

Doing Good Works

Heidelberg Catechism

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Our Scripture reading is Luke 7:36-50. Luke 7:36,

36 And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. 37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, 38 And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. 39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. 40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. 41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. 42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? 43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. 44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. 45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. 46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. 48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. 49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? 50 And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

Thus far we read the divinely inspired, infallible, sacred Scripture which is the only rule for our faith and life.

It is on the basis of this passage of God's word and the whole of the Bible, that we find the instruction of Lord's Day 32 of the Heidelberg Catechism this morning. Lord's Day 32 which comes under the heading, "The Third Part of Thankfulness."

Q. 86. Since then we are delivered from our misery, merely of grace, through Christ, without any merits of ours, why must we still do good works?

Because Christ, having redeemed and delivered us by His blood, also renews us by His Holy Spirit, after His own image; that so we may testify, by the whole of our conduct, our gratitude to God for His blessings, and that He may be praised by us; also, that every one may be assured in himself of his faith, by the fruits thereof; and that, by our godly conversation, others may be gained to Christ.

Q. 87. Cannot they then be saved, who, continuing in their wicked and ungrateful lives, are not converted to God?

By no means; for the Holy Scripture declares that no unchaste person, idolater, adulterer, thief, covetous man, drunkard, slanderer, robber, or any such like, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Beloved congregation in our Lord Jesus Christ, those whom God justifies, he sanctifies; and those whom God redeems, he renews; and those whom God delivers from the guilt of sin, changing their status so that they do not have to tremble before him but enjoy peace with him, he also purges from the pollution of sin so that they hate their evil works and walk in good works.

The saved believing child of God must, can, and will live in good works. This is illustrated very powerfully in the passage of sacred Scripture that we read this morning. Jesus once came as a guest into the house of a Pharisee for a meal. While he was there, a sinful woman walked through the door and came into the house. The woman was a sinner. Now, everyone is a sinner but she was a sinner in the sense that she was known by everyone in the city to be a particularly immoral woman. What exactly was her sin we are not told, but everyone knew this woman was a sinner. She's the kind of woman that a pious man or woman does not want to be around like healthy people do not want to be around lepers.

Into the house she came and she came to the feet of Jesus and began crying, watering his feet with her tears, and wiping his feet with her hairs, and kissing his feet, and then pouring her expensive ointment from the alabaster box all over Jesus' feet.

The host, Simon, objected to this act and Jesus' reception and approval of it as proof positive that Jesus was not and could not be the Messiah because if Jesus were the Messiah, he would have known the woman was a sinner and he never would have let her touch and defile him.

Jesus put Simon, the Pharisee, in his place with a parable and said that if there is a debtor who owes a debt he cannot pay and the creditor freely cancels that debt, the man will be thankful and he will love the creditor. But if there's a man who has an enormous debt that he cannot pay and the creditor freely cancels that debt, that former debtor will be very thankful to the creditor and he will have much love for the creditor.

"Now, Simon," says Jesus, "what happened when I came into your house? You didn't even perform the basic and common acts of kindness and hospitality. You didn't even provide me with a little bowl of water for the washing of my feet. This woman, she's been washing my feet with her tears and her hair. Simon, you didn't even give me a customary kiss of greeting. This woman has not stopped kissing my feet since she came into the house. Simon, you didn't even provide for me a little bit of cheap olive oil for my head. She's been anointing my feet with expensive ointment from her alabaster box. Who has really been forgiven? Who really is saved? And who really does love me? Are not these good works of love from this woman the proof she has been saved? She has been forgiven? And she loves me? And is not your coldness and your criticism and your refusal even to perform the basic acts of kindness the proof you are not saved? You do not have forgiveness? You do not love me? Those who are saved, like this woman, they must, they can, and they will do good works of love."

Verse 47, Jesus says, "Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven." "Are forgiven" is not in the original in the present tense as it appears in our English translation, it is in what is called the perfect tense and, therefore, is to be understood this way, "Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, have been and still are forgiven." And Jesus' point is that she was not first forgiven when she came into the house and when Jesus said, according to verse 48, "Thy sins are forgiven," but this woman came to the house already having a sense of the forgiveness of Jesus. "Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, have been and still are forgiven; for she loved much."

Jesus with that statement is not teaching that the ground and basis for the woman's forgiveness is her love and the good works that come out of her love. Love is never the basis for forgiveness. Forgiveness or justification comes by faith and by faith alone, apart from any works and any love, and the good works of love from the sinner, and Jesus makes that very very plain with his last word in verse 50 where he says, "Thy faith," not thy love, not the good works of thy love, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

When Jesus says in verse 47, "for she loved much," he's not explaining the basis for her forgiveness, he is stating there the proof of her forgiveness. She is forgiven. She is definitely forgiven. How do you know that? Here's the proof, "for she loved much." Love

is the fruit of forgiveness, the fruit of justification. It is, therefore, the proof and the evidence that one has been forgiven and that's Jesus' point.

Those who have been forgiven much, they love much and do good works much. But to those who have been forgiven little, they love little. And those to whom nothing is forgiven, like the self-righteous Simon the Pharisee who does not trust in Jesus for forgiveness but he trusts in his own good works and how he's so much better than sinners like the woman, they do not have forgiveness and, therefore, they do not love at all, and they do not perform good works of love for Jesus. How ironic it is that the Pharisee who boasts in his good works and prides himself in all of his good works, is actually bankrupt of good works and has to be chided by Jesus for not doing good works.

The incident illustrated here before us in Luke 7 is an illustration of the truth of Lord's Day 32, that believers must, can, and will do good works. If we do not do good works of love, that's the proof we have not been forgiven. All those who have been forgiven, like the woman, who have been justified by grace through faith, they love their Savior. They must, they can, and they will do good works of love and gratitude for their deliverance.

Let's turn to a consideration of Lord's Day 32 this morning under the theme "Doing Good Works," considering three things: first, the necessity; second, the purpose; and third, the benefit.

The Heidelberg Catechism is a Catechism. Let's remember that. It is a Catechism and so let's picture a Catechism class this morning full of Reformed catechumens and there are two oddities in the Reformed Catechism class, there is in that class, first of all, a Romish, Arminian, works righteousness sort of fellow; there is also in that Catechism class, an Antinomian fellow. The teacher of the class is Mr. Heidelberger. He is giving the instruction to the Catechism class.

Lord's Day 32 Question 86 can be understood as the sincere and honest question of one of the Reformed Catechism students in the class. He's been carefully listening to the instructor and now he has an honest question and he raises his hand asking the teacher, "Since then we are delivered from our misery, merely of grace, through Christ, without any merit of ours, why must we still do good works?" That question is summarizing everything the teacher has taught in the second section of the Catechism which is entitled, "Deliverance," namely, that we are delivered; we are forgiven; we are justified. We receive the blessings of salvation. We are taken into the enjoyment of covenantal communion with God by grace and by grace alone, through Christ and through Christ alone, without any merit of ours but only through the merits of Jesus Christ. Especially in that second section of the Catechism in Lord's Days 23 and 24, it was emphasized that our justification, our status before God, our obtaining of the right to eternal life, our coming into possession of all of the blessings of salvation, is by faith and by faith alone apart from works. In fact, it was emphasized that in connection with justification, not only are we not justified by our works but we repudiate our works. All of our works. Our good, Spirit-wrought works that were performed by grace, we repudiate them all as any basis for our salvation.

The Catechism student has been carefully taking notes. He's been listening. By grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. It's the clear teaching of the Bible. The Reformed Catechism student, he embraces that truth of sovereign grace as the truth of the Bible, but he does have a question now: if our deliverance is of mere grace, through Christ, without any merit of ours, if salvation is not obtained, if none of the blessings of salvation are acquired by works, good works, good, Spirit-wrought works, then what is the necessity of doing good works? If works do not save, can there be any compelling reason to do good works? That's the sincere question of the catechumen. Why must we still do good works if they do not save us?

The Romish, Arminian, works righteousness sort of fellow sitting in the class is now smirking deviously, kind of like the Pharisees did when one of their own would put what they thought was a really tricky question to Jesus, and he's thinking now, the teacher is stumped. He will never be able to answer this question. If he is an honest man, he will have to retract everything he's taught us for the last number of months; what he calls, the whole second section of his instruction will have to be undone. For you see, the Romish, Arminian, works righteousness sort of fellow, he's been taking notes all through the second section of the Catechism. He's been writing down all these lectures by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, and in big bold letters at the top of every page of his notebook he writes, "This is not true. This is contrary to the Bible and plain reason." He grinds in his agitated soul. He doesn't like coming to class and hearing by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, because he truly believes that by the operation of God's grace working in his heart through the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to perform good works and those good works align right alongside of faith as the twin instruments whereby he will acquire the blessings and favor of God. He believes that. He believes that good works are absolutely necessary for receiving the blessings of God and, therefore, it cannot be emphasized too strongly that good works are necessary. Why are they necessary? They are necessary because in the doing of good, Spirit-wrought works, we acquire some blessings and the favor of God.

Now the Reformed student raises his hand. He asks his question and the Romish, Arminian, works righteousness sort of fellow says, "Aha, great question. If the believer's good works do not contribute in some way to his deliverance, there is no necessity for doing them. If good works do not merit blessings, there is no reason to do good works. This question cannot be honestly answered."

There is an empty seat in the Catechism classroom this day because the Antinomian fellow who typically sits there, is gone. He skipped class. After completing Lord's Day 31 and the second section of the Heidelberg Catechism on deliverance by grace alone, the teacher informed the students, "Beginning next week and all the way to the end of the season, we will now take up a consideration of good works: their necessity, their possibility, their character and nature as good works of obedience to the law and prayer." And having heard that, the Antinomian says, "I am not coming to class."

He refuses to come. In fact, with his parents' encouragement, he has taken Lord's Days 32 through 52 and he's ripped them right out of his Catechism book. He's very happy to learn all about the law in the first section of the Catechism when treating misery, he is happy to learn about the law in the second section of the Catechism when it was taught that the Lord Jesus Christ came under the law and fulfilled all righteousness before the law, giving perfect obedience to God for the sake of his people, but he considers it a heinous offense against the Gospel of grace to bring again the law back into now what is called the third section of the Catechism and not only to bring it back but to treat it at length from Lord's Days 34 through 44.

He is, after all, an Antinomian, which means he is against law. He considers any talk of good works as something a believer must perform as absolutely detrimental to the doctrine of salvation by grace. He believes that teaching the law and demanding obedience to the law is taking the people of God and bringing them right back into the bondage from which Christ has set them free. He wants to hear about total depravity, he wants to hear about the law's condemnation of the sinner, he wants to hear about gracious redemption through the Lord Jesus Christ, but he wants to hear nothing about the obligation that is placed upon the sinner saved by grace to be holy before a holy God.

Being the consistent Antinomian that he is, he doesn't only skip class, he goes to hang out in the dorm on his university campus with a bunch of ungodly men and women to do a little drinking and talk about their favorite Hollywood actors and watch some profane movies. Just being consistent, he is as an Antinomian.

When the Reformed Catechism student asks his question, "If we are saved by grace, why must we still do good works?" the Antinomian says, "We do not have to do good works and you must not teach me that we must do good works, and if you do, I'm not coming to class." So he's absent.

The question still stands. Good works are those works wrought in the believer by the Holy Spirit. They proceed, says Lord's Day 33, out of a true faith. They are done according to the law of God, and they are done for the glory of God. They are good works of love for God and for Christ and for his church, like anointing Jesus' feet with ointment, good works. And good works are necessary.

Question and Answer 87 underscores their necessity. "Cannot they then be saved, who, continuing in their wicked and ungrateful lives, are not converted to God? By no means, for the Holy Scripture declares that no unchaste person, idolater, adulterer, thief, covetous man, drunkard, slanderer, robber, or any such like, shall inherit the kingdom of God." And so the question is: why we must do good works. Why must we do good works? And the answer of the teacher is very simple and short: because Christ, having redeemed and delivered us by his blood, also renews us by his Holy Spirit after his own image.

The answer is very simple but you would think that after all of the bluster of Rome in contending that the Reformed have no basis upon which to teach the necessity of good works because they deny that good works are one of the instruments for receiving

salvation. You would think that Ursinus and Olevianus under the commissioning of Frederick III in Heidelberg in 1563, they would go on at length in several Lord's Days to explain the necessity of good works and why we must do good works. But their answer is very simple and short and their answer is: because God saves us unto good works. Why must we still do good works? Because God saves us unto good works. We are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Christ not only redeems and delivers us from sin and death and hell and the power of Satan by shedding the blood of the atonement upon the cross and rising the third day, but Christ also comes by his Holy Spirit into our hearts to renew us, and he must. Redemption demands renewal even as condemnation demands punishment. In the beginning, God condemned man as a sinner and that condemnation demanded punishment so God punished man by subjecting him to the bondage of sin and Satan. Condemnation demanded punishment. Redemption demands renewal. Jesus Christ redeems us by his blood and that redemption demands renewal; that Christ also come by us into his Holy Spirit and renew us more and more so that we are conformed unto his image, so that we are freed from the bondage of sin and able to live unto God with a will inclined to God and with affections that are pure, so that we can love God and the neighbor and walk in good works. We need renewal because by nature we are God and neighbor hating malefactors. To save us, to take us by grace into his communion as the holy God, God must not only justify us, he must renew us by sending forth his Holy Spirit into our hearts, recreating us, forming us in the image of Christ so that we can be holy as he is holy.

In salvation, Jesus not only does a work for us, shedding his blood upon the cross to redeem us, to deliver us, to justify us, but he also performs a work in us, renewing us by his Holy Spirit so that we can walk in all good works. This is God's will. This is God's plan. This is God's salvation. Why must we still do good works? Why? What is the necessity of doing good works? The answer is: because God has saved us unto good works. God not only redeems us, he renew us. He not only justifies us, he sanctifies us. And that's the simple answer of the Catechism.

It is not God's will to take a sinful woman of evil works in Judea, who is maybe an unchaste woman, or an idolatrous woman, or an adulteress, or a thief, or a covetous woman, or a drunkard, or a slanderer, or a robber, or any such like, it's not God's will to take a sinful woman like that in Judea and save her simply by pardoning her, by removing her guilt, but it is his will to lay ahold of her sinful heart and to renew her according to the image of Christ so that she consciously and willingly and gratefully responds to God's gracious pardon of her by hating her past life of whatever it was: adultery, idolatry, stealing, being covetous, being a drunkard, being a slanderer, whatever it may have been, by hating that past life and by loving the Lord God and Jesus Christ and his church and walking in good works of love. That's God's will. That's how God saves. That's his plan.

So God takes his will, he takes the commandments and he writes them upon the heart of his people by the Holy Spirit so that we must do good works, we can do good works, and we will do good works. We want to do good works. He saves us unto good works. There is a kind of holy inevitability about our doing of good works for this is not the must of coercion and force where good works have to be forced out of us against our will, it's not the must of an artful contrivance. We must do good works and by the operation of the Holy Spirit within us, we can do good works, we will do good works. We, like that sinful woman pardoned by Jesus, we love to do good works. God has saved us unto good works, redeeming and renewing us. Why must we do good works? The Catechism says because Christ not only redeems us, he also renews us.

That's the teacher's answer to the student's question, Answer 86 of the Catechism, and the student may yet ask, "But why is this God's plan? Why is this his will? Why does he save us unto good works like this?" In further explaining the necessity of doing good works, the Catechism now moves to a consideration of God's purpose in renewing us. The Catechism teacher continues with his explanation that so we may testify by the whole of our conduct our gratitude to God for his blessings, and so that he may be praised by us. We must do good works as a testimony of gratitude for our salvation, and by that testimony of gratitude God will be praised.

Gratitude for the sake of God's praise. That's always the goal. That's always the aim of all things. God is God and of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory forever, amen, Romans 11:36. The reprobate wicked exists on the world. For God and for God's glory, the whole creation, the heavens, the sun, the moon, the stars, ants, alligators, camels, the whole creation exists for the glory, the praise of God's name, but especially God's elect people redeemed by grace through the blood of Jesus Christ and renewed by the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ exist fundamentally for one purpose: for God. For his glory. For his praise. And unlike the unwilling reprobate who will not praise him, and unlike the unconscious brute beast of the field who cannot consciously praise him, God's graciously saved people indwelt by the Holy Spirit willingly and consciously praise God for God is God, for who he is as God, for what he does as God.

The goal of all things is the praise of God's name and how the chief manner in which God will be praised by us, his people, is when we, by the operation of his Holy Spirit of renewal in us, willingly and consciously respond to his gracious saving of us, his redeeming of us, his delivering of us, by dedicating a life of good works unto him as the expression of our gratitude. That, especially that, praises God, when his people live for him and love to live for him, to say thanks for undeserved election; to say thanks for Jesus Christ who did come under the law on our behalf and suffered the curse and the condemnation of the law that we deserved, and who fulfilled all righteousness with respect to that law. For our blessed Jesus. For the Holy Spirit. For the church, the body of Christ, of which we are a part. To say thanks. To say thanks for the everlasting life of heaven. We dedicate our lives unto good works according to the power of God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

And that testimony of gratitude in the doing of good works is to the praise of God's great name, and that's the purpose, the purpose of good works. The purpose of God saving us unto good works is that we live in gratitude doing those good works for his praise. And that's not optional. Gratitude is not optional. Praising God, that's not optional. God redeems us, God renews us, for the accomplishing of this purpose and he comes to us and says, "You must do good works."

So we live by his power that worketh in us in all good works as gratitude for the praise of his name. If we do not do good works but continue in a wicked and ungrateful life, we will not go to heaven. That should probably be stated a little stronger lest any indolent hypocrite become too comfortable before God's word. If you do not do good works but you continue in a wicked and ungrateful life, you will not inherit the kingdom of God. That's not true because your good works obtain heaven. Perish the thought. But that's true because your good works are the proof of your conversion, your salvation, and if there is no fruit, if there are no good works, that's the evidence there is no salvation, there is no conversion, there will be no inheriting of the kingdom of heaven. And that's exactly the point of Question and Answer 87, "Cannot they then be saved, who, continuing in their wicked and ungrateful lives, are not converted to God? By no means; for the Holy Scripture declares that no," and you know the list now, all those who walk in evil works and not in good works, "they shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

How Jesus delighted in the good works of love performed by that sinner woman. Critical and hypocritical as Simon was, Jesus was well-pleased by the tears and the hairs and the ointment and the kisses because that was the woman's gratitude and that for the praise of God. Beloved, you must wash your Lord's feet and you must kiss Jesus' feet and you must pour out your most expensive ointment on Jesus' feet as the expression of your gratitude for your salvation and to the praise of God's name. And if you say, "Well, Jesus is in heaven. How do I kiss his feet?" Jesus says to you, "Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of these the least of my brethren, you've done it unto me."

Children, you must be kind one to another. That's not an option. You must be kind to each other. Church of the Lord, be hospitable and care for one another. Wash the feet of and serve willingly not only those who are your best of friends and your closest of family members and those who can easily repay you. Jesus says in another place, "Well, what is this love of the Pharisees? They love those who can repay them. But love and serve and wash the feet of those who can never repay you." When you come to worship, you must be friendly and greet one another with cordial expressions of love. You don't necessarily have to kiss someone's feet or even kiss them on the cheek, but in your heart you must be willing to do that, able to do that, because you love the brethren and the sisters of Christ.

You must love one another. That's not an option. You must love. And in the house where you live with Christ's brothers and sisters, love. Show your love even by kisses. Do you have a wife? Love her. Show her that you love her. Do you have a husband? Love him. Show him that you love him. Do you have sons and daughters? Love them. Show them that you love them. That's not optional.

And for the cause of Christ and his Gospel and his kingdom and his church the world over, take of your ointment in your alabaster box, take of your firstfruits and cheerfully give to the Lord Jesus Christ and his church. That's not an option. You must give. Why? Not to earn, not to merit, not to accomplish, not to obtain one single blessing from God, but to show that you are thankful for your salvation, for those good works are the works of gratitude and to the praise of God's name, and if anyone is a cold, unloving, highly critical, niggardly Simon, then it must be asked, "Simon, aren't you thankful? Simon, are you even saved?" For those who are forgiven much, love much. Purpose: gratitude for the praise of his name.

In still further explaining the necessity of good works, the Heidelberg Catechism class teacher moves finally to a consideration of the twofold benefit of doing good works. First, also that everyone may be assured in himself of his faith by the fruits thereof. Good works are not the basis for assurance of salvation and God be thanked that good works are not the basis and foundation for our personal assurance of salvation because we'd all be miserable young Martin Luthers. If my personal assurance of salvation, if the quieting of my conscience is based on, is founded upon, my good works of love, I would never have complete assurance and peace in my soul because I'd always fear and be confronted by that nagging question: are my works good enough and really have I done enough of them? Have I done enough works to be able to have assurance that I am saved?

Assurance of salvation belongs to true faith and assurance is not founded upon our good works, but the perfect work of Jesus Christ. My assurance is that I believe by faith Jesus Christ took all of my punishment and perfectly kept the law in my stead as I cannot do. And when the devil tempts me with doubts, we do not quickly number our works, but we look to Christ and his perfect work. Those good works, though, they do have a benefit in that they have a confirming character and confirm that we have true faith; that we have not a false hypocritical faith but a true faith. And in the way of doing good works, God grants us the enjoyment of assurance not because we do good works but it's in the way of our walking in good works that God grants the enjoyment of assurance. If you do not walk in good works of love for God, for Jesus, and for the church, but continue in a wicked and ungrateful life, you may have no assurance of salvation.

The motive, the goal, the aim, what are we always aiming at as God's graciously saved people? The chief motive in doing good works, in turning away from sin and walking in righteousness, the motive is gratitude to God that his name may be praised. God be praised. That's the motive. But God is so good that God grants a personal benefit as an additional incentive unto good works, and that is the truth that in the way of our doing of good works our faith is confirmed and we enjoy assurance of salvation.

Secondly, the benefit, says the teacher, is that by our godly conversation others may be gained to Christ. Only God converts and saves a soul. Salvation is by his work, his grace, but God may use the means of the witness of Christ and a godly life to impact a wicked heart in a positive way. Ungrateful and wicked lives drive people away from Christ. Just imagine someone coming to church where the people in the church are like Simon. The truth may be there, it may be taught, let's suppose, but the people, many of the people are

living like Simon who hosted Jesus: they are cold; they are critical; they are highly judgmental; they are niggardly; unloving. That's going to turn people around and send them right back out the door. That kind of living drives people away from Christ and his church but the teaching of the Catechism instructor in here is that by our godly conversation, by our godly conduct, by our doing of good works of love for God, for Jesus, for his church, and for all those who come across our path, God might use that to gain someone to Christ.

Grace and peace and living and dying happily in Jesus, they are so precious, so valuable to us, and we want others who lack this wonderful experience of salvation to share it with us and in the doing of good works for God's glory, there is this added incentive: others may be gained to Christ, maybe even a Roman Catholic, maybe even an Arminian, maybe even an Antinomian, who is sitting next to you somewhere in your life, and that by our godly conversation, others may be gained to Christ.

And that concludes the teacher's answer. Amen.

Let us pray.

Father in heaven, we make thee our willing choice in that we sing in the Psalms and what a wonderful thing that is, because by nature we hate thee, we despise thee, we will make the devil and the world our willing choice. We are exhorted to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling for thou dost work in us both to will and to do of thy good pleasure and thereby through thy power we do make thee our willing choice. We love thee. We hate sin. We love Christ. And what brings us greater sorrow than anything else in life in our own personal life, is that we still love sin too much and we still do not love thee as much as we should. That is truly cause for grief. Renew us, O God, according to thy promise. Not only redeem us but renew us that we may more and more be conformed to the image of our blessed Christ and that to the glory of thy name. In Jesus' name do we pray. Amen.