

**BLESSEDNESS OF THE TRUTH: THANKFUL LIVING**

**Intro:** - We come in this third section of the Catechism to what the baptism form calls "our part in the covenant."

- The blessedness of the truth taught by the Catechism treats the truth of Scripture from the viewpoint of the Christian's experience.
- The Catechism does not simply jump to the 10 commandments, but approaches the Christian's life from the perspective of thankfulness.

**I. THE IDEA OF THANKFUL LIVING:**

- A. The Catechism Instructor begins this third section of the Catechism with the word "**since**" (Q. 86).
1. Already the instructor has explained that we are saved purely by grace through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.
  2. So immediately we repudiate the idea that our good works in any way contribute to or are in order to be saved.
  3. But we are not careless Christians, who believe that it does not matter what we do in our lives since we are saved.
  4. Good works must be present, or we are not saved. Good works are the fruit of salvation.
  5. None are saved who deliberately continue in sin. Where there is no fruit, there is no life of Christ is such a one.
- B. In his answer, the Catechism Instructor speaks of "**our gratitude to God for his blessings.**"
1. A life of thankfulness is based on the understanding of what God has so graciously given us (the viewpoint of Ps. 116).
  2. Gratitude is NOT an attempt to remunerate God. That would be not only impossible but phariseeism.
  3. We have nothing, and owe everything to the God of our salvation. (Eph. 2:10)
  4. When we show gratitude to God in our good works, we give thanks for the very gratitude that we express.
  5. Gratitude consists in showing forth the glorious praises of him that called us out of darkness into his marvelous light!
  6. The contents of this gratitude are that he alone is God, our covenant God who chose and redeemed us!
- C. In his answer, the Catechism Instructor speaks of a "**testifying by the whole of our life.**"
1. What a beautiful phrase this is a life: it is a Christian world-view!
  2. We show our gratitude by our spoken word: prayer, singing, worship, teaching our children in the home & those around us.
  3. This not merely a matter of compulsion, but desire and love of God (vs.1).
  4. But we show gratitude not only in word but by our actions.
  5. The life of the gratitude is a life of service (Ps. 116:16), serving God in obedience (Ps. 119:11,12).
  6. Our whole life must assume the form of the antithesis for we cannot serve two masters.

**II. THE NECESSITY OF THANKFUL LIVING:**

- A. Good works are necessary. The question is why?
1. The life of the Christian is not merely getting by, but a life of action.
  2. This fruit of our salvation is inevitable. There is a "must" in our doing good works (Q. 86).
  3. The essence of salvation is not merely that we are forgiven or that we go to heaven.
  4. But there is a wonderful glory in revealed in us. We are made new creatures refashioned in Christ's image!
  5. Justification is of necessity followed with sanctification. We are made, (and desire to be) a holy people.
  6. There is a must, a may, an ability, and a desire to show our gratitude to God in the way of obedience.
- B. Christ by his death forgives us and delivers us from the bondage of sin.
1. There are two aspects to sin: the guilt of sin and the power of sin.
  2. Christ by his death has removed the guilt of our sin, so that we are richly forgiven.
  3. But Christ by his death has also delivered us from the power of sin, having defeated sin, Satan, and death on the cross.
  4. Christ has removed the shackles & bondage of sin. Set free: not to wallow again in sin, but to live in freedom.
- C. Christ by his resurrection renews through his Spirit.
1. Renewed, given life from above, we have a purpose: servants of God (vs.16)
  2. Restored to us is the obligation to do good works as servants of righteousness, an obligation that is not relinquished.
  3. Restored to us is the privilege to do good works. It is a delight. It makes us happy to walk this way w/ our whole heart.
  4. We are restored the ability to do good work. In Christ Jesus we can do all things! Our depravity replaced.
  5. Restored to us is a free and willing choice to do good works. We love God's law, long to do good in the inner man.

**III. THE PURPOSE OF THANKFUL LIVING:**

- A. The glory and praise of God.
1. This is not merely a purpose, or even the chief purpose, but the sole purpose of good works.
  2. God's glory is the purpose of all things, and all the works of his hands must praise him.
  3. This is especially true of God's work of salvation.
  4. The other two purposes mentioned under this Lord's Day also fall under this grand purpose!
- B. God glorified: "that everyone may be assured in himself of his faith, by the fruits thereof."
1. Notice, it is NOT that good works assure faith. Then at times we might be mightily disappointed.
  2. The ground of our assurance is always God's gracious and unchangeable election.
  3. But good works are the fruits of faith and by these fruits we may be assured of our faith.
  4. The Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.
- C. God glorified: "others gained to Christ." Texts used:
1. I Pet. 3:1,2 speaks of wives in the home with unbelieving husbands. God is pleased to use this behavior with the gospel.
    - A Christian walk within our covenant homes is vital for our children and for others to witness.
  2. Matt. 5:16: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father...in heaven."
    - This might mean that God uses our good works to bring the ungodly to Christ.
    - This also mean that heathen see our works and hate them and persecute us, and in their rebellion God will be glorified.
  3. Rom. 14:19 speaks of good behavior together as God's saints edifying, building up one another in our faith.