

DAILY MEDITATIONS ON THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

by Pastors of the Protestant Reformed Churches of America

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JUN
Lord's Days 23 - 26

The Second Part - Of Man's Deliverance

Of God The Holy Ghost

Lord's Day 23

Question 59. But what doth it profit thee now that thou believest all this?

Answer. That I am righteous in Christ, before God, and an heir of eternal life. [\[a\]](#)

Question 60. How are thou righteous before God?

Answer. Only [\[b\]](#) by a true faith in Jesus Christ; so that though my conscience accuse me, that I have grossly transgressed all the commandments of God, and [\[c\]](#) kept none of them, and am still [\[d\]](#) inclined to all evil; notwithstanding, God, without any [\[e\]](#) merit of mine, but only of mere [\[f\]](#) grace, grants [\[g\]](#) and [\[h\]](#) imputes to me, the perfect [\[i\]](#) satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ; even so, as if I never had had, nor committed any sin: yea, as if I had fully [\[j\]](#) accomplished all that obedience which Christ has accomplished for me; [\[k\]](#) inasmuch as I embrace such benefit with a believing heart.

Question 61. Why sayest thou, that thou art righteous by faith only?

Answer. Not that I am acceptable to God, on account of the [\[l\]](#) worthiness of my faith; but because only the satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ, is my righteousness before [\[m\]](#) God; and that I cannot receive [\[n\]](#) and apply the same to myself any other way than by faith only.

[a]: [Rom. 5:1](#); [Rom. 1:17](#); [John 3:36](#)

[b]: [Rom. 3:22ff](#); [Gal. 2:16](#); [Eph. 2:8,9](#)

[c]: [Rom. 3:9ff](#)

[d]: [Rom. 7:23](#)

[e]: [Rom. 3:24](#)

[f]: [Tit. 3:5](#); [Eph 2:8,9](#)

[g]: [Rom. 4:4,5](#); [2Cor. 5:19](#)

[h]: [1John 2:1](#)

[i]: [Rom. 3:24,25](#)

[j]: [2Cor. 5:21](#)

[k]: [Rom. 3:28](#); [John 3:18](#)

[l]: [Psa. 16:2](#); [Eph. 2:8,9](#)

[m]: [1Cor. 1:30](#); [1Cor. 2:2](#)

[n]: [1John 5:10](#)

June 4 – LD 23, Day 1: The Profit of Faith
by Prof Herman Hanko

Read: Romans 4:1-12

It is quite clear why our teacher who instructs us in the truth of Scripture, should now ask this important question: What is the profit of your faith?

We have been instructed in all the truths that God has revealed in His word. We have been told that these truths are the objects of our faith. We have repeatedly recited our lessons.

“I believe in God the Father.”

“I believe in His only begotten Son.”

“I believe in all the work that Christ did from His birth to His exaltation and will do until His second coming.”

“I believe in the Holy Ghost.”

“I believe in a holy catholic church.”

“I believe in the resurrection of the body.”

“I believe in the forgiveness of sins.”

“I believe in life eternal.”

Now: what profit is there in the fact that we believe all these things? That is a good question.

The answer of the teacher in our classroom is quite surprising. He could have said: Faith makes all these truths our own possession and experience. He could have said: The profit is that God is our Father. Christ is our Savior. Christ died for us. Christ is our Lord in heaven. We are members of the church of Christ. Our sins are forgiven. We shall inherit eternal life.

But our teacher does not do that. Rather, he chooses to point us to one truth, which, if true, makes all the other truths ours as well. If we are righteous, we possess all the other blessings of salvation as well.

It is like a man in prison for an enormous debt, which he cannot pay. He is there until the debt is paid. But someone comes along and pays the entire debt. He can then be released from prison and enjoy all the blessings of freedom with his wife and children, his friends and relatives, and in God's creation. But the important thing is that he is legally declared to have no debt.

And so our teacher points out to us what a wonderful power faith is. Faith believes “that we are righteous in Christ, before God.” When faith can and does believe that, then faith can also believe everything else. But to be righteous is first.

So our teacher takes great pains to point out several things about this “profit” of faith.

First, we are righteous in Christ.

Second, we are righteous before God.

Third, we come to the knowledge of our righteousness only by faith.

Fourth, this means that we do not come to our righteousness by our works.

Fifth, we do not even come to the knowledge of our righteousness because of the worthiness of our faith.

Sixth, we become righteous by faith **in Christ**. The only way we possess that righteousness approved of God is to appropriate by faith the righteousness of Christ.

June 5 – LD 23, Day 2: What is the Righteousness we have by Faith?
by Prof Herman Hanko

Read: Numbers 23

We really have to understand what righteousness is, if we are to appreciate this profit of faith.

Righteousness is different from holiness. When God created Adam in His own image, He created him in the true knowledge of God, righteousness and holiness.

Holiness has to do with the moral character of one's nature. God is holy, because His divine essence is without the least blemish or moral spot. We are holy when our natures are without the corruption and depravity of sin.

Righteousness has to do with our activity.

God is righteous because everything He does is perfectly in harmony with the holiness of His divine nature. We are righteous when everything we do is in keeping with a holy nature we possess.

By "everything we do," I mean our thoughts, our desires, our emotions, as well as our words and deeds. When all these things reveal a holy nature, then we are righteous.

But, as you well know, our natures are not holy. They are not holy in any aspect. They are corrupt, depraved, morally dead, and incapable of doing any good. And because our natures are in no way holy, we cannot do anything right. We are unrighteous. Every thought, desire, word, deed and emotion is wrong. They are contrary to God's will. They deserve the punishment of death.

The righteousness of which the text speaks is the righteousness God gives us by His grace. That is, God declares that all His people have no sin, all that they do is perfectly in harmony with His law and His own divine being, and they are, therefore, heirs of eternal life.

We must be clear on what this means. Martin Luther used a Latin expression, *Justus simul peccator*. This Latin expression means that we are found to be just, while we are, in our lives, sinners. It is like a judge pronouncing a murderer to have never committed the crime of murder, even though he was found guilty of the crime and even though he confessed it to be true.

The clearest instance of this is found in Numbers 23:21. You will recall the history.

Israel was just east of the Jordan River, on the Eastern boundary of Canaan. The nation was camped in a valley. To the south was a high plateau, which was occupied by Moab. Balak was king of Moab, and frightened by the nation of Israel. And so he hired Balaam, a prophet out of Mesopotamia, to come and curse Israel, for Balak knew that if Balaam cursed Israel, they would never be a threat to him.

Balaam tried to curse, but could only bless. Finally, Balak, in despair, took Balaam to a place where only the outer fringes of Israel's camp could be seen. It was Israel at its very worst, where the mixed multitude was camped.

What did Balaam say? "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel." That was all Balaam could say.

That is what it means to be righteous before God.

June 6 – LD 23, Day 3: Righteous in Christ
by Prof Herman Hanko

Read: Romans 4:13-25

Yesterday we left Balaam on the heights of Moab blessing Israel when Balak had hired him to curse God's people. Balaam spoke in the same way the donkey spoke, when the donkey attempted to prevent him from going to Moab to curse Israel. God caused the donkey to speak words of warning to Balaam. God caused Balaam to speak words of blessing when he wanted to curse.

But in the middle of the camp of Israel was the tabernacle and the priests going about their work of sacrificing, and the smoke of their sacrifices rose towards the sky. And so, when Balaam was forced against his will to bless Israel and when he said, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel:" Balaam added, "the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them."

God was saying through wicked Balaam, "I see no sin in this nation because I am with them and Christ, their king, is among them."

Israel was righteous. And that meant that when Balak and Balaam wanted to curse Israel for Israel's many sins (and they were terrible), God said, as it were, "How can I curse them? I do not see any sin in them. All I see is a righteous and holy people. They can only be blessed."

What could be the reason for this? The answer is that, as our teacher points out to us, we are righteous in Christ.

Christ is righteous because of His death on the cross. All our sins were made the sins of Christ, and all the guilt of all the sins of all the people of God were placed on Christ. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:21).

Christ was made responsible for all our sins and guilt. For them, he went to the cross on which God poured out all the wrath he had against all the sins of all the elect. Christ suffered what God's people should have suffered.

Christ paid the debt that was our debt, and by His perfect obedience he earned for us righteousness. If our debt is paid, we are now righteous.

This was a legal transaction. Legally, Christ stood before God's bar of justice and God condemned Christ to die for the debt of all the elect. Christ did this willingly, and paid that debt by bearing all the guilt of our sins. He, therefore, became, though guilty for our sins, perfectly righteous.

But that righteousness God imputed to us. Not because of what we had done, but because of what Christ had done. "[He] was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25).

And so our teacher reminds us that we are righteous **before God, in Christ**.

This great work of God is called justification. The word literally means, to make just or righteous. It is God's declaration that he sees no sin in us.

What a wonderful blessing that is! We can sing, "How blest is he whose trespass hath freely been forgiven" (Psalter No. 83).

June 7 – LD 23, Day 4: The Blessedness of Justification
by Prof Herman Hanko

Read: Romans 8:31-39

Justification is a great work of God in Jesus Christ, and is a blessing that forms the basis for all the other blessings of salvation. If we are not justified before God, we do not have a right or claim to any of the blessings of salvation, for we are then sinners, worthy only of hell.

But if God justifies us, then we have the rightful claim to all the blessings of salvation, for we are found by God to be without sin.

This is a very personal confession on the part of the believer. The teacher in this classroom asks: What doth it profit **thee** now that thou believest all this? And the answer we give to our teacher is this: I am righteous in Christ, before God, and an heir of eternal life.

This very personal aspect of justification is underscored in the passage of Scripture assigned to us in our lesson: Rom 8:31-39. The scene is a courtroom where God is Judge and into which we are brought to be judged. We have many accusers: the devil is there to point out that we really belong to him and have no right to heaven. The world is present to bring accusations against us that we are no better than they are. And our own consciences condemn us so that we are forced by the testimony of our consciences to agree with our accusers and to admit with hanging heads: Yes, it is all true.

But then the Judge speaks. After examining all the evidence and weighing it carefully in the scales of absolute justice, the Judge pronounces us innocent: "I have not found iniquity in Jacob, neither transgression in Israel." That is the sentence! It comes to us as a thunderbolt. God, the Judge of all the earth, who always judges rightly, finds us to be without sin and cannot find any accusations against us to be true!

At first, we are not sure we have correctly heard it. It seems too good to be true. But then, the sentence of the divine Judge sinks into our souls and we become confident that this amazing wonder is ours. And so we turn on our accusers: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Who is he that condemneth?"

That means that, in our lives, when the devil or the world, or even our own consciences try to sow the seeds of doubt in our minds by pointing out our sins, we are able to say: "Go away devil; get far from me, world; be still, conscience. I know that what you say is true. But I have Christ. He is mine. He bore my sins. He earned for me my innocence. He freely and graciously gives it to me. God imputes it to me for Christ's sake. Whatever you say is a lie. I am righteous in Christ before God."

June 8 – LD 23, Day 5: The Blessings of Justification
by Prof Herman Hanko

Read: Romans 5

All the blessings of salvation follow our justification.

Our teacher emphasizes in our lesson the greatest of all such blessings: the forgiveness of sins. Here it is: "I have grossly transgressed all the commandments of God, and kept none of them, and am still inclined to all evil; notwithstanding God, without any merit of mine, but only of mere grace, grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ, even so, as if I never had sinned nor committed any sin: yea, as if I had fully accomplished all the obedience which Christ has accomplished for me."

How precious is the gift of the forgiveness of sins.

I sin against God in thought, word and deed. I commit sins of omission (by failing to do that which is my duty to do) and sins of commission (I do those things I know are wrong and contrary to the will of God. Knowing what is sin and knowing God disapproves, I do these things anyway.)

I do not do them once or twice, or even one hundred or two hundred times; I do them over and over again.

Yet when the day is finished and I prepare to seek sleep, I bring my sins to the throne of grace to confess them and express my sorrow for them. Every time the Lord forgives and tells me that he will not hold these sins against me, for he has punished them in His own dear Son.

And after rejoicing at the great blessedness of forgiveness, the next day I commit the same sins over again. Again I confess them, and God forgives.

My sins intrude on everything. My confession of sin is not always as sincere as it ought to be. Sometimes I ask the Lord to forgive, but not to keep me from that same sin. Sometimes I ask to be delivered from a sin, but add, not yet. Wait a few days. Our prayers, our singing to God, our thankfulness – all our activities, even the most holy, are sinful. Yet God forgives. I see, God says, no sin in Jacob, neither transgression in Israel.

When we lay our heads on death's pillow, the words of our teacher come to our minds: "Death is not the penalty for sin, but the door to glory. What comfort do we have while we live and when we die? Our sins are forgiven us."

Hebrews puts it so beautifully: For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4:15-16).

How blessed is he whose trespass

Hath freely been forgiven.

Whose sin is wholly covered

Before the sight of heaven. (Psalter No. 83)

June 9 – LD 23, Day 6: By Faith Alone
by Prof Herman Hanko

Read: Galatians 2:16-21

The great truth of the Reformation was “Justification by faith alone.” Luther opened the door to reformation in the church with that simple, four-word statement.

The Roman Catholic Church taught differently. This apostate church that held sway over the whole of Europe taught justification by faith **and works**. One had to do works in addition to believing in order to be saved. Luther had tried that in the monastery. God plagued Luther with the consciousness of his sins. God drove Luther almost frantic, as Luther tried to appease God by all sorts of works.

Chief among these works was his confessions of his sins to his superior, Johann Staupitz. He would spend long periods of time confessing to Staupitz every little sin he could think of; and minutes after leaving Staupitz, he would think of another sin, and hurry back to confess that sin as well.

Staupitz got sick of it all, and finally said to Luther, “Brother Martin, if you are going to confess all these sins to me, please commit some big sin, like murdering your mother, to make your confession worthwhile.

Staupitz did not mean that literally, but he tried to show Luther the way to the cross of Christ, a way Luther could not yet see as the way to peace. The blinders of the Roman Catholic church prevented him from seeing the cross.

But God led Luther, through this dark way, to the cross. And when Luther finally saw it, he exclaimed, “I saw heaven itself opened before me!” He saw heaven as a reality for him through that dark and murky cross of Calvary.

The cross revealed heaven because Luther finally turned away from a preoccupation with his own works, and saw only the work of Christ, which Christ performed on the cross.

When Luther translated the Bible into German, he translated such texts as Romans 5:1: “Therefore being justified by faith alone, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” the Roman Catholics badgered him mercilessly for adding the word “alone,” which they said was not in the original Greek.

Luther’s reply was, “I know the word is not in the Greek, but the idea is.” It was the word “alone” that infuriated the Roman Catholics. But Luther insisted on it. It was the salvation of the church.

Why do so many leaders in the church and ministers of the gospel want to go back to that awful error of Rome? Why do they want to turn their backs on Luther and his soul-wrenching struggle to come to peace with God?

We cannot tell with certainty, but man’s pride is a terrible thing and sinful man wants to preserve some tattered remnants of his pride. And so he says, “I can do something too. I am justified by faith **and my works.**”

We ought to fall on our faces at the foot of the cross and confess that we can do nothing— nothing at all to be justified.

June 10 – LD 23, Day 7: Justification by Faith Alone
by Prof Herman Hanko

Read: Romans 3:19-31

The teacher who has assumed responsibility to instruct us in the absolute sovereignty of God in the work of salvation is intent on getting this point, that we are justified by faith **alone**, across to us.

This teacher of ours recognizes that there are also plenty of people around who would quickly say, “Yes, we are justified by faith,” but who also make faith a **work**. They make faith a work when they use expressions like, “You must accept Christ as your personal Savior”; “You must let Jesus into your heart”; “Jesus wants to save you and loves you, but you must accept him”.

Here our teacher speaks up: “Why sayest thou that thou art righteous by faith only? Answer: Not that I am acceptable to God **on account of the worthiness of my faith.**” So, after all, they make faith a work and teach, in a sneaky way, that we are saved by faith and works.

The point our teacher is making is not a mere doctrinal point; it is our salvation. I, we are reminded, need a comfort in the life I am called to live, but also at the moment of death. If that comfort comes from my works, there is no comfort. The Roman Catholic Church could just as well have hung a sign about its doors, “Abandon all comfort, ye who enter here.” The Catechism says, your only comfort is that you do not have to save yourself nor contribute one little deed to your salvation. Your salvation is in Christ. That is comfort!

Faith, as we learned earlier from our teacher, is the bond that unites us to Christ. Christ is like a giant reservoir in which all the blessings of salvation for time and eternity are. Faith is the “pipeline” that connects us to Christ and through which all Christ’s blessings flow into us.

Or to use another figure: Christ is the “dynamo” and source of all power. Faith is the electric wire that connects us to the dynamo. If the “wire” is not there, we give no light. If we are connected to him, we shine in holiness and glory.

God gives that faith, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:” (Eph. 2:8).

It is true that God causes that faith that he gives to come to conscious activity in our lives. We believe. We run to the cross with the load of our sins. We take hold of the Saviour who hangs there. We make him our Saviour. And all these things are activities of faith.

But let us remember that “it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phil 2:13). God works the “will” that makes us want to go to Christ. God himself actually works in us “to do of His good pleasure”. He makes us do it.

But do not be alarmed by this; that God does it all is “our only comfort.”

The Second Part - Of Man's Deliverance

Of God The Holy Ghost

Lord's Day 24

Question 62. But why cannot our good works be the whole, or part of our righteousness before God?

Answer. Because, that the righteousness, which can be approved of before the tribunal of God, must be absolutely perfect, and in all respects [\[a\]](#) conformable to the divine law; and also, that our best works in this life are all imperfect and [\[b\]](#) defiled with sin.

Question 63. What! do not our good works merit, which yet God will reward in this and in a future life?

Answer. This reward is not of merit, but of grace. [\[c\]](#)

Question 64. But doth not this doctrine make men careless and profane?

Answer. By no means: for it is impossible that those, who are implanted into Christ by a true faith, should not bring forth fruits of [\[d\]](#) thankfulness.

[a]: [Gal. 3:10](#); [Deut. 17:26](#)

[b]: [Isa. 64:6](#)

[c]: [Luke 17:10](#)

[d]: [Mat. 7:17,18](#); [John 15:5](#)

June 11 – LD 24, Day 1: Objections Made and Answered
by Prof Herman Hanko

Read: Romans 3:1-18

The Biblical and confessional doctrine of justification by faith alone has been the object of constant attacks. These attacks were already launched against Luther. They were launched especially by the Roman Catholic Church, which hated Luther's doctrine and did all in its power, including terrible persecution, to rid the church of it.

Luther stood firm. He called this doctrine the "hinge" on which hangs the whole church. Or, in another figure, this doctrine determines the standing or falling of the church.

Similar attacks have been made throughout history. They were made wherever the truth of justification by faith alone was preached. They were made in Germany, in Scotland, in the Netherlands, and elsewhere.

They are made again in more modern time with particularly fierce attacks that seem to have paralyzed many churches.

Following John Wesley and his preaching in England, attacks against justification by faith alone were made on the basis of Wesley's open and radical Arminianism. In the Scottish Church, attacks against this doctrine were made by the Marrow Men, whose objections led to the adoption of the well-meant and gracious offer of the gospel.

Today we face the same attacks. Strangely these attacks come within Reformed and Presbyterian Churches. They come from those who claim to be children of the Reformation; and yet they are not hesitant to deny the most fundamental truth of the Reformation. And the fiercest attacks come from those who want to make salvation **conditional**. These even plead for a conditional covenant. And from such error comes the error of a conditional justification – justification by faith **and works**.

What is worse, such views as are being taught in Reformed and Presbyterian circles today rob the child of God of his only comfort. If your salvation and mine depended on the slightest measure of what we do that is pleasing to God, we are lost. It cannot be any different.

To follow these false teachers is to commit the sin of Esau: sell our birthright for a bowl of bean soup.

And so, after teaching us the great truth of Justification by faith alone, without any works, our teacher warns us that in the defense of this doctrine, we will be under constant and sometimes brutal attacks. We must be prepared for this, for if we know before hand the nature of the attacks, we can be ready to meet them.

We **must** be ready to meet them and stand our ground, for the battle is not only on the level of our intellects; it is a spiritual battle. Our salvation is at stake. To claim justification is partially or altogether based on works is to lose our salvation.

Our only hope is in justification by faith alone; that is, our only hope for salvation is in the cross of our Saviour.

June 12 – LD 24, Day 2: Cannot Our Works Save?
by Prof Herman Hanko

Read: Psalm 53, Psalm 14

The first objection to which our teacher calls attention, is a question that seems to be asked by someone who is surprised by the fact that justification is not based on works. “Why can’t our works be the whole basis for our justification? Or, at least a partial basis? What’s wrong with our good works?”

It is question that comes from a person who is rather proud of his goodness and is convinced that these works are surely good enough for God to acknowledge their worth. Obviously, the man is proud.

But, wait a moment. Do we not often do the same? Is it not true that when God sends us some great affliction, and we writhe beneath the heavy chastisement of God, that we often say, “Why me? Why does God do this to me?” And what we mean to say is: “I do not deserve this, for I have not done anything that makes me worthy of such affliction.”

That kind of thinking is the same as being of the opinion that our works ought to be the ground for God doing good to us. What makes people think better of themselves than is true?

The only explanation for this is **pride**. Pride caused Eve to speak with the serpent in Paradise, and to obey the serpent when he suggested that eating of the forbidden tree would make her as God, knowing good and evil. Pride is the devil behind all our boasting. Pride keeps us from admitting our sin and worthlessness.

Pride asks the question: “But why cannot our works be the whole, or part of our righteousness before God?”

The two most difficult words in any language to say, because of our pride, are: “I’m sorry.”

We have a wise teacher to instruct us in the truth. He understands all too well why we like to raise objections to justification by faith alone, without the works of the law. He will point us, first of all to our pride.

And then he will tell us what the Bible says about us and our works.

All our instruction up to this point is clearly what is taught in the Bible. The Bible also teaches us what to think of our good works. And knowing what the Bible says about our good works, we will never, never think of them as the reason why God ought to justify and save us on the grounds of what we do.

And when we stop to think about it all, we will shudder at the thought that our good works must save us. We will cringe with horror that we could ever entertain such an idea.

We will fall on our faces before God, confess our sins, and thank God for Christ.

June 13 – LD 24, Day 3: The Uselessness Of Our Works
by Prof Herman Hanko

Read: Psalm 10

Our teacher is very patient with us and tells us in some detail why it is impossible for our works to be in any way the basis for our justification.

The first reason is that if our works must serve as a ground for our justification, they must be “absolutely perfect, and in all respects conformable to the divine law.”

This clearly is true. God is, in His own divine being, a righteous God. He created man in true knowledge and holiness, but also righteousness. As all God does is in perfect conformity with His holiness, so he made man able to do all things in perfect conformity with God’s holiness. That is the righteousness approved by God.

Where someone is found who is as righteous as God demands, you will find a person whose whole life is in conformity with the law of God. His thoughts and desires, his words and deeds are all perfectly in conformity with the law that God has given for man.

But we must not forget that that law is: “Love the Lord thy God. And love him with all thy heart, mind, soul and strength.” An outward conformity with the law will not do. It must be a conformity to the law of God that characterizes our entire nature.

But where can such righteousness be found?

The answer to that question is the second reason why our good works can never be the ground of our justification: “Our best works in this life are all imperfect and defiled with sin.”

That is the indictment of Scripture.

Notice that our teacher is not now talking about wicked people; he is talking about God’s people, who through the power of God’s grace, actually do good works. He is talking about our worship of God, our prayers, our instruction of our children, our care for the poor, our refusal to indulge in all the sinful activities of the wicked world in the midst of which we live.

Our teacher is talking about our works **in this life**. Another day is coming, for which this life is the preparation. But we live in this life as God’s people. Can we claim, in this life, to keep God’s law perfectly? We cannot!

Worse yet, it is true we do good works, but every good work is imperfect. We sing God’s praises, but not from the heart. We pray, but our minds wander during our prayers. We pray for God’s grace to escape a particular sin, but we add in our hearts, “Not yet, Lord. I want to enjoy this sin a while first.” We help the poor, and hope to gain glory for it. We witness to others, but do so very imperfectly. Our best works are still imperfect.

In a striking passage, Isaiah calls our “righteousnesses”, that is, our very best works, like “filthy rags”; that is, like menstrual rags. That certainly does not say much for them.

How often we must ask God for forgiveness for our “good” works, for our best works are still corrupted and polluted by sins!

June 14 – LD 24, Day 4: The Inability to Merit With God
by Prof Herman Hanko

Read: Matthew 20:1-10

But, our instructor tells us, there are other arguments that enemies of the truth will bring.

They will try to trap you into agreeing that our works merit with God. And then they will quote some texts for you. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” (II Cor. 5:10). “See?” they will say, “We will receive something for doing good. The text says so.”

Here is another verse: “And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” (Rev. 22:12). Jesus even calls what he will give us ‘a reward’.

Our teacher tells us that while it is indeed true that Scripture speaks of merit, the reward that we merit is not that we have earned something with God, but is rather of grace.

One of our other confessions puts it very beautifully. Article 24 of the Confession of Faith explains all this.

“Therefore we do good works, but not to merit by them (for what can we merit?), nay we are beholden (“in debt to”, Herman Hanko) to God for the good works we do, and not He to us, *since it is He that worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure*. Let us therefore attend to what is written: *When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do*. In the meantime, we do not deny that God rewards our good works, but it is through His grace that He crowns His gifts.

Moreover, though we do good works, we do not found our salvation upon them; for we can do no work but what is polluted by our flesh, and also punishable; and although we could perform such works, still, the remembrance of one sin is sufficient to make God reject them. Thus, then, we would always be in doubt, tossed to and from without any certainty, and our poor consciences continually vexed, if they relied not on the merits of the suffering and death of our Savior.”

There are three things the article says.

First, we cannot merit with God even though we do everything he requires of us. For, in that case, we have only done our duty, and nothing beyond our duty.

The Roman Catholics talk about “works of supererogation,” by which they mean works which we do which go beyond our duty, and merit sainthood. In fact, other people less able to perform these works, can draw to their account these works, for they are in a bank in heaven and can be drawn on by others. What nonsense!

Second, consider that beautiful expression that the reward of grace is “through His grace that He crowns His gifts.” That is, the works are His gift of grace, and so is their reward.

Third, if we had to rely on our good works, our consciences would always plague us. We rely on the merits of Christ and His merits alone.

June 15 – LD 24, Day 5: How We Do Good Works
by Prof Herman Hanko

Read: Ephesians 2:1-10

In the interests of learning fully how it is possible for a child of God to do good works, Paul speaks of this very thing in Eph 2:8-10.

We are dead in trespasses and sins, Paul tells us (2:1).

We are made alive by the power of God (2:1, 5).

This all is so much God's work that it is rooted in God's love for us and flows to us out of the fountain of His grace, His unmerited favor. (2:4, 5).

The result is that we are saved by grace, through faith (2:8).

That salvation by grace, through faith, is not of ourselves, but is the gift of God. Grace is a gift; faith is a gift; and the resulting salvation is a gift. It is never our work.

By making all these His gifts, God shuts the door to all boasting (2:9). If our works entered in, we would boast of our contributions.

But we can hear some objector, off to the side, shouting, "But what about works? You are forgetting our works."

"You are right," the apostle says; "we do good works. But let me tell you about those good works. And then see once whether you can still boast in them."

First of all, we must remember that we are God's workmanship. Now, a workmanship is a work of stunningly beautiful art that shows by its beauty the skill of the artist and demonstrates why he is to be praised. That is what we, as God's saints, are. We are a work of the divine Artist who makes us His divine work so that we show forth His praise.

Second, we are a divine work of art "in Christ Jesus." Christ Jesus and His people are one work of art, planed in eternity, prepared in the cross of Christ, painted throughout history, finished in all its glory in heaven.

Third, the purpose God has in mind in preparing this masterpiece of the church in Christ is so that the church can do good works: "Created in Christ Jesus unto good works."

These good works are "before ordained". That is, every good work each saint does is determined for him by God in His eternal counsel before the creation of the world. This is possible because Christ merited them. Our good works are God's gift, merited by Christ, graciously given. Good works are part of our salvation.

Finally, even the fact that we do these good works is ordained by God from all eternity. He gives us the privilege, the blessings, the power to do that which Christ merited for us.

And these good works, a part of God's masterpiece, are to the praise and the glory of the divine Artist. God is praised for our good works, because God gave them to us to show His power and grace.

"Do you want to talk about works?" says Paul; "These are our good works. Where is the merit?"

We ought to thank God for the good works we do.

June 16 – LD 24, Day 6: Good Works, The Fruit of Justification
by Prof Herman Hanko

Read: Romans 6

Never, never ought we to make our good works the ground or reason for our justification. Many may do that very thing, as they have done it throughout the new dispensation. But to make our works in any way a contributing factor to our salvation is to lose our salvation.

Put yourself once as standing before the judgment seat of Christ at the end of the world, where Christ sits blazing with all the holiness of God Himself, in dazzling garments of white. It is your turn to be judged as worthy or unworthy of heaven. You are commanded to produce your works, which would then be judged to determine whether you ought to go to heaven or hell.

You pull a book from your pocket and say to Christ: "On February 10, 1989 I prayed three times during the day. On June 5, 1997, I took care of one of the sick members of my church. On November 2000, I brought a cake over to a friend in the block next to ours." Do you think that Christ will order the angels to escort you into heaven?

Our best works are corrupted and polluted by sin. What then can we say about the myriads of our other works? We will, I am sure, try to hide our best works behind our backs so that Christ cannot see them.

But what about these good works? We surely do them. And we are admonished in Scripture, again and again, to do them. We do pray. We do sing praise to God. We do visit the sick. We do hate sin and struggle to walk in obedience.

Yes, we do these things, and many more. But we do them not to be justified because we do them; we do them because we are already justified. They are the fruits of justification, not the grounds.

Consider a prisoner who is put in prison for the crime of theft. He is sentenced to prison for he is guilty. So the sinner is sentenced to the prison of spiritual depravity and death because of his sin.

But someone pays the debt for the thief. He is then innocent of his crime. Can a just judge, nevertheless, keep him in prison for that crime? No, he must let the prisoner go free. So, Christ paid our debt, and we are justified; that is, we are declared by the Judge of all the earth to be innocent.

Can God then keep us in the prison of depravity and death? No! He who has justified us, now delivers us from the slavery of sin and death. That is, He sanctifies us. We are made holy as He is holy.

It takes us a long time to be made holy; all our life. Our souls are made holy when we die, and our bodies in the resurrection from the dead.

But we are holy in principle. And because we are holy in principle, we do good works. They too are of God.

June 17 – LD 24, Day 7: A Careless And Profane Christian Is Impossible
by Prof Herman Hanko

Read: Matthew 25:31-46

What about careless and profane Christians? Are there such people? Do anyone of you know of such a person? Are you such a person? Does the doctrine of justification by faith alone make you want to sin as much as you like because you are going to heaven in any case? No matter how much you sin?

I know people who do say this as an excuse for their sins. Young people are sometimes tempted to say this. They go to shows, drink too much alcohol, go to wild parties where ungodly music is played, and live as the world. When they are reprimanded for their sins, they fall back on the excuse: I am justified without my works. I am going to heaven because my sins are forgiven.

What can be said to these people? This can and must be said: If you excuse your sin because of the doctrine of justification alone, you are not a Christian, for a Christian would never say anything like that. You may claim to be a Christian. You may have been baptized. You may have gone to a Christian school. You may go to church every Lord's Day. But you are not a Christian.

Paul says the same thing in Rom 6. He has developed beyond any fear of contradiction the truth of justification by faith alone. He receives an objection: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?"

Some in Paul's day carried the whole matter to that extreme. They said, "It is better to sin wildly, for the greater sinner we show ourselves to be, the more wonderful is our justification." There was a woman who claimed to be a prophetess in the church of Thyatira who taught the same thing (Rev. 2:20-23).

But one who is a true Christian does not say these things. The reasons for this are:

First, the sinner who is justified is also sanctified, that is, made holy. A just judge does not declare a prisoner innocent and then let him stay in jail. If a man is innocent, the judge orders his release.

So God, the righteous judge, does not declare us to be without sin and then leave us in the prison of our sins; He delivers us from our sins. Depravity was the punishment for our sins; if our sins exist no longer, the punishment is taken away. We are sanctified. This is Paul's argument in Rom 6.

But there is more. The justified sinner, in his own consciousness, never can and never will, say: "Now I can sin as much as I like. I have attained justification; I can now eat and drink and be merry." That is a spiritual impossibility. The justified sinner is so overwhelmed by the wonder of God's grace in Christ that all he wants to do is please his Savior. And when he sins, he does not say, "I'm justified; it doesn't matter." He says, "Lord, Be merciful to me, a sinner."

The Second Part - Of Man's Deliverance

Of the Sacraments

Lord's Day 25

Question 65. Since then we are made partakers of Christ and all His benefits by faith only, whence doth this faith proceed?

Answer. From the Holy Ghost, who works [\[a\]](#) faith in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel, and [\[b\]](#) confirms it by the use of the sacraments.

Question 66. What are the sacraments?

Answer. The sacraments are holy visible signs and seals, appointed of 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 freely the remission of sin, and [\[c\]](#) life eternal, for the sake of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross.

Question 67. Are both word and sacraments, then, ordained and appointed for this end, that they may direct our faith to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross as the only ground of our salvation?

Answer. Yes, indeed: for the Holy Ghost teaches us in the gospel, and assures us by the sacraments, [\[d\]](#) that the whole of our salvation depends upon that one sacrifice of Christ which He offered for us on the cross.

Question 68. How many sacraments has Christ instituted in the new covenant, or testament?

Answer. [\[e\]](#) Two: namely, holy baptism and the holy supper.

[a]: [Eph. 2:8](#); [Eph. 6:23](#); [Phil. 1:29](#)

[b]: [Mat. 28:19](#); [Rom. 4:11](#)

[c]: [Gen. 17:11](#); [Rom. 4:11](#); [Ex. 12](#); [Lev. 6:25](#); [Acts 22:16](#); [Acts 2:38](#); [Mat. 26:28](#)

[d]: [Rom. 6:3](#); [Gal. 3:27](#)

[e]: [1Cor. 10:2,3,4](#)

June 18 – LD 25, Day 1: The Means of Grace
by Rev Arie den Hartog

Read: Ephesians 2: 1 to 8

I have been asked to write a series of meditations on Lord's Days 25 to 31 of the Heidelberg Catechism. The subject of this section is what has been called the 'means of grace'. Part of the reason why there is such an unusually long section in the Heidelberg Catechism on this subject is the historical fact that the truth of the sacraments was a greatly debated subject at the time of the Reformation. This debate engaged not only the church of Rome and Protestantism, but it was also between the two major branches of Protestantism, one more or less following the teachings of Martin Luther, the other those of John Calvin.

We can however learn much from the biblical teaching of this section of the Heidelberg Catechism. The whole of the catechism teaches us the wonderful truth that we are saved only by the grace of God in Jesus Christ. The grace of God comes to us through faith in Jesus Christ. We must know Him, trust in Him, and glory in Him alone as our Savior. Even our faith is a gift of God's grace. (see Eph 2: 8). It is not of ourselves that we should have something to boast in ourselves. We give thanks to God for the faith He gives us!

God uses means to work faith in our hearts. These are called 'means of grace'. These means God Himself also has given and ordained in His church.

Being saved by Jesus Christ is a great spiritual mystery and wonder. It is a mistake of some Christians however to imagine that being a Christian is merely a matter of a mystical personal experience or some vague personal relationship with Him. Faith in Jesus Christ involves knowing the truth of God revealed in Jesus Christ. Faith is knowing the fullness of the treasures of salvation which are in Him alone. We must grow in our faith by growing in the spiritual understanding of this truth and embrace it with our hearts. Faith involves growing up unto the fullness of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge as they are in Christ. We must grow up unto the stature of the full measure of the knowledge of Jesus Christ unto a perfect man, or in other words, a mature Christian. This faith, God works in us by the means He has Himself ordained and appointed in the church. See Eph 4: 11 to 16.

As Christians, we are called to confess this truth and to live by it for the glory of Jesus Christ. We do not come to know Christ Jesus through a personal quest of our own great knowledge and intellectual powers. God gives us the wisdom and knowledge of faith. He also works the conviction and assurance and comfort of faith in our hearts.

When the Bible teaches us that our faith is the gift of God, it means more than faith being given to us as merely an external gift; somewhat like a package or present that we then take with our hands and make our own. That faith is a gift of God's grace means that God actually works faith in our hearts. He does this by the mysterious and wonderful operation of His Spirit in our hearts. God works both the power to believe in our hearts and also our actual believing, by the means of grace of which Lord's Day 25 speaks.

When we experience lively and true faith in our hearts, we should thank Him for this wonderful gift. By this gift, we are spiritually united to Christ, rely on Him completely, and glory in Him alone.

June 19 – LD 25, Day 2: How God Works Faith
by Rev Arie den Hartog

Read: Ephesians 4:11 to 16

We first believe when we are regenerated by the Spirit of God. In our regeneration, God gives us the power to believe. He wonderfully changes our hearts from being unbelieving and rebellious, to being repentant and believing. God works in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, renewing our minds, and giving us new understanding so that we can receive His truth. The heart is the spiritual center of man. When God regenerates us, He gives us a new heart. He makes us willing and active in our own faith. All of these are wonderful aspects of God's work when He gives us the gift of true faith.

When we are born again, we are babes in Christ who must be fed and nourished by the Word of God. We must grow to maturity in the faith. We must be made strong and steadfast in the faith, able to face opposition and to distinguish the truth from the many false teachings that are in the world. We need to be edified, to be built up in the faith. Eph 4:13 speaks of growing up in "the stature of the fullness of Christ."

Faith is not a mere passing emotion or momentary exciting experience. Our faith must be founded on the knowledge of the truth of God. If this is not the case with us, then according to the words of the apostle in Eph 4: 14, we will always be children, "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;" To avoid this tragic end, so common in the lives of many professing Christians, we must be made strong in the faith.

The preaching of the Word is not only the means whereby we are first called to faith, it is also the means God continually uses to build us up and make us strong in our faith. We must be strong in our faith so that we might be able to endure the temptations of sins, the trials that God sends us in our lives, and doubts and fears common to the Christian life. We must be strong in the knowledge of the truth of the Word of God so that we are not deceived and led away again from the Lord. The way of the devil is to deceive and thereby to lead astray those who once believed, by leading them away from faith in God and Jesus Christ.

Our faith in God and the knowledge of His truth must equip us for a life of good works whereby we serve our Lord and glorify Him in every part of our life.

The means of grace are therefore very important for the Christian. He or she must not despise them in his/her life. If anyone does this, he/she will inevitably become weak, unstable, and vulnerable to the work of the devil to destroy him/her.

In Eph 4, we are told that the exalted Lord of His church gave to her, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. All of these men were given the solemn duty of preaching the Word of God in order to strengthen the faith of the saints of God, to equip them fully for their Christian life, and for their calling in turn to edify one another in the love of Christ, building each other up in the knowledge and love of the truth of the Word of God.

We are greatly in need of the means of grace and should attend to them faithfully, especially by going to church every Lord's Day.

June 20 – LD 25, Day 3: The Preaching of the Word as the Chief Means of Grace
by Rev Arie den Hartog

Read: Romans 10: 14 to 21

There is little understanding today of what the preaching of the Word in the church is. The preaching has been replaced in the worship services by all kinds of other things; movie shows, the artistic dance, entertainment programs enlisting popular so-called Christian rock groups, or discussion forums where everyone shares his or her own opinion about things, or simply Bible studies instead of listening to the preaching. Today, there is heavy use of modern day electronic media and things like power point presentations for many things. When these new ways of worshipping God are used, there are usually much larger audiences. There is greater interest. The opinion is out there that the very fact that there is so much greater interest in these new methods, this itself proves that these ways of doing things are much more effective and bring more results. This may make us wonder if we are still using the old and tried way of preaching, whether we should change our ways to be more effective in our modern day and time.

The new ways of worshipping God reflect little understanding of a truth that is very obvious from scripture, if one pays some attention to what scripture says. God calls His people through the preaching of the Word. The preaching is a divine institution. It is the means that God Himself uses to call His people to salvation in Jesus Christ.

The very fact that the prophets in the Old Testament, Jesus in the New Testament, and the apostles were sent out by the Lord to preach, ought to make us take notice. Why was this? This was the practice over thousands of years. In the great commission, the Lord sent His apostles to preach unto all sorts of nations and peoples. See Matt 28: 19 and 20. Each of the countries that the apostles were sent to had their own cultures. But the preaching of the gospel transcended all of these cultures. God used the preaching in all of them to call His people unto salvation. Never from age to age did the Lord change His own ordained way to save His people, nor did He change the means whereby He accomplishes this salvation.

In Rom 10 we read, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” Rom 10: 13 - 15

Paul says in I Cor 1: 23 - 25, “But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

Let us trust in God’s own way to call us to faith and build us up in the faith.

But in order to do that, we must seek out the church where there is true preaching of the gospel. And we must also understand what true preaching really is. This we will address in our next meditation.

June 21 – LD 25, Day 4: What is the Preaching?
by Rev Arie den Hartog

Read: I Corinthians 1: 23 to 31

We are saved by the power of God. We are saved through faith in Jesus Christ. Throughout all ages, God has sent out preachers of the gospel in order that men everywhere might be saved. The church has the great commission of Christ to preach the gospel. And we are saved through coming under this preaching and receiving it by a true and living faith in humility before God.

This does not mean that the mere words of a mere man can save anyone; not even the words of a popular, eloquent, or very persuasive preacher, no matter how large the audience he is able to gather. There are many popular false teachers who have large followings, sometimes all over the world, who are not God's instruments of salvation at all. These deceive many and lead many astray. Against these we must also be warned. Jesus warned many times about the many false prophets that would arise in the last days.

A true preacher is the minister of God. He stands in the service of the Word of God. He does not bring his own word. The word of a mere man does not have the power to save. The meaning of this is actually in a sense very simple. The infallible Word of God is contained in the Bible. The complete revelation of all that we need to know about God and Jesus Christ for our salvation is recorded in the Bible. The solemn duty and obligation of the preacher is simply to bring the Word of God and the Word of Christ, nothing else. Anyone called to be a preacher must devote his life to this. He must earnestly and prayerfully search what the Word of God has to say and what it truly means. The preacher must compare scripture with scripture to be sure he is bringing to the people of God only the Word of God. This alone will build them up in the faith.

True preaching is the simple, clear, and authoritative exposition and declaration of the Word of God. The preacher is called of God to his office through the faithful church of Jesus Christ. God has appointed and qualified elders in His church. One of the most important duties of these elders is to judge and guard the preaching.

Even the ordinary child of God, one who is not an elder, has the Spirit of God, and is able to judge the preaching. John tells Christians, "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things...But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." I John 2: 20 and 27.

The Christians in Berea in the days of the apostle Paul did this. They were able to judge the preaching of the greatest missionary and preacher that ever lived save Jesus Christ Himself. We read about them in Acts 17:11 "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." We all must follow this amazing example.

The Christian must place himself under the true preaching of the gospel.

The apostle Paul gives thanks to God for such true and faithful Christians. "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." I Thes 2:13

June 22 – LD 25, Day 5: The Sacraments as the Secondary Means of Grace
by Rev Arie den Hartog

Read: Romans 4: 1 to 11.

The preaching of the Word is the chief means of grace. God has added to the preaching a secondary means of grace, the two sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. There is a reason why they are properly called the secondary means of grace. The sacraments do not have any magical power in themselves to work faith. They can only strengthen the faith that by the grace of God is already in the heart of those who receive the sacraments.

One lesson we can learn about the history of the Protestant Reformation is that God used this mighty movement to teach us the right understanding and use of the sacraments. The proper administration of the sacraments is one of the marks of the true church of Jesus Christ. The church of Rome before the days of the Reformation had corrupted the sacraments. It also wrongly added five additional sacraments by its own imaginary authority. The church of Rome, especially during the middle ages, gave the sacraments a place in the church that corrupted their use in the church. Because of Rome's false and superstitious teaching regarding the sacraments, they were given a position independent of and above the preaching in the church. It was and is maintained even today by the church of Rome that the sacraments in themselves have the power to save. Preaching in the church of Rome was virtually eliminated or reduced to mere moral homilies.

Scripture teaches that the sacraments are of benefit only to believers. So true is this that, wrongful use of the sacraments adds to the condemnation of those who partake of them without repentance and faith in their hearts. Read I Cor 11: 18 - 34. The church must forbid unbelieving and unworthy people from receiving the sacraments. The sacraments must be kept holy in the church. The honor and glory of Christ is maintained when the church is faithful in this regard.

But when the holy sacraments are properly received with faith and reverence for their intended meaning, they are a great blessing to the church and great encouragement and comfort to the believer.

We limit the sacraments strictly to the two which Christ instituted in the church. Sacraments are not human inventions. They are not even mere traditions that originated from the church herself. They were given by Christ to His church. Christ Jesus Himself operates in connection with the sacraments which He Himself has ordained in the church and works in the hearts of believers through them.

We only need the two sacraments which Christ has instituted in the church because they signify and seal to us all the blessings of salvation. Baptism signifies and seals to us the washing away of all our sins. The Lord's Supper is a spiritual sign of our daily communion with Christ and of our being partakers with Christ of all the benefits which He has merited for us by His sacrifice on the cross.

If the sacraments are to be of spiritual benefit to us, we must be very careful that we do not have any superstitious ideas regarding their power and significance in our lives. We need to have a good spiritual understanding of the meaning of the sacraments. This is the reason why there was so much debate about this at the time of the Reformation and why the Heidelberg Catechism has such a lengthy section on the sacraments.

June 23 – LD 25, Day 6: The Meaning of the Sacraments
by Rev Arie den Hartog

Read: Acts 2: 37 to 47

The sacraments have often been misunderstood and misused. One of the reasons why the Reformation of the church was necessary was because of the abuse of the sacraments by the church of Rome.

It is easy to use the sacraments out of mere custom or superstition or without the proper attitude of faith and spiritual understanding. In Bible times, this was being done by the church of Corinth. The apostle Paul wrote his first letter to the church of Corinth to correct the serious abuse, especially of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. We can read about this in I Cor 11: 18 - 34. Because of the abuse of the Lord's Supper, the members of the church of Corinth who ate and drank unworthily were "eating and drinking damnation to [themselves], not discerning the Lord's body." The judgment of God even came upon the whole church. The name of Christ was being dishonored.

One of the greatest evils with regards to receiving and observing the sacraments is to treat them as though they have some inherent, mystical power in themselves. This leads to superstition and idolatrous use of the holy sacraments, which Christ has given for the worship of the one only true God and trusting in Christ, not in mere outward ceremony.

We must properly distinguish between the outward sign of the sacraments and the blessed reality they were intended to signify. These two must not be confused.

When Christ gave the sacraments to the church, He chose simple outward signs. In the case of baptism, the sign is water. In the case of the Lord's Supper, the sign is the broken bread and the poured out wine. The water in baptism signifies the precious reality of the atoning blood of Jesus Christ as the only ground of our righteousness before God. The bread in the Lord's Supper signifies our Lord's broken body sacrificed for us on the cross, and the wine signifies His precious blood which was poured out in His suffering and sacrifice for us on the cross. Only the blood of Christ could atone for our sins.

The mystery of the meaning of the sacraments is that they are visible signs of invisible spiritual realities. By these outward signs, Christ intends to strengthen our faith in Him and in His suffering and death on the cross and all the riches of salvation that we have through the perfect sacrifice of Christ.

The Lord accommodates to the weakness of our faith with regards to the hearing of the preaching of the Word. The preaching of the Word appeals to our ears. We receive the preaching through faith, by the faith which God gives us. This faith is able to receive those things which we cannot see, but God has nevertheless given to us in His Word. Peter tells us in I Pet 1: 8 - 9 that we have not seen Christ in His bodily appearance. We will not see Him until He appears again in glory at the end of the world. Yet already now, we rejoice in Christ. We cannot see the spiritual realities of salvation which we have in Christ. However, we know and glory in these blessings as we receive them by faith according as we are told of them in His Word.

In the sacraments, God gives us visible signs and seals of the grace of God in Christ. He appeals to our sight, our taste, our touch to strengthen our faith in Jesus Christ. This the Lord does in connection with the sacraments and through the work of His grace and Holy Spirit in our hearts.

June 24 – LD 25, Day 7: The Lord’s Purpose in the Sacraments
by Rev Arie den Hartog

Read: Hebrews 9: 23 to 28

The Heidelberg Catechism teaches us that both the preaching of the Word and the sacraments are ordained and appointed of God for the purpose of directing our faith to the sacrifice on the cross as the only ground of our salvation.

By His once and for all sacrifice on the cross, Jesus fully and perfectly accomplished all of our salvation. Nothing else need be or even can be added to the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ. To suggest that something needs to be added to the perfect sacrifice on the cross is really blasphemy, for this suggests that somehow the sacrifice of Christ was not sufficient, something else was needed.

One of the ways in which the sufficiency of Christ’s sacrifice has been denied in the church is through the misuse of the sacraments, a strange thing indeed. When one has a false understanding of the sacraments, especially in imagining that the sacraments have somehow in themselves the power to save us, we begin to trust in the sacraments themselves rather than Christ Jesus, the only hope of our salvation.

When God gave the two sacraments to the church, He Himself intended to direct our faith and trust in the one sacrifice of His Own dear and eternal Son on the cross, and to remind us of the absolute sufficiency of this amazing and wonderful sacrifice. The whole of our salvation was accomplished by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. This truth must be maintained in the church. God then gave the sacraments in order that by the proper use of them, we might glory in Christ Jesus alone, and find all our hope and assurance of salvation in His cross alone.

The apostle Paul wrote about the great importance of this in the book of Galatians. He makes his own confession to be our example when he writes in the concluding chapter of this book, “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” Gal 6:14.

The proper use of the sacraments involves then the important issue of glorying in Christ alone and our trusting in none other than in the cross of Christ for our salvation. No wonder the great men through whom God brought about the Reformation of the Church were so earnest and zealous about the proper use of the sacraments and why there was such a lengthy debate regarding the proper administration of the sacraments. As we said in an earlier meditation, this explains why there is such a lengthy section in the Heidelberg Catechism on the sacraments.

Let me offer one closing thought. The proper use of the sacraments is maintained in the church when the proper relationship between the preaching of the Word and the observance of the sacraments is maintained. The sacraments should not be administered independently from the church and the preaching of the Word. Whenever the sacraments are being administered, the preaching of the Word continually explains to the church the true meaning of the sacraments. The church must never be confused about this.

The Second Part - Of Man's Deliverance

Of Holy Baptism

Lord's Day 26

Question 69. How art thou admonished and assured by holy baptism, that the one sacrifice of Christ upon the cross is of real advantage to thee?

Answer. Thus: That Christ appointed [a] this external washing with water, adding thereto this [b] promise, that I am as certainly washed by his blood and Spirit from all the pollution of my soul, that is, from all my sins, as I am [c] washed externally with water, by which the filthiness of the body is commonly washed away.

Question 70. What is it to be washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ?

Answer. It is to receive of God the remission of sins freely, for the sake of Christ's blood which He [d] shed for us by His sacrifice upon 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 [e] lead holy and unblamable lives.

Question 71. Where has Christ promised us, that he will as certainly wash us by His blood and Spirit, as we are washed with the water of baptism?

Answer. In the institution of baptism, which is thus expressed: [f] "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost [g]." "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 [h] washing of regeneration, and the washing [i] away of sins.

[a]: [Mat. 28:19](#); [Acts 2:38](#)

[b]: [Mark 16:16](#); [Mat. 3:11](#); [Rom. 6:3](#)

[c]: [Mark 1:4](#); [Luke 3:3](#)

[d]: [Heb. 12:24](#); [1Pet. 1:2](#)

[e]: [John 1:33](#); [Rom. 6:4](#); [Col. 2:11](#)

[f]: [Mat. 28:19](#)

[g]: [Mark 16:16](#)

[h]: [Tit. 3:5](#)

[i]: [Acts 22:16](#)

**June 25 – LD 26, Day 1: Baptism Instituted by the Lord
by Rev Arie den Hartog**

Read Matthew 28: 16 - 20.

The sacraments are the precious gifts of Christ to His church. They are to be used with understanding of what they mean for the confirmation and assurance of believers and members of the church.

The very fact that our Lord Himself gave the sacraments to the church is of great significance. They were not mere inventions of men or even traditions begun in history by the church. Exactly for this reason, they are so significant. Even today, Christ by His grace and Spirit blesses His beloved church and her believers through the sacraments.

The first of the sacraments that Christ gave to the church is the sacrament of baptism. Baptism in its simple meaning, is the sign and seal of the washing away of our sins through the precious blood of Jesus Christ offered on the cross for us.

Already in the Old Testament, there were many ceremonies that involved cleansing. Some of these involved the washing with water, and others the sprinkling of the blood of bulls and goats. All these ceremonies testified to believing Israel that there could be no approach to the holy God except that first of all, our sins are dealt with, atoned for and washed away. We are always sinning, and every time we approach God to worship Him, we must be cleansed of our sins.

John the Baptist, we believe, under the direction of the Lord, took the Old Testament ceremonies of cleansing and made them the sign of his preaching. John the Baptist preached that the kingdom of God was now at hand, because Jesus the Son of God was come into the world. John was appointed of God to be the forerunner of Jesus. Jesus, through all of His ministry, His cross and resurrection, exaltation and return, would bring in the kingdom of God. Entrance into that kingdom is only by repentance and the forgiveness of sins. John preached the great urgency of repentance. Those who did repent and believed the message concerning the kingdom preached by John were baptized in the river Jordan as the blessed sign of the forgiveness of their sins.

The ministry of John the Baptist came to its climax when on a certain day, Jesus stood in the audience of John while John was preaching. John then declared to the people, "Behold, the lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world."

The next time Jesus was in the audience of John, Jesus came forward to be baptized of John. This was a great surprise for John. But Jesus told John, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness" Matt 3:15.

The amazing fact that Jesus came forward to be baptized was a sign of the truth that Jesus accepted from God the Father the fearful reality that only He could make atonement for the sins of His people through the shedding of His own blood on the cross. There was no other way that we could become the citizens of the kingdom of God except through the washing away of our sins. The ceremonies of the Old Testament, no matter how many times they were repeated over and over again, could not themselves cleanse God's people from their sins. These ceremonies were only types and pictures of a greater sacrifice which needed to be made. There was the need of a greater sacrifice. Jesus, the Lamb of God, alone could make that sacrifice.

Our baptism is a sign of this amazing truth!

June 26 – LD 26, Day 2: The Baptism of Jesus and the Institution of Baptism
by Rev Arie den Hartog

Read: John 1: 29 - 34

It is amazing that Jesus Himself was also baptized. The reason for this was due to the fact that Jesus could enter into His kingdom only through the sacrifice of Himself on the cross for the sins of His people.

When Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan River, God gave two wonderful signs. There was a voice from God the Father which said, "This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." The second amazing thing that took place was the descending of the Spirit of God upon the Lord Jesus under the visible sign of a dove. Both of these signs had great meaning. The baptism of Jesus marked the beginning of His public ministry. From the very beginning of His public ministry, Jesus had the testimony of God that He is the beloved Son of God. Jesus, the Son of God in our human nature, performed all of His work by the Spirit of God that came upon Him.

Jesus Himself made baptism a sacrament when He gave the great commission to His disciples after His resurrection, and just before His ascension into heaven.

The Lord commanded His disciples to preach the gospel to all nations of the world after His ascension. (See Matt 28: 19 - 20) The disciples were commanded to teach men all the things which He had taught them during the whole of His earthly ministry. By learning the truth of the Lord, men and women from all nations would themselves become disciples, followers of Jesus. Then He commanded His disciples to baptize whoever believed.

No one could be baptized until they first had heard the gospel preached to them. The Lord sent His disciples to preach. He continues to command the church today to preach the gospel. The preaching of the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Through instruction in the truth, the elect of God become the disciples of Jesus.

The preaching of the gospel continues to equip God's people for Christian living. The preaching of the gospel equips God's people to be the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Word of God must be their guide and encouragement in their lives. So the church must preach extensively and continually all that Christ commanded. We must hear the Word of Christ over and over again and learn it more and more deeply.

We are also to be encouraged in our faith by our baptism. Our baptism is a sign that we belong to the Lord Jesus Christ and that He will be with us to the end of the world. See Matt 28:20.

It is clear from the book of Acts that the apostles of Jesus clearly understood the Lord's commission to preach and to baptize. On the day of Pentecost, 3000 came to the knowledge of the truth of Jesus Christ and were baptized, and then were added to the church. In the book of Acts, there are numerous examples of baptism following the preaching. When the gospel was explained to the Ethiopian eunuch by Philip the Evangelist, God worked faith in his heart.

When Philip and the Ethiopian came to a body of water, this man earnestly asked, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" And Philip said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." See the amazing account of this in Acts 8. More such amazing accounts followed in the book of Acts.

June 27 – LD 26, Day 3: Baptism in the Name of the Blessed Triune God
by Rev Arie den Hartog

Read: Matthew 28: 16 - 20

We are struck by the fact that our Lord commanded that baptism should be done in the name of the blessed Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The only true baptism is the baptism that is performed in the name of the Trinity.

We also read in the Word of God that at times, baptism is done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. On the day of Pentecost, Peter commanded believers to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. See Acts 2: 38. The meaning of “in the name of Jesus Christ” is that baptism must be done by the authority of the Lord Jesus. Our baptism means that we become members of Christ and receive all spiritual blessings from Him.

In time however, the formula that has commonly been used for baptism was the one Jesus gave to us in the great commission. Baptism in the name of the triune God puts on the foreground the greatest mystery of the Godhead. The one only true and living God Who is absolutely one in His being, is at the same time three in His persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. From the beginning, we must know and confess this truth about God’s triune being even though this truth is at once also a mystery far beyond our comprehension. We should not be troubled by this if we know that God in His infinite being is so much greater than we can fully know. If this were not true, we would be equal with God and God would not be God.

It is clear that this three-person God is one God only and not three gods. For this reason, the baptism formula uses the word ‘name’ in the singular.

All three persons are involved in all of God’s works of creation, providence and redemption. Without a God who is the eternal Father, there could never have been the great demonstration of the love of God by which our salvation was accomplished. This love was revealed in the highest sense when God gave us His own dear Son to be the propitiation for our sins. See I John 4: 8 - 10. Jesus, the Son of God, saves us by sending into our hearts the Spirit of God, the third person of the triune God.

Baptism is a sign that we are incorporated into the covenant fellowship of the blessed triune God.

The liturgy commonly used for baptism in Reformed Churches has a beautiful statement regarding the trinity in connection with our baptism. Let me quote this in the conclusion of today’s meditation:

When we are baptized in the name of the Father, God the Father witnesseth and sealeth unto us, , that He doth make an eternal covenant of grace with us, and adopts us for His children and heirs, and therefore will provide us with every good thing, and avert all evil or turn it to our profit. And when we are baptized in the name of the Son, the Son sealeth unto us that He doth wash us in His blood from all our sins, incorporating us into the fellowship of His death and resurrection, so that we are freed from all our sins and counted righteous before God. In like manner, when we are baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost assures us, by this holy sacrament, that He will dwell in us and sanctify us to be members of Christ, applying unto us that which we have in Christ, namely, the washing away of our sins and the daily renewing of our lives...

The reader of this meditation is encouraged to look up several passages of scripture which are the basis of the truth of this statement in the liturgy, such as Romans 6: 1 - 11 and Colossians 2: 10 - 13.

June 28 – LD 26, Day 4: Baptism With the Spirit of Jesus Christ
by Rev Arie den Hartog

Read: Matthew 3: 1 - 11

During his ministry, John the Baptist made this prophecy concerning Jesus: “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:” Matt 3:11. This prophecy was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. Pentecost was actually the work of the exalted Lord Jesus Christ. He poured out His Spirit on His church. Jesus received the Spirit from the Father, and then Jesus from His throne in the heavens “shed forth” His Spirit on His church. This was a once and for all, never to be repeated event. This is how Peter in Acts 2 explains the wonder of Pentecost to the multitudes gathered in Jerusalem. See Acts 2: 33.

Pentecost was the baptism of the church by the Spirit of Jesus Christ. This was the beginning of the New Testament Age. It was a very dramatic and wonderful event! It happened not only according to the prophecy of John the Baptist, but also according to the promise of Jesus.

Jesus gave His disciples the power to preach by sending them His Spirit. By the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the disciples could understand the wonderful works of God and the mysteries of salvation in Jesus Christ. They could then understand as never before, what it meant that Jesus is the Son of God, why He had to die on the cross and why He also arose again after His crucifixion. They could understand the prophecies of scripture about the exaltation of Christ and His glorious return at the end of the ages. With understanding of these things, they could then preach with boldness and power.

The Spirit of Jesus Christ was also poured out on those who believed at the preaching of the apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost. When they were deeply moved by the truth of Christ and brought to repentance, they asked Peter what they must do. And Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” On the days of Pentecost, when the Spirit was given, 3000 were added to the church.

From this history in the book of Acts, we can conclude that water baptism is a sign of being baptized with the Spirit. This is further explained by several passages later in the letters of the apostles. Every believer receives the baptism of the Spirit when he or she is born again of the Spirit of God. Water baptism and Spirit baptism are not to be wrongly separated. The right understanding of the relationship of these two is that water baptism is the outward sign of having received the Spirit of Jesus Christ. This is one of the beautiful meanings of baptism. It is a sign of having received the Spirit of Christ.

Every believer receives the fullness of the Spirit when he or she is regenerated. They need not tarry for a so-called second baptism. All the blessings of salvation in Jesus Christ are given by the Spirit of Christ to believers. Our water baptism is a wonderful outward sign and seal of this.

June 29 – LD 26, Day 5: The Meaning of Our Baptism
by Rev Arie den Hartog

Read: Acts 22: 1 to 16

The simple but wonderful meaning of our baptism is that it signifies and seals unto us the washing away of our sins by the blood of Jesus Christ. The expression 'blood of Jesus' does not mean that we must be literally washed by the blood of Jesus. Rather, the blood of Jesus signifies the suffering and atonement of Christ by His precious sacrifice on the cross. It calls to mind the obedience and love of this sacrifice and all the shame, agony and suffering involved in this sacrifice of Jesus for us. As earthly water washes away the filth of the body, so the blood of Jesus washes away the guilt and corruption of our sins.

When Jesus gave us the sacraments, He gave very simple and plain signs, easy to understand. No one, not even the church, should add to the simple sacraments, any ritual or ceremony of their own devising. Such additions to the sacrament which Christ gave us simply obscure its simple and beautiful meaning.

The Heidelberg catechism has one of the best statements of any confession explaining the meaning of baptism. To the question, "What is it to be washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ?", the catechism gives the answer, "It is to receive of God the remission of sins freely, for the sake of Christ's blood which He shed for us by His sacrifice upon 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."

The simple meaning of baptism is that it signifies and seals to us that all our sins have been washed away by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. Our sins have two aspects. The guilt of our sins that make us worthy of condemnation has been atoned for by the satisfaction of Christ. Also, the corruption or spiritual defilement of our sins is washed way by the Spirit of Christ. We are made holy before God.

All our sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ, both our original sin which we inherited from our fallen parents, and sins which we commit personally every day. Every sin that we commit all our life long is washed away by the blood and Spirit of Jesus Christ. The church of Rome teaches that only original sin and sins committed before baptism are washed away by baptism. The church of Rome has a very wrong understanding of baptism. Because of what she believes, she had to invent other sacraments which the Lord Himself never instituted in the church, to deal with sins committed after baptism. Because of this false idea, the church of Rome teaches her members that they still have to satisfy for sins not washed away by the blood of Christ. After death, they will be tormented for a time in purgatory before they can go to heaven. By this doctrine, the church of Rome held the saints of God captive in terror and at the same time compelled them to give money to the church to escape the torments of purgatory.

The Reformed Church restored the gospel truth concerning the meaning of baptism. This truth is that baptism signifies that **all** our sins are forever washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ. We therefore have peace with God and can die in great and blessed comfort. No additional sacrament is needed as a sign of atonement for sins committed after our baptism, for baptism is the sign of Christ that He has washed away all our sins.

June 30 – LD 26, Day 6: Baptism Has an Even Richer Meaning
by Rev Arie den Hartog

Read Romans 6: 1 - 6

From question and answer 70 of the Heidelberg Catechism we can learn what scripture teaches about the rich meaning of our baptism. It would be good if you could read this question and answer again before you read this meditation.

There are several beautiful aspects of the meaning of baptism all clearly taught in the Word of God.

First, baptism is a sign of our new birth. Our baptism is a sign that we have received the Spirit of Christ, and by His power we are made alive from the dead and made new creatures in Christ. (See Matt 3:11, Rom 6:4) Water baptism is a sign of our spiritual baptism. We disagree with the teaching of the charismatics who claim that a born-again Christian is in need of a second baptism. According to this teaching, there is a need to be baptized a second time by the Spirit. We do not believe scripture teaches two baptisms. Rather, water baptism is a sign of having been 'baptized by the Spirit'. Our one baptism is a sign that when we were born again, we received the fullness of the Spirit. There is no need for another baptism. All the blessings of Christ have been given to us by His Spirit, of which our water baptism is a sign. Baptism is a sign that the fullness of the Spirit of Christ was given to us.

Secondly, baptism is a sign of our being members of Christ and of our mystical spiritual union with Him. Rom 6, that we asked you to read for this meditation, speaks of our being 'baptized into Christ Jesus.' Baptism is a sign that we belong to Him. We were purchased by His precious blood to be His own. We are mystically united to Christ.

Thirdly, and related to what was said above, our baptism is a sign that our old sinful nature was crucified with Christ, so that now we no longer serve sin. The dominion of sin over us has been destroyed by the power of the cross of Jesus Christ. According to Rom 6, we are therefore also raised with Christ unto newness of life. Our baptism is a sign of the new life we have in Christ.

Fourthly, water baptism is a sign of our being baptized by the Spirit of Christ into the membership of His body, called the Church. I Cor 12: 13 speaks of this. So, our baptism is a sign that we belong to the church of Jesus Christ, which is spiritually the body of Christ. We must also serve her, as members of the body serve the whole body.

We are living members of the church whom Christ Himself has saved and gathers and keeps in the world. Each of us have a place and calling in this church. The one same Spirit of Christ has given to every member of the church his or her particular calling.

Finally, our baptism is a sign that we have an obligation to live as Christians. The life of the Christian is called a new and holy life. The Christian life is one lived by the power of the Spirit which we have received from Christ. This means that we are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. We are called to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Christ in our lives. We deny the meaning of our baptism when we fail to do this. On the other hand, we are not to despair at the difficulty of Christian living. Christ has given us His Spirit. We are called to walk in the Spirit and to live by the Spirit, and so bring forth the fruits of true Christian living. See Gal 5: 22 - 26 which speaks of the fruit of the Spirit that we must bring forth.

July 1 – LD 26, Day 7: Baptism Unto A New, Holy and Unblamable Life
by Rev Arie den Hartog

Read: Romans 6: 1 - 13

One of the many facets of the meaning of our baptism is that we are by the grace and Spirit of Christ baptized unto a new and holy life. This is the teaching of the passage from God's Word which you were asked to read from Rom 6.

Our baptism is a sign of our mystical union with Christ. Christ is our legal and representative head. This in part is the meaning of the truth that He is our Lord. God laid upon Christ the guilt of our sins according to which we stand condemned before the just and holy God of heaven and earth. Jesus satisfied for all of the guilt of our sins through His death on the cross. We are also made spiritually one with Christ. Christ has given to us His Spirit when we were born again. Of this, baptism is the sign. The power of the Spirit of Christ is the power of Christian living.

By the Spirit of Christ, we are made new creatures. Our old man of sin, representing the old sinful nature that we all inherited from our fallen parents, was crucified with Christ. It was put to death at the cross of Christ.

We still have the remnants of our old sinful nature. Our old sinful nature is our corrupt and sinful nature out of which arises all kinds of sinful, corrupt thoughts, lusts and evil passions, such as unclean thoughts, thoughts of pride, hatred and envy, covetousness and worldliness. As long as we are still in the body of sin, we still struggle with these evil inclinations. We must resist these sinful inclinations and strive to overcome them and put them entirely away. Christian living involves an ongoing spiritual battle. This battle is not only with the devil, and the temptations of the ungodly world we live in, but also with the remnants of our own sinful nature.

However, thanks be to God, we have been delivered from the bondage of sin because our old sinful nature was crucified with Christ. Therefore sin can no longer have dominion over us. We have been freed from the slavery of sin. We could never have conquered sin in our own strength. Christ has given to us the victory over sin.

Our baptism is also a sign that we have the new life of Christ in us. The new life of Christ is the principle in us of love for God, and desire after holiness. Because of the new man in Christ, we delight in the law of God in our inner man, desiring to do that which is pleasing to God in obedience and service to God. Christ Himself gave us this new life. He works that new life in us more and more. For this, we are continually thankful to God. The Christian life is one of complete reliance on Christ, trusting in Him and seeking daily His grace and Spirit, and glorying in Him as our Lord.

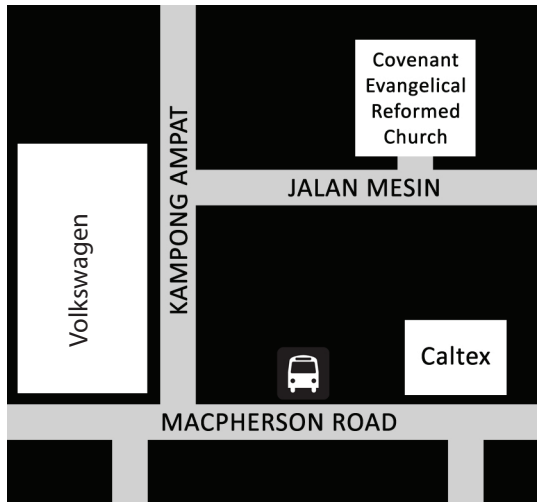
That Christ gives us the new life does not exclude our own will and efforts. The Reformed believer confesses that his or her life is in Christ Jesus. This does not mean that we are passive in the new life. The new life of Christ makes us ready and willing to serve Christ and live unto Him. Read again Lord's Day one of the Heidelberg Catechism, where we are told that the comfort of belonging to Christ is also that He makes us ready and willing to live unto Him.

In every area of our life, our personal life, our life in society, and our life in the church of Christ which is His body, we are called to serve and glorify Him.



COVENANT EVANGELICAL REFORMED CHURCH

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