayer of consecration. In consecration nothing happens to the being of the elements (water, bread, and juice or wine). They remain what they were before. The water of baptism is still water. The bread and wine of holy supper are still bread and wine but they are designated for a holy use.
 - c. The church has faced two great temptations with respect to the sacraments. The first is to make them more than they are. The second is to make them less than they are. By their nature and divine intention and institution, the sacraments are supports for the preaching of the gospel. Through the history of the church we have tended either to make them more than or less than that.
4. Q/A #67- Are both these, then, the Word and the Sacraments, designed to direct our faith to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, as the only ground of our salvation? ***Yes truly; for the Holy Ghost teaches in the Gospel, and by the Holy Sacraments assures us, that our whole salvation stands in the one sacrifice of Christ made for us on the cross.*** Given the conflict with the Roman Catholic understanding of the sacraments, what is this Q/A communicating to us?
- a. They really are true signs of what God has done for sinners in Christ and they are true seals, promises, guarantees of what is true for those who believe. They are not the “thing” or the One signified...they have no salvific power in them...they only enables us to look back on what God has done...to consider what he is doing now...and to confirm what He will do when His Son returns.
 - b. The sacraments point us to Christ. We are not free to make of them what we will. The recipient does not make the sign or the seal what it is. The author of the sign and seal makes them what they are. The function of the recipient is to acknowledge the author’s intent and to receive those signs and seals in faith (knowledge, assent, and confidence) that what they signify is true and what they seal is true “for us” who believe.
 - c. The sacraments testify to and seal to believers that Christ really has come, that He really did obey, that He was crucified for us, He was raised on the third day, that He is ascended and seated at the right hand of the Father, that He there intercedes for us and that he is coming again.
 - d. The gospel truth, signified and sealed by the sacraments, is that we have been saved, we have been justified by God’s free grace alone, through faith alone, and He will complete the good work, i.e., sanctification He has begun in us (Phil 1:6).
 - e. The Father loves us so much that He not only gave His One and Only Son (John 1 and 3) but He also gave us truth-telling signs and seals, guarantees to believers, that it is really true.

Heidelberg Catechism Study
November 8, 2015

A. Prayer

B. Review- Lord's Day #25- Gen. 17:1-4; Rom. 10:17; I Cor. 1:26-32; Col. 2:11-12

1. Q/A #65- Since then we are made partakers of Christ and all his benefits by faith only, from where comes this faith? *The Holy Ghost works it in our hearts by the preaching of the Gospel, and confirms it by the use of the Holy Sacraments.*
2. Q/A #66- What are the Sacraments? *The Sacraments are visible, holy signs and seals, appointed by God for this end, that by the use thereof He may the more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the Gospel: namely, that He grants us out of free grace the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life, for the sake of the one sacrifice of Christ accomplished on the cross.* In your own words, what is a sacrament and what is it for?

C. Lord's Day-#25 continued

1. Q/A #67- Are both these, then, the Word and the Sacraments, designed to direct our faith to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, as the only ground of our salvation? *Yes truly; for the Holy Ghost teaches in the Gospel, and by the Holy Sacraments assures us, that our whole salvation stands in the one sacrifice of Christ made for us on the cross.* Given the conflict with the Roman Catholic understanding of the sacraments, what is this Q/A communicating to us?
 - a. They really are true signs of what God has done for sinners in Christ and they are true seals, promises, guarantees of what is true for those who believe. They are not the "thing" or the One signified...they have no salvific power in them...they only enables us to look back on what God has done...to consider what he is doing now...and to confirm what He will do when His Son returns.
 - b. The sacraments point us to Christ. We are not free to make of them what we will. The recipient does not make the sign or the seal what it is. The author of the sign and seal makes them what they are. The function of the recipient is to acknowledge the author's intent and to receive those signs and seals in faith (knowledge, assent, and confidence) that what they signify is true and what they seal is true "for us" who believe.
 - c. The sacraments testify to and seal to believers that Christ really has come, that He really did obey, that He was crucified for us, He was raised on the third day, that He is ascended and seated at the right hand of the Father, that He there intercedes for us and that he is coming again.
 - d. The gospel truth, signified and sealed by the sacraments, is that we have been saved, we have been justified by God's free grace alone, through faith alone, and He will complete the good work, i.e., sanctification He has begun in us (Phil 1:6).
 - e. The Father loves us so much that He not only gave His One and Only Son (John 1 and 3) but He also gave us truth-telling signs and seals, guarantees to believers, that it is really true.
2. Q/A #68- How many Sacraments has Christ appointed in the New Testament? *Two: Holy Baptism and the Holy Supper.* Why did they need to even ask this question?
 - a. The earliest church fathers mentioned and taught only those two sacraments. There is no unambiguous record of the church receiving or practicing more than these two sacraments up to at least the 9th or 10th Century. But the Roman Catholic Church decided the Church needed 7 sacraments beginning to encode these in Catholicism in the 12 and 13th Centuries, which became in their teaching salvific in nature at the Council of Trent in 1547.

- b. If 2 are good then 7 are better right? After all, 7 is the perfect number. Who can argue with perfection? Well, we can and must on the basis of God's Word. Our Lord only instituted 2 sacraments. The Roman Catholic Church stated that we are justified because we are sanctified and if we are sanctified by the infusion of grace, through the sacraments, and cooperation with grace then more sacraments are better than less sacraments. The list of 7 sacraments is often organized into those of: initiation into the Church, namely, Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist; the healing sacraments, namely, Penance and the Anointing of the Sick(which includes last rites or Extreme Unction for the dead and dying...absolution from sin is granted to all unconfessed sin if you are a baptized member of the Roman Catholic Church by a priest); and sacraments of service: Holy Orders and Matrimony.
 - c. Many of the original recipients of the catechism had been taught that in the Holy Supper, the minister (as a priest) offers a memorial sacrifice that turns away God's wrath each time they take the Mass. Jesus did not initiate new covenantal sacrifices or the "priesthood of the new law" (as Rome says) but actually He instead ended the priesthood of the old covenant. He did not die to make salvation merely possible for those who do their part (read: cooperate sufficiently with grace) but to secure our salvation and to give it freely—for it is by God's free grace you have been saved!
 - d. But there are other reasons why the church felt an impulse to elaborate upon the sacraments instituted by our Lord. At least one with a more "noble" reason. In part it was a reaction to pagan dualism. In the early church the greatest heresy we faced was Gnosticism. The Gnostics claimed to have secret information, they believed in a 2nd blessing, which distinguished them from ordinary Christians who had to rely on Scripture. In response the church finally claimed to have its own secret, unwritten revelation (oral tradition). When this dualism re-emerged in the high medieval period, the church, in the 13th century, turned to this unwritten oral tradition, to ecclesiastical (as distinct from biblical) authority, and to the alleged 7 sacraments as part of its response.
 - e. Baptism is the sign and seal of initiation into the visible covenant community. The Spirit does not necessarily create new life when baptism is administered. Rather, baptism is a sign of what Christ has done for His people...and perhaps will do for His children's children, namely, the washing away of sins and the conferring of new life. It seals, it promises to those who believe that what is signified in baptism is really true of them...and to their children as we await their open response to the faith of God in their lives.
 - f. The Lord's Supper is a sign of what Christ has done—He has saved us!—and a seal, a promise to believers, that just as surely as they taste the bread and wine, so surely has Christ saved them and is at work in them, and is with them.
 - g. Neither Holy Baptism nor the Holy Supper create the realities they signify and seal but they are gospel sacraments. They are promises of good news to believers. Faith receives what they promise. Faith knows, assents, and trusts and receives all that they promise. The sacraments do not replace faith. They supplement faith. They confirm faith. If you take an old high school or college diploma out of its frame you will see signatures and a raised seal stamped into the paper. That seal makes that document authentic. That's what a sacrament is to a believer.
3. There is a lot of talk today about marriage being considered a sacrament? What reasons would you give against this idea?
- a. God's Word only commands 2... Covenant baptism and the Lord's Supper.
 - b. God in Christ only instituted 2.
 - c. Man does not have the right to add to God's word...in fact, is specifically commanded not to add to God's word.
 - d. God has determined HOW He is to be worshiped...and only Him.
 - e. And why is the distinction even important?
- D. Lord's Day #26- Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:38-41; Rom. 6:1-7; I Peter 3:18-22
1. Q/A #69- How is it signified and sealed to you in Holy Baptism, that you have part in the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross? *Thus: that Christ has appointed this outward washing with water, and has joined therewith this*

promise, that I am washed with His blood and Spirit from the pollution of my soul, that is, from all my sins, as certainly, as I am washed outwardly with water, whereby commonly the filthiness of the body is taken away.

a. Why is it important to stress that the sacraments are divinely instituted?

Interesting illustration that I came across some years ago: I desire friendship with you and in order to assure myself that you are my friend, I come up to you and shake your hand warmly. Would that give me assurance of your friendship? Not really...I might wish it would. What would be more assuring of a friendship? Suppose the one with whom you wish to be friends came up to you first and initiated the handshake...if that happened...them coming to me...I could have a greater assurance that they wanted friendship with me. It was initiated and instituted by Christ...it is His sign to us by which He expresses to us what He has done for us...or will do for our children.

b. This is an interesting answer to the question. Now think with me a minute with this answer in mind. Why isn't this answer and the Baptist position concerning baptism compatible?

- (1) Christ does it all here...He initiated it...He washes His own with His blood and Spirit...washing away all the filth of our sin. It is not something I initiate...not something I decide to do...to show that I have chosen to be saved. Baptism once again is a sign and a seal of what Christ has done or will do to our children if they are elect as well.
- (2) Baptists don't teach any longer the passive nature of baptism. Long before I existed, Christ bore my sins on the cross. While I was still dead in my sins, I was made alive in the Holy Spirit based on the promise of redemption made for all God's elect in the covenant of grace. This work was done to me..... I am passive in this action... the work that is symbolized in my baptism is a passive work...a sign given to me...and received passively...anything I do would take away from the work of God on my behalf.
- (3) When we see a baptism done we think we are looking at an outward washing away of sins. But it is only a sign and a seal that this washing done inwardly has been accomplished by the blood of Christ wrought on us by the Holy Spirit. Just like circumcision was an outward sign and seal of an inward work so to baptism.

2. Q/A #70- What is it to be washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ? *It is to have the forgiveness of sins from God, through grace, for the sake of Christ's blood, which He shed for us in His sacrifice on the cross; and also, to be renewed by the Holy Ghost, and sanctified to be members of Christ, that so we may more and more die unto sin, and lead holy and unblamable lives.* Just to be clear again, for those who would want to teach baptismal regeneration, one has to remember that Abraham was regenerated BEFORE he received circumcision... and if that be the case then the sign and the seal could not have been the cause of his regeneration.

3. Q/A #71- Where has Christ promised that we are as certainly washed with His blood and Spirit as with the water of Baptism? *In the institution of Baptism, which runs thus: Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. This promise is also repeated where the Scripture calls Baptism the washing of regeneration and the washing away of sins.*

a. Considering each of these Q/A's on baptism, why do you suppose that the mode of baptism is not mentioned?

Heidelberg Catechism Study
November 15, 2015

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. Q/A #68- How many Sacraments has Christ appointed in the New Testament?
Two: Holy Baptism and the Holy Supper. Why did they need to even ask this question?
2. What's wrong with having more than 2 sacraments? If 2 are good, 7 should be better, right?

C. Lord's Day #26- Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:38-41; Rom. 6:1-7; I Peter 3:18-22

1. Q/A #69- How is it signified and sealed to you in Holy Baptism, that you have part in the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross? *Thus: that Christ has appointed this outward washing with water, and has joined therewith this promise, that I am washed with His blood and Spirit from the pollution of my soul, that is, from all my sins, as certainly, as I am washed outwardly with water, whereby commonly the filthiness of the body is taken away.*
2. Q/A #70- What is it to be washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ? *It is to have the forgiveness of sins from God, through grace, for the sake of Christ's blood, which He shed for us in His sacrifice on the cross; and also, to be renewed by the Holy Ghost, and sanctified to be members of Christ, that so we may more and more die unto sin, and lead holy and unblamable lives.* Just to be clear again, for those who would want to teach baptismal regeneration, one has to remember that Abraham was regenerated BEFORE he received circumcision... and if that be the case then the sign and the seal could not have been the cause of his regeneration.
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 - b. Considering each of these Q?A on baptism, why do you suppose that the mode of baptism is not mentioned?
 - c. See Scripture:
 - (1) Matthew 28:19;
 - (2) Acts 22:16- Paul, in recounting how the Lord brought him from spiritual death to spiritual life, on the road to Damascus, makes the closest possible connection between baptism and the benefits of Christ (justification and sanctification or salvation). The text says literally, *"having risen be baptized and wash away your sins, having called upon his name."* There are two participles of circumstance (rising and calling) and two imperatives (baptize and wash). Did Paul mean to communicate that baptism itself or that the Spirit necessarily through baptism washed away his sins? No. Paul had already been initiated into the visible covenant community (Phil 3:5). He had been circumcised on the 8th day according to institution of circumcision under Abraham. If the sacraments of the covenant of grace necessarily confer what they signify then Paul was already regenerated.
 - (3) Rom. 4:3-12- Paul presses his argument here to show the continuity between the substance and administration of the covenant of grace between Abraham and the new

covenant. Just as Abraham believed and was justified before he was visibly initiated into the covenant community, so he is the father of all the uncircumcised Gentiles who believe in Christ. And as he was circumcised and yet believed, he is the father of all those Jews who believe in Christ. In other words, Paul made no contrast between the covenant of grace as it was under Abraham and as it is under Christ.

- (4) 1 Cor. 6:11- That it is the Spirit of Christ who cleanses us is clear in 1 Corinthians 6. We were ungodly by nature but now, having been justified *sola gratia, sola fide* we are being progressively cleansed.
- (5) Eph. 5:26- It is the Word or Christ's Spirit operating through the Word, that washes and cleanses. Again, holy baptism is a sacrament, a sign and seal of what Christ does to and in us but it is not the thing signified.
- (6) 1 John 1:7- Baptism is a sign and seal to believers that as the blood of bulls and goats pointed forward to the reality of Christ's final satisfaction of divine justice, so too we are clean. The blood of bulls and goats was sacramental. It did not make them clean. That's one reason why God repeatedly told the Israelites that He was not pleased with their sacrifices. What God demands is the reality and Christ is that reality for us.

D. Lord's Day #27- Gen. 17; Acts 2:39; Gal. 3:23-29; Col. 2:11-12, Titus 3:3-8

1. Q/A #72- Is then the outward washing with water itself the washing away of sins? **No; for only the blood of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit cleanse us from all sin.** Again why does this need to be repeated?
 - a. To not only remind ourselves that there is no such thing as baptismal regeneration but also so that we don't ever begin to think that somehow there is magic in the water or that there is magic in the one who pours out the water. It is a picture of God washing away our sin...not us or someone else.
 - b. That by this divine pledge and token He assures us, that we are as really washed from our sins spiritually as our bodies are washed with water.
2. Q/A #73- Why, then, does the Holy Ghost call Baptism the washing of regeneration, and the washing away of sins? **God speaks thus not without great cause: namely, not only to teach us thereby that like as the filthiness of the body is taken away by water, so our sins also are taken away by the blood and Spirit of Christ; but much more, that by this divine pledge and token He may assure us, that we are as really washed from our sins spiritually, as our bodies are washed with water.**
 - a. Titus 3:3-8= Paul begins to set up a contrast between what he once was, *"foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another."* By implication this is true of all of us. In v.4 he points to God's grace, goodness, and faithfulness to His covenant promises to redeem all of His elect. Notice by the way that he teaches that God "saved" us by grace and not by (or through) our works. Justification *and* salvation are by grace alone (*sola gratia*), through faith alone. Paul's uses the metaphor of "washing" to describe the effect of salvation and the application of Christ's righteousness. Notice too that we have these benefits *"not by works done by us in righteousness."* By this expression Paul intentionally excludes all of our efforts, all of our obedience, all of our performance or striving. Which, in effect, equals Paul saying that baptism is a picture of the regeneration poured out on God's elect by God alone.
 - b. The symbol and the physical action are so greatly related for the true believer so as not to be separated as God's work and our work...they are both God's work.
3. Q/A #74- Are infants also to be baptized? **Yes. For since they, as well as their parents, belong to the covenant and people of God, and both redemption from sin and the Holy Ghost, who works faith, are through the blood of Christ promised to them no less than to their parents: they are also by Baptism, as a sign of the covenant, to be ingrafted into the Christian Church, and**

distinguished from the children of unbelievers, as was done in the Old Testament by Circumcision, in place of which in the New Testament Baptism is appointed.

- a. See Gen. 17:4-13 then Acts 2:39...Peter presumes a continuity between this covenant and the believers of the NT.
- b. See Paul in Gal. 3:23-29
- c. Since an infant of believing parents is not aware of what is happening in his baptism and they cannot make a confession of faith, what good is baptism to them?
- d. Is this a guarantee that all the children of believers will come to faith? No but it never was intended to be such a promise. The first person to receive the sign as a child into the visible covenant community was Ishmael. Esau was initiated and we know from Romans 9 that he was an unbeliever. But as believers we are to believe the promise. We administer it as God commanded....and to our children the NT makes clear that the sign and seal of God's covenant is baptism (Col. 2:11-12)so the command remains for our children to be given the sign and seal...so they must be baptized. We trust Him to work out His decree according to His good pleasure, in His good time. We pray for our covenant children, we catechize them, and we call them to a personal saving faith in Jesus the Savior. Baptism does not confer salvation upon them any more than circumcision conferred it upon Ishmael and Esau. Nevertheless, they were initiated.

Heidelberg Catechism Study
November 22, 2015

A. Prayer

B. Review- Lord's Day #27- Gen. 17; Acts 2:39; Gal. 3:23-29; Col. 2:11-12, Titus 3:3-8

4. Q/A #72- Is then the outward washing with water itself the washing away of sins? *No; for only the blood of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit cleanse us from all sin.* Again why does this need to be repeated?
5. Q/A #73- Why, then, does the Holy Ghost call Baptism the washing of regeneration, and the washing away of sins? *God speaks thus not without great cause: namely, not only to teach us thereby that like as the filthiness of the body is taken away by water, so our sins also are taken away by the blood and Spirit of Christ; but much more, that by this divine pledge and token He may assure us, that we are as really washed from our sins spiritually, as our bodies are washed with water.*
6. Q/A #74- Are infants also to be baptized? *Yes. For since they, as well as their parents, belong to the covenant and people of God, and both redemption from sin and the Holy Ghost, who works faith, are through the blood of Christ promised to them no less than to their parents: they are also by Baptism, as a sign of the covenant, to be ingrafted into the Christian Church, and distinguished from the children of unbelievers, as was done in the Old Testament by Circumcision, in place of which in the New Testament Baptism is appointed.* See Gen. 17:4-13 then Acts 2:39...Peter presumes a continuity between this covenant and the believers of the NT.

C. Lord's Day #28- Mark 14:22-24; I Cor. 10:16-17, 11:23-25; Heb. 10:10-12

1. Q/A-#75- How is it signified and sealed to you in the Holy Supper that you do partake of the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross and all His benefits? *Thus; that Christ has commanded me and all believers to eat of this broken bread, and to drink of this cup, and has joined therewith these promises: First, that His body was offered, and broken on the cross for me, and His blood shed for me, as certainly as I see with my eyes the bread of the Lord broken for me, and the cup communicated to me; and further, that, with His crucified body and shed blood, He Himself feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life as certainly as I receive from the hand of the minister, and taste with my mouth, the bread and cup of the Lord, which are given me as certain tokens of the body and blood of Christ.*
 - a. Here we go again... "*Christ has commanded me and all believers...*". What does this say to us about our practice concerning the Supper...personal and ecclesiastical?
 - (1) Often communion Sunday can be one of the least attended days...what does that say about how we look at this command? Seldom do any actually take time during the week to prepare for the Supper? What does this say concerning how we consider this command individually?
 - (2) What could/should I do to make the importance more clear and would that actually impact people's personal decisions on attendance?
 - (3) Or does the greater story surround the feeling that we can choose to go to church on any given Sunday or not? In this country we are given the right to choose...I even saw a sign this week at the 1st Presbyterian Church on Navarro that read something like this, "It is good that we have the right to give thanks or not." Christians... brothers and sisters...we do

not have this right...even if our government "gives" us this right... we answer to a higher power than our government or our Constitution. God's word demands attendance and demands that we give thanks IN ALL circumstances. Listen to this quote from James Madison...4th President of the US... *"We have staked the whole future of American civilization, not upon the power of government...far from it! We have staked the future of all political institutions upon our capacity to sustain ourselves according to the 10 Commandments."*

b. What is the significance of eating the bread and drinking the wine in the Lord's Supper? If these only represent the Lord's body and blood why couldn't we just look upon them?

- (1) It is the purpose of the sacrament to engage our senses.
- (2) As we take the bread to nourish our bodies...we also believe in Jesus and what He has done for our salvation...His body broken and given for us. The taste of the bread should remind us of this act of sacrifice.
- (3) As we drink the wine we are to put our whole trust in the certainty of the sacrifice.
- (4) There is then the visible sign and seal...externally taken in...and then there is the invisible...internal participation in the sacrament by faith.

2. Q/A #76- What is it to eat the crucified body and drink the shed blood of Christ? *It is not only to embrace with a believing heart all the suffering and death of Christ, and thereby to obtain the forgiveness of sins and eternal life; but moreover also, to be so united more and more to His sacred body by the Holy Ghost, who dwells both in Christ and in us, that although He is in heaven, and we on the earth, we are nevertheless flesh of His flesh and bone of His bones, and live and are governed forever by one Spirit, as members of the same body are by one soul.*

a. What does the answer mean when it says by participating in the sacrament that we are "*united more and more to His sacred body by the Holy Ghost...*"?

- (1) Jesus goal of unity surrounds His Word and Sacraments! Since we have union with Christ by faith we must share in the benefits of His offering.
- (2) Means of grace in that the more we participate in the Lord's prescribed feasts/Lord's Supper the more grace that is conferred. Benefit of the Lord's Supper.
- (3) Much like taking a meal with loved ones...the more we do this the more united we become. In the old days, when you had someone in your home for a meal you created a bond of friendship that would usually last until death...and the more you were in each other's home the stronger the bond.

3. Q/A #77- Where has Christ promised that He will thus feed and nourish believers with His body and blood, as certainly as they eat of this broken bread and drink of this cup? *In the institution of the Supper, which runs thus: The Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said: Take, eat, this is My body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when he had supped, saying: This cup is the New Testament in My blood: This do ye as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come. And this promise is repeated also by St. Paul, where he says: The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread. If you were to answer the question posed in a*

shorter but no less profound way, how would you answer? I know it from Holy Scripture. The same Holy Spirit who operates through the Supper to strengthen our union and communion with Christ also gave us the gospel and epistle records of its institution. That same Spirit operates through the Supper to renew our assurance and to draw us back to Christ and to His promises (and away from ourselves, our doubts, and our fears). How do I know the Supper is what it is? It's in the BIBLE!!! How do I know the Bible is true? The Holy Spirit testifies to and through Scripture that it's true. There's further confirmation in history. Is the tomb empty? Yes. Were there witnesses? Yes, hundreds of them. It's all true and it's true for us, in particular, who believe. Just as certainly as we eat and drink so certainly are the gospel promises for us.

D. Lord's Day 29- John 6:26-59; I Cor. 10:3-4

1. Q/A #78- Do then the bread and wine become the real body and blood of Christ? *No: but as the water, in Baptism, is not changed into the blood of Christ, nor becomes the washing away of sins itself, being only the divine token and assurance thereof, so also, in the Lord's Supper, the sacred bread does not become the body of Christ itself, though agreeably to the nature and usage of sacraments it is called the body of Christ.* Why is this an important position to take on the elements? What difference does it make anyway? The doctrine of transubstantiation is wrong:
 - a. Since it confuses and mingles the created things...like the bread and the wine... with the Creator...nothing created can become God...anything that stands for God is idolatry.
 - b. It is wrong because it demands faith in a so called "miracle" (transubstantiation) each time the mass is taken...which does not happen.
 - c. The Supper is the gospel made visible. To corrupt the Supper, as Rome did at Trent (and before at the Fourth Lateran, 1215) is to corrupt the gospel.
 - d. It makes it virtually unimportant whether or not one has true faith in the Lord Jesus and His one sacrifice on the cross....because no one has salvation based on Christ's sacrifice except for when Christ is continually offered by the priest.
 - e. It is wrong because the Roman Church confers a power of miracle upon each priest as he handles this so called miracle and calls the miracle to happen. The Roman communion teaches that, "by consecration," the elements of the supper, the bread and the wine are transformed from bread and wine into the literal body and blood of Christ. The Catechism of the [Roman] Catholic Church (1984) says: (1376) "The Council of Trent summarizes the Catholic faith by declaring: 'Because Christ our Redeemer said that it was truly His body that He was offering under the species of bread, it has always been the conviction of the Church of God, and this holy Council now declares again, that by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation.'"
2. Q/A #79-Why then does Christ call the bread His body, and the cup His blood, or the New Testament in His blood; and St. Paul, the communion of the body and blood of Christ? *Christ speaks thus not without great cause: namely, not only to teach us thereby, that, like as the bread and wine sustain this temporal life, so also His crucified body and shed blood are the true meat and drink of our souls unto life eternal; but much more, by this visible sign and pledge to assure us, that we are as really partakers of His true body and blood, through the working of the Holy Ghost, as we receive by the mouth of the body these holy tokens in remembrance of Him; and that all His sufferings and obedience are as certainly our own, as if we had ourselves suffered and done all in our own person.* In other words, if it is not a literal statement as the Roman Catholics and eastern orthodox profess, then what is the purpose for the metaphor?

- a. The answer is that our Lord, followed by the Apostle Paul, speaks metaphorically to great effect. (Oh by the way, God has the writers of the OT {Duet. 32:11-12; Ruth 2:12} write that way as well. Pictures were always important to God to get His commands and concepts across to a fallen people.) As He sustains us physically by bread and wine, He also sustains us by His body and blood. To insist that the only way one can be fed on the body and blood of Christ is either by transubstantiation or by locating the body and blood "in, with, and under" (consubstantiation-Lutherans) the elements is rationalism...that is, to decide what must be the case ahead of time and then insist on it despite the evidence. There is abundant evidence that our Lord wanted us to think that, in the Supper, by faith, believers are fed by His body and blood. He did not explain how that happens. There is no evidence that our Lord intended us to think that the elements are transformed or that otherwise locally present.
- b. We are meant to understand that, in the Supper, by faith, by the mysterious operation of the Holy Spirit, we are "really partakers" of Christ. This is why we should understand and believe in a real communion in the true body and blood of Christ. There is a strong correlation between eating the elements with the mouth and receiving Christ by faith. That's the force of the phrase "just as." When we eat bread we are not ordinarily in doubt as to whether we have eaten. We remember the sensation of eating, tasting, and swallowing. We have a sensation of being full, of being satisfied. So too it is with the Supper. According to the promise of the Supper, we are as surely fed.
- c. See John 6:26-59

E. Lord's Day #30- I Cor. 10:19-22, 11:17-34; Hebrews 8

1. Q/A #80- What difference is there between the Lord's Supper and the Popish Mass? *The Lord's Supper testifies to us, that we have full forgiveness of all our sins by the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which He Himself has once accomplished on the cross; and that by the Holy Ghost we are engrafted into Christ, who with His true body is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father, and is to be there worshiped. But the Mass teaches, that the living and the dead have not forgiveness of sins through the sufferings of Christ, unless Christ is still daily offered for them by the priests; and that Christ is bodily under the form of bread and wine, and is therefore to be worshiped in them. And thus the Mass at bottom is nothing else than a denial of the one sacrifice and passion of Jesus Christ, and an accursed idolatry.* A bit harsh?
 - a. The Mass by its very nature claims to be a sacrifice...a continuation of the sacrifice of Jesus, saying that the one sacrifice of Christ was not sufficient...hence it detracts from the honor and glory of Christ's finished work on the cross...drawing into question how one is ultimately saved...through the sacrament or through Christ alone.
 - b. As we have said the Mass teaches that the bread and the wine actually becomes the Lord's Body and blood...and that being the case they are to be worshiped and adored as Christ the Lord's Body and Blood.
 - c. And that is idolatry...plain and simple.
 - d. Not any harsher than those it was spoken to speak of us: In September 1562, the Council of Trent delivered its decrees on the Eucharistic sacrifice. Canon 3: *"If any one says, that the sacrifice of the mass is only a sacrifice of praise and of thanksgiving; or that it is a bare commemoration of the sacrifice consummated on the cross, but not a propitiatory sacrifice; or, that it profits him only who receives; and that it ought not to be offered for the living and the dead for sins, pains, satisfactions, and other necessities; let him be anathema."*
 - e. In the 1984 Catechism of the Catholic Church Rome confesses: §1367 The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice:
 - f. And also from the same catechism: §1378 Worship of the Eucharist. In the liturgy of the Mass we express our faith in the real presence of Christ under the species of bread and wine by, among other ways, genuflecting or bowing deeply as a sign of adoration of the Lord. "The Catholic Church has always offered and still offers to the sacrament of the Eucharist the cult of adoration, not only during Mass, but also outside of it, reserving the consecrated hosts with the

utmost care, exposing them to the solemn veneration of the faithful, and carrying them in procession."

- g. But His one sacrifice was sufficient that is why He says *"proclaim or show forth my death until I come..."* We proclaim its perfect sufficiency each time we take the Supper in its proper way.
- h. The Supper is the gospel made visible.

Heidelberg Catechism Study
November 29, 2015

A. Prayer

B. Review /continue – Lord's Day #30- I Cor. 10:19-22, 11:17-34; Hebrews 8

1. Q/A #80- What difference is there between the Lord's Supper and the Popish Mass? *The Lord's Supper testifies to us, that we have full forgiveness of all our sins by the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which He Himself has once accomplished on the cross; and that by the Holy Ghost we are engrafted into Christ, who with His true body is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father, and is to be there worshiped. But the Mass teaches, that the living and the dead have not forgiveness of sins through the sufferings of Christ, unless Christ is still daily offered for them by the priests; and that Christ is bodily under the form of bread and wine, and is therefore to be worshiped in them. And thus the Mass at bottom is nothing else than a denial of the one sacrifice and passion of Jesus Christ, and an accursed idolatry. A bit harsh?*

- a. This is what they have to say themselves...
- b. In September 1562, the Council of Trent delivered its decrees on the Eucharistic sacrifice. Canon 3: *"If any one says, that the sacrifice of the mass is only a sacrifice of praise and of thanksgiving; or that it is a bare commemoration of the sacrifice consummated on the cross, but not a propitiatory sacrifice; or, that it profits him only who receives; and that it ought not to be offered for the living and the dead for sins, pains, satisfactions, and other necessities; let him be anathema."*
- c. In the 1984 Catechism of the Catholic Church Rome confesses: §1367 *"The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice."*
- d. §1378 Worship of the Eucharist. *"In the liturgy of the Mass we express our faith in the real presence of Christ under the species of bread and wine by, among other ways, genuflecting or bowing deeply as a sign of adoration of the Lord. The Catholic Church has always offered and still offers to the sacrament of the Eucharist the cult of adoration, not only during Mass, but also outside of it, reserving the consecrated hosts with the utmost care, exposing them to the solemn veneration of the faithful, and carrying them in procession."*

2. Q/A #81-Who are to come to the table of the Lord? *Those who are displeased with themselves for their sins, yet trust that these are forgiven them, and that their remaining infirmity is covered by the passion and death of Christ; who also desire more and more to strengthen their faith and amend their life. But the impenitent and hypocrites eat and drink judgment to themselves.*

- a. What are the standards that this catechism suggests for people to be admitted to the Lord's Table? How well do you live up to that?
- b. What should we do to be better able to ensure the sanctity of the Lord's Table? It is vital that the church does both:
 - (1) That the individual examine his heart continually to repent of his sinful ways before he comes to worship and the table of the Lord... and the elders continually remind the members of their need to repent before the Lord... and...
 - (2) That the church elders be diligent in insisting upon credible professions of faith prior to admittance to the Lord's Supper...
- c. What does it matter if the impenitent and hypocritical eat this meal?
 - (1) After all to the non-believer the elements don't symbolize anything...they are simply bread and wine.
 - (2) In receiving the signs and seals they do not receive life so they in turn must receive judgment.
 - (3) When non-believers eat and drink they make a mockery of the meal thus making a mockery of God...thus bringing judgment upon themselves.

(4) It is commanded for them not to... 1 Cor. 10:21.

3. Q/A #82- Are they then also to be admitted to this Supper, who show themselves to be, by their confession and life, unbelieving and ungodly? *No: for by this the covenant of God is profaned, and His wrath provoked against the whole congregation; wherefore the Christian Church is bound, according to the order of Christ and His Apostles, by the office of the keys to exclude such persons, until they amend their life.*

a. This is called fencing the table. We fence the table. By “fencing” we mean that we invite all those who are members of the visible church (i.e., a congregation with the marks of the true church) to come to the table of the Lord. We challenge those who are present but who do not believe or who have not demonstrated true faith by uniting themselves with the true church not to come to the table of the Lord.

b. Why do we do such a thing?

- (1) It needs to be remembered that the Supper is not ours to share with just anyone. It is not our table, it is the Lord's. He sets the terms of communion. Though it seems counter intuitive in our inclusive age, fencing the table is an act of love. There are always limits to inclusion. Is it inclusive to let a small child drive a car? No. A car is a good tool at the hands of a skilled adult but in the hands of a child, it's a danger to himself and to others. So it is with the Lord's Supper. It is a gospel blessing to believers but to the unbelieving and impenitent, i.e., to those who refuse acknowledge their sins and to turn from them, it is nothing but a curse.
- (2) The Christian Church is constantly being charged as being hypocrites. One of the first charges made against the visible, institutional church is that it is “full of hypocrites.” To be sure, there are hypocrites in the church. There are those who profess faith but who do not give evidence of actually possessing genuine faith. Here, as always, we should be careful to use the right measure. When the outside world criticizes the visible church as a bastion of hypocrisy it is because Christians do not conform to whatever it is they think Christians should do or say.
- (3) On the other side, whenever the church recognizes a problem and takes steps to address it in concrete, practical, visible ways she is criticized as narrow and bigoted. Think about this: Someone else is doing something wrong in the name of the law; therefore I am entitled to disobey the law. Does that make good sense? Not at all. What, then, is God's law on this matter? 1 Cor. 11:27-32. The Lord's Table is not for unbelievers. It is for believers. The Lord has commissioned the visible church to recognize when someone shows himself by his conduct to be an unbeliever.
- (4) If history is an indication, we are likely going to be criticized no matter what we do so better to obey our Lord and seek his approval rather than the approval of men.
- (5) A Note about what is going on and why Paul needed to “remind” the Corinthian believers of the proper way to conduct the Supper even making this claim. Paul warned us in 1 Corinthians 11 that the Supper is a holy feast. It is not a mere fellowship meal between believers. In Corinth this fellowship meal or agape' meal had so degenerated into a bunch of individuals eating, while in a group, by themselves...and that by the time they got to the actual Lord's Supper there had been so much sin in the room that they were all hypocrites...brother looking down on brother for what they didn't have...brother looking up to brother for what they had...arrogance among brothers so badly that they were unwilling to share even the crumbs from the meal with those who didn't have anything. These were not pot lucks or fellowship meals at this point...there was little to no sharing going on. So Paul means to remind them that the Agape' meal was a distraction and an abomination to the Lord especially when afterwards they would take the Lord's Supper together.

Heidelberg Catechism Study
December 6, 2015

A. Prayer

B. Review/continue- Lord's Day #31- Matthew 16:15-20; 18:15-20

1. Q/A #83- What is the Office of the Keys? *The Preaching of the Holy Gospel and Church Discipline; by which two things the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers and shut against unbelievers.*

a. Why would God want to keep anyone out of the kingdom of heaven?

- (1) Demonstrate His justice.
- (2) Is "want" an acceptable reference when speaking of God on this matter? It is definitely His decision to do this. It is His will. It is His predetermined will to pass over some for the good of His elect and His own glory. He did want to do this if we consider this word from His point of view. From ours it is harder to swallow. So let's agree that it was by His decree that some are kept out of His kingdom...for His kingdom is only for His own.
- (3) A kingdom is composed of individuals but it is a corporation with a discernible, authoritative head. A kingdom is not a democracy. It has a king and subjects. A kingdom has boundaries. Not everyone is in it.
- (4) In Scriptural teaching we are by nature rebels, at odds with God and excluded from His kingdom. Apart from Christ our righteous substitute and our King, we have no status before God except as condemned before the king. Therefore we very much need the gates to the Kingdom of Heaven to be opened for us.
- (5) Read II Cor. 6:14-7:1- For the sake of the unity and purity of the church. We often read this passage in conjunction with a discussion about Christians not marrying non-Christians...and it can, given the innumerable text in the Pentateuch and the Prophets that would support that command, ...but here Paul, the Apostle and preacher of God's Word, is using it to declare to these Corinthians the need for unity and purity within the church of God...God's body. We are not to connect ourselves with unbelievers...the church is not to house them...allowing non-believers in the church or allowing people with opposing views from scripture to stay in the church will destroy the peace, purity and unity of the church. We should be careful in aligning ourselves in partnerships with unbelievers outside of the church as well. We are to align ourselves with other believers instead.

b. Read Matthew 16:15-20.

(1) What are keys?

- They open and close things...or they unlock and lock things.
- An ancient city was an enclosed camp fortified with walls and gates. Those gates had to be opened and closed. Indeed, the noun for keys is derived from the Greek verb "to open". Keys are things that open that which is closed.

(2) Who are they given to?

- We do not hold these keys as individuals. They have been given to the visible, institutional church. Our Lord Jesus gave them to Peter as he confessed the truth about Christ. Peter was a disciple. He did have an office (disciple) and he did become an Apostle (who had to be corrected more than once). We may safely say that Christ gave the keys of his kingdom to a representative officer of his church.
- They were intended to be exercised in a corporate setting by an officer of that corporation on behalf of the corporation as Christ's minister. As ministers, the church's officers do not create realities but rather they recognize and announce them.

2. Q/A #84- How is the kingdom of heaven opened and shut by the Preaching of the Holy Gospel? *In this way: that according to the command of Christ, it is*

proclaimed and openly witnessed to believers, one and all, that as often as they accept with true faith the promise of the Gospel, all their sins are really forgiven them of God for the sake of Christ's merits; and on the contrary, to all unbelievers and hypocrites, that the wrath of God and eternal condemnation abide on them, so long as they are not converted; according to which witness of the Gospel, will be the judgment of God both in this life and in that which is to come.

a. How does preaching open the kingdom to His elect?

- (1) He has instituted offices to fulfill that ministry: minister of Word and sacrament and elder.
- (2) Properly ordained and installed ministers... and the Bible clearly defines the role of the minister...II Tim. 5: 17...or elders Acts 6:2, 4... have the responsibility to use the 1st key spoken of here: preaching of the Word, that Jesus has obeyed in place of His people, that He died, that He was raised from the dead on the 3rd day, that He has ascended to the right hand of the Father, and that He will return bodily, in glory, to judge the living and the dead.
- (3) There is more than enough abundant biblical evidence that the officers whom God has called are commissioned to announce the good news everywhere...not just anyone. (See II Cor. 1:1, 2:15-17) All are called to witnesses for the faith that God speaks of but not all are called to proclaim the good news with authority. Rom. 10:14-17; also Acts 10:41-43... Notice Peter's appeal to his status as an authorized messenger: *"but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses."* In this case, he is talking about His call as a proclaimer...the words can be used interchangeably simply because all of us are called to be witnesses but some are called to more...to proclaim the word.
- (4) William Perkins (1558-1602) from His book The Art of Prophesying says this about the 2-fold purpose for preaching God's Word...it is *"...for gathering the church and for bringing together all the elect and to drive away the wolves from the folds of the LORD."*
- (5) We are all called to be salt and light...to evangelize ...to witness to the good news.

b. Since the gospel is the good news of salvation, how can we say as the catechism does, that the preaching of the gospel closes the kingdom to some? It is for he who has ears, let him hear...

3. Q/A #85- How is the kingdom of heaven shut and opened by Church Discipline? *In this way: that according to the command of Christ, if any under the Christian name show themselves unsound either in doctrine or life, and after repeated brotherly admonition refuse to turn from their errors of evil ways, they are complained of to the church or to its proper officers, and, if they neglect to hear them also, are by them excluded from the Holy Sacraments and the Christian communion, and by God Himself from the kingdom of Christ; and if they promise and show real amendment, they are again received as members of Christ and His Church.*

a. What essentially are two grounds for discipline spoken of in this catechism question?

- (1) Errors in doctrine or moral failure.
- (2) This process is important. First, people rush the process by not following the first two steps.
- (3) Remember, private sins are addressed privately, public sins, publicly. Ordinarily, discipline begins with private admonition. It only becomes an ecclesiastical matter only after the first two steps listed by our Lord fail to produce repentance. If someone offends, you go to him. If he refuses, then you take a brother or two. This is the "two or three witnesses" principle from the Mosaic law, which requires us to establish something by 2 or 3 witnesses. Only if he still refuses does a matter go to the visible, institutional church.

b. Read Matthew 18:15-20

(1) What is it that this passage reveals to us about how Jesus sees the church?

- He sees the church as a “family.” And He seeks to provide helpful measures for the unity of family.
- He also seems to consider the Church wise enough to make the Christ guided decisions that need to be made...so much so that He will endorse what the church decided as long as it follows His directives...verse 18-20.
- This passage could easily started with the word “when”... for Jesus knows there will be conflict within the church and He knows that brother will sin against brother...and that the sins of brothers and sisters will affect the church’s witness.
- Christians must expect to be hurt by other Christians, and must expect sin to be a continuing reality even in the fellowship of believers. Christians are surprised by this...we shouldn’t be...Jesus tells us it will happen.

(2) Given the context of this passage, what are some “sins” you would suspect are in mind here? Coveting, slander, gossiping, mistreating young Christians, false teachers, sexual improprieties, lying... (See Rom. 1:28-31; 1 Cor. 6:9-10, Eph. 5:3-5; Titus 3:9-11)

(3) Does this passage then give us license to continually bring our brothers up on charges for every conceivable sin? Why or why not?

- This is for Serious Private and Public sins.
- But this is not to be set into action by every petty irritation or annoyance. 1 Peter 4:8 and other passages speak clearly of how in most cases we should show deference to our brothers when possible when it is a private sin or offense...even the passage concerning the paying of the Temple tax shows how we can forgive others and even give in to them when it is not harmful and they are ignorant of their positions.
- Every sin does not rise to the level of conflict within the church. Certainly all sin is deserving of death.
- One may give offense to another by slandering or lying or seeking to lead believers astray or by living a double life, if you will, caught up in some heinous sin...
- The Bible seems to teach in many places that Christians may not choose to take offense . Example: I may say something that is not sinful, yet you choose to take offense. I did not intend to give offense but you chose to take offense. Telling the truth will often offend others who choose to be offended by the truth. But this is an offense taken.
- In the end, only one sin brings about excommunication...is what has come to be called “contumacy”...an obstinate refusal to repent of sin.

(4) Why do you go to your brother in the first place? In other words, what is your motivation? He is saying that when a professing Christian, a member of your congregation offends you, seriously, the first thing you have to do is think about that person's spiritual well-being. Because that sin that that brother did against you will come between that brother or sister and God. And you’ve got to be so concerned about their spiritual welfare that you do everything in your power to encourage that brother to repentance and back into fellowship with God. Not an easy task. To that Peter ends up asking...Ok, I have to do this so, “How many times must I do it?”

(5) As you look at verses 15-17 what would you say is the purpose (s) for church discipline?

- The exercise of the authority that the Lord Jesus has given to His Church to promote and maintain purity, peace, and unity.

- It is the act of biblically and lovingly confronting a brother or sister in Christ who is in serious sin to seek reconciliation and restoration to Christ and His Church.
- Ongoing sin in the life of a believer obstructs their walk with the Lord, threatens the unity and fellowship of the Body, and ultimately weakens the witness of the whole church among non-believers.
- *"For those who are Calvinists (Reformed), you know that one of the manifestations (marks) of a true church is the willingness to practice church discipline. I agree that church discipline is sometimes necessary, but I believe that it should be prescribed, not on the basis of the sin committed, but on the basis of the lack of repentance manifested."* - Steve Brown PCA pastor

(6) Considering the steps that Jesus gives us here, when you have an issue with someone else, who do you go to first and why? Why do we have the next 2 steps?

- Because the first step doesn't always work...
- We are commanded to do it this way...
- This is set up to prevent gossiping which is a sin unto death...gossiping destroys...and itself becomes like slander and lying a public sin worthy of discipline itself.
- These steps are also given to us so that we can love properly as brothers and sisters. If we show no concern for the sins of our brothers and sisters then we are not loving them as Christ expects.
- Jesus is not telling us to do this as a way of getting satisfaction for a personal grievance, but as a way of seeking to help one another. Go, in this instance, may mean more than one visit, because the point is we need to look out for our brothers' spiritual interests even when our brother has offended.
- This can promote unity when we step back look at our own sins as He has already told us in Matt. 7 and then seek for our brother and sister to be restored.
- Now if going to your brother privately doesn't work out: Jesus foresees a circumstance where the brother will not see his sin, he will not see his wrong, and that reconciliation will not occur after you go to speak to him. And Jesus says, so you do this, just like the law said, you go and take two witnesses to confirm the facts. These are what the Bible refers to as peacemakers...those who will hold both parties to the same standard but also can be people who will point out the sin that is evident.
- Lastly, if all other attempts to bring the sinner to repentance fail then they are to be brought to the church/elders of the church, who on behalf of the church deal with that situation and attempt to bring resolution. And if even they cannot bring about recognition of the sin committed and a repentance of it, then that brother is to be treated as you see Jesus uses the word, as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer, as a foreigner and a tax-gatherer... He is just saying that that brother can no longer be thought of as a brother if that brother is going to continue to persist in known willful disobedience.

Heidelberg Catechism Study
December 13, 2015

A. Prayer

B. Review/continue- Lord's Day #31- Matthew 16:15-20; 18:15-20

1. Q/A #83- What is the Office of the Keys? *The Preaching of the Holy Gospel and Church Discipline; by which two things the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers and shut against unbelievers.*

2. Q/A #84- How is the kingdom of heaven opened and shut by the Preaching of the Holy Gospel? *In this way: that according to the command of Christ, it is proclaimed and openly witnessed to believers, one and all, that as often as they accept with true faith the promise of the Gospel, all their sins are really forgiven them of God for the sake of Christ's merits; and on the contrary, to all unbelievers and hypocrites, that the wrath of God and eternal condemnation abide on them, so long as they are not converted; according to which witness of the Gospel, will be the judgment of God both in this life and in that which is to come.*

3. Q/A #85- How is the kingdom of heaven shut and opened by Church Discipline? *In this way: that according to the command of Christ, if any under the Christian name show themselves unsound either in doctrine or life, and after repeated brotherly admonition refuse to turn from their errors of evil ways, they are complained of to the church or to its proper officers, and, if they neglect to hear them also, are by them excluded from the Holy Sacraments and the Christian communion, and by God Himself from the kingdom of Christ; and if they promise and show real amendment, they are again received as members of Christ and His Church.*

c. Re- Read Matthew 18:15-20

(7) What is it that this passage reveals to us about how Jesus sees the church?

- He sees the church as a "family." And He seeks to provide helpful measures for the unity of family.
- He also seems to consider the Church wise enough to make the Christ guided decisions that need to be made...so much so that He will endorse what the church decided as long as it follows His directives...verse 18-20.

(8) As you look at verses 15-17 what would you say is the purpose (s) for church discipline? *"For those who are Calvinists (Reformed), you know that one of the manifestations (marks) of a true church is the willingness to practice church discipline. I agree that church discipline is sometimes necessary, but I believe that it should be prescribed, not on the basis of the sin committed, but on the basis of the lack of repentance manifested."*- Steve Brown PCA pastor

(9) What are some reasons that church discipline is so hard? Heck, forget church discipline, a minute, why is it so hard to hold our brothers and sisters accountable for destructive behavior?

- There is a basic dislike for authority or anything that smacks of it.

- We are not “prepared” to speak to someone else’s sin. Hard not to remember our own sin and then think, “Who are we to point out to someone what we are guilty of?”
- We don’t believe in hell...really. If we did we would be scared of it...at least a respect about it that would drive us to want to keep others out.
- We hate conflict of all kind...that is, if it falls to us to do something. Don’t always mind watching others do conflict management.
- We don’t really believe that this stuff works.
- We don’t consider what “one” brother or sisters sin will/can do to the witness of the Church. Think 1 Cor. 5.
- The Southern way to deal with offences is usually denial. You know, we just kind of pretend, *“O.K., that didn’t happen, I’m not going to say anything about it in public, I’m not going to say anything but I’m going to boil inside, and I’m probably going to talk to a lot of other people about it.”* That is the way we deal with it. But to go right to another person and deal with it is a very unnatural thing. For most of us. And yet, Jesus says this is the way that He wants us to relate to one another, because He is concerned for the peace and the purity in the family.
- When the offense has been in private, and we publicly expose it, it naturally brings up that person’s defenses to think about not what they have done, but what you have done to them.

d. How does church discipline open the kingdom to His elect?

- (1) Here the elders are chiefly responsible to use the 2nd key is ecclesiastical discipline. They have the ruling office in the church. John 20:21-23.
 - Jesus blows the Holy Spirit upon the disciples/ officers of the newly formed NT church. This had the effect of blowing upon them a particular gift of the Spirit which is handed down to the elders of the local church...like the mantle of Elijah was handed down to Elisha. Also, proclaims to the officers that they cannot act separate from the Spirit.
 - Forgiving or retaining forgiveness is an act of Church discipline.
- (2) Only if a person shows himself to be stubborn and impenitent (charge of contumacy) should the matter go to the church and then the ministers and elders must work together, prayerfully, carefully to correct the brother. II Cor. 2:5-11
- (3) The hope is that the brother (or sister) will recognize his (or her) error or sin, repent, and be reconciled. That is always the goal of church discipline. By the people seeing this they then can be restored to fellowship.
- (4) Need to remember the great blessing of repentance.

e. Again, why do so few churches engage in Church discipline?

- (1) They fail to do so to the destruction of their witness to a watching world that sees the church complaining about the sins of the world but does nothing to root out those same sins from amongst itself.
- (2) If the church does not make use of the keys correctly it will never grow spiritually as it should.

f. Why does it matter anyway?

- (1) In the OT every sin is a corporate sin. Every sin affects the effectiveness and the belief of the whole church.
- (2) When the church failed to act on a particular persons sin, God disciplined the whole people.
- (3) We need a more corporate understanding of the church today...these are not our individual sins...whatever we do affects the other and our witness for God.

c. The Heidelberg Catechism is in three parts: Law, Gospel, and Sanctification or Guilt, Grace, and Gratitude. This is not an artificial interpretation of the Catechism nor is it an artificial arrangement of the Christian faith. Question 2 outlines the

Catechism for us: Q/A #2- How many things are necessary for you to know, that in this comfort you may live and die happily? *Three things: the first, how great my sin and misery is; the second, how I am redeemed from all my sins and misery; the third, how I am to be thankful to God for such redemption.* Notice that there are three things that one must know: sin and misery (guilt), how we are redeemed (grace), and how believers live in light of God's grace (gratitude).

D. Lord's Day #32- I John 3:10-15; 5:1-5

1. Q/A #86- Since, then, we are redeemed from our misery by grace alone through Christ, without any merit of ours, why must we do good works? *Because Christ, having redeemed us by His blood, renews us also by His Holy Spirit after His own image, that with our whole life we may show ourselves thankful to God for His blessing, and that He may be glorified through us; then also, that we ourselves may be assured of our faith by the fruits thereof, and by our godly walk may win others also to Christ.*

a. How important is thanksgiving for the Christian? "Because Christ, having redeemed...purchased... us with His blood, renews us by His Holy Spirit after His own image" we do not have the right to give thanks or not...we only have the right and we are commanded to give thanks continually...we can never thank God enough for what He has done. To say as some that we do not have to give thanks because God already knows that...then we are not thankful...presumption is our downfall.

b. What are the fruits that are in mind here...ie. Godly walk that may win others also to Christ?

- (1) Keeping God's Law...His Word... out of thankfulness and reverence to Him and Him alone. We have been saved to live by the Law...the Law does not in any way save us.
- (2) This is the language of our Lord Jesus in John 15. Believers "show themselves to be thankful." They manifest their new life by good works. They give evidence. That's why the two words most often used by the classical Reformed writers and the Reformed confessions in this discussion are "fruit" and "evidence."
- (3) When, by God's grace, we do good works that gives witness to our faith and to the truth of the Christian faith. When our lives match our profession opportunities for witness are created. We do not have to choose between a silent witness of good works and a spoken witness to Christ and his truth. We believe in and confess both. They go together. May the Lord give us opportunities to give witness and may he bless that witness when it is given.

2. Q/A #87- Can they, then, be saved who do not turn to God from their unthankful, impenitent life? *By no means: for, as the Scripture says, no unchaste person, idolater, adulterer, thief, covetous man, drunkard, slanderer, robber, or any such like, shall inherit the kingdom of God.*

a. If Q/A #86 be true, and of course it is, why even ask this question?

- (1) Because Scripture asks questions just like this.
- (2) People need to be warned that we cannot be saved without a radical change of life that is evidenced in our desire to follow God's Law.
- (3) See how the Apostles speak of this: I Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:13-26; Eph. 5:1-20; I John 3:4.
- (4) It seems natural for man to think he can be justified by faith without having to exhibit any noticeable change.
- (5) What the Reformed Churches here confess is that it is the case that believers will be penitent, i.e., they will recognize sin for what it is. They will recognize their own sin what it is. They recognize and confess the greatness of their sin and misery (Heidelberg Catechism 2-9) and they turn away from it. Believers, those to whom God has graciously, sovereignly granted new life and with it true faith, have repented, do repent and shall repent.
- (6) It is not that sinners cannot be saved. Were that so there would be no saved persons. We know from Scripture that there are saved persons. It's not that the imperfect cannot be saved. Heidelberg 87 is thinking about those who sin impenitently. Christians may indeed

commit gross sins. What distinguishes the believer from the unbeliever is repentance and penitence, which is the fruit of true faith.

- (7) But the Bible is right and the catechism only echoes the warning of Scripture. There is no salvation for those who remain unchanged in their relationship between God and His Word...the Law which is the 10 Commandments.

- b. Why do you suppose there is such lacks of emphasis on the 10 Commandments in most churches today...even those who require memorization of the 10 Commandments by their children?

Heidelberg Catechism Study
January 10, 2016

A. Prayer

B. Review- Lord's Day 33- Mark 7:1-13; Eph. 2:1-10; Col. 3:5, 9-10

1. Q/A #88- In how many things does true repentance or conversion consist? *In two things: the mortification dying of the old man, and the quickening of the new.*
2. Q/A #89- What is the mortification/dying of the old man? *Heartfelt sorrow for sin; causing us to hate and turn from it always more and more.*
3. Q/A #90- What is the quickening of the new man? *Heartfelt joy in God; causing us to take delight in living according to the will of God in all good works.*
 - a. As the catechism says, a person being made alive increasingly takes delight in living according to God's will revealed in His holy Word.
 - b. Before the Spirit gave us new life we did not have such a desire at all. So, He has graciously changed our stance and more fundamentally has delivered us from death into life.
4. Q/A #91- But what are good works? *Those only which are done from true faith, according to the Law of God, for His glory; and not such as rest on our own opinion, or the commandments of men.* God has spoken. We are not the measure of all things. Our experience is not final. Our hunches are just that. Our intuitions, however useful, are just that. There is an objective arbiter. When intuitions and feelings conflict with God's clear revelation, our feelings must give way to objective revealed truth. We are bound together to God's clear, objective Word so that no one, not even the church, can impose on us what God Himself has not imposed. As we have seen from the beginning, we are not our own. We are given by God works that He has prepared beforehand for us to accomplish as His fellow-workers.

C. Lord's Day #34-Exodus 20:1-17; Duet. 6:5; Matthew 22:36-40; Mark 12:29-31; Luke 10:27; I John 4:21)

1. Q/A #92- What is the Law of God? *God spoke all these words, saying: I am the Lord thy God, which has brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 1st COMMANDMENT: Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. 2nd COMMANDMENT: Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them. For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments. 3rd COMMANDMENT: Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain. 4th COMMANDMENT: Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it. 5th COMMANDMENT: Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. 6th COMMANDMENT: Thou*

shalt not kill. 7th COMMANDMENT: Thou shalt not commit adultery. 8th COMMANDMENT: Thou shalt not steal. 9th COMMANDMENT: Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. 10th COMMANDMENT: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's. (Ex. 20:1-21; Duet. 5:1-22, 6:1-13)

a. Given what we have just seen in these readings, how would you answer this question: How important is the Law of God?

- (1) So important that God made sure that the next generation was told them...
- (2) So important because God wanted His people to know Him and to know what He expected...
- (3) These are up most important in the life of His people...
- (4) Since this is true why do so many want to say that the Law was fulfilled...read, done away with... in Christ?

b. (Read the Duet. passages) What are some of the differences between these two recitations of the Law?

- (1) The Exodus passage was the original and it was given to the people who originally came out of Israel...the Deut. Passage was given to the next generation as they prepared to re-commit themselves to God before entering the promised land.
- (2) The people of the exodus broke these Laws blatantly...the hope is better for this new generation that have watched their parents die in the wilderness by God's command.

Heidelberg Catechism Study
January 17, 2016

A. Prayer

B. Lord's Day #34-Continued- Exodus 20:1-21; Duet. 5:1-22, 6:1-13; Matthew 22:36-40; Mark 12:29-31; Luke 10:27; I John 4:21)

1. Q/A #92- What is the Law of God? Answer-Ex. 20:17 (See also Ex. 20:18-21 and Duet. 5:1-22, 6:1-13)

a. Given what we have just seen in these readings, how would you answer this question: How important is the Law of God?

- (1) So important that God made sure that the next generation was told them...
- (2) So important because God wanted His people to know Him and to know what He expected...
- (3) These are up most important in the life of His people...
- (4) Since this is true why do so many want to say that the Law was fulfilled...read, done away with... in Christ?

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- (2) The people of the exodus broke these Laws blatantly...the hope is better for this new generation that have watched their parents die in the wilderness by God's command.

c. Why is it important that the prelude to the commandments... *"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery..."* be included in this discussion?

- (1) It points out their deliverance...
- (2) It points out who delivered them...
- (3) It points out the type of deliverance...out of the bonds/house of slavery...
- (4) The Law is given because of the covenant –keeping God consistent with His promises...who has "already" delivered and redeemed His people...redeemed in the sense of being purchased out of slavery. *"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."* God saved His people to be able to do the law. The exodus demonstrates God's grace...the people did not deserve to be rescued...once again it was His grace towards His own because of His promise in the covenant of grace that He delivered them...Gen. 15: 13-14. But also because this was the foundational covenant that He had made with Himself before the foundation of the earth to save His own elect people. Vs. 2 is not calling upon the Hebrews to keep this law so as to win God's favor for they already have that by virtue of being delivered by God. They like us were to keep the commandments out of gratitude for what God had done for them....a "law of faith" not a "law of works".
- (5) See Gal. 3:17-18. The law is not a substitute for grace. God did not intend that thenceforth man was to be saved by keeping the law. *"By the works of the law shall no one will be justified"* (Gal. 2:16). The law was added simply as a means of administering the covenant of grace more effectively. *"The law was added because of transgressions"* (Gal. 3:19).

d. What is the purpose of the Law? There is a 3 fold purpose to the Law.

- (1) The first purpose of the law is to be a mirror. On the one hand, the law of God reflects and mirrors the perfect righteousness of God. And the law highlights our weakness and sin. It serves to reveal to us our need of a Savior.
- (2) The second purpose of the law is that it serves as a restraint of evil. The law cannot change the heart but it serves to protect the righteous against the unjust. The law allows

for a limited measure of justice on earth until the last judgment. Since the law is written on the hearts of men, it has made its way into laws of all cultures of the earth.

- (3) The third purpose of the law is to reveal to God's children what is pleasing to God our Father. The Christian delights in the law as God Himself delights in it. Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15) This is the highest function of the law, to serve as an instrument for the people of God to give Him honor and glory.
- (4) The Reformed church is in the minority in this understanding with the greater body of Christ in disagreement.

e. What are some of the things you learn about God in this passage?

- (1) He is a jealous God...the Only One who truly has the "right" to be jealous...all attention given to others is an offense...because He loves so deeply His children...not wanting anything or anyone to take what is due Him alone.
- (2) God's presence is known by Moses and these people...no question...and to be in the presence of God is a terrible and frightening thing.
- (3) He reveals a desire for relationship by giving the Law.
- (4) God clearly reveals Himself in specific ways.
- (5) His grace is evident in how He warns Moses so that they don't do something they are not supposed to do.
- (6) His justice is evident as well as He clearly lays out the consequences for His people if they sin.
- (7) He is a God with standards...this could be a "duh" statement except for the fact that most people think we are the ones who set the standards for living...redefining them as we see fit.
- (8) He is not to be taken lightly...once again...this should be another "duh" statement except that we act as if the universe revolves around us and what we want.
- (9) He left nothing out so that we have "no excuse"...we can't say we weren't told.
- (10) These are His Top 10, if you will, and everything else in Scripture defines them for us...
- (11) He is All-Powerful ...All Sovereign!

f. With so much positive about the Law why do people recoil from it so much and so easily?

- (1) Our fallen nature naturally rejects the Law.
- (2) As redeemed people the Church has not often taught correctly on the place of the Law in our lives today...so it is easy to recoil at the suggestion that we are required to keep the Law today. It is not grace if our lives are to be governed by the law many would say.
- (3) It is one thing to talk about such comfortable things as: the benefits of the oneness with God, of fellowship with the Creator, even of harmony in the covenant, but...
- (4) It's another thing to talk about rules, requirements, duties and commands. The very mention of these seems to smash the sense of comfortable communion with the Maker.
- (5) Laws speak of standardization; of conformity to an outward norm...some people go so far as to speak of coercion.
- (6) But covenant suggests a relationship, trust and friendship, but true trust, true friendship and true relationship can only be found within structure.

g. Just so we are clear here, is there anything new in these laws? Haven't they already been present so that man knew this already? So what is different?

- (1) These laws had always been present as eternal truths since they define God's character and nature, but they had not been laid out in such a clear fashion...in a list together. Because these 10 Commandments or Ten Words of God arise out of God's nature, these are not something that suddenly appears for the first time at Sinai.
- (2) And also, although these moral laws were inherent in the image of God in man from the beginning of man's creation, the corruption of sin had the effect of "blurring" the clarity of these laws. At Sinai God reasserts the clear law that has always been evident and that man

has always been bound to in covenant with God...and on the shores of the Jordan He reasserts the law for His children before they enter into the Promised Land.

- (3) Remember Adam and Eve knew immediately that they had sinned against God and His law though it had not been written down physically for them...
- (4) Cain knew immediately that he had sinned when he wasn't obedient to God's will in the sacrifice and then again he knew he had done wrong when he murdered his brother long before the actual law was given against pre-meditated murder.

h. Many Reformed theologians have said that this law is a summary of God's will for the Christian (See Q/A # 91). Others have also pointed out that the law defines and reveals God's character to the Christian. Given what we know from Scripture it is safe to assert both of these as true. With this being true, how is it that so many in the church say, "*We are saved and so we no longer need the Law of God.*" How would you answer that statement? Why is a biblical response absolutely necessary?

- (1) This statement is a false claim...to be saved is to live by the Law through the power of the Holy Spirit...since God requires that His Law be maintained as His standard.
- (2) By studying God's law, we learn what pleases Him and what offends Him. We learn God's very character. The moral law is always binding upon us. Our redemption is from the curse of God's law- His wrath... not from our duty to obey it. We are justified, not because of our obedience to the law, but in order that we may become obedient to it. To love Christ is to keep His commandments. To love God is to obey His law.

i. How do we keep covenant with our God? How are we to show our love? By keeping the law. Jesus said, "*If you love me, keep my commandments.*"

Heidelberg Catechism Study
January 24, 2016

A. Prayer

B. Review- Lord's Day #34-Continued-

1. If you were to explain the giving of the Law to your children...how would you do it and incorporate the fact that these laws have been written on the hearts of all people for all time? Why was it necessary to give these in written form?
2. Why is it biblically irresponsible of the church when it says things like, "*Jesus has saved us the law no longer applies to us*"?
3. Q/A #93- How are these commandments divided? *Into two tables: the first of which teaches us, in four commandments, what duties we owe to God; the second, in six, what duties we owe to our neighbor.*
 - a. What is this communicating to us?
 - (1) (See Duet. 6:5; Matthew 22:36-40; Mark 12:29-31; Luke 10:27; 1 John 4:21) Another way to say this is: They focus on the two most important spheres of a believers life; 1st; all that has to do directly with the worship of God (first 4 commandments), and 2nd; what God requires of us in His service (last 6 commandments).
 - (2) The organization IS CRUCIAL! We almost always fail to understand this.
 - WE start with the fact that we are "good people" because we haven't been too bad...we refrain from stealing, murder, and adultery,
 - while paying hardly a nod to the highest duty... of worship which comes first!
 - b. If this construct is correct...that the Law deals with the 2 most important spheres of a Christian's life...1st Worship, then 2nd Service to God...then...why IS worship first...why is it more important than how we treat one another?
 - c. Look with me at the reverse of the handout and let's look at the guidelines to interpretation... General Rules of Interpretation for the 10 Commandments...
 - (1) God reveals Himself to His children even more through these commands. He shows us what is of utmost important to Him. He tells us His name (He revealed it to Moses but here it is revealed to His children). "*Yahweh*" means "I am" and it can also mean, "I cause to be". He then is the one who "is" and the One that "causes". He longs to be close to us, His children, so He keeps nothing of importance from us.
 - (2) The 10 Commandments must be interpreted spiritually. The Law is understood best when we see it fulfilled in Christ. This also recognizes that external obedience is not enough. The Law must capture our hearts to be effective. (Psalm 19; 119; Matt. 22:37-40; 1 Tim. 1:5).
 - (3) This is God's standard for Christian living. The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) is a commentary by Jesus into what it means to live by the Law.
 - (4) The negative commands (You shall not...) include positive commands as well.
 - (5) Each sin dealt with by each commandment must be interpreted to cover the entire range of related sins. ("*You shall not commit murder*",

according to Jesus also means we shall not ruin the character of another in anger.)

(6) Those commandments concerned with love toward God are of greater importance than those commandments concerned with love toward our neighbor. (compare Matt. 22: 34-40)

(7) The purpose of these commandments is to show God's grace. So they are positive rather than negative. (John 1:16-17)

d. Do the 10 Commandments fully cover every aspect of our duty in modern life? Example: Where do traffic laws fit into the 10 Commandments? Taxes?

4. 1st Commandment- *Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.*

a. Are there other gods? (Judges 2:11, 3:7; I Kings 11:4-8, 18:20-40) How do they compare to God? (Ex. 19:5; Deut.4:28; I Kings 18:27; Is. 2:8,18,20; 40:18-20; Acts 17:18-23)

(1) They are man's imagination!

(2) They are the devils and minions of Satan.

(3) They do not compare...

b. How do we fit these two things together: on one hand, gods that do not exist; yet, on the other hand, gods against whom we must be on guard against? ...gods equals idols...idols equal our sinful lives putting trust in anything or anyone besides God.

c. What does this commandment tell us about GOD's character? When we respond to the Lord, what are we rejecting?

5. Q/A# 94- What does God require in the first commandment? *That, on peril of my soul's salvation, I avoid and flee all idolatry, sorcery, enchantments, invocation of saints or of other creatures; and that I rightly acknowledge the only true God, trust in Him alone, with all humility and patience expecting all good from Him only, and love, fear and honor Him with my whole heart; so as rather to renounce all creatures than do the least thing against His will.*

a. When the answer here says, "*That, on peril of my soul's salvation...*" is it implying that we can lose our salvation? If so how? If not, then what is it saying? The whole answer speaks to the urgency of this commandment ...but it also speaks to our agency. If we live a life defined by idolatry of any kind then our profession is in vain and our life reflects our true belief ...or unbelief in this case.

b. The last phrase, "...so as rather to renounce all creatures than do the least thing against His will."... is a rather ominous phrase. What should this whole statement cause us to constantly be doing and why?

6. Q/A #95- What is idolatry? *It is instead of the one true God who has revealed Himself in His Word, or along with the same, to conceive or have something else on which to place our trust.*

a. When Israel sought a king like the other nations from Samuel, how was that a form of idolatry? Anything or anyone who takes God's place is an idol!

b. What other things in 21st Century America do we make into idols?

- c. I made the statement last week that when we break this one commandment we break them all. How is that possible? Pick any commandment and explain how breaking it involves the transgression of the 1st commandment.

Heidelberg Catechism Study
February 7, 2016

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. 1st Commandment- *“Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.*
2. 2nd Commandment- *“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.- (Ex. 20:22-26; John 4:22-24; Acts 17:29)*
3. 3rd Commandment- *“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.”*
 - a. See I Samuel 15:13- 21- How does Saul take God’s name in vain?
4. Lord’s Day #38- 4th Commandment- *“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”*
 - a. Q/A #103. What does God require in the fourth commandment? *In the first place, that the ministry of the Gospel and schools be maintained; and that I, especially on the day of rest, diligently attend church to learn the Word of God, to use the Holy Sacraments, to call publicly upon the Lord, and to give Christian alms. In the second place that all the days of my life I rest from my evil works allow the Lord to work in me by His Spirit, and thus begin in this life the everlasting Sabbath.*
 - b. What did you learn about the Sabbath/Lord’s Day that you didn’t realize before? Much discussion ensued from this simple question.

Heidelberg Catechism Study
February 14, 2016

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. 1st Commandment- *“Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.*
2. 2nd Commandment- *“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate*

me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.- (Ex. 20:22-26; John 4:22-24; Acts 17:29)

3. 3rd Commandment- *“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.”*
 - a. Lord's Day #36 – Eccl. 5:1-7; Matt. 5:33-37, 10:32-33- Q/A #99- What is required in the third commandment? *That we must not by cursing, or by false swearing, nor yet by unnecessary oaths, profane or abuse the name of God; nor even by our silence and connivance be partakers of these horrible sins in others; and in sum, that we use the holy name of God no otherwise than with fear and reverence, so that He may be rightly confessed and worshiped by us, and be glorified in all our words and works.*
 - (1) If the 1st commandment deals with the “object of our worship” and the 2nd commandment deals with the manner in which he will be worshiped what is this commandment teaching us about our worship of God? The proper attitude!
 - (2) What is the positive command implied by this command? And how are we to fulfill it? (Ps. 111:9-10; Psalm 115:1; Matt. 6: 9, 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; Colossians 3:12-17; Philippians 4:8-9) One place where Christians swear properly by God's name is when we take membership vows. Those are sacred oaths. When Christians, who have professed the faith, stand before God and the congregation, and swear an oath to be faithful in response to God's grace and then abandon the visible church, that is a violation of the 3rd commandment (and the 5th too but we will come to that later). You have broken your word, your promise made over the holy name of God. That is why church membership was so difficult to obtain in the ancient church. Perhaps, in view of the sacred oath that is sworn, might do well to make it a little more difficult in our day.
 - (3) What is the overarching issue here? The Lord's Name...Yahweh...is absolutely Holy...and like God Himself deserve absolute loyalty...anything less than absolute is blasphemy!
 - (4) What are some positive uses of God's name?
 - b. Q/A #100- Is then the profaning of God's name by swearing and cursing so grievous a sin that His wrath is kindled against those also who seek not, as much as in them lies, to hinder and forbid the same? *Yes truly: for no sin is greater, or more provoking to God than the profaning of His name. Wherefore He even commanded it to be punished with death.*
 - (1) A few comments as we think through this:
 - As believers, as Christians, we're obligated to uphold the holy name of God, the covenant name of the Lord who saved us, who sent His only begotten Son because that is His name. The name Jesus means Yahweh saves. Jesus' name is Yahweh. The God who spoke at Sinai, who gave His holy law, was God the Son. He is the revealer of God. He is the Word and that Word became incarnate. So, when we or another believer or perhaps anyone else uses the holy name of Jesus carelessly or as a curse word, they are making COMMON the name of the Lord who thundered at Sinai and the Savior, who became incarnate for sinners such as you and I.

- If there really are things that are not common, that really are set apart, that really are pure, clean, and good, then they are worth defending. When we do this, however, we should do it graciously and patiently. When a brother or sister abuses the Lord's name, perhaps the best thing to say is, "I suppose that you did not mean to do it but are you aware of how you just used the name of our Lord?"
- The distinction between sacred and COMMON also helps us to know how to handle those situations when we are in the midst of those who do not profess faith in Christ. For example, you are standing in line in the bank. Should you correct the person next to you who abuses the Lord's name? The Apostle Paul instructed Christians when they were and were not free to eat meat offered to idols (1 Cor. 8 and 10) but he did not instruct the pagans. Those who believed it was wrong to eat meat offered to idols were free not to eat it but those who believed it was permitted were free to eat. Perhaps this is a guide to responding to abuses of the Lord's name in the public square.

(2) Let's look at Lev. 24:10-23. What does it mean to blaspheme the name of the LORD? What does this text tell us about the applicability of God's law on non-believers?

- It was a capital crime under the old covenant to abuse the holy name of God (Lev 24:16). It was called "blasphemy." The catechism reminds us of this fact to drive home how much we, who know God in Christ, who've been given new life by the Holy Spirit, should value the name of God.
- It may be expected by non-believers but they are in no way exempt from this law and or its consequences.

(3) Is this form of cursing in this text different than what goes on every day? If so, how?

(4) God is holy and He demands that His name be treated with reverence, as something that is holy. As we contemplate how we ourselves have profaned God's beautiful name we may be thankful that we have a Savior, who so revered His Father's name that He never profaned it even once and His perfect obedience is imputed to all who believe as if we had never violated the 3rd commandment. The Holy Spirit who sustained Him through His trials and who raised Him from the dead is at work in us helping us to learn to pray, "*Hallowed be your name*" in true faith.

- c. Lord's Day #37- Q/A #101- But may we not swear by the name of God in a religious manner? *Yes; when the magistrate requires it, or it may be needful otherwise to maintain and promote fidelity and truth, to the glory of God and our neighbor's good. For such swearing is grounded in God's Word, and therefore was rightly used by the saints in the Old and New Testaments.* (Deut. 10:20; Numbers 5:9; Matt. 26:63; II Cor. 1:23) Jesus did not say that vows themselves are evil...that would contradict His own law...but what He said was that they come from evil, in the same way divorce was given because of sin. If all people were Christian and all

people were perfect then our word would be enough...but since we live in a fallen world our word is not enough for good or for ill so there is a need for oaths and vows.

- d. Q/A #102- May we swear by the saints or any other creature? **No: for a lawful oath is a calling upon God, as the only searcher of hearts, to bear witness to the truth, and to punish me if I swear falsely; which honor is due no creature.**

(1) Since a Christian may not use blasphemous or immoral speech, how can he add strong emphasis to his speech when it is needed? Knowing the Word...Knowing your opponent...their weaknesses and strengths...seeking to understand their motives...so that you can do what Jesus does...he uses their own words and actions against themselves.

(2) Elton Trueblood- ***"The worst blasphemy is not profanity, but lip service."***

C. Lord's Day 38- Acts 20:1-16; Hebrews 4:1-10; I Cor. 16:2; Revelation 1:10

1. 4th Commandment- ***"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."***

a. A claim and a bit of history to substantiate the claim:

(1) "If there was a time when the church needed to stop its business, to rest, to worship, and to set aside time for the care of the poor in their midst, that time is now. **At no time in its history has the church been so distracted, pulled in so many competing and contradictory directions and so alienated from the creational and redemptive pattern as it is today.** That is a large claim but that it is reasonable appears with just a little knowledge of history.

(2) Prior to the industrial age, the world operated largely on an agrarian schedule. Farmers work hard but the pace of life is typically a little slower in rural, agrarian cultures than it is in urban and suburban culture. An agrarian culture is naturally (no pun intended) more in sync with natural patterns. The rise of the industrial age put a great strain on the creational pattern and the post-industrial age might have offered some relief but for the natural inclination of fallen humans to fill time with everything but rest, worship, and ministry to the suffering in their midst. Roughly contemporary with the rise of industrialization, Evangelical theology, piety, and practice was being revolutionized. Where in the 16th and 17th centuries, "evangelical" meant "confessional Protestant" (Lutheran and Reformed) by the mid-19th century "evangelical" came to denote one of the revivalist traditions. Further, much of evangelical theology and piety was increasingly colored by a Dispensational reading of Scripture that emphasized discontinuity between the various epochs of redemption and between the old covenant and the new. Neither the revivalism nor Dispensationalism was particularly known for its doctrine of natural law. Rather, Dispensationalism particularly was all about eschatology and the rest of nineteenth-century evangelicalism was heavily influenced by what Reformed folk should regard as an over-realized

eschatology. Now, a sound theology should account for both creation and redemption (nature and grace) but since the 18th century evangelical theology has struggled to do that. Because American evangelical theology and biblical interpretation lost the old Protestant ways of thinking about nature and grace it is not surprising that, through the 20th century most evangelicals should also have lost any notion of the Sabbath. For most evangelicals the Sabbath became identified with the old covenant, with Moses, and the one thing they knew about Moses and the old covenant is that it is not for today. So, the theology behind Sabbath practice was decimated and before long the practice followed, as it always does, the theology. In contrast to modern evangelical theology, confessional Reformed theology does not regard the 4th commandment as passé."- R. Scott Clark from his commentary on the Heidelberg catechism

2. Q/A #103. What does God require in the fourth commandment? *In the first place, that the ministry of the Gospel and schools be maintained; and that I, especially on the day of rest, diligently attend church to learn the Word of God, to use the Holy Sacraments, to call publicly upon the Lord, and to give Christian alms. In the second place that all the days of my life I rest from my evil works allow the Lord to work in me by His Spirit, and thus begin in this life the everlasting Sabbath.*
 - a. This commandment has generated more ambiguity among Reformers than any of the other commandments. Many of the Reformers have struggled with how to defend and describe what all appears to be in this commandment namely; a temporary and ceremonial aspect to the 4th Commandment and a permanent moral aspect as well. The Synod of Dordt (1618-1619), 30 years before The Westminster Assembly, came up with 6 points to try and help this dilemma:
 - (1) There is in the 4th Commandment of God's Law a ceremonial and a moral element.
 - (2) The rest on the 7th day after creation, and the strict observance of this day with which the Jewish people were charged particularly, was ceremonial.
 - (3) That a definite and appointed day has been set aside to the service of God, and that for this purpose as much rest is required as is necessary for the service of God and for hallowed contemplation, this element is moral.
 - (4) The Sabbath of the Jews has been set aside, Christians are duty bound to hallow the Day of the Lord solemnly.
 - (5) This day has always been kept in the early church since the time of the Apostles.
 - (6) This day must be so consecrated unto the service of God that upon it men rest from all servile labors, except those required by charity and present necessities, and likewise from all such recreations as prevent the service of God.
 - b. The Puritan View- (which won out at Westminster), there is nothing ceremonial about the 4th Commandment, the Sabbath day was to be taken up in worship, in the study of the things of God, and in doing errands of mercy...ONLY! No recreation of any kind.

- (1) Their support for this is Is. 58:13 giving more definition to Ex. 20:8-10. They chose to interpret the word “pleasure” in this text to mean that all things outside of the “approved things” on the Sabbath were prohibited.
 - (2) There are a few things at play here, however, that make this interpretation problematic:
 - First, if this interpretation is true then it would be an addition to Sabbath restrictions that had not previously been known to the people. God could do this if He chose to but that is not how He normally worked through the prophets.
 - The prophets served very much like the Reformers not calling the people to something new so much as calling them back to what God had already prescribed in His covenant.
 - But the term “pleasure” here has to be seen within the context of Israel first and then brought into today. The Israelites knew the law, they chose to ignore it in most cases...not a matter of ignorance so much as a willful act...in other cases they violated it commercially. They didn’t want to lose profits by closing down businesses on the Sabbath...they didn’t want to give their fields rest on the Sabbaths because that would take away from “their” fortunes...their “pleasures”. You see the “pleasures” that Isaiah spoke about was doing business on the Sabbath so they wouldn’t see a downturn in profits. They were doing as they pleased as far as making money of the Sabbath and this displeased God. So this text has nothing to do with recreation but with doing business on the Sabbath at the expense of their faith.
 - The original intent was “rest” so it is hard to see that this wouldn’t include recreations and fellowship with family and friend as we rest in the Lord’s gift away from regular worldly affairs.
- c. **The Continental View-** the Sabbath should at all cost be kept by every believer, but there is no prohibition in Scripture against recreation. Recreation being how we rest, relax and fellowship on the Sabbath.
- d. There is a ceremonial aspect to the law but it is more minor than the Synod of Dordt seems to indicate...ceremonially...the Sabbath of the Jews was ceremonial and all that went with it...but everything else is still in force.
- e. **Why did God give us the Sabbath commandment?**
- (1) Each of the commandments tell us something of God’s nature, something that He holds dear.
 - (2) It tells us that God wants desires and expects to be worshiped.
 - (3) It communicates clearly how important our keeping the Sabbath/Lord’s Day is to God.
 - (4) He set aside a day for rest and gave it to us as a gift...the Sabbath was made for man...not man for the Sabbath.
 - (5) The Lord was setting a pattern for us. That’s the teaching of Exodus 20:8. The Lord created for 6 days and rested 1. That pattern is built into creation, into the nature of things. It was instituted even before the fall. It was instituted before Moses. The Saturday Sabbath was be Mosaic but the Sabbath pattern, the 6 and 1 pattern existed long before the 613 Mosaic commandments and the temporary, typological national covenant with Israel at Sinai. That is why the Lord referred to the creation pattern at Sinai, in the 10 commandments. The 4th commandment is grounded in creation. All humans should observe the creational 6 and 1 pattern in the same way that all humans should observe the laws against idolatry abusing God’s name, respecting authority, against sexual immorality, against theft, against lying, and against coveting. The Sabbath pattern is just as permanent, just as built into the nature of things, as universal as they are. It is a creation ordinance.
 - (6) God delights in what He made and He expects that we will delight unimpeded in the One who made us.

f. Jesus says the Sabbath is for man...what did He mean?

- (1) Keeping the Lord's Day promotes worship of God which brings with it many side benefits such as restoration spiritually and physically.
- (2) It is good for children and good for our workers according to the commandment.
- (3) Theologically; God made the earth in 6 days, and then He rested. His activity in creation sets the pattern for our lives as well.... He rested on the 7th day so the principle of rest is not only verified but commanded in Eden...He rested from His work of creation not from everything else that needs to be done...though...in a way it has all been concluded in God's economy...
- (4) Also, the Sabbath was for everyone to enjoy...by virtue of naming all that He does He is telling us that this commandment and the resting and relaxation that it carries with it have implication for the wider community but specifically for the family.
- (5) This commandment then really is a day to also spend with family. The commandment is not a straitjacket for the Christian.
- (6) In keeping the 4th Commandment there seems to be room for Christian freedom, the wise exercise of godly judgment...if it will not harm what God intends for your family fine...but don't seek to legislate for what is acceptable to one family may not be for another depending on many circumstances from maturity of faith to actual work constrictions. However, if we are seeking to discover what we can do simply to increase our earthly pleasures we will miss out on the greatest pleasure of them all fellowship with our God.
- (7) So it begins with working hard for His glory the rest of the week. And the work week actually begins with the Lord's Day which obviously then is not a day of inactivity.

g. Given the answer to this Q&A how would you say the Sabbath day/Lord's Day should be observed by the believers today?

- (1) Preparing our hearts throughout the week...
- (2) Setting in order all worldly affairs so nothing has to be dealt with on the Sabbath...so that we can rest from our regular cares.
- (3) Public and private worship...church attendance, catechism, reading of Scripture...21st Century...Sunday School, Evening worship service or Bible Studies on Sunday for churches that do that sort of thing.
- (4) Recreations and fellowship with family and friend as we rest in the Lord's gift away from regular worldly affairs.

h. How does preparation for the Lord's Day enter in when we think of this commandment?

- (1) For us as believers to truly sanctify or set aside the day properly we should be about preparation that actually gets us in a mindset of worship.
- (2) Doing things like, but not limited to:
 - Week long time in the Word and in prayer
 - Much time in repentance throughout the week...so that we can keep our list of sins short, if you will
 - Not staying up late on Saturday night so that we are worn out on Sunday
 - Preparing our children for the day at least a day ahead of time...helping them to understand what is expected of them as we go to worship God...growing them in an attitude of honor for god and worship with His people
 - Not being too distracted by the cares of the day on Sunday...no Internet, Facebook, iPad, iPod, phone usage to a minimum.

i. Food for thought: Look at Genesis 2:1-3- When did the 7th day end? What does this have to say about God's resting? Does He cease from His work or did He cease from the work of creation and has gone on to other things? Why might this distinction be important for us?

- j. The Sabbath is a difficult concept for some but not an unsolvable problem. The key is creation. This is the part of the equation that people often overlook.
 - (1) Why does God reveal Himself as having “rested” on the seventh day? He reveals Himself as having rested even before the fall. He calls the Sabbath day holy even before the fall. In other words the 6 (work) and 1 (rest) pattern is built into creation before we ever get to sin, salvation, or grace. In the new testament the Christian Sabbath is inaugurated in the new creation, in the resurrection of Christ. The pattern changes. It becomes 1 and 6. We begin on the first day with rest/resurrection and live out of that for 6 days.
- k. The 4th Commandment prescribes a 7 day cycle with a proportional division. Out of every 7 day cycle 6 days are to be given over to what we would call our routine activities. Then, out of the same cycle of 7days, one day is to be given over to rest and worship. But then, the rub comes when we talk about the fact that there truly is no secular and spiritual...that ALL we do we do for the glory of God which ALL then become acts of worship... and it is in this that we begin to experience the rest that is talked about in the last half of the answer.

Heidelberg Catechism Study
February 21, 2016

A. Prayer

B. Review

5. 1st Commandment- *"Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."*
6. 2nd Commandment- *"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.- (Ex. 20:22-26; John 4:22-24; Acts 17:29)"*
7. 3rd Commandment- *"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain."*
8. 4th Commandment- *"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."*

C. Lord's Day 39- Rom. 13:1-7; Eph. 6:1-9

1. 5th Commandment- *"Honor your father and your mother that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you."*
 - a. Traditionally, the first 4 Commandments are distinguished from the last 6. The first table of the Law consists of the four commandments that govern our response to God. The second table of the Law consists of the 6 Commandments that govern the way we treat one another. Obviously, our human relationships cannot be separated from our relationship to God, but there is a distinction: The first 4 Commandments teach us to love and worship God, while the last 6 teach us to love and serve our neighbor.
 - b. The first word in the commandment is "honor". Honor in the Hebrew literally is the word "KAVOD"...if said correctly sounds out its meaning= "heavy or weighty"...it is the word the OT uses for the glory of God, for the weightiness of God's divine majesty. Since this is true of God what is God communicating in this word concerning children to their parents? We are to give due weight to their position...to give them the recognition they deserve for their God-given authority. It is a command to respect, to revere, to obey, and when necessary to care for our parents.
 - c. Interesting, that in a Testament often negatively called the "patriarchal" testament... meaning that it obviously demeans the position of women... what is this commandment saying about mothers? That they are due equal respect with the father. This commandment was without parallel in the Old Testament time where women were thought of as property.

2. Q/A #104. What does God require in the fifth commandment? *That I show all honor, love and faithfulness to my father and mother, and to all in authority over me; submit myself with due obedience to all their good instruction and correction; and also bear patiently with their infirmities: since it is God's will to govern us by their hand.*
- a. Why a commandment dealing with the parent/child relationship? Obviously, loving our neighbor begins at home. How does a child's relationship with his or her parents affect the way he or she relates to others throughout life? How does this affect society as a whole? See II Tim. 3:1-2
 - b. What responsibilities do the parents have in helping their children obey this commandment? Parents are called on to give their children many other things besides proper discipline. We are called to pray with them, encourage them, counsel them, correct them, protect them, and provide for their daily needs. We are called to set a godly example, for although children don't always listen to their parents, **THEY NEVER FAIL TO IMITATE THEM!!!** If children are supposed to obey their parents, then obviously parents are supposed to give them proper love, encouragement and discipline so that they can and they want to obey.
 - c. What is the significance, if any, about the fact that God says "father and mothers", rather than "parents"?
 - d. Okay we get the implication concerning parents. But why then does the catechism stress authority in general? One of our rules of interpretation speaks of how each commandment stands for a whole category of sins and duties...not just the one spoken of as we see defined for us in the NT by Christ Himself. By implication then, when God tells us to respect our parents, He is telling us to respect anyone who has legitimate authority over us.
 - e. Who else is in authority over us that we must also show respect and honor to according to the Scripture?
 - (1) Rom. 13:1- the government
 - (2) I Peter 2:13-17- the government and others as needed...
 - (3) Eph. 6:5-8; I Peter 2:18- management on the job...doing our job to the best of our ability and speaking well of management, at least to others when possible.
 - (4) I Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:17- elders in the church
 - (5) I Peter 5: 5- younger to older...age and in the faith
 - (6) R. C. Sproul speaks to this, *"A person who can be consistently sassy and irreverent in their speech to parents or to one of these in authority over them has a deep moral and spiritual problem. A person, who can, without the slightest qualm of conscience, disobey and deceive those in authority, has a deep moral and spiritual problem to be dealt with."*
 - f. When is it acceptable, even though there may still be consequences, to oppose the authorities over us?
 - (1) There may be people who call on you to do things against God's will.
 - (2) There may be parents who have been extraordinarily neglectful and incompetent. They may have actually abandoned you in one way or another. How do you deal respectfully in that situation? How do you uphold this commandment? Well, there are a couple of things to be said.
 - The first thing is this. Don't think, that the utter failure of a parent to relate to you properly as the Lord commands in His word alleviates all obligations on your part to think through this commandment helpfully and carefully. If you write it off and say, "They haven't dealt with me right so I'm not going to deal with them," you'll be wracked with guilt. You must deal with them in a way that will be best for both parties.

- You need to go to a godly older person in the faith and get good counsel on how to deal with the specifics of that relationship.

g. How can holding those in authority or our parents accountable for their behavior be a form of honoring them?

- (1) This is hard to do as a child...for we don't have the experience or the position but as we grow into adulthood the relationship goes from one of obedience to being peers to a certain degree now requiring our respect and honor not our obedience.
- (2) By pointing out the sin in their behavior we are seeking their best ...we are seeking to preserve their honor...so that they don't continue to go down the same path.
- (3) See 1 Sam. 19:5...prior to this Jonathan had warned David of his father's plans and then he interceded with his father so that his father would not continue to dishonor himself by his behavior. There were times that Jonathan and David had to disobey King Saul, but in so doing they were not breaking the 5th Commandment, but actually kept it by honoring their higher commitment to obey their Father in heaven which also commands us to also hold one another accountable.

Heidelberg Catechism Study
February 28, 2016

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. 1st Commandment- *"Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."*
2. 2nd Commandment- *"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.- (Ex. 20:22-26; John 4:22-24; Acts 17:29)"*
3. 3rd Commandment- *"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain."*
4. 4th Commandment- *"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."*
5. 5th Commandment- *"Honor your father and your mother that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you."*
 - a. Why a commandment dealing with the parent/child relationship? Obviously, loving our neighbor begins at home. How does a child's relationship with his or her parents affect the way he or she relates to others throughout life? How does this affect society as a whole? See II Tim. 3:1-5
 - b. Okay we get the implication concerning parents. But why then does the catechism stress authority in general? One of our rules of interpretation speaks of how each commandment stands for a whole category of sins and duties...not just the one spoken of as we see defined for us in the NT by Christ Himself. By implication then, when God tells us to respect our parents, He is telling us to respect anyone who has legitimate authority over us.

C. Lord's Day #40- Gen. 9:5-7; Matt. 5:21-26, 43-48; Rom. 13:1-7

1. 6th Commandment- *"You shall not commit murder."*
 - a. How was this commandment handled when you grew up?
 - (1) Depending upon one's age and location in the world one might have learned the sixth commandment as *"You shall not kill"* (Exodus 20:13). That is how the Authorized Version (KJV) translated it in 1611. In the pre-Reformation period, the Wycliffe Bible translated the commandment, *"Thou schalt not sle."* The verb *sle* is Middle English for slay. In the early 16th century, Tyndale translated the 6th commandment as *"Thou shalt not kyll."* Remember that English spelling varied until the 19th century. The American Standard Version followed the AV as did the Revised Standard Version in the mid-20th century. Since World

War II translations (e.g., NASB, NIV, ESV), have tended to use murder instead of kill in Exodus 20:13. It is an interesting question why the translators of the AV used the verb to kill.

- (2) The Hebrew verb used here (חָרַץ) refers to manslaughter or murder. It is used 11 times in Numbers 35 in those senses. It does not refer to all taking of human life. Indeed, it is used many times in the Hebrew Bible and it seems to refer primarily to manslaughter or murder.
 - b. Why do you suppose that it is “trendy” in the church and outside the Church to say that capital punishment is outdated and unjust?
2. Q/A #105- What does God require in the sixth commandment? *That I neither in thought, nor in word or look, much less in deed, revile, hate, insult or kill my neighbor, whether by myself or by another; but lay aside all desire of revenge; moreover, that I harm not myself, nor willfully run into any danger. Wherefore also, to restrain murder, the magistrate is armed with the sword.*
3. Q/A #106- But does this commandment seem to speak only of murder? *In forbidding this, however, God means to teach us that He abhors the root of murder, namely, envy, hatred, anger, and desire of revenge; and that all these are in His sight hidden murder.*
- a. We might agree with the phrase, “*All men are liars.*”, especially since the Bible says so, but what about this phrase, It has been said, “*All men are murderers.*”? Does it have merit? Why or why not? How many times have you wished ill will on someone you know...or someone you don't ...like that person who cut you off on the way to work or to shopping yesterday? (Matt. 5:21-26)
 - b. Does this commandment forbid all killing? If not, give some examples from Scripture for lawful killings?
 - (1) Capital punishment- See Gen. 9:5-7- Why is this command not done away with in Christ? The injunction against murder and the institution of capital punishment is grounded not in Moses but in creation. It is a creation ordinance.
 - (2) Just war...invasion of our security...civil rulers have the capacity from God to protect us...Rom. 13:1-7...this includes the above as well...capital punishment. If they civil authority does NOT act against acts of aggression such as terrorism then they have not exercised their God-given authority to shepherd God's people well.
 - (3) Police authority...just as a soldier in our armed forces in the performance of his duty.
 - (4) Father/parent in their own home and to protect their own family and the “innocent” among them. See Exodus 21:29-31, 22:2-3; Duet. 22:8; Ps. 82:4; Prov. 24:11; Ezek. 33:6; Luke 22:35-39; I Cor. 6:19-20...
 - (5) We learn more about God's view of bloodshed from David. David is a man who loved God and who was loved by God. God raised him up to defend Israel. God sent David to physically fight to defend Israel. When David killed Goliath and Philistines in battles, it was at God's command. They were righteous killings. Now, with that understanding, let's look at a few passages:
 - 1 Chronicles 22:8, “*But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, You have shed blood abundantly, and have made great wars: you shall not build a house in my name, because you have shed much blood upon the earth in my sight.*” 1 Chronicles 28:3 “*But God said to me, 'You shall not build a house for My name, because you have been a man of war and have shed blood.'*”
 - David wants to build a house for the Lord. This is a good desire. But God says, “*David, you are disqualified from doing this.*” Why? Not because of the murder of Uriah. Not because of his adultery with Bathsheba. It is because of the wars, and because David had “*shed much blood upon the earth in my sight.*” David had killed men in the sight of God, and that disqualified him from this spiritual service. But wasn't David obeying

God in engaging in these wars? Yes. Did David sin in shedding this blood? No. But shedding blood is so significant to God that David was unfit to for certain "ministries".

- Killing someone is not a light thing. Our culture casually depicts killing. In television, movies, and video games, killing, whether it is legitimate or illegitimate killing, is portrayed with such a frequency that most people are relatively desensitized to it.

Heidelberg Catechism Study
March 6, 2016

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. 1st Commandment- *"Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."*
2. 2nd Commandment- *"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.- (Ex. 20:22-26; John 4:22-24; Acts 17:29)"*
3. 3rd Commandment- *"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain."*
4. 4th Commandment- *"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."*
5. 5th Commandment- *"Honor your father and your mother that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you."*

C. Lord's Day #40- Gen. 9:5-7; Matt. 5:21-26, 43-48; Rom. 13:1-7- 6th Commandment- *"You shall not commit murder."*- continued.

1. Does this commandment forbid all killing? If not, give some examples from Scripture for lawful killings?
 - a. Capital punishment- See Gen. 9:5-7- It is a creation ordinance.
 - b. Just war...invasion of our security...civil rulers have the capacity from God to protect us...Rom. 13:1-7...this includes the above as well...capital punishment. If they civil authority does NOT act against acts of aggression such as terrorism then they have not exercised their God-given authority to shepherd God's people well.
 - c. Police authority...just as a soldier in our armed forces in the performance of his duty.
 - d. Father/parent in their own home and to protect their own family and the "innocent" among them. See Exodus 21:29-31, 22:2-3; Duet. 22:8; Ps. 82:4; Prov. 24:11; Ezek. 33:6; Luke 22:35-39; 1 Cor. 6:19-20...
 - e. We learn more about God's view of bloodshed from David.
 - (1) David is a man who loved God and who was loved by God. God raised him up to defend Israel. God sent David to physically fight to defend Israel. When David killed Goliath and Philistines in battles, it was at God's command. They were righteous killings.
 - (2) David wants to build a house for the Lord. This is a good desire. But God says, *"David, you are disqualified from doing this."* Why? Not because of the murder of Uriah. Not because of his adultery with Bathsheba. It is because of the wars, and because David had *"shed much blood upon the earth in my sight."* David had killed men in the sight of God, and that disqualified him from this particular spiritual service. But wasn't David obeying God in

engaging in these wars? Yes. Did David sin in shedding this blood? No. But shedding blood is so significant to God that David was unfit to for certain "ministries".

- (3) Killing someone is not a light thing. Our culture casually depicts killing. In television, movies, and video games, killing, whether it is legitimate or illegitimate killing, is portrayed with such a frequency that most people are relatively desensitized to it.
 - (4) Here is the bottom line: Shedding blood, taking the life of another, is a big deal. Your life is forfeit if you wrongfully take the life of another. Even if you take life in a permitted manner, it is serious enough that it can disqualify you from certain types of spiritual service. Even if you are the "good guy", you are "marked" in the eyes of God. I didn't say you are guilty. I am merely showing that God viewed Godly David differently because David had killed men (though righteously). Bloodshed must have the same significance to us. It is never a light thing, even if you are in the right, even if you do it righteously.
 - f. The authority to kill...is defined throughout the Scriptures with very specifics seen in context. Gen. 9:5-7; Ex. 20:13, 21:12-15; Lev. 24:16-17; Num. 35:6-34; Deut. 19:1-13; Neh. 4:8-23
 - g. Restraint from killing comes in here as well...Matt. 26:51-56; Luke 22:49-53; John 18:10-11- In these three passages, you get a sense that Jesus is saying, "Though we have a right to employ our swords in defense of this unrighteous arrest, we are intentionally putting aside our lawful right, and I am allowing myself to be taken without resistance." Why Christ tells Peter to put up the sword:
 - (1) Christ is willingly laying down His life, though He has the right to use sword and angelic legions to deliver Himself from this unjust arrest (Luke 22:51, John 18:11).
 - (2) Those who are quick to resort to violence will die by violence (Matt 26:52). The Lord hates the one who "loves violence" (Psalm 11:5).
 - (3) The sword is not always the appropriate response, especially in persecution for Christ.
 - (4) There is greater protection than swords.
 - h. As Christians we are called to keep the right perspective on this. Though we see sanction and even a qualified directive from God to possess personal weapons, we must remember three points.
 - First, in the remainder of the New Testament, we have no further examples of believers taking up the sword.
 - Secondly, the emphasis in the remainder of the New Testament is decidedly not geared toward the issues of physical self-defense or righteous use of lethal force. Rather, we see more emphasis on Godly living, suffering affliction and persecution for Christ, and grasping the precious doctrines of Christ and the Gospel.
 - Thirdly, possession of weapons and acquiring the skill to use them in self-defense is permitted but not required by Scripture.
 - i. Believers should be conscious that personal self-defense is legitimized by the Scriptures, just as the use of construction tools, cooking tools, transportation tools are legitimized by Scripture. And these matters of self-defense should hold in our minds and in our affections the same position as those other legitimate, but transitory, matters.
2. This commandment speaks directly to all forms of premeditated acts of murder...from the body to the character of men.
3. Q/A #107- But is it enough that we do not kill our neighbor in any such way? *No: for in condemning envy, hatred, and anger, God requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves, to show patience, peace, meekness, mercy and kindness towards him, and, so far as we have power, to prevent his hurt; also to do good even unto our enemies.*
- a. Every commandment has a positive as well as a negative side. Give some examples of what this commandment means on the positive side.

- (1) It confirms the alternate command to love God with all our heart, soul, and strength and our neighbor as ourselves.
- (2) Seek to preserve life at all costs.
- (3) Prevent someone from killing someone else.
- (4) Pray for those who persecute you.
- (5) Forgiveness of those “unworthy” of forgiveness...just like God forgave us who were unworthy of His forgiveness. Forgiveness is a sanctified choice by us towards someone else..and it is a commanded choice as well...considering where we came from.

b. What can help us cease to be murderers?

- (1) We need to learn what it truly means to be forgiven and then how to forgive others based on that knowledge.
- (2) Eph. 2:3 tells us that we were originally the objects of God’s wrath. Yet God did not destroy us...he in fact sent Jesus to deliver us...to die for us.
- (3) Stephen prayed for those who stoned him just like Jesus prayed for those who crucified Him...(Acts 7:59-60).
- (4) We are to love our enemies...Matt. 5:43-48...A hard commandment...it is so much easier to hate them or even be indifferent towards them. But we are commanded to love our enemies.
- (5) 1 John 4:7-8,10-11

D. Lord’s Day #41- Rom. 1:24-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-7:7; Phil. 4:8- 7th Commandment- “*You shall not commit adultery.*”

1. So is the act of sex, like the Church taught at one point in history, evil?
Obviously not! God designed it in its proper context.

Heidelberg Catechism Study
March 13, 2016

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. 1st Commandment- *“Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.*
2. 2nd Commandment- *“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.- (Ex. 20:22-26; John 4:22-24; Acts 17:29)*
3. 3rd Commandment- *“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.”*
4. 4th Commandment- *“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”*
5. 5th Commandment- *“Honor your father and your mother that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.*
6. 6th Commandment- *“You shall not commit murder.”*

C. Lord's Day #41- Rom. 1:24-32; I Cor. 6:9-7:7; Phil. 4:8- 7th Commandment- *“You shall not commit adultery.”*

1. So is the act of sex, like the Church taught at one point in history, evil?
Obviously not! God designed it in its proper context.
2. Q/A #108. What does the seventh commandment teach us? *That all unchastity is accursed of God; and that we should therefore loathe/detest it from the heart, and live chastely and modestly whether in holy wedlock or single life.*
 - a. *“Unchastity” –interesting word. We don’t use the word “chaste” anymore...or we are not called upon to act chastely and modestly any more. What do you suppose it meant when this was written? It is a Latin noun, *“castitas”*, taken over into English that refers to purity and purity refers to single-mindedness.*
 - (1) We think that this is the most degenerate time in the history of the world...but men have always had a wild fantasy life.
 - (2) Also, there is a reason that a particular profession has been called the oldest in the history of men...

- (3) Because of our sinful nature... men were not the only ones who lived loosely...Just like today, women would dress up “provocatively” for the time... for affect and attention...sometimes not getting the attention they wanted.
- (4) Homosexuality was around even though it was against the law and brought the death penalty in many cultures. Just because it wasn’t practiced openly as today it doesn’t mean that it was unknown. The Bible talks about it specifically and hints of it in inference throughout the history of the sins of men.

3. Q/A #109. Does God in this commandment forbid nothing more than adultery and such like gross sins? *Since our body and soul are both temples of the Holy Ghost, it is His will that we keep both pure and holy; for which reason He forbids all unchaste actions, gestures, words, thoughts, desires, and whatever may entice thereto.*

a. What is the big deal concerning what happens between 2 consenting adults? Why should the church care?

- (1) In reaction to the latest phase of the sexual revolution, in response to the discovery by a 5–4 majority of the Supreme Court of the United States of the “right” to same-sex marriage, in reaction to the rise of a militant “transgender” (transsexual) movement and the normalization of homosexuality generally, it has become accepted wisdom in some quarters that sexual sin is no different than any other sin. There is a sense in which that is true, of course, since James 2:10 says that to break one commandment is to break all of them. Nevertheless, there is more to be said.
- (2) Paul explained the natural decline in men who seek to oppose all things that would honor God... and sexual immorality is the one that He highlights. When men and women live as they chose... they will become sexually corrupt. God will give them over to their natural/default nature. For the nature of men is depraved and it will manifest itself in the kind of immorality that God speaks about in Scripture...if not actually doing it certainly condoning it. Romans 1:18–32
- (3) Paul issued pointed warnings to the Corinthian congregation about the special dangers of sexual sin. See 1 Cor. 5: 1–5, 6:13–20. Paul distinguished between sexual immorality and “every other sin.”
- (4) There are two aspects to sexual union that are essential to understand. First, is the creational pattern and second, is the spiritual significance. As humans made in the image of God we were created to reflect God and to live according to the order that He established. We were created.
 - The creational pattern established by God is heterosexual sex, i.e., sex between a man and woman. Homosexual activists are saying now “if the hearts fit, the parts fit.” That is not true. You, I, and they know that is a lie. We know that heterosexual monogamy is the creational pattern. Our Lord Jesus said that the polygamy practiced in the under Moses was allowed because of the hardness of their hearts “but from the beginning it was not so.” (Matt 19:8)
 - Because there is a creational pattern, because we were intended to relate to one another a certain way, sexual infidelity is terribly damaging. It has been fashionable for a long time for people to say that commitment is outmoded but we know that that is a lie as well. When you take a job you expect your employer to keep his word and it hurts when he does not. It hurts when you are betrayed by a friend. What we are talking about here is fidelity to another person. If it is important in business and friendship, how much more important is it in marriage. Sexual immorality is so bad that according to Jesus it can be grounds for a divorce something that God hates!
- (5) 2nd, what is spiritual significant is that Christians are called to live chastely, i.e., with our eyes fixed on one other person, namely Christ Jesus, whether we are called to the single life or to married life. We are verging on the 10th commandment here. If we are married, we are not to be looking around at other people. God has given us a spouse. If we are single, we are to live sexually chaste lives and our focus is to be on the Lord all the more since we do not have the distraction of a spouse and children. As weird as it might sound in today’s

pornographic culture, we are not to be imagining sex with other people. Christians are not to be having sex with other people, and we are not to be watching sex. Chastity means recognizing that we belong to Christ, that we have been bought with a price and we are to order our sexual affections accordingly.

b. Does this mean that sexual sin is worse than other sins?

- (1) Not necessarily, but it does mean that sexual sin is distinct from others. It is not easy to say exactly how sexual sin affects us differently from other sins. E.g., gluttony and drunkenness certainly affect the body yet not in quite the same way. Perhaps the difference is this: sex is about the union of two persons. In sex, we give ourselves to one another that simply is not true with other sins and vices. In sexual immorality, then we enter into a sort of false communion. That is different from over eating or theft. Sexual immorality leaves a mark on the soul in way that other sins do not. It is using what God has purchased with the blood of His Son for a specific use in a profane manner.
- (2) Perhaps this explains why people are so quick to defend and justify sexual sin in a way that they do not, regarding other sins and vices. There does not seem to be a serious movement to say that thieves or “child molesters” are “born that way” but we are quick to conclude that some sexual sins must be the result of a created disposition (and therefore, “good”) even though there is virtually no evidence to support such a claim. In truth, after the fall, we do all have a natural inclination to sin. Idolatry, murder, and sexual immorality do all come naturally to all of us after the fall.

c. What is the biblical antidote to sexual immorality that Paul gives? (See I Cor. 7:1-7)

- (1) For most of us... a Good Marriage,
- (2) A special call to chastity...

d. What is positive about this command? What things are required of us by this commandment?

- (1) Living purely is a sign of God’s work in your life. We are all responsible for our own sexual behavior.
- (2) We are all to uphold the sanctity and honor of marriage as defined by God.
- (3) We are to do nothing to tarnish this relationship, ever!
- (4) Because it is one of God’s good gifts in marriage it should not be neglected by husband and wife except by agreement for a limited/measured time.

e. The catechism says, “...all unchastity is accursed of God;” Does that mean that all unchasteness is unforgiveable? Biblically support your answer.

- (1) Rom. 1:16
- (2) I Cor. 6:9-11 (I Tim. 1:8-10)
- (3) Eph. 2:1-6

Heidelberg Catechism Study
March 20, 2016

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. 1st Commandment- *“Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.*
2. 2nd Commandment- *“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.- (Ex. 20:22-26; John 4:22-24; Acts 17:29)*
3. 3rd Commandment- *“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.”*
4. 4th Commandment- *“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”*
5. 5th Commandment- *“Honor your father and your mother that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.*
6. 6th Commandment- *“You shall not commit murder.”*
7. 7th Commandment- *“You shall not commit adultery.”*

C. Lord's Day #42- Deut. 25:13-16; Eph. 4:28; II Thessalonians 3:6-15- 8th Commandment- *“You shall not steal.”*

1. Q/A #110. What does God forbid in the eighth commandment? *Not only such theft and robbery as are punished by the magistrate; but God views as theft all wicked tricks and devices, whereby we seek to draw to ourselves our neighbor's goods, whether by force or with show of right, such as unjust weights, ells, measures, wares, coins, usury, or any means forbidden of God; so moreover all covetousness, and all useless waste of His gifts.* (Note: An “ell” WAS A UNIT OF MEASURE...APPROXIMATELY THE LENGTH OF A MAN'S ARM FROM HIS “EL-“ BOW TO THE TIP OF THE MIDDLE FINGER...ABOUT 18”. In England, however, an ell was 45”; In France an ell was 54”, and in Germany, an ell was 57”...no standard on the ell...so they would have used other measurements internationally since all cultures seemed to measure this one differently...but within culture it could be used as another unit of measure to check each other.)

- a. How would you define “stealing”?

- (1) Simply...taking something that we have no right to take. We often forget, in the world as God has ordered, there is a difference between what is yours and what is mine. What is yours does not belong to me. The recognition of "yours" and "mine" is not arbitrary. It is grounded in the nature of things.
 - (2) We know it intuitively. People enjoy theorizing about giving away other people's belongings but rarely do they legislate the redistribution of their own (often gated) property. Still less often do they actually give away their own wealth as freely as they give away that of others. The theoretical redistributionist who lives in a gated community, with private security rolling by every hour, recognizes implicitly that there is a difference between "his" and "mine."
 - b. **When did we first break the 8th Commandment?**
 - (1) Gen. 3:6
 - (2) That fruit did not belong to our first parents. It belonged to God. He had not authorized them or us to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Satan promised that if we stole and ate we would be blessed. Theft did not bring the promised happiness. It brought death and shame.
 - c. **See Deut. 25:13-16- What does this expect of us?**
 - (1) Historically this commandment spoke to everyday life in Moses' time when people carried weights in a bag so they could determine the corresponding weight of things they bought and sold.
 - (2) We don't carry weights today...but the principle is still valid...that we must have only one standard, and it must be a correct one.
 - (3) We are not free to use one standard with one person and another standard with another.
 - (4) We are not free to cheat someone by deceptive means...which is stealing.
 - d. **What would you say is the "root(s)" of all theft?**
 - (1) The root of theft and swindling is dissatisfaction with God's providence....lack of contentment!
 - (2) Laziness is another root of theft.
 - (3) Instead of coveting and stealing believers are charged to work and give and be content with what God has given to you.
2. **Q/A #111. But what does God require of you in this commandment? *That I further my neighbor's good, where I can and may; deal with him as I would have others deal with me; and labor faithfully, that I may be able to help the poor in their need.***
- a. See Eph. 4:28 and II Thess. 3:6-15 (vs.10)
 - b. How do these verses help us in understanding how to further your neighbors good?
 - c. Just for fun: Where does the lottery fit into this thinking?
 - d. How about receiving welfare from the government?
 - e. How should a society provide for its poor?

Heidelberg Catechism Study
March 27, 2016

D. Prayer

E. Review

8. 1st Commandment- *"Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."*
9. 2nd Commandment- *"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.- (Ex. 20:22-26; John 4:22-24; Acts 17:29)"*
10. 3rd Commandment- *"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain."*
11. 4th Commandment- *"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."*
12. 5th Commandment- *"Honor your father and your mother that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you."*
13. 6th Commandment- *"You shall not commit murder."*
14. 7th Commandment- *"You shall not commit adultery."*
15. 8th Commandment- *"You shall not steal."*
 - e. What would you say are some of the "root" causes of all theft?
 - (4) The root of theft and swindling is dissatisfaction with God's providence...lack of contentment!
 - (5) Laziness is another root of theft.
 - (6) Instead of stealing believers are charged to work and give and be content with what God has given to you.
 - f. What is the thrust of this commandment on our daily lives? A #111- *That I further my neighbor's good, where I can and may; deal with him as I would have others deal with me; and labor faithfully, that I may be able to help the poor in their need.*

F. Lord's Day #43- I Samuel 16; Matt. 5:33-37; Eph. 4:15& 25

1. 9th Commandment- *"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."*
2. Where, specifically, do we find the first lie?
 - a. Gen 3: 1-5
 - b. It would be easy to say Eve committed the first lie...and as far as a proper lie that would be so, however, Satan begins by emphasizing a prohibition rather than God's provision...God had not kept anything from them up to this point. It was not God's purpose to prohibit (Gen. 2:17),

given that He had given them everything else, but to teach obedience and to emphasize His provision for Adam and Eve. God knew He had created man with the ability to choose and He created him with an understanding of right and wrong...God had created man to glorify Himself.

- c. So Satan lied first by twisting God's words.
 - d. Since long before Moses we recognized that God constituted objective reality and he constituted us to recognize it. If there is no such thing as objective reality, then there is no such thing as a "false witness." Scripture everywhere assumes and teaches that we may know objective truth and that we must speak that truth.
3. What does John 18:33-38 add to this conversation?
- a. There is truth. Pilate's reply was as cynical as it was false. Ironically, Pilate promptly went out to the crowd and told them the truth, that he found no guilt in Jesus because Jesus was innocent and positively righteous. Not only had Jesus not transgressed the law but he had fulfilled it perfectly every day and in every way.
 - b. Jesus is Truth. Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"* (John 14:6). Jesus is not A truth or merely a witness to the truth (you and I do that). Jesus was, is, and always will be the truth. All men, all humans are liars (Ps 116:11) but God is the truth!
4. Q/A #112. What is required in the ninth commandment? *That I bear false witness against no one; wrest no one's words; be no backbiter, or slanderer; join in condemning no one unheard and rashly; but that I avoid, on pain of God's heavy wrath, all lying and deceit, as being the proper works of the devil; in matters of judgment and justice and in all other affairs love, honestly speak and confess the truth; and, so far as I can, defend and promote my neighbor's good name.*
- a. Explain for me why this statement is true, *"There is no such thing as 'your truth' and 'my truth.'"*
 - (1) There is no such thing as your stoplight and my stoplight.
 - (2) There is no such thing as your gravity and my gravity. There is just gravity.
 - (3) $1 + 1 = 2$ is true for you in the same way that it is true for me. We might have different learning styles and speeds but it is the same math. We might interpret the significance of $1+1=2$ differently, according to different worldviews, but the math is objectively true for all of us because that is the way God made the world.
 - b. Why is this such a big deal?
 - (1) Because lying has become pandemic in our culture.
 - Newscasters Brian Williams lied about being shot down.
 - Former New York Times reporter Jayson Blair "fabricated" stories. Rolling Stone magazine recently admitted that a story of about an alleged rape on a university campus was lie.
 - One of the more remarkable public lies in my lifetime was the wholesale appropriation by then Senator Biden of another man's biography. As a candidate for president, in 1987, Biden lifted not only a few lines from a speech by English Labor Politician Neil Kinnock, but indeed he portrayed Kinnock's life as his own. That error in judgment forced him to retire from the race. As it turns out, that episode was part of a longer pattern of plagiarism. All through law school he plagiarized one paper after another to get through. One might have thought that it would have cost him his political career. At the time I thought so but I was wrong. Biden has gone on to serve two terms as Vice President of the United States.
 - Hillary Clinton claimed to have come under sniper fire in Bosnia, in 1988, but according to reporter Sharyl Attkisson, who was on the plane with the then First Lady, that story is false.

- Her husband, President Bill Clinton, looked directly into the camera and declared to the world, "I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Monica Lewinsky." That lie nearly cost him his presidency as he became only the second president in the history of the republic to be impeached. But a lie none the less that had few if any lasting consequences.
- The current occupant of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue looked into the camera more than two dozen times to say: *"If you like your insurance, you can keep your insurance."*
- Why do people lie this way?...because they are not content with who they are...Hillary Clinton and Brian Williams aspired to be heroic figures instead of a first lady or a reporter.

(2) By it being pandemic we are growing not to expect that anyone tells the truth, hence making a big argument against any real truth at all.

c. What does this commandment require of us positively?

- (1) The 9th commandment requires us to tell the truth about our neighbor. And in this internet age, everyone is or can be your neighbor. It has never been easier to gossip than it is today. A text here, a tweet there, and a Facebook post over there and a reputation is destroyed. The moral law says, you are not to bear false witness about your neighbor online or anywhere else for that manner. It means that Christians must not gossip. If you do not know it to be true, if you did not hear it yourself, if you did not see it yourself, then it may well be gossip. Even if you did hear or see it yourself, that experience is not a license to repeat it. It is easier now than ever before to sully or even to destroy someone's reputation with a single click. A careless Facebook comment, a haphazard tweet, or a misrepresentation of another's arguments and ideas, to the degree these things do not promote my neighbor's good name, these are all violations of the ninth commandment. The catechism even calls them the "work of the Devil." A very simple rule is it edifying? Does it hurt or help my neighbor?
- (2) Christians are, or ought to be, ruthlessly committed to the truth as God has revealed it in nature and in Scripture. The Evil One is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44). Not only do we need to assert that there is truth in nature and grace, and not only must we tell the truth about God and our neighbor, we need to tell the truth to our neighbor. We have bad news to tell to everyone: "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23). We have a great, precious, and objective truth to tell: Jesus is God the Son incarnate and he came to earth to save sinners, of which I am chief (1 Tim 1:15).

G. Lord's Day #44- Col. 2:20-3:17; I John 5:1-4-

1. 10th Commandment- *"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."*

a. When was the first act of coveting committed and by whom?

- (1) Gen. 3:1-6
- (2) Satan coveted the allegiance of the man and his wife.
- (3) Only after did Eve covet the fruit, which equaled equality with God...setting into motion an unrest that will be with us throughout this life...even our redeemed life.

b. What would you say is the root of covetousness?

- (1) *James 1:14-17; ESV*
- (2) Lack of contentment with God's provision!

2. Q/A #113. What is required in the tenth commandment?- *That not even the least inclination or thought against any of God's commandments ever enter into our heart; but that, with our whole heart, we are to continually hate all sin, and take pleasure in all righteousness.*

a. What is this answer saying to us?

- (1) That this one commandment is a summary of the other 9.

- (2) Coveting is all about what you love, what you want, and who you are. In a sense, then, we are back to where we began since the first table is about the intellect, will, and affections.
 - (3) The tenth commandment shows us our hypocrisy. We frequently hear people say, *"I'm not that guy"* or *"that's not who I am."* A while back a husband and wife were convicted of heinous crimes (including torturing a young woman for 18 days) and were justly sentenced to a very long time in prison. At trial the woman said, *"I made a bad choice, however, I am not a bad person."* A good person does not kidnap someone and torture them for 18 days. This is the ultimate in identity politics. The woman does not self-identify as a kidnapper and torturer but that is what she is. She did what she did because she is what she is.
 - (4) Before the fall we had the power, by nature, to do what the law commands. After the fall, our intellect, our affections, and our will are all bent, corrupted, darkened so that, apart from God's restraining mercies and his favor merited for believers by Christ, we not only lack the power to obey but even the slightest desire.
- b. Just so we are clear, what is the antidote to coveting?
- (1) We covet because we are corrupt. The only way out of the cycle of corruption is repentance, recognizing sin and our sinful nature, calling it what it is, turning from it in faith and calling upon the Savior in confidence. He is in the business of saving sinners. His Spirit is in the business of progressively, gradually sanctifying sinners.
 - (2) The antithesis of coveting, is to rest in what has been given to us. Our Lord Jesus, the Last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45) did just that. (Phil 2:6-7; ESV)
 - (3) Contentment- through faith in Christ, in union and communion with him, by grace alone, we are gradually learning contentment.
 - (4) Jeremiah Burroughs (1600-46) defined contentment this way: *"...contentment is an inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit-the whole soul, judgment, thoughts, will, affections and all are satisfied and quiet."*
 - (5) Christ is our contentment. We belong to Christ "with body and soul, both in life and in death." HC #1-What is your only comfort, contentment, in life and death? Christ for me and Christ in me, i.e., in our union with Christ.
 - (6) Phil 4:11-13; 1 Tim 6:5-10
 - (7) It is not easy for Adam's children to learn contentment. It begins with Christ. By grace, daily we die a bit more to the false promises of this world and learn to accept that Christ's promises are genuine and to rest in that and to accept whatever circumstances he provides are enough for the moment. The apple is shiny and seems full of promise but only Christ is true and full of life.
3. Q/A #114. Can those who are converted to God keep these commandments perfectly? *No: but even the holiest men, while in this life, have only a small beginning of this obedience; yet so, that with earnest purpose they begin to live, not only according to some, but according to all the commandments of God.*
- a. What is Paul saying in Rom. 7:7-15?
- (1) This commandment doesn't deal with externals...those things that we think we can fix...but it deals with the internal desires...Man cannot control those. The 8th commandment tells me that I am required not to steal my neighbor's new truck or donkey but this one tells me that I am not even to desire the new truck or donkey.
 - (2) The 10th commandment while a summary of the others is also unique in that it deals entirely with thought and desire.
 - (3) Our sanctification cannot be the ground or instrument of our standing before God or even of our salvation because it is, in this life, never perfect. Traditionally, and correctly in my view, we have appealed to Romans 7:14-15.
- b. According to this passage, how would you answer this question; "Is our sin the fault of the Law?" The choice to sin is not the Law's fault. The law shows us our sin and our need to run to the One who can deal with our sin.

- c. **What about Col. 3:5? Covetousness =idolatry. How is covetousness equal to idolatry according to Paul? Whenever we have a desire for what God has forbidden or for some reason has kept from us we are forsaking God and His provision in order to serve an idol...the thing we want more than God and His Word.**

Heidelberg Catechism Study
April 3, 2016

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. 1st Commandment- *"Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."*
2. 2nd Commandment- *"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.- (Ex. 20:22-26; John 4:22-24; Acts 17:29)"*
3. 3rd Commandment- *"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain."*
4. 4th Commandment- *"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."*
5. 5th Commandment- *"Honor your father and your mother that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you."*
6. 6th Commandment- *"You shall not commit murder."*
7. 7th Commandment- *"You shall not commit adultery."*
8. 8th Commandment- *"You shall not steal."*
9. 9th Commandment- *"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."*
10. 10th Commandment- *"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's." - Lord's Day # 44*
 - a. What is the difference between the 8th Commandment and the 10th?
 - (1) This commandment doesn't deal with externals...those things that we think we can fix...but it deals with the internal desires...Man cannot control those. The 8th commandment tells me that I am required not to steal my neighbor's new truck or donkey but this one tells me that I am not even to desire the new truck or donkey.
 - (2) This commandment doesn't deal with externals...those things that we think we can fix...but it deals with the internal desires...Man cannot control those.
 - b. Q/A #115. Why then does God so strictly enjoin upon us the Ten Commandments, since in this life no one can keep them? *First, that all our life long, we may learn more and more to know our sinful nature, and so the*

more earnestly seek forgiveness of sins and righteousness in Christ; secondly, that we may continually strive, and beg from God the grace of the Holy Ghost, so as to become more and more changed into the image of God, till we attain finally to full perfection after this life.

(1) Scriptures to consider:

- Ps. 119:70, 97- learning to delight in God's law is a lifelong process.
- Rom. 7:22
- Eph. 4:24
- Gal. 3:24- In the ancient world a teacher (a pedagogue) was not your friend or your therapist. He almost a legal figure whose job it was to see that you had done your lessons properly, that you made memorized your vocabulary and paradigms and finished your translation (e.g., from Latin into English). This is why Paul described the law as a "tutor" (Gal. 3:24). By common law (still in effect today), the teacher acts in loco parentis, in place of one's parents.
- Col 3:10
- I John 5:1-4
- Here the catechism first reflects on the correcting (2 Tim 3:16) or convicting function of the law in the Christian life. The law remains the law and we remain sinners. *"If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar"* (1 John 1:10).
- The nomist (Long "o" sound=one who holds the Law up as necessary for salvation) thinks that, now that we have grace, we have no need of the gospel or that the gospel is only to help us obey the law. The antinomian thinks that now that we have grace, we have no need of law. Both are wrong. The gospel is that Christ obeyed in the place of, died for, and was resurrected for, and intercedes for sinners. We were justified in order that we might be gradually, graciously sanctified and that means being brought into conformity to Christ and to his holy law.
- Nevertheless, the law continues to teach us the greatness of our sin and misery and to drive us to Christ, not because we are under the law for acceptance with God but because we are under grace and need the law to continue to push us to Christ.
- The law teaches us Christians that we need the gospel every day. It teaches us to continue to seek the forgiveness of our sins for Christ's sake alone. It teaches us that we are not yet fully sanctified, that, indeed, in the bright light of God's holy law, we have only a small beginning of sanctification (Heidelberg 114). We are not perfectionists.
- The law teaches us Christians that we need the gospel every day. It teaches us to continue to seek the forgiveness of our sins for Christ's sake alone. It teaches us that we are not yet fully sanctified, that, indeed, in the bright light of God's holy law, we have only a small beginning of sanctification.
- In the final part of the answer, the catechism hints at the next section, on prayer. The law is a stimulus to prayer and one of our first prayers is to acknowledge our ongoing struggle with sin and for continued sanctification. The law is God's objective measure of righteousness. Constant prayer is one of those habits that is being

formed in us. We have been forgiven but we continue to seek forgiveness because we continue to sin.

- The Christian life is a penitent life. We shall never be done with sin in this life but we are learning daily to die to sin and to live to Christ and that begins with the daily prayer for forgiveness of our sins.

C. Lord's Day #45- Psalm 16; Matt. 6:1-15; Rom. 8:26-30

1. Q/A #116- Why is Prayer necessary for Christians? *Because it is the chief part of the thankfulness which God requires of us; and because God will give His grace and Holy Spirit only to such, as earnestly and without ceasing, beg them from Him, and render thanks unto Him for them.*

a. What does this mean?

- (1) Prayer is the hallmark of true believers.
- (2) It is fundamentally the longing aspiration of a regenerate heart for the one true God.
- (3) Prayer is an essential element of our sanctification (the Spirit's gradual, gracious work of conforming believers to the image of Christ). Just as we are learning daily what it means to die to sin and to live to Christ, so too we daily learn how imperfect and inconsistent our prayers are and what it means to pray as our Lord taught, in the Spirit, to the Father.
- (4) Prayer, calling upon the name of the Lord, in faith, in confidence, in Christ, is the first act of the believer. It is the act of the grateful recipient of mercy and grace. It is the act of needy sinner. It is the act of one who is in the midst of a mighty struggle between what is to be and what presently is. It is the act of the believer, first corporately with God's people in joyful solemn assembly and also daily, quietly, in one's closet, as it were.

b. What is the chief component in prayer that the Catechism is highlighting? Thankfulness. Why this one first?

- (1) Prayer is the chief means, the principal instrument through which we express our gratitude to God for his favor (grace) merited for us by Christ and given freely to us, for his mercy so that we do not experience the consequences of sin generally and of our sins in particular, and for his general mercy and kindness to his creation and to his image bearers.
- (2) It is believers who have received God's free grace in Christ. It is believers who have been saved. It is believers who have been justified. It is believers who are being gradually, graciously conformed to Christ (sanctification). It is believers who are thankful.

2. Q/A #117. What belongs to such prayer, as God is pleased with and will hear? *First, that from the heart we call only upon the one true God, who has revealed Himself to us in His word, for all that He has commanded us to ask of Him; secondly, that we thoroughly know our need and misery, so as to humble ourselves before the face of His Divine Majesty; thirdly, that we be firmly assured, that withstanding our unworthiness He will, for the sake of Christ our Lord, certainly hear our prayer, as He has promised us in His word.*

a. What are the 4 components that are spoken of concerning prayer?

- (1) A regenerate heart
- (2) God's word...our prayers are based here. True prayer is filled with Scripture and is controlled by Scripture. To thoroughly know the Law...to be people of the Word.
- (3) Our Needs
- (4) His assurance
- (5) We do not have to choose between the heart and truth. True prayer contains both. We pray with all our heart and we pray to the one true, Triune God who has revealed Himself to us in Holy Scripture.

b. What does this Q/A speak to?

- (1) Many think of prayer as just a form of pious words, spoken with a certain tone. But Paul says...Rom. 8:26-27. The one who is long winded and eloquent may not be as "mighty" in prayer as it looks...but the one who is too choked up to express more than a groan or a sigh may really be praying in a way more pleasing to God.
- (2) Prayer that comes from the heart...not out of a sense of duty.
- c. **What needs in our prayer life does this catechism focus on?**
 - (1) The need to exercise true faith in our prayer...faith based from the heart of desire for God's will to be done.
 - (2) That we are so aware of our own unworthiness...so as to not think that somehow God owes us.
 - (3) That we can be firmly assured that when we ask in faith, God will answer...in His time and in His way...and we need to be okay with that. If we are not willing to wait or accept God's answer then we have not asked in faith.
 - (4) True prayer is not a self-esteem building exercise. Our confidence is not in ourselves. It is in Christ, the Word of God (John 1:1-3). It is in God's promises to us in Christ. It is in his finished work for us. It takes comfort in Christ's high priestly work even know and the Spirit's work in us helping us to make known those needs that we cannot find the words to articulate.

3. Q/A #118. What has God commanded us to ask of Him? *All things necessary for soul and body, which Christ our Lord has comprised in the prayer taught us by Himself.*

- a. **Is it only the Christian who can offer acceptable prayers to God? If so, why?**
 - (1) Even though non-believers know to pray to God and they will when in crisis their prayer to be acceptable would have to come through Christ and if they are not in Christ their prayers do not come through Christ.
 - (2) Only the true Christian can pray with complete humility.
 - (3) Only the true Christian can pray in complete confident expectation...without doubt...as hard as that is sometimes.
 - (4) Only the Christian is not governed by sin.
 - (5) God listens to his children.
- b. **What is the relationship between true prayer and biblical doctrine?**
 - (1) Without good understanding of biblical doctrine we will not know why we should pray, what to pray for and how to pray.
 - (2) We are to ask what God has commanded we ask of Him. When our prayers begin with Scripture, are filled with Scripture, and end with Scripture, we may be sure that what we are praying is what God would have us ask of Him.
- c. **What does Peter mean when he says a husband's prayers are hindered in I Peter 3:7?**
 - (1) Our prayers are hindered because sin (dishonoring our wives...breaking the relationship) obstructs (puts barrier up) our relation to God. (1 Peter 3:12)
 - (2) Our prayers are hindered because sin obstructs the unity of the husband and wife in prayer, making it less likely God will respond favorably. They are one in Christ... "one-flesh" means God looks at us in the marriage as one so if one part is out of sync with the other then the voice is hindered.
 - (3) Our prayers are hindered because a broken relationship makes it hard to kneel in prayer together.

Heidelberg Catechism Study
April 10, 2016

A. Prayer

B. Review- Lord's Day #45- Psalm 16; Matt. 6:1-15; Rom. 8:26-30

1. Q/A #116- Why is Prayer necessary for Christians? *Because it is the chief part of the thankfulness which God requires of us; and because God will give His grace and Holy Spirit only to such, as earnestly and without ceasing, beg them from Him, and render thanks unto Him for them.*

a. What is the chief component in prayer that the Catechism is highlighting?
Thankfulness.

b. Why?

2. Q/A #117. What belongs to such prayer, as God is pleased with and will hear? *First, that from the heart we call only upon the one true God, who has revealed Himself to us in His word, for all that He has commanded us to ask of Him; secondly, that we thoroughly know our need and misery, so as to humble ourselves before the face of His Divine Majesty; thirdly, that we be firmly assured, that withstanding our unworthiness He will, for the sake of Christ our Lord, certainly hear our prayer, as He has promised us in His word.*

a. What are the 4 components that are spoken of concerning prayer?

(1) A regenerate heart

(2) God's word...our prayers are based here. True prayer is filled with Scripture and is controlled by Scripture. To thoroughly know the Law...to be people of the Word.

(3) Our Needs

(4) His assurance

b. How does this Catechism answer the question: "to whom does God listen to and act because of their prayers?"

3. Q/A #118. What has God commanded us to ask of Him? *All things necessary for soul and body, which Christ our Lord has comprised in the prayer taught us by Himself.* What is the relationship between true prayer and biblical doctrine?

a. Without good understanding of biblical doctrine we will not know why we should pray, what to pray for and how to pray.

b. We are to ask what God has commanded we ask of Him. When our prayers begin with Scripture, are filled with Scripture, and end with Scripture, we may be sure that what we are praying is what God would have us ask of Him.

C. Lord's day #45 Continued- Q/A #119- What is the Lord's Prayer? *Our Father which art in heaven: Hallowed by Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*

1. Turn to Matthew 6:9, and look at what Jesus said before He began to pray: "After this manner, pray..." What is He saying?

a. Jesus does not command that we should just repeat this prayer.

b. He actually says we should pray after this manner as a pattern...a place to begin; perhaps...One older preacher illustrated this phrase this way... "This prayer is like a model house at a construction site. It was never meant to be a house to live in, but rather a model to build by."

- c. We have so many types of prayers listed for us in Scripture, even in the NT, that we know that this is not the only way to pray...
- d. He IS saying as in so many other places look at what I have included in prayer...who it is to focus on, how it is to start, etc. etc.
- e. It is not wrong to pray the other prayers in scripture...and as such has had a rich heritage in Church history but it is not required as is...
- f. But prayer IS required of God's people... a prayer that reflects the priorities that God/ Jesus say that it should....the things we should be emphasizing in our prayers as well.
- g. In prayer we confess to our Creator and Redeemer God, our covenant God who promised to redeem us and who has, in Christ, redeemed us and is now by his Spirit, through Word and sacrament, sanctifying us that we are not our own but belong body and soul, in life and death, to our faithful Savior. We confess our needs and we call upon Him to meet those bodily and spiritual necessities. In His Word He reassures us that He hears our prayers, for Christ's sake, and that He answers them for our good and His glory.

2. Why do you suppose Prayer is becoming a much less used and understood method of communication in the 21st Century?

- a. Our word "communication" is a Latin word that means "sharing," "imparting," or "making common." The very notion of prayer, of addressing God directly in the name of Christ, assumes that we understand the importance of interpersonal communication.
- b. In short, we cannot text God.
- c. We cannot leave Him voicemail.
- d. Prayer is a form of direct personal address to the tri-personal God. It is not a dialogue in the usual sense of that word. We do not pray and wait for a verbal response. That leads to an unbiblical, sometimes paralyzing quest for direct, extra-canonical special revelation.
- e. It is a dialogue insofar as God has revealed Himself, His gospel, and His will to us in His Word.
- f. We listen to His Word. We read his Word. We see and receive the gospel made visible (Calvin) in the holy sacraments. These are all true, reliable, canonical messages from God to us, His people.
- g. In prayer we are responding to His Word by praising Him, confessing our sins, and by making our petitions known.
- h. Despite the appearance of intimacy, much of our electronic communication is not truly personal. Sending a text message is not the same thing as having a conversation with another person. Electronic transmission of information ("we will meet you at 7:00 PM at the restaurant") is impersonal.

D. Lord's Day #46- Luke 11:1-13; Eph. 1:1-6; I John 3:1-12

1. Q/A #120. Why has Christ commanded us to address God as: Our Father? *To awaken in us, at the very beginning of our prayer, that filial (childlike) reverence and trust toward God, which are to be the ground of our prayer; namely, that God has become our Father through Christ, and will much less deny us what we ask of Him in faith, than our parents refuse us earthly things.*

- a. What is this answer seeking to teach us?
 - (1) All true prayer begins with a relationship...of child to a loving Father.
 - (2) That this is the same God who created the universe that is our Father who becomes such through the world and Jesus Christ on behalf of all God's elect children.
 - (3) See I John 3:1-12
- b. At this time of year...during the election cycle we begin to see the signs that say "Prayer is America's greatest need!" While a good sentiment...and perhaps its being a bit picky...but what does this sentiment leave out?

Why is this clarity important according to this catechism and the Word of God?

2. Q/A #121. Why is it added: *Who art in heaven? That we may have no earthly thought of the heavenly majesty of God; and may expect from His almighty power all things necessary for body and soul.*
 - a. How is it possible to view God as both Almighty, before whom we are to come with fear and awe, and as a loving Father to whom we may come with all our burdens and needs?
 - b. Is it really true, as many in the church say and teach, that God will give us anything we ask for?
 - (1) Our Lord urges us to “ask,” to “seek,” and to “knock” (Matt 7:7).
 - (2) Our Father is ready to hear us and ready to answer according to His purposes, our benefit, and His glory.
 - (3) If we do not ask, if we do not pray, if we do not unburden our hearts to our heavenly Father it is because we do not believe.
 - (4) We should confess that too and He will renew our hearts and even as we ask it because His Spirit is renewing our hearts and gradually, graciously renewing us and replacing our unbelief with heartfelt, childlike trust.

E. Lord’s Day #47- II Samuel 12:1-15; Psalm 99-Q/A #122. What is the first petition? *Hallowed be Thy name. That is: Enable us rightly to know Thee, and to hallow, magnify and praise Thee in all Thy works, in which shine forth Thy power, wisdom, goodness, justice, mercy and truth; and likewise so to order our whole life, in thought, word and work, that Thy name may not be blasphemed, but honored and praised on our account.*

1. In general, what is interesting about this petition?
 - a. God’s name already is HOLY! BUT...it is not recognized as such in most of the world by most of the worlds inhabitants...so we say “Hallowed/holy be your name.”
 - b. It is asking God to MAKE His own name holy!...Interesting request...something we cannot do.
 - c. “Hallow”= “to make holy”. “Holy” in both OT and NT means “to separate, to set apart” ... “To hold as sacred” “to sanctify”...God is to hold Himself sacred...since we will not. The verb “to make holy” is in the imperative. It is an urgent request. When we pray, “holy be your name” or “hallowed be thy name” as in the King James Version (1611), we are making an urgent request that something be done. We are not wishing that something, which is not presently so, might be. We are urging Him who has the power to make it so.
 - d. Creation declares the glory and majesty of God but only God Himself can reveal His holiness.
 - e. This is not a call to admire God’s name...we can admire an athlete, or a soldier...but when we say this we are saying that God’s name is above all other names...that we adore Him...and this is proper only to Him.
2. What does it mean to say that God is holy? Why is this distinction important?
 - a. In Genesis 4 we read that people began to call upon the name of Yahweh (Gen 4:26).
 - b. We are not to take “the name” of Yahweh Elohim in vain (Ex 20:7). God’s name is majestic (Ps 8:1,9).
 - c. When we praise God’s name, we praise him. His name is who and what He is to us: our holy, gracious, covenant-making and covenant-keeping God.
 - d. That which is holy is wholly different from all else.
 - e. It tells us the God in His essential nature is HOLY.
 - f. The faith that God gives to His own only enables us to recognize His holiness.
3. What is God’s primary purpose in having this prayer start with this first petition?

- a. We begin our prayer, as Calvin said, by turning away from ourselves; *"in the first three petitions we ought to lose sight of ourselves, and seek the glory of God: not that it is separated from our salvation, but that the majesty of God ought to be greatly preferred by us to every other object of solicitude. It is of unspeakable advantage to us that God reigns, and that He receives the honor which is due to Him: but no man has a sufficiently earnest desire to promote the glory of God, unless (so to speak) he forgets himself, and raises his mind to seek God's exalted greatness."* (John Calvin, Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke, vol. 1)
 - b. It is not our name that is to be revered but God's. His name is holy. It is our deepest desire to see all creation recognize our Father for who and what He is, the Holy One, the God of creation and redemption, and He who adopts His people out of sin, death, and judgment and into grace, life, and communion.
 - c. Ultimately, however, we pray that our heavenly Father might sanctify His name and the name of the Holy Trinity, the name of the Son, and the name of the Holy Spirit, because it is a job only He can do. We are urging Him to work powerfully for His own glory first of all in us but also beyond us.
 - d. True prayer is not cheap or without cost. It always has us put the Godhead first.
4. Once again, given this first petition, why is being a people of the Word so important?
- a. If we do not know God's Word, we do not know God...
 - b. Which leads to another fact... we know not for what we ask when we pray this prayer...thus taking His name in vain and reveling our hypocrisy.
5. With all of this in mind, how are we to go about "hallowing" God's name?
- a. On one hand only God can hallow His own name...
 - b. One the other, we are called upon as His people to glorify Him which means we are to treat His name as holy in what we do.
 - (1) We do this by keeping His name pure...Ex. 20:7.
 - (2) We do this by loving His name...Ps. 5:7...as in a marital love...He has given us His name as a husband gives his bride his name and she truly loves her new name.
 - (3) We do this when we profess His name...when we profess that He is God and that He is our God and we are His children... but it is not enough just to profess...remember Matt. 7:23.
 - (4) We do this when we live as we are possessed by Him and His glory...when we live as holy as He is holy...which reveals our absolute trust in Him and our adoration of Him. Augustine once said... *"We imitate whom we adore!"* In praying hallowed be your name we offer adoration to God our Father in and through our imitation of God the Son.
 - (5) We do this every time we attribute to Him what He has done, is doing or will do according to His Word...in our lives, in the church and in the world. We can add nothing to His name but we honor Him when we lift His name up in the eyes of our children, our spouses and the world.
 - (6) We do this every time we honor His name before the other things we hold dear...our own good name- Heb. 11:26...our own profit and interests...business...family...friends
 - (7) We do this when we worship Him as He has prescribed. All the regulations of Lev. show us the importance of worshiping God as He prescribes...the structure of this prayer does as well.
 - (8) When we keep His Lord's Day as holy...Ex. 20:8-11
 - (9) We do this when we read His Word and shape our lives by His Word and hold His Word as holy...since it is His Word.
 - (10) We do this when we stand up...no matter the cost...for His Word. Athanasius is said to have said something like, *"It is better to have truth without peace, than peace without truth."*
 - (11) We do this when we submit to His sovereign royal rule...which leads us to the next petition... *"Your kingdom come."*

Heidelberg Catechism Study
April 17, 2016

A. Prayer

B. Review- Q/A #119- What is the Lord's Prayer? *Our Father which art in heaven: Hallowed by Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*

1. Q/A #120- Why has Christ commanded us to address God as: Our Father? *To awaken in us, at the very beginning of our prayer, that filial (childlike) reverence and trust toward God, which are to be the ground of our prayer; namely, that God has become our Father through Christ, and will much less deny us what we ask of Him in faith, than our parents refuse us earthly things.*

2. Q/A #121- Why is it added: Who art in heaven? *That we may have no earthly thought of the heavenly majesty of God; and may expect from His almighty power all things necessary for body and soul.*

3. Q/A #122-What is the first petition? *Hallowed be Thy name. That is: Enable us rightly to know Thee, and to hallow, magnify and praise Thee in all Thy works, in which shine forth Thy power, wisdom, goodness, justice, mercy and truth; and likewise so to order our whole life, in thought, word and work, that Thy name may not be blasphemed, but honored and praised on our account.*

a. What is God's primary purpose in having this prayer start with this first petition?

(1) We begin our prayer, as Calvin said, by turning away from ourselves; *"in the first three petitions we ought to lose sight of ourselves, and seek the glory of God: not that it is separated from our salvation, but that the majesty of God ought to be greatly preferred by us to every other object of solicitude. It is of unspeakable advantage to us that God reigns, and that He receives the honor which is due to Him: but no man has a sufficiently earnest desire to promote the glory of God, unless (so to speak) he forgets himself, and raises his mind to seek God's exalted greatness."* (John Calvin, Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke, vol. 1)

(2) It is not *our* name that is to be revered but God's. His name is holy. It is our deepest desire to see all creation recognize our Father for who and what He is, the Holy One, the God of creation and redemption, and He who adopts His people out of sin, death, and judgment and into grace, life, and communion.

b. Once again, given this first petition, why is being a people of the Word so important?

(1) If we do not know God's Word, we do not know God...

(2) Which leads to another fact... we know not for what we ask when we pray this prayer...thus taking His name in vain and reveling our hypocrisy.

c. With all of this in mind, how are we to go about "hallowing" God's name?

(1) We do this by keeping His name pure...Ex. 20:7.

(2) We do this when we worship Him as He has prescribed. All the regulations of Lev. show us the importance of worshiping God as He prescribes...the structure of this prayer does as well.

- (3) When we keep His Lord's Day as holy...Ex. 20:8-11
- (4) We do this when we read His Word and shape our lives by His Word and hold His Word as holy...since it is His Word.
- (5) We do this when we stand up...no matter the cost...for His Word. Athanasius is said to have said something like, *"It is better to have truth without peace, than peace without truth."*
- (6) We do this when we submit to His sovereign royal rule...which leads us to the next petition... *"Your kingdom come."*

C. Lord's Day #48- Q/A #123. What is the second petition? *Thy kingdom come. That is: So govern us by Thy word and Spirit, that we submit ourselves unto Thee always more and more; preserve and increase Thy Church; destroy the works of the devil, every power that exalted itself against Thee, and all wicked devices formed against Thy holy word, until the full coming of Thy kingdom, wherein Thou shalt be all in all.*

1. What are the first things that are communicated here as we say Thy kingdom come?

- a. That Our Father is also a King...for He has a kingdom...Ps. 47:7-8... and a great King at that...Ps. 5:2, 95:3; Jer. 23:24
- b. We ask that God's would make His kingdom known to us...a kingdom that has been promised to us... a promised land that grants us peace in Christ. Matt. 25:34....

2. What does this Q/A teach that is not taught in most churches today?

- a. The Bible and the Reformers (hence the Catechism answer as given) taught that the kingdom is a present reality.
- b. All the above sources also teach that the kingdom will come more and more as the fold of redemptive history unfold all the way to the consummation. The kingdom is already and not complete yet!
- c. What is often taught in today's church is that the kingdom will come to be sure, but only AFTER the return of Christ. Many people, Jewish and Christian alike are actually looking for Christ to come and reign on an earthly throne in Jerusalem and to reinstitute the sacrifices of the Temple...once the temple is re-built...and Jerusalem will be the center of all political and earthly rule overseen by Christ.
- d. In the meantime...between His comings, we must look to the Anti-Christ. When he comes the church will be so hard pressed by the power of the Anti-Christ that she will barely survive. Only the sudden appearance of Christ in His glory...like the Lone Ranger to the rescue...will stop the seemingly inevitable defeat. Then, at last the kingdom will come. This is the stuff of Hollywood movies...the hero comes in to save the day at the last minute when all seems lost.
- e. That Christ has infinite resources that will enable us to do God's will.
- f. Satan does not have these same resources ...in fact the reality is that he himself acts at the pleasure of the King as well. He is unable to do anything that has not been granted Him by the King. As Christian we need to remember this so as not to despair over his seemingly victories...He could do nothing had it not been granted to him to do.
- g. God has given the CHURCH His Word and His Spirit...with these it is certain, therefore, that His kingdom WILL prevail in His redemptive history. We have all the weapons necessary to overcome and battle Satan and his minions...and chief among those weapons in prayer.
- h. See Eph. 6:17... the 2 offensive weapons to combat the devil, if you will are...the Spirit in us wielding the Word of God and prayer!
- i. I found an illustration in one of the books I read on WWII...in the early stages of the war in the Pacific and just before D-Day in France moral had begun to wane in our forces. A massive campaign was put together with newsreels showing the facts....that the Allied forces, mainly the US had overwhelming resources that the Axis powers did not have. The fighting men saw these films and were energized with the FACT that we were going to win...and win overwhelmingly.

That is not to say that there wouldn't be bloody battles but in the end we would win resoundingly. It is the same with the cause of Christ.

3. What is the kingdom of God?

- a. It is NOT political or earthly in any way...John 18:36
- b. As we have said...a King implies naturally a kingdom. A king's kingdom extends to the limits of his realm. Since God is Creator of all things and He reigns omnipotent overall then His realm is everywhere...God's is King over everything seen and unseen.
- c. In one sense, the kingdom of God has been around and Christ ruled with God His Father from the beginning...in another, the kingdom became known when Christ came and inaugurated it on this earth with clear references to His reign...no longer represented by men... He now reigns again with His Father at His ascension. So He is King now...reigning now...this is not something we have to wait for.
- d. And we are all citizens of this kingdom by virtue of being adopted by God into His family...Phil. 3:17-21. The kingdom is the family of God.

4. What is required of us as subjects of the King? In other words, how do we make God's kingdom obvious to the world around us? (All of this plays into the petition... *may your kingdom come* especially if we are kingdom citizens.)

- a. We must serve of the King...envoys, representatives, ambassadors...speaking and acting on behalf of the King only communicating what He has told us to communicate.
- b. We must trust the King...kings took a vow to protect their people with their very lives...the people understood the rules...the king would protect them and they would serve the king and they would all prosper.
- c. We must fear the King...we are to be in awe of Him, His Word, His Will revealed in His Word and we are to be obedient to Him submitting to His every Word...Jer. 5:22; Nahum 1:3-7; Luke 12:5.
- d. We must love the King...there is no reason not to and every reason to love Him considering that he has kept EVERY promise ever made...
- e. And we do this by living under His kingship...by being in His word that reveals what "good citizen" look like and how they are to act bringing His glory in all we do...so we manifest this kingdom with our lives...show that it exists until that day when Christ does return...See Rev. 14:11.

5. But it is not enough to ask "*May your kingdom come*" but this petition must be followed up by the next, "*May you will be done in earth as it is in heaven.*"

Heidelberg Catechism Study
April 24, 2016

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. Q/A #119- What is the Lord's Prayer? *Our Father which art in heaven: Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*
 2. Q/A #120- Why has Christ commanded us to address God as: Our Father? *To awaken in us, at the very beginning of our prayer, that filial (childlike) reverence and trust toward God, which are to be the ground of our prayer; namely, that God has become our Father through Christ, and will much less deny us what we ask of Him in faith, than our parents refuse us earthly things.*
 3. Q/A #121- Why is it added: Who art in heaven? *That we may have no earthly thought of the heavenly majesty of God; and may expect from His almighty power all things necessary for body and soul.*
 4. Q/A #122- What is the first petition? *Hallowed be Thy name. That is: Enable us rightly to know Thee, and to hallow, magnify and praise Thee in all Thy works, in which shine forth Thy power, wisdom, goodness, justice, mercy and truth; and likewise so to order our whole life, in thought, word and work, that Thy name may not be blasphemed, but honored and praised on our account.*
 5. Q/A #123. What is the second petition? *Thy kingdom come. That is: So govern us by Thy word and Spirit, that we submit ourselves unto Thee always more and more; preserve and increase Thy Church; destroy the works of the devil, every power that exalted itself against Thee, and all wicked devices formed against Thy holy word, until the full coming of Thy kingdom, wherein Thou shalt be all in all.*
 - a. Brief describe the kingdom, for someone who would be new to the faith?
 - (1) It is NOT political or earthly in any way...John 18:36
 - (2) A King implies naturally a kingdom. A king's kingdom extends to the limits of his realm. Since God is Creator of all things and He reigns omnipotent overall then His realm is everywhere...God's is King over everything seen and unseen.
 - (3) In one sense, the kingdom of God has been around and Christ ruled with God His Father from the beginning...in another, the kingdom became known when Christ came and inaugurated it on this earth with clear references to His reign...no longer represented by men... He now reigns again with His Father at His ascension. So He is King now...reigning now...this is not something we have to wait for.
 - (4) And we are all citizens of this kingdom by virtue of being adopted by God into His family...Phil. 3:17-21. The kingdom is the family of God.
 - b. But it is not enough to ask "*May your kingdom come*" but this petition must be followed up by the next, "*May you will be done in earth as it is in heaven.*"
- C. Lord's Day 49- Q/A #124. What is the third petition? *Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. That is: Grant that we and all men may renounce our own will, and yield ourselves (promptly) without gainsaying(denying, disputing or contradicting... "say against"), to obey Thy will, which alone is good; that so*

every one may fulfill his office and calling, as willingly and truly as the angels do in heaven.

1. How does His kingdom come according to this answer? It comes as we, together with all believers, are brought by the Spirit and the Word of God into obedience of the faith.
2. What does this catechism answer say is expected of us on a constant basis?
 - a. To be constantly seeking God to enable us to renounce our own will.
 - b. We are to do His will as a matter of fact...
 - c. And we must do it in the manner He prescribes...as it is done in heaven...And how is that?
 - (1) Without question or hesitation. One might assume that the angels do not have a will to do whatever they want unless it is like our revealed will where we desire to do what God wants. But wherever they are on this will thing...it is clear throughout Scripture that they never question God's will...they just carry it out...and so are we to do so in joy and gratefulness for God grace. They do it out of duty we do it out of the grace shown us for the gift of eternal life.
 - (2) Willingly without complaint...the angel's desire is to honor and glorify God...there seems to never be a moments struggle with anything God commands. See Rom. 12:1. The "order" has been given and we are expected to carry it out like good soldiers...working together as a team with God's other children. Individualism and autonomy that is so common today is completely contrary to the Scriptures. There are so many autonomous churches today...non-denominational, individualistic, autonomous churches. Many Christian see no problem with this today in 21st century America...in fact, most applaud it as the way to the truth. But this is erroneous thinking for part of our obedience to Christ is to belong to a church that is faithful to the Scriptures...so that our offering of worship are actually serving the cause of Christ...not self or the devil.
 - (3) Continuously and our best. Numbers 18:29, 28:7...gold is mentioned more times in Scripture than any other precious metal...for it is considered to be the best...that is why we are to give our first fruit for our tithe and offerings...we give the best...not what's left.
 - (4) Without adding to or taking away from what God has revealed. He reveals clear how things are to be done and we are not at liberty to change that to meet our own fancy.
 - d. So that by doing so, we give such an example that others will want to follow suit and also do as God has gifted and called them. The more people who are following God's law will begat more people following God's Law/Word.
 - e. Our obedience is personal and corporate at the same time. Eph. 6:1; Heb. 13:17.
3. What is meant by the will of God?
 - a. There is the Sovereign Will of God which basically means that God needs no one's permission to do whatever He wishes...and He will do whatever He wishes for His own glory and the good of His children. He created... which brings Him glory... and He redeemed His own ...bestowing His grace on the ones He chose before the foundations of the earth...which brings Him glory. This expression of God's will focuses on the fact that God sovereignly ordains everything that comes to pass. This aspect of God's will is seen in verses like Ephesians 1:11, where we learn that God is the one *"who works all things according to the counsel of His will,"* and Job 42:2, *"I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You."* This view of God's will is based on the fact that, because God is sovereign, His will can never be frustrated. Nothing happens that is beyond His control.
 - b. There is also the Prescriptive/Revealed Will of God which is revealed in His precepts and commands. Jesus was not telling His disciples and us later to pray for God's sovereign will because we do not need to pray for that...it is done on earth as it is in heaven. Obviously Jesus is teaching us to pray that God will carry out His prescriptive will through us...that we will obey this will as those in heaven do. He is basically restating this petition when He tells His disciples, *"If you love me, keep my commandments."*... God's revealed will...which is found in the Scriptures...God's commandments, His statutes...His precepts...His desires...these reveal His character and what He expects that we will do as kingdom citizens. Duet. 29:29. God's revealed will lets us know what is right and wrong...so that we might love Him as He demands.

- c. There is also God's Preferential Will. This has to do with what gives God pleasure, and what does not. We know that God loves to show mercy, and yet He will execute judgment (Exodus 34:6-7). It is clear that God takes no pleasure in the condemnation of the wicked, it is also clear that He wills or decrees their condemnation. This expression of God's will is revealed in the many verses of Scripture which indicate what God does and does not take pleasure in. For example, in 1 Timothy 2:4 we see that God desires all His people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, yet we know that God's sovereign will is that *"no one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day"* (John 6:44).
 - d. Then there is what we might call God's Permissive Will. This is what God allows, even though it is sin. God allowed Joseph's brothers to betray him, and to deceive their father, so that He might bring the Israelites (few in number) to Egypt, where God would spare them, and they would greatly multiply (Genesis 50:20). God allows man to reject the gospel, to willfully disobey His laws, to persecute the righteous, and so on. But in all of this, God is still in control, and His purposes are being accomplished. God's permissive will is never outside His sovereign will. God "permits" those things which will lead to the accomplishment of His sovereign will.
 - e. There is also God's Directive Will. This is God's personal guidance in our lives. There are times when God wants us at a certain place, doing a certain thing. God does guide us personally and directly, but it seems that this is not as common as some would like. This seems to be required at certain points of our life, when specific guidance is needed (see also 1 Timothy 4:14?).
 - f. In conclusion (if that is possible)... What we should seek to know is the perceptive or revealed will of God.
 - (1) The true mark of spirituality is when we desire to know and live according to the will of God as revealed in Scripture, and that can be summarized as *"be holy for I am Holy"* (1 Peter 1:15-16).
 - (2) Our responsibility is to obey the revealed will of God and not to speculate on what His hidden will for us might be.
 - (3) While we should seek to be *"led by the Holy Spirit,"* we must never forget that the Holy Spirit is primarily leading us to righteousness and to being conformed into the image of Christ so that our lives will glorify God. God calls us to live our lives by every word that proceeds from His mouth.
 - (4) Living according to His revealed will should be the chief aim or purpose of our lives. Romans 12:1-2 summarizes this truth, as we are called to present our *"bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."*
 - (5) To know the will of God, we should immerse ourselves in the written Word of God, saturating our minds with it, and praying that the Holy Spirit will transform us through the renewing of our minds, so that the result is what is good, acceptable and perfect—the will of God.
4. What do we pray for when we pray, *"May your will be done..."*?
- a. That God will enlighten us to His will, so that it may be done. For we must know His will before we can do it. So many people in the church say... "I don't know the will of God." or "How can I know the will of God for my life?" I usually answer with something like... "You must not read the Bible much...since everything you need to know to answer either of those questions is in there." And then second, I sometimes ask, "Which is more important your life...that is the things you want...or bringing God glory?" The answer is that God answers both of these in His Word and by His will. When we carry out His will to glorify Him He will take care of all our needs...If God takes care of the birds...how much more will He care for His children?
 - b. This is a confession of sorts...we are saying we know that He is the only One who can reveal His will ...He is the only One that can bring His will about...He only reveals His total prescriptive will to His own for only we can understand His Word...1 Cor. 2:14-16...We are then confessing..."I can do nothing with You...sooo since you delight in using your own...use me to make your will known."

- c. Given that God often carries out His will through His people we are praying:
 - (1) For active obedience to His will...that we may actually do his revealed will...what he commands.
 - (2) For passive obedience...that we may submit to God's will patiently...no matter what his will may be...

5. Why is doing God's will so necessary?

- a. Brings Him glory!
- b. God may rightly claim our obedience...after all He is our Creator...our benefactor...deserving our allegiance.
- c. The process of sanctification enables us to be doers of His will...so we are being trained on the job, if you will, and we are to carry out His revealed will right where we find ourselves out of love and obedience to God.
- d. When we do God's revealed will we give evidence of the sincerity of our claim that we are His. Only hypocrites will seek to do their own will.
- e. Doing God's will means that the Gospel is being proclaimed in word and deed...our light is shining.
- f. Doing God's will reveals our love for Christ...John 14:21...There is no greater love we can show to Christ than to do what he commands....It is a vain thing for a man to say that he loves Christ and then do whatever he wants to do slighting His commands.
- g. Doing God's will is beneficial for us. Deut. 10:13...What God wills is not so much our duty as our privilege. He commands us to obey His voice and is it for our good....Jer. 7:23.
- h. Doing God's will brings the peace that passes all understanding...since we are doing the will of the Prince of Peace...we will have peace when doing His will.
- i. Not to do God's will is evil...and sinful... and foolish. Not to do God's will is to openly rebel against Him and His word.

6. Sometimes we hear the question or even hear ourselves asking, "How can I find God's will for my life?" Given who we are, what is meant by this question usually? How would you answer it?

7. How would you answer someone who says that the will of God is not to work but to rest in God's work, to wait patiently and quietly while He does mighty things, to let go of our attempts to accomplish His work and let Him do it?

Heidelberg Catechism Study
May 8, 2016

A. Prayer
B. Review

1. Q/A #119- What is the Lord's Prayer? *Our Father which art in heaven: Hallowed by Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*
 2. Q/A #125. What is the fourth petition? *Give us this day our daily bread. That is: Be pleased to provide for all our bodily need; that we may thereby know that Thou art the only fountain of all good, and that without Thy blessing, neither our care and labor, nor Thy gifts can profit us; and may therefore withdraw our trust from all creatures, and place it alone in Thee.* Why does Jesus teach us to ask for such a thing as our daily bread? What does it require of us?
 - a. That we need to put God first in all things...
 - b. Submission to God's Word in when, how and why we are to do what we do.
 - c. We request this because we lack the sustenance we need...
 - d. By praying "Give us..." we are praying be mindful of more than just ourselves...but the whole body of Christ.
 - e. That we must be content with whatever God chooses to give us.
 3. Q/A #126. What is the fifth petition? *And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. That is: Be pleased for the sake of Christ's blood, not to impute to us, miserable sinners, our manifold transgressions, nor the evil which still always cleaves to us, as we find this witness of Thy grace in us, that it is our full purpose heartily to forgive our neighbor.*
 - a. What does the first half of this request tell us to acknowledge?
 - (1) That we are sinners...guilty...not one is innocent... And in reality most "Christians" today don't see themselves as debtor or offender of God.
 - (2) That we are sinners in need of forgiveness...as often as we pray...daily, moment by moment...regularly.
 - (3) That we are sinners in need of forgiveness...as often as we pray...daily, moment by moment...regularly.
 - (4) That we will be forgiven...
 - (5) Daily bread will satisfy the stomach but forgiveness of sin satisfies the soul eternally.
 - b. What is being said according to the 2nd half of this phrase?
 - (1) He who knows he is forgiven is more willing to forgive....Eph. 4:32. Every Christian is required/ charged with forgiving his brother in Christ. Col. 3:13.
 - (2) See Prov. 19:11...it is better to bury an injury than to revenge it... This does not mean that we are required to trust as before only to forgive... if you are self-focused you will get upset immediately and want revenge... but "good sense" dictates something better... if practicing forgiveness then, it is easier to forgive sins done to us...
 - (3) It is for the good of the kingdom.
- C. Lord's Day #52- John 16:7-11; James 2:12-18; I John 2:15-17, 4:1-6**
1. Q/A #127- What is the sixth petition? *And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. That is: Since we are so weak in ourselves, that we cannot stand a moment; while our deadly enemies, the devil, the world and our own flesh, assail us without ceasing; be pleased to preserve and strengthen us by the power of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may make firm stand against them, and not sink in this spiritual war, until we come off at last with complete victory.*

- a. Given that we have seen that each of these petitions mean a whole lot more than the simple surface reading...what all comes to mind when you read or say the first half of this petition... *"And lead us not into temptation..."*?
 - (1) It begins by telling us to expect that temptations will be there at any moment.
 - (2) *"Keep 'us' ahead of the temptation..."* This petition is not concerned with our individual need at this point...but the need for all God's children.
 - (3) Praying that when temptations come that He will be there to lead us through them.
 - (4) The forgiven pray this because they trust God and distrust themselves. We are not to think too highly of ourselves to be sure...for when we do ...we fall. Matt. 26:41.
 - (5) That the Father may seek to prove us...but He does not and cannot entice us to sin (James 1:13-18).
 - (6) And He will not allow us to be tempted beyond our ability to withstand (1 Cor. 10:13).
 - (7) This could easily be translated... *"Lead us not into the place of testing."* Or *"Allow us not to be led into temptation."* Jesus seems to be saying to us that it is okay to pray to God that He will never put us in a place where we will have to undergo a severe test of our faith or obedience. A place like the temptation in Eden...or the temptation of Job or the test of Abraham concerning the sacrifice of His son...or the place of testing like the wilderness that the Spirit drove Jesus into in Matthew 4. It is okay to ask...and we should ask...which makes us aware that they are there and that we need to be mindful of them all the time.
 - (8) Can't keep ourselves from falling...only by God's grace and mercy can we stand in the face of temptation and...stand up again when we do fall.
- b. What is the sequence to temptation? Let's look at our first parents and how this breaks down. Turn to Gen. 3.
 - (1) We perceive that things are not really all that serious. Gen. 3:4. Satan led Adam and Eve to believe that eating the forbidden fruit would not really have serious consequences...
 - (2) Satan presents a picture that arouses some passion or a desire in our personality. Gen. 3:4-5. Satan presented the picture to Adam and Eve that they could become as gods, knowing good and evil, if they ate the forbidden fruit.
 - (3) A deep seated appeal comes with this desire. Gen. 3:6. This idea had a tremendous appeal to Adam and Eve. It aroused a desire to become great and wise. It seemed pleasant and reasonable at the time.
 - (4) We begin to toy with the temptations...we entertain it. Gen 3:6. They actually reached and took the fruit.
 - (5) We don't just entertain the idea any more we act. Gen. 3:6. They accepted it. They ate it. They took it right in. Self-will was exerted here to stand against God's will. This was the sin actually occurred.
 - (6) The moment of shame. Gen. 3:7. The result was they sensed at once that they had been taken in. They were ashamed and embarrassed.
 - (7) The attempt to hide our sin from others. We attempt to excuse our behavior or conceal it. Gen. 3:8. They attempted to hide from God their Heavenly Father...which brought about a separation from the open relationship they had had with God.
 - (8) So this is why Jesus wants us to pray *"lead us not into temptation..."*

Heidelberg Catechism Study
May 15, 2016

D. Prayer

E. Review

4. Q/A #119- What is the Lord's Prayer? *Our Father which art in heaven: Hallowed by Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*

5. Q/A #126. What is the fifth petition? *And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. That is: Be pleased for the sake of Christ's blood, not to impute to us, miserable sinners, our manifold transgressions, nor the evil which still always cleaves to us, as we find this witness of Thy grace in us, that it is our full purpose heartily to forgive our neighbor.*

F. Lord's Day #52- John 16:7-11; James 2:12-18; I John 2:15-17, 4:1-6

2. Q/A #127- What is the sixth petition? *And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. That is: Since we are so weak in ourselves, that we cannot stand a moment; while our deadly enemies, the devil, the world and our own flesh, assail us without ceasing; be pleased to preserve and strengthen us by the power of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may make firm stand against them, and not sink in this spiritual war, until we come off at last with complete victory.*

c. Given that we have seen that each of these petitions mean a whole lot more than the simple surface reading...what all comes to mind when you read or say the first half of this petition... *"And lead us not into temptation..."*?

(9) It begins by telling us to expect that temptations will be there at any moment.

(10) *"Keep 'us' ahead of the temptation..."*... This petition is not concerned with our individual need at this point...but the need for all God's children.

(11) Praying that when temptations come that He will be there to lead us through them.

(12) The forgiven pray this because they trust God and distrust themselves. We are not to think too highly of ourselves to be sure...for when we do ...we fall. Matt. 26:41.

d. How do we counter these temptations?

(1) The knowledge that even the greatest saints of old have fallen for a time into temptation and then they were delivered by God.

(2) The knowledge that Satan can go no further in tempting than God will allow...think Job.

(3) The fact the Satan bothers to tempt means we are God's child.

(4) Remember and deliberately turn to Him with the knowledge that He is there...always.

(5) Christ having sent His Spirit who enables us to overcome in His time.

(6) Resting and using the strong faith given to us by God. Eph. 6:16; 1 Peter 5:8-9... not being idle in life...but living and standing for God and His word...to want these things more than life itself.

(7) Resting in God's promises. 1 Sam. 17:40; Matthew 12:20; John 10:29; Rom. 16:20; 1 Cor. 10:13; Heb. 13:5.

(8) To always be alert...on guard...for the temptation and trust in those closest to you...like spouse to point out the possibilities when we are blind to them. Flee from these...1 Tim. 6:11...we all know the weaknesses that we have...and with that knowledge we can flee.

(9) Prayer as a regular practice.

(10) Service to others...re-focusing ourselves on the things God would have us to do...the ol' *"do what your hands find to do..."* from the LORD.

(11) It is not the actual temptation which makes us guilty, but rather giving into that temptation...

e. **Why does God allow us, His children, to be tempted?**

- (1) As I mentioned before... to try/test us...grow us in maturity..."The only easy day was yesterday!"
 - If we are not stretched we do not and will not grow...Duet. 8:2
 - He who is never tempted is never tested...and the one not tested never knows for sure God is with him.
 - Each test ...each discipline strengthens us against the next...Job's sincerity of faith was tested...each time the devil comes tempting us with something and we look him in the eye and walk on it is a severe test of our love for the Father...and He tests our courage as well... So it is part of our ongoing sanctification...it is part of drill, drill ,drill...finishing the drill that God has set before us for His glory and our good.
- (2) He also allows us to be tempted that we may be kept from pride. Think Paul II Cor. 12:7.
- (3) God lets us be tempted so we can speak to others about such temptations and how to overcome them. II Cor. 2:11.
- (4) God lets us be tempted so that we long all the more for heaven.

f. **The second half ends this way... "*but deliver us from evil.*" In our English versions. But the Greek seems to indicate this more descriptive ending... "*deliver us from the evil one.*" So what if it does say as the Greek seems to indicate "*deliver us from the evil one*"? Does that change anything? If so, how?**

- (1) It personifies and points to a specific enemy...one who is seeking to undo us personally.
- (2) It lets us know that there is one who has his hands in every truly evil event in history.
- (3) That this one is more powerful than we....that he hinders good and provokes even more evil... that he is restless.
- (4) We are reminded as Jesus reminded Peter that Satan wants us and we need Him to pray for us to be delivered...and when we fall to be delivered for better service. Luke 22:31-32....John 17:20.
- (5) That God through Jesus is the only one who can deliver us from the evil one...
- (6) But by leaving it..."but deliver us from evil", we still keep focused on the other evils that exist ...the world and our flesh...our fallen nature. We must be aware and on guard for all of them.

g. **After asking for God to deliver us from the evil one...does anything else need to be said? What? Cyprian says in his ending of his treatise... "*After we have prayed this we stand secure and safe against all the devil and the world can do. For what fear can he have of the world, who has God for his protector in the world.*" See Ps. 27:1 and Rom. 8:31.**

3. **Q/A #128. How do you close this prayer? *For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. That is: All this we ask of Thee, because as our King, having power over all things, Thou art both willing and able to give us all good; and that thereby not we, but Thy holy Name may be glorified forever.***

a. **But what about the part that is left out that we say when we pray the prayer; "*For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*"?**

- (1) There is not much said about this in church history or in commentaries because some ancient manuscripts have it and others do not.
- (2) The most reliable manuscript Codex Vaticanus does not include these words.
- (3) Most scholars agree that this was not in the original text but was added because it was customary among the Jews to conclude a prayer with a doxology. It was found in copies as early as the first half of the 2nd Century...also in teaching tools written by the church; like the Didache and the teaching of the 12 Apostles and it seems to have been picked up by the church as a way to transition out of the prayer that Jesus gave. Neither Matthew nor Luke refer to this doxology in the most reliable manuscripts but it certainly does reflect and conclude the prayer well.

b. What does the conclusion make us mindful of?

- (1) That we are to revere ...honor Him...Thine is the formal use of a personal pronoun...more formal than "yours" which can in our mind bring God down to our level.
- (2) Thine also reminds us that of what God possesses...thine is the kingdom...it all belongs to Him...no one can take credit for any of it. God does not rule by the consent of the governed...God rules by His sovereign authority.
- (3) It reminds us of His power that is received through His Word...not programs or methodology ...and it is His power...no one else's...
- (4) We are reminded that it is His glory...For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever...and we need to be reminded of this fact....Soli Deo Gloria= to God alone the glory...
- (5) So its inclusion in the text or not is one of those mysteries that does not really seem to matter in the end since this doxology has been sustained by the church as an appropriate repose to all the Jesus has said in this prayer.

c. 129. What is the meaning of the word Amen? *Amen means: So shall it truly and surely be. For my prayer is much more certainly heard of God, than I feel in my heart that I desire these things of Him.*

- (1) These are not temporary but are eternal they last forever...
- (2) Amen ...says, It is so! Not because I believe it but because God has said it is so!
- (3) We express a willing agreement, by saying this, with the revealed will of God. When we say "amen" at the end of our prayers it is not merely a signal that we are done praying. It is a heartfelt affirmation of all that God has promised to us in the gospel, which we receive through faith alone (sola fide). To say the word amen is a confession of faith. When we say it, in faith, we are affirming that God will do what he has promised.
- (4) There are a couple of expressions that we use, in prayer, almost without thinking. One of them is the word "Amen." This little term is more important than we might think. In at least one place in Scripture it is used as a substitute for truth. God is described as the "God of Amen" (Isa 65:16), which is translated in the ESV as the "God of Truth."

Heidelberg Catechism Study
May 22, 2016

G. Prayer

H. Review

6. Q/A #119- What is the Lord's Prayer? *Our Father which art in heaven: Hallowed by Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*
7. Q/A #128. How do you close this prayer? *For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. That is: All this we ask of Thee, because as our King, having power over all things, Thou art both willing and able to give us all good; and that thereby not we, but Thy holy Name may be glorified forever.*
8. Q/A #129. What is the meaning of the word Amen? *Amen means: So shall it truly and surely be. For my prayer is much more certainly heard of God, than I feel in my heart that I desire these things of Him.*
 - a. These are not temporary but are eternal they last forever...
 - b. Amen ...says, It is so! Not because I believe it but because God has said it is so!
 - c. We express a willing agreement, by saying this, with the revealed will of God. When we say "amen" at the end of our prayers it is not merely a signal that we are done praying. It is a heartfelt affirmation of all that God has promised to us in the gospel, which we receive through faith alone (sola fide).
 - d. The word amen is a confession of faith. When we say it, in faith, we are affirming that God will do what He has promised.
 - e. This little term is more important than we might think. In at least one place in Scripture it is used as a substitute for truth. God is described as the "God of Amen" (Isa 65:16), which is translated in the ESV as the "God of Truth."

I. Lord's Day #1- Gen. 1-11; Hebrews 2:14-18; Titus 2:11-14

3. Q/A #1 - What is my only comfort in life and in death? A. *That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins, and redeemed me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me, that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must work together for my salvation. Wherefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me heartily willing and ready henceforth to live unto Him.*
4. HC Q/A 2- Q. How many things are necessary for you to know, that you, in this comfort may live and die happily? A. *Three things: first, the greatness of my sin and misery. Second, how I am redeemed from all my sins and misery. Third, how I am to be thankful to God for such redemption.*

f. We have talked a few times about “confessions” and “catechisms” through the years. Since we have the Scriptures why do we need confessions and catechisms?

- (1) Confessions simply are putting in to an academic form what we believe for many reasons but not the least of which for maintaining unity and a standard for correct interpretation within the church.
- (2) Catechisms are simply teaching tools. A “short” manual (the term “short” as used in the church is almost as relative as the term “soon” used by Jesus) in the form of questions and answers on the essential of Christian doctrine.
 - In fact, the original subtitle of this catechism, was “Heidelberg Catechism: a catechism in our Christian Religion.”
 - Scripture makes it clear that, especially our children, but we as well, ought to constantly be indulging in ways to counter the inborn wickedness and the external wickedness that surround us and are constantly seeking to win us over.
 - It is the continual assessment of Christian doctrine from the Scriptures, through the preaching and teaching of the Word publically and privately that will help us by God’s grace through the work of the Spirit of God to endure and grow unto our salvation.
 - The teaching of the Word of God and the doctrines of God requires different forms to aid our learning experience. This form has proven highly affective as we train our little ones, the way the Scriptures command, and as well we remind ourselves of the truths of God’s word daily for our lives.
- (3) Historically confessions and catechisms were put together to re-train God’s people after leaving the Roman catholic Church in the essentials of the Christian religion as outlined in the Scriptures. And it also served as a liturgy for the church that even some Reformed Churches still use today to constantly teach God’s people. (Like: United Reformed Church, Reformed Church in America, Christian Reformed Church, the Protestant Reformed Church...churches primarily that were influenced by the Dutch reformed traditions)
- (4) The catechism, whether this one or the Westminster Shorter catechism, teaches us the gospel...the A to Z of the Christian Religion.
- (5) Also, it helps us to confess Christ properly and clearly.

g. These first 2 catechism questions speak of “comfort”. Why does the catechism seem to imply that comfort is one of our greatest needs?

- (1) Because we are descendants of Adam and Eve and are fallen which means, just as the Westminster Shorter Catechism says, we are in a condition of sin and misery whether we fully know that or not.
- (2) The world is dangerous and messy and uncomfortable. It is hard to find rest and satisfaction within it especially since God cursed the world and commanded that we would not find the kind of comfort and rest that we desire.
- (3) Because of our fallenness we seek “comfort” from all the wrong places that this world has to offer.
- (4) In other words because the misery of man is so great we seek “comfort”.

h. What is the essence of this comfort according to the questions in front of us? It is knowing that I am not my own but belong, body and soul, in life and death, to Jesus Christ. In other words, it is having a living relationship with Jesus Christ.

i. How is it possible for sinners who by nature are enemies of Christ to “belong” to Christ? This is only possible through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Hence our Catechism says “He [i.e. Christ] has fully paid for all my sins with His precious blood”.

j. What are the benefits of “belonging” to Christ according to the Catechism? There are several:

- (1) He pays the penalty for our sins (1 John 1: 7)
- (2) He delivers us from the power of the devil (Heb. 2: 14)
- (3) He preserves us (John 10: 28)
- (4) Through His Holy Spirit He assures me of eternal life and makes me heartily willing and ready to live unto Him
- (5) When we belong to Christ, He takes care of a guilty past, He comforts us in an insecure present, and He promises us a glorious future.

k. Why is this comfort necessary?

- (1) Bottom line...all people know in their heart of hearts they're going to die but they don't like to admit it. It's a mark of our post-Christianity that this culture is so obsessed with youth and beauty. Most folk don't die at home anymore. Many folk have never seen a dead person. We go away to antiseptic hospital rooms to die and are boxed up and delivered to the funeral home and, in many cases, (even the "open casket" seems to be disappearing) never seen again.
- (2) You know, of course, about the "Black Death," which swept through Europe in the middle ages killing as many as 1/3 of the population. Death was a frequent visitor in everyone's house. So, for the catechism to ask about our comfort in "in life and in death," was a good and necessary question then and it remains so now. No matter how much we exercise (and that's a good thing), diet, and preen, should Jesus delay his return, we're going to die. It's hard enough when friends and loved ones disappoint us, but eventually even our body will disappoint us. When all else fails, on what will you depend? On your good works? Be honest, you know that all of your works are tainted. Never in your life have your motives been completely pure about anything. If in the greatest act of self-denial in your life you hoped secretly that someone would notice. Your obedience isn't perfect so it's not trustworthy.
- (3) On account of our salvation...so that we can live assured in this otherwise messy life. So many temptations come our way that we can often struggle under the wonder of what to do...also, we have been commanded to engage in the proclamation of the Word of God thus opening ourselves up to persecution.
- (4) On account of praising and worshiping God...if we are unassured our ability to trust, to praise and to true worship in Spirit and in Truth will be hampered..
- (5) So God's comfort is absolutely necessary!

l. How can this comfort become mine? What three things do we have to know according to the catechism questions? (Q/A 2)

- (1) How great my sins and miseries are....and we learn this from the law.
- (2) How I am delivered from all my sins and misery.... The gospel is that Christ, as the righteous and holy One, has merited righteousness for his people, he has paid the penalty incurred by their sin, has suffered actively all his life in the place of all his people, died a horrible death for all his people, and has been raised for all his people. The good news is that all that the law requires for perfect righteousness has been accomplished and we benefit from it only by trusting, resting, and receiving Christ and his finished work for us as our own.
- (3) How I am to be thankful to God for such deliverance.... The catechism follows the pattern of Romans very closely. Having been redeemed, we belong to Christ and we want to do his will, not to be just but because we are just in Christ and we are his grateful people.
- (4) Or... *"guilt, grace, and gratitude,"* or *"sin, salvation, service."* Those are all right, because they all say the same thing, though law, gospel, and sanctification gets to a basic Reformation truth that is widely misunderstood, denied, or confused.

- (5) The Reformation read the apostle Paul to be teaching just this distinction in the book of Romans. Indeed, the catechism itself is patterned on the book of Romans which is in three parts: law, gospel, and sanctification (the Christian life).
- (6) In other words, we have to know something of guilt, grace and gratitude.
- (7) NOTE: This is the basic outline for the entire Catechism. The rest of the Catechism is devoted to an explanation of each one of these three things.

m. Where do we have to turn to learn about these three things?

- (1) To the Bible which is God's Word. The Bible contains everything we need to know in order to be saved and to grow into our salvation granted to us by the grace and great mercy of God. (1 Peter 1:3)
- (2) Therefore if you want to know more about these things you must read, study the Bible and listen to it preached. For this catechism is given only to for training concerning what God teaches in His Word.

n. What truth must we keep in mind with reference to these three things?

- (1) There is a certain order to these three things. Guilt precedes grace and grace precedes gratitude.
- (2) We do not come to a full and complete understanding of these three things all at once. This kind of knowledge requires a lifetime to gain. Even then, what we know of these three things will always be imperfect.

Note: I am using many sources to try and get the best quality of understanding concerning this catechism...but my primary sources include:

1. **The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism**, translated from the original Latin by the Rev. G.W. Willard, A.M, reissued by the Presbyterian And Reformed Publishing Company by the urging of the Eureka Classis, RCUS
2. **A Firm Foundation: An Aid to Interpreting the Heidelberg Catechism** by Caspar Olevianus, translated and edited by Dr. Lyle D. Bierma (1995), by Baker Book House
3. **The Heidelberg Catechism: a study guide**, by G.I. Williamson (1993), from Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company...
4. ***The Heidelberg Commentary series on the Heidelberg Catechism***, by R. Scott Clark.