

I expect, the Lord willing, to bring several sermons on the subject of sanctification, which is the subject of the third section of our catechism, the treatment of the third section of the Apostles' Creed. God the Father and Creation, God the Son and Redemption; God the Holy Spirit and Sanctification.

The First Question of the Catechism reads: Question 1: What is your only comfort in life and in death?

Answer 1: That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death,[1] am not my own,[2] but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ,[3] who with His precious blood [4] has fully satisfied for all my sins,[5] and redeemed me from all the power of the devil;[6] and so preserves me [7] that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head;[8] indeed, that all things must work together for my salvation.[9] Wherefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life,[10] and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live unto Him.[11]

“Wherefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life,[10] and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live unto Him.[11]”

Hence, the second questions says: Q2: How many things are necessary for you to know, that in this comfort you may live and die happily?

A2: Three things:[1] First, the greatness of my sin and misery.[2] Second, how I am redeemed from all my sins and misery.[3] Third, how I am to be thankful to God for such redemption.[4]

“How I am to be thankful to God for such redemption.”

Beginning the Third Section of the Catechism [on page 97] We have Question 86, which sets the plate for the consideration of the work of the Holy Spirit in sanctification:

Q86: Since, then, we are redeemed from our misery by grace through Christ, without any merit of ours, why must we do good works?

A86: Because Christ, having redeemed us by His blood, also renews us by His Holy Spirit after His own image, that with our whole life we show ourselves thankful to God for His blessing,[1] and that He be glorified through us;[2] then also, that we ourselves may be assured of our faith by the fruits thereof;[3] and by our godly walk may win others also to Christ.[4]

You will see that the Scriptures cited for this topic are on page 98, the second of which is our text for this morning, Romans 12:1,2. You see, the Book of Romans follows the order of the Apostles Creed and the Heidelberg Catechism: God the Father and Creation; God the Son and Redemption; God the Holy Spirit and our Sanctification.

Our text read: 1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Having preached on the subject of sanctification when I went through the *ordo salutis* a while ago, these sermons will be more on the practical outworking of the Holy Spirit in the new man in Christ—what is the duties and privileges we have as the Children of God, called to holiness of life and service in the Kingdom of Christ. This is what Paul begins in Chapter 12 of the book of Romans, the practical, personal theology of what it means to live the Christian life. I will be taking a number of texts from the latter part of Romans and elsewhere to develop these sermons.

The First Covenant was a covenant of works, whereby promises of God were made as a reward for obedience and curses for disobedience. “Cursed is he that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.” That covenant fail, not because the commandments were wrong, but because of the inability of sinful men to perform that which was commanded. In the New Covenant, God writes his law on the heart of His Only Begotten Son and ordains Him to fulfill all the requirements of the law in our behalf. Hence, the Father ordains our salvation, the Son purchases our salvation, and the Holy Spirit performs salvation in us, by working in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. He has begun a good work in us and will perform unto the day of Christ.

There are three things, because Christ died for us we are to be: I. Presented; II. Conformed; III Transformed.

Thus, your sanctification consists of your offering up yourself to God as a image of God offering up His Son for you. Because He died on the cross for you, you are to take up your cross and follow Him. His sacrifice purchased a complete and perfect salvation for you; you and I are to offer up ourselves, imperfect though we be, to Him, in gratitude for His redemption.

Hence, we have in questions 88-90 a summary of the sermon this morning:

Q88: In how many things does true repentance or conversion consist?

A88: In two things: the dying of the old man,[1] and the making alive of the new.

1. Rom. 6:4-6; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:5-10; I Cor. 5:7

Q89: What is the dying of the old man?

A89: Heartfelt sorrow for sin, causing us to hate and turn from it always more and more.[1]

1. Rom. 8:13; Joel 2:13

Q90: What is the making alive of the new man?

A90: Heartfelt joy in God through Christ,[1] causing us to take delight in living according to the will of God in all good works.[2]

1. Rom. 5:1; 14:17; Isa. 57:15
2. Rom. 7:22; 8:10-11; Gal. 2:20

Presented; Conformed; Transformed

I. Presented. “I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies as living sacrifices, holy acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” Romans 12:1 There are several things here.

A.Mercies of God: This entire doctrine that Paul is teaching from Rom. 12:1 to the end of the book is based upon the mercies of God. Everything flows to us from the grace and goodness of God, and we are called to a life of holiness because of His mercies and grace. It is therefore something that we can begin to do. We can begin to take delight in living according to the will of God in all good works. We do not have to wallow around in the love of the world and empty pleasures, but can seek those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. What the pagans only dreamed of and speculated upon in vain imaginations is found in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and we must seek the good life there in Christ, in His finished and perfect work.

B.Motivation: You will never be motivated to live a holy life, until you see your life flowing out of the mercy and love of God to you. You must see yourself loved by God who has forgiven you all your sins. This only comes by the preaching of the cross where Christ suffered a horrible death, feeling Himself under the wrath of His Father, to take away our guilt and fear.

C.Present your Bodies. The image is an old testament burnt offering, where the dead body of an animal was offered up to God in a burnt offering. It had been slain, the blood pour out, and now the whole animal is presented to God as a whole burnt offering. It was an offering made by fire, indicating complete devotion and love for God.

D.Cost: There was cost involved. The very poor could bring a dove; the rich brought of the cattle. The value of the offering was the same, whether a dove or a fine bull worth many thousands of dollars. The heathen corrupted the offerings which were rooted in the command of God from the beginning, and even offered up their children, as the finest possession they had, in sacrifice to their awful gods.

E.Living: Our sacrifices are not dead animals, but our living selves. “bodies” means the whole man, body and soul; but because our bodies have so often been instruments for sins that we offered up to our own lusts, Paul uses body as a symbol for the whole man. This is a refutation of the Greek idea that sin was rooted in the body and salvation

means escaping from the body. No, as Paul says in Romans 6: "12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 13 Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God." (Ro 6:12-13) I will be developing this idea in the next few weeks, but this is sufficient for now.

F. Holy: Because of Jesus Christ your savior, you can now take control of your behavior, and do not have to live unholy, wicked lives. We can work out our salvation, because Christ has worked it in. The purpose for the sacrifice of Christ is to bring to Himself a holy people, zealous of good works. This is the end and purpose of the work of Christ. Illustration: Three years ago I received this message from a new Facebook friend:

"Hello Pastor Powell. I really enjoy reading your posts and comments. Your thoughts and words are encouraging, enlightening, and appropriately poignant. Do you think a fellow like myself, whose kids are mostly rebellious, and whose marriage is nearly dead, could become a preacher? Or is it something that I should avoid for the stated reasons? I am interested in your thoughts. July 2009."

I sent him a letter, urging him to forget about the ministry at this time and work on his own soul and his marriage and family. He was the member of a feely-meely perfectionistic church, Arminian works-justifying body. I urge him to get into a church where the gospel was preaching so that he could begin grow in the Lord. Over the past years we exchange a few messages. He also had begun to attend a Reformed church.

Just yesterday I received this message:

July, 2012: Hi Bud, i just want to give you an update. I have been doing better and better emotionally and in other ways too. My wife moved out for eight months, because i started to take a stand (though not perfectly), but she has now moved home!! Praise the Lord!! She has even started to attend church with me, though it causes her much anxiety. She now wants to learn how to honor and respect me. I have much to learn about how to love her and honor her, but i am learning. We both really like our pastor who is really helping us to see things clearly. Please pray for us. God is doing a wonderful thing in our marriage and in our own personal lives, but it does not come without its hinderances. Thank you for sticking to godly principles and contributing so much biblical wisdom to us crack-bookers. Bless you dear brother.... [Crack-booker—networking addict]

You can get your life into control, and you can begin to live as you ought to live, as you know you ought to live. God has called you to it if you believe in the mercies and grace of God as Paul set them forth.

G.Acceptable: This is a sweet smelling aroma before God, for this word uses the Old Testament image. This sacrifice is pleasing to God.

H.Reasonable: This shows that the offering is both body and soul, for it is not sacrifice without meaning, but the whole man, body, soul, mind, heart, reason, emotion—and so the law begins to be fulfilled in us: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart

I. The verb “Present” Aorist, active, infinitive. Means to stand. As we would present someone or a product. Place at disposal. Mary and Joseph took Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord when he was a baby. Jesus said his Father could give [present] Him twelve legions of angels—place at his disposal. This is exactly what we are to do because Christ loved us and died for us. We are to present ourselves, ready, able, willing, we are not our own. “Hear am I, O Lord, use me however you like.” I stand here ready to do your will. Amen.

II. Conformed. “Be not conformed to the world” “Conformed means to be fashioned to a pattern.

A. Two figures in geometry are “congruent” if every part of one figure, matches exactly every part of the other. 1Pe 1:14-16 “14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: 15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”

B. This is to say that you don’t fit the pattern of the world, so don’t try to make yourself fit. Don’t cut here and cut there in order to conform to some ungodly image; Don’t set these patterns before your children and before your friends.

C. You and I are called to be conformed to Christ; in fact we have been predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ. This word in Romans 8:29 is a different word than Paul used in our text. In Romans 12:1,2, the word translated “conformed” means an exact likeness; in Romans 8:29 we have been predestined to be conformed, means a similar likeness. We cannot be God, so the exact likeness of Christ will never be ours; but we are his images, similar to His humanity. Our old man, however, is the exact likeness of Adam in his rebellion and sentence of death.

D. Do not try to be something you are not: In Ezekiel, God told His people: This stuff you are trying to do and be, to do and be like the nations around you, to serve their gods and be conformed to them. “This shall not be.” You are not going to succeed, for I with ei-

ther save you and conform you to my plan, or I will destroy you. Either way, what you dream shall not be.

E. More of this later, but this is sufficient for now.

III. Transformed. What you inherited from Adam, your old man, is perfectly conformed to the world; but the new man is not and cannot be.

A. The purpose for your salvation is that you be a new person in Christ.

B. This is not just an outward transformation, but an inward one: the mind is to be renewed. You must begin to think differently.

C. This means that you realize that you need to think differently. Sanctification is the result of striving after Christ. To "follow after," as a man would hunt the foe, for seek to flee from an enemy, as Paul says in Philippians. "I am not perfect, but I follow after...." The new man hungers and thirsts after righteousness. He doesn't have to be dragged to the table; or dragged to the fountain.

D. Prove: as an assayer would prove the sample to be gold. This shows how far removed we are naturally from thinking as God thinks.

1. The will of God seems foolish and alien to us, until we are renewed in our minds. We are as children, not knowing right from wrong, until we grow up unto Christ to the full man in Christ. Our senses must be exercised to discern good and evil.
2. That the will of God is **Good**. It is a good thing to serve the Lord. It is a good thing to do His commandments. It is a good thing to think good things, to do good things, to say good things, to believe good things. It is a good thing to get out of the pigpen and go home.
3. That the will of God is **Acceptable**. This is the same word used in verse 1. Instead of stinking up the place the works of God, being good, are not rotten and sour. They leave a sweetness behind; not bitterness, hatred, and decay.
4. That the will of God is **Perfect**. Nothing needs to be added to it. It is complete in itself. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. "perfect" has to do with the end of a thing, grown to perfection, perfectly ripe and finished. You were created to do the will of God; when you have done it, you are perfected, complete, satisfied. Paul wrote:

a. Prayers:

- (1). Heb 13:21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.
- (2). 2Co 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:
- (3). Col 1:10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

b. Exhortation: 2Ti 2:21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

Application.

1. The Christian faith is rooted in sacrifice. Christ sacrifice for us; our sacrifice for the brethren
2. It means not doing as you please; thinking as you please; feeling as you please, but rejecting deeds, thoughts, feelings that are contrary to Christ—rejecting them, putting them to death; cutting them off as they arise, and replacing them with deeds, thoughts, feelings that conform to Christ.
3. Yes, this is hard; but Christ's sacrifice was not easy, either. He learned obedience through the things that He suffered, just as you and I must.
4. Above all people on the earth, the children of God are called to distinguish between the good and the evil; between that which is edifying and that which is not:
5. Paul wrote the same thing in Philippians 4:6: 8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.
6. You and I are to make the decisions; there is no set of rules; and none of us is called to exactly the same will of God as another Christian is called.
7. We have tried to trace the outline of some of the things we will preach over the next few weeks. Please pray for me, try to make the sermons, and listen to the word of God, who has ordained preaching for the sanctification of His people.
8. The inner man, being conformed to Christ, will break out in deeds that are conformed to Christ. This must be, and is the will of God for us.

Amen and Amen. God bless you.