

QA 2; Rom. 3:9-20; Rom. 6:20-23; What to Know for Comfort I. Our Guilt and Misery II. His Grace and Our Redemption III. Our Gratitude and Obedience

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the amount of comfort you enjoy is directly linked to the depth of your knowledge! The greater your knowledge, the greater your comfort! And the fact is, we all need comfort- even if we do not know it- we need to be comforted! As we continue in LD 1 with QA 2, we find that the Catechism is going to take us by the hand as we walk down the road of human suffering.

Where did suffering come from- what is the source of our discomfort- so that we might know where to look for comfort! First, we have to figure out what is wrong with us- so that we can come to a solution.

And as we look at QA 2- we are really walking the Roman Road. The Roman Road is an evangelical tool that outlines the basic points of our faith. If you are telling someone what we believe, these 3 points are a great place to start. And as I said before, the book of Romans serves as an outline for the Heidelberg Catechism. So today as we look at our 3 points, we not only find the summary of the Heidelberg- the 3 sections of sin, salvation and service, (guilt, grace and gratitude). Those three sections also serve as the broad outline of the book of Romans. Knowing our sin and misery, finding a solution to that sin, and the calling to live a holy life as a response of thanksgiving. So this morning we are going to outline the book of Romans and the Heidelberg Catechism together- so let's take this map in our hands and chart the path before us. We look at this theme: Jesus Christ saves fallen sinners from their misery by graciously redeeming them.

I. Our Guilt and Misery

In our first point, we find our guilt and misery. Let me ask you, does a sick person need a doctor- or is it a healthy person that looks for relief? Well, it is the sick- those who are unwell that go to the doctor looking for a cure. But the problem is, human beings do not know that they are sick! People are convinced that there is nothing wrong with them- so they are not looking for a solution! They are living and dying without comfort- and they don't even know it! So the first stepping stone we land on is this-

we need to know our sin, guilt and misery. In order for us to be truly comforted, we have to first figure out what is wrong with us! To find the proper cure, we have to diagnosis what ails us! So what is this disease that plagues all men? Well, we are born sinners. Rom. 3:11-12 paints this picture, there is no one righteous, none that do good, none that seek God. We are all sinners who act sinfully- no one is holy and good. We are all alike in this sin- v. 9 says- Jew and Gentile. The shared condition of man is that we are fallen and polluted. We are all alike in our sin and misery. Being the children of Adam, when he fell into sin, this polluted nature was shared and transferred to us all. We are strangers from God- hostile to Him and His word. But worst of all- we are born ignorant of this fact! As 1:18 says, man suppresses this truth in unrighteousness! Although we are sick, we put on our happy face and pretend nothing is wrong! We see the rotting flesh of gangrene, but we cover it up and pretend everything is fine! We are rebels who have wronged God- we break His commandments and we have become polluted. So the source of our sinful nature is Adam- and in him we have all fallen. But now, what are the effect of this sinful nature? Well, we are born enslaved to sin- bound to follow the fallen flesh. We are born ignorant of the truth- as we each go our own way. We do what is right in our own eyes. We are enemies of God- He is angry with our sins and our sinful nature. And we are now standing condemned- held accountable to God as 3:19 says. God's wrath hangs over us- 1:18. We are unrighteous and unable to make ourselves righteous! We are condemned with no way to get ourselves out of this verdict! Your works- your best deeds- these are polluted- by the works of your hand you cannot be saved- 3:20. No human will be justified by their own works. We are guilty- and death has spread to us all! So the first point that Paul is making in Romans today is that you are guilty and condemned because of your nature and actions! There is nothing you can do about it! As a good doctor, Paul shows us what is wrong with us- and makes it know that we will not get better on our own! So to apply this- you and I need to be delivered! We need someone else to save us- a doctor who has the power to not only expose our need but meet our need! To tell us what is wrong with us- and how

we might be healed! You are included in the prognosis of Rom. 3- None- no one is good. All have- every one has turned aside- together worthless- no good! You are under the law- condemned! Now this first point is anything but comforting. It is the very definition of anxiety and fear inducing. But, lets follow this road and see where it leads! We learn not only why we need grace, but how we receive grace!

II. His Grace and Our Redemption

With Paul, we jump to the next stepping stone. You are dead- but there is someone who can raise the dead! You are sick, but there is one who can heal! Without knowing our sin, we would be too confident in our own ability and power. But if we don't find out more about our Savior and how we might be delivered, we would be overwhelmed by grief or give up in despair! But praise God, there is good news! There is a cure to our disease. As we read in Rom. 6:23, the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. So although our sin deserves death, we receive the gift of God. But what is this gift of God? Well, the gift is first of all Jesus Christ. Christ was sent from the Father. It was the work of Jesus that secures our salvation. Rom. 5:8- God shows His love for us, that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. We have been justified by His blood- and saved from the wrath of God. So since Jesus died for us, we are justified instead of condemned. We are saved instead of destroyed. We have peace with God- instead of remaining enemies. And instead of death, we receive eternal life! Now this free gift of salvation has been secured by Jesus- and offered to you freely and without cost. Freely we are forgiven. We could say that what Jesus has accomplished for us is the greatest reversal in history! Death to life, darkness to light, hostility to peace, condemnation to justified. This is what the whole second section of the catechism will be all about- how we are saved from my sin and misery. But here again, we note the personal aspect of this phrase. QA 2 says- how I am delivered from all my sins and misery. This truth about the identity and work of Jesus is not just something we know- it must be believed. Listen to these well-known words from Rom. 10- if you confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that Jesus is the Christ and that He has been raised- you will be saved! Or I could ask- who

is speaking in QA 2? What must you know? What must you believe? I must know how I am delivered from my sins and misery! You have to know this- your comfort for your body and soul depends on this! Your peace for this life and the next! Without knowing Jesus and how He saves- and that He has saved you- you cannot have lasting comfort! But for those who do have this knowledge and belief- these have a peace and comfort that endures!

III. Our Gratitude and Obedience

But there is one more stepping stone that we must consider- how we are to thank God for such deliverance! Belonging to God's family necessarily means that I will begin to look like God's children. The joy that is a necessary part of the Christian's life flows from gratitude for what God has done for us. Each of these 3 parts come together. Knowing about your sin, trusting your Saviour- and living a thankful life of gratitude. Our passage we read from Rom. 6:22 says that we have been set free from sin and now have become slaves of God- the fruit you get leads to sanctification. Since we belong to Christ as we saw last week, we are slaves of God! And since the Holy Spirit has given us new hearts, we are now on a path of sanctification! Having been saved, we are motivated to thanksgiving. And as we will see later on in our HC, the two chief ways we are thankful is by obeying God's commandments and by saying we are thankful in our prayers. Or as Rom. 6:13 says, present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life- now instruments for righteousness because we are under grace. When we have been purchased by the precious blood of Jesus, we are also filled by His Spirit that motivates and controls us to the end that we live a new, holy and God-glorifying life. As we saw last week with QA 1- Christ by His Spirit makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for Him. The Bible speaks of this process in various ways. The work of the Spirit in making us holy within- or sanctification- is producing good fruit, being conformed to the image of Christ, putting off the old and putting on the new and offering yourself as a living sacrifice of praise. As Rom. 12: 1 says, present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. But although you can speak about

this process in many ways, the primary goal of this godly life is to bring praise to God and give Him thanks for the gift of salvation you have received. We read of this from the Westminster QA 1- what is the chief end of man? To glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Now why is this obedience and sanctification a necessary part of our comfort? Why not just stop at the first two points? Why do we need to know about our gratitude and obedience in order to fully enjoy the comfort of belonging? Well, one of the main reasons we need to know about our thanksgiving is because a Christian will be known by their fruits. One of the ways our hearts are encouraged is when we see the Spirit at work within us! The living fruit is evidence of a living tree! If I see good fruit in my life, I can be assured that the Spirit has indeed made me alive! So there is an aspect of comfort in assurance that we can find here! When I know I am a member of Christ and His people because I see the work of the Spirit within- when I see my progress in sanctification- I know that the Spirit is doing this! I too am a sanctified member of Christ! And this fact does encourage and comfort my heart! Because as we saw a few weeks ago- He who began a good work within will complete it- because He is faithful!

As we close, we have seen that comfort results from a process of reasoning- of knowing and believing something! Jesus Christ saves fallen sinners from their misery by graciously redeeming them. When you know this- and when you believe it- when it is true about you- then you will have a comfort for your body and soul in this life and the next. The three stepping stones of the Catechism have outlined the book of Romans for us- Sin, salvation and service. Or guilt, grace and gratitude. It is as we grow in our love and appreciation of Jesus Christ that comfort fills our hearts- comfort in the forgiveness of sins and joyful obedience in gratitude.