

Ps. 51:10-13 (LD 20, Q/A 53) "Concerning the Holy Spirit"

For the Children: It is not unusual that when mum goes away for a while – to hospital, or to visit someone overseas – dad and the kids pitch in to make the house spic and span for when she returns. They try to think of everything, so that when mum comes back, the house will be completely in order. When we add up all the things that God has done to save us, we see how much He loves us. The Lord Jesus died, rose, ascended, sits at the Father's right hand, and will come again to judge the world, for our benefit. The Holy Spirit enables us to believe, teaches us from God's Word, makes us more like Jesus, makes a church for us to join, teaches us to pray and to repent – and much more – for our benefit. All of this is by the Father's will, for our benefit, as well as for His glory. We should be very thankful! **Questions:** What are some of the main differences between Jesus' work and the Spirit's? Can we make ourselves better? Why do we need the Spirit in order for us to teach others about God?

Introduction:

First Point: What the Spirit Does

- 1) A Theology of the Spirit: The Heidelberg follows the Reformers in displaying a well-developed, Biblical theology of the Spirit's Person and work. There are at least 29 questions in the Catechism that mention the Holy Spirit. The main areas covered are: The Spirit as the 3rd Person of the Trinity; the Spirit's role in empowering Jesus' human nature; and the application of redemption. The last is very large subject, including such works as calling, regeneration, repentance and faith – which also leads to justification - assurance, comfort, illumination, sanctification, glorification, enabling prayer and creating the church – with its communion of saints. This creates an emphasis on salvation and its application, rather than on mystical or Pentecostal experience.
- 2) The Struggle with Sin: Ps. 51 concerns David's struggle with sin – something we all have to contend with. David fears that he may have the Spirit taken from him like Saul (1 Sam. 16:14). Therefore he pleads that God would not take His Spirit from him.
- 3) Works of Restoration: David's plea has to do with the application of redemption. He desires a clean heart and steadfast spirit, along with the joy of salvation and a willing spirit. These will be the result of the Spirit restoring, renewing and rebuilding him. Only God can do this. David realizes he depends entirely on the Lord for this renewal.
- 4) Internal Work: This work starts with a renewed heart and spirit – it is internal. Mere, external reform is not enough. This is the Spirit's main area of work: Christ accomplishes salvation in a legal way; He then sends His Spirit to apply it internally, in the sinner's heart and life. We need that internal work daily, since ongoing sin threatens to take away the joy of the salvation that Christ has accomplished.

Second Point: How We Respond

- 1) Teaching Others: David promises to teach other sinners about God's ways, if God sends His Spirit to restore him. Others will hear that no matter how great our sins may be, God's mercy in Christ is greater. They will see the reality of that outworked in the life of the forgiven believer.
- 2) Restoration First: However, in order to show these truths most effectively to others – when encouraging believers not to despair because of their sins, or proclaiming the Gospel to unbelievers – it is important that we have actually been restored by the Spirit ourselves. Moreover, those who hear our testimony to God's mercy cannot truly understand unless the Spirit works in them.
- 3) Praying for the Spirit's Work: We all need the Spirit's work within us in all of the areas where He applies Christ's redeeming work to us. We should therefore pray that God may send His Spirit to work within us in all of these ways.
- 4) How Much God Has Done: All the work of the Spirit in the application of redemption is an extension of Christ's work, by the Father's will. We see how much God loves His children, that each Person of the Trinity does so much to ensure that we are His and remain so.

Conclusion: