LD 2; Psalm 19:7-14; II Sam. 12:1-15; Revealing Our Sins I. The Standard of God’s Law II. The Deceitfulness of Sin III. The Response to this Sin

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, no one likes to have their flaws pointed out. For example, a person who is editing for a newspaper will likely have their spelling errors identified. Now how would a good writer respond? Well, hopefully they would learn from their errors and make the correction. Today our word processors on our computers usually catch our spelling errors. But imagine how hard it would be- how long it would take to write a paper or write a sermon with the editing function turned off. The fact is, as least for me, I would miss many errors if the program did not catch them for me. In a similar way, the life of a Christian needs an editing program. We need something to catch and expose our errors- so that we can see them, correct them, and learn from them. Ignorance is not bliss when it comes to our faults! So today we enter the first section of the Catechism with LD 2- how we come to know our sin and misery. Here we find that the Law of God is a tool and gift from God by which we might know our errors and transgressions. We not only need to know who we are as we found this morning; we also need to figure out what is wrong with us! Why is humanity so messed up? Why all these wars and riots? Why and I so messed up? Why this these faults and errors? So today we consider this theme: Jesus Christ reveals our sin with the Law so that we might flee to Him for forgiveness.

**I. The Standard of God’s Law**

In our first point we consider the standard of God’s Law. In order to understand what is wrong with us, we have to compare ourselves with the standard or rule. To decern our faults we have to compare ourselves with the rule. To see if our lives are as straight as we thing, we have to compare our actions with the perfectly straight line of God’s Law. What was man like when he was created? What was our human nature like before the fall? Well, we were made to know, love and obey God! Specifically, loving God with all our heart and loving our neighbor as ourselves. This is the summary of the Law as Jesus relates in Matthew 22. So why must we know God’s Law? In order to see what God requires- to know how we are to live. Now the Law of God is incredibly broad and deep. It covers every aspect of our lives and it plumbs the depths of our hearts. David says God’s Law is perfect in Psalm 19:7. His law is sure, right and pure. When we read the 10 Commandments, we note that most of them come to us in the negative form. “You shall not” we read. But as Jesus applies these commands in the Sermon on the Mount, we find that the positive is also included. “You shall not” also means “you shall also do” something else. For example, you shall not murder also includes you shall protect your neighbor’s life. You shall not commit idolatry means you shall worship God rightly. So the negative implies the positive. This can be seen when we look at the summary of the Law- you shall love God and love your neighbor. But the problem is that by nature we prone to hate God and hate our neighbor as QA 5 states. By forbidding hatred God commands love! Another principle that helps us read and apply God’s Law is this, loving God is the first and primary commandment. Loving Him with all your heart and soul and mind and strength means that whatever love you give to fellow man must fall under and be subservient to your love for God! In other words, loving fellow man is never a reason to cut your love for God short! No, as the apostle says, we must obey God before men for this very reason! Loving God is the greatest good and most primary calling of every man. That is why when we fail to obey Him we are in fact failing to love Him. If you love Him, you will keep His commandments. So if you do not obey, you are showing that you do love as you ought. David teaching this when He says in Psalm 51 that he has sinned against God first. All sin is primarily a sin against God. Against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight. Not that sinning against man does not matter- but rather sinning against God is the primary sin! God alone is to be loved supremely! So the love of God is the first and greatest commandment- it precedes all others and is the source of all other commands. As David confessed in II Sam.12: 13- I have sinned against the LORD. When it comes to working on a piece of machinery- it is vital to know what is wrong. For example, if your check engine light is on you need to figure out what is wrong. It would unwise to start replacing parts if you did not know which part was broken. In a similar way, God’s Law reads our hearts- exposing what is inside- and telling us what is broken! As Rom. 3:20 reveals, through the Law comes knowledge of sin.

**II. The Deceitfulness of Sin**

But if we are so sinful that we are prone to hatred, why don’t more people speak about sin? If no one is righteous- no not one- why do people have such a high opinion of themselves and of mankind? Most people would say that humans are basically good- but is that true? Asking this question in another way- why do we need the Law? The answer is this- sin is sneaky! Although man is clearly sinful- and God’s Law reveals what God expects of us- the fact is that man suppresses the truth in unrighteousness! In our reading from Psalm 19 we found two distinct kinds of sins. In 19:12-13 David says- declare me innocent from hidden faults and keep me back from presumptuous sins. So there are times when our faults are hidden- when we may not know what we are doing is wrong. Often when we get older, we look back at our life- we see sins that we committed in our youth that were done out of ignorance. But as we found with David, there are also times when we sin even when we know better! These are called willful sins or high-handed sins. These sins are particularly dangerous- they are addictive and hardening on the heart! David’s actions in our reading from II Sam. 12 prove this point. He knew better than to take the wife of another man- he knew better than to kill Uriah and try to cover up the murder. It was not that David thought these actions were acceptable. The fact is; sin is deceitful! It is often easy for us to see the sins of others while we ignore or look over our own sins. By way of hypocrisy we can pull the wool over the eyes of others- and by ignorance we can even deceive ourselves. There are sins of commission and sins of omission- doing evil things or leaving good undone. Instead of loving God with our heart, soul, mind and strength- we can sin against God by loving the wrong things, worshipping the wrong ways, thinking the wrong things or doing the right thing with only half our strength! The Bible has a lot of different words to describe sin- missing the mark, iniquity, trespass, evil, transgression, falling short. Basically anything that breaks God’s Law. So we can deceive ourselves and we can deceive others. We can even do he right thing for the wrong reason! All of this is to say that sin is tricky- like Satan himself- a crafty serpent! Sin tries to lull us to sleep- so that we cannot see the danger that we are in! Like a drunk driver racing around the edge of cliff- our life hangs in the balance! One application of this point is simply this- watch out and be on guard! Sin likes to hide! Or As Heb. 3:13 puts it, exhort one another, that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin! Sin has a hardening effect on our hearts! That is why it is such a gracious act of God when He shows us our sins and convicts us of it! For apart from this exposing of our sin, we would be deceived into thinking that we were basically good!

But rest assured, God is not deceived! God sees all! As we found with David in II Sam. 11:27- the LORD saw what David did and it displeased Him! So many people think that they can deceive God- or that God does not care! They have a false sense of security and are apathetic about their sin. But the truth is- God sees all and He is not pleased! God sends Nathan to David with a message- you are the man! David, I know what you have done! So the Law is used by God to expose us to the truth! As we read in Psalm 19:11- by your Law your servant is warned! God’s commands enlighten the eyes! When the Spirit brings God’s Law to us- when He brings it home to our hearts- we begin to see the truth! I am a sinner- sinful from the time my mother conceived me! I have more sin than I thought- secret sins- ones that I have hidden from other! I was ignorant- I myself did not even see how bad my actions were- how wicked my heart is! As David said again in Psalm 51- for I know my transgression and my sin is ever before me! When God shows us our sins it is indeed painful! I am inclined towards all evil- to hate God and to hate my fellow man! That is my default, fallen position! Sinful creatures like the dark- because our deeds are evil! I need to be awaken to this truth- my apathy need to be snapped- I need to wake up to see my sin and misery! And this is the very thing that Spirt does as He shines the light of God’s Law upon our hearts!

**III. The Response to this Sin**

Now that David has been found out- his sin exposed- he responds to this truth as all God’s people should. Nathan has said in v. 7- you are the man! So David responds in v. 13, I have sinned against the LORD. God is not done with David yet. David’s heart is softened, and He responds to this truth- against you O Lord have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight! So this sin is graciously exposed- David confesses and repents. Our God is a kind and forgiving God- slow to anger and abounding in love! David is not cast out- he is not consumed in the LORD’S anger. Rather, God graciously takes away his sin. So in v. 13 Nathan says, you shall not die, the LORD has put away your sin. For those who repent and believe, forgiveness is graciously given! Although we deserve to die- even as Adam and Eve did in the garden- God covers our sin and takes our iniquity away! We are pardoned! David is restored and his life spared. AS Psalm 19:7 says- my soul is revived. As David also says in Psalm 51, restore to me the joy of your salvation. We find the same thing with Peter after he denied knowing Jesus Christ. He was graciously forgiven and restored to office. So God’s grace is running through this passage. Sin is exposed so that sin might be repented of- and forgiven! Yes, sin has consequences as David will see. His child will die and the sword will not depart from his house. But grace has consequences as well! God does not forsake His people- but rather He lovingly calls them to repent! You shall not die! There is great comfort to be found here. God loves you enough to expose your sin- so that you do not die in your sins- but that you might repent and live! As Ezekiel 36 puts it, God takes no pleasure in the death of anyone, but rather that they would repent and live! To apply this point, God does not simply expose sin so that we might feel bad. This applies to church discipline as well. The elders do not put a person under discipline in order to shame them and their family! No, the work of discipline is the work of one who loves! God disciplines the child he loves! God was moving David to see his sin- so that this sin would not destroy David and the kingdom! So it is with us- when the Spirit uses the Law to expose our sin, He is not picking on us! He is not just poking the bruise to make us hurt. He is cutting open the infection to get out the poison! For our good- so that we might see the grossness of sin and turn from it! Fleeing from our sin into the hands of the loving Father who longsuffering, patient and kind!

To conclude, even God’s people can fall into sin- they can backslide and commit grave transgressions. David and Peter prove this point. David was a man after God’s own heart- but he was also a sinner who need to repent and be forgiven! But there is one who never sinned- who delighted to do God’s Law day and night! The Son of David who came to do God’s will! Jesus perfectly loved the Father and loved His neighbors- so much so that He laid down His life for us while we were yet enemies! By God’s grace, we are not left in our sin. Jesus Christ reveals our sin with the Law so that we might flee to Him for forgiveness. So it is our prayer that the Spirit would convict us by the Law- to draw us to Christ the source of our salvation!