

Heidelberg Catechism 1 – Christ: My Only Comfort

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: The Heidelberg Catechism is not equal to the Bible, but it is an accurate summary of what the Bible teaches and it teaches it in a personal way. So it is right and good to examine it – as we will begin to do now.

The Catechism will help you develop answers to questions about what you may believe and how you may live. This means you must not just understand these doctrines but you must also believe these doctrines and put them into practice in your lives. You see, accurate doctrines mean nothing. Doctrines must be believed and lived for true benefits to come.

And what are those benefits? Good comes to you and glory comes to Christ. Conversely, to know these doctrines and not believe and live them will be the ground for judgment. So there is no neutrality for those who know these doctrines.

Today we will begin with the Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 1. This first question is about understanding man's basic need. I did say that the Catechism is personal.

Our headings are: The Need for Comfort, The Ground of Comfort, The Continuation of Comfort, and the Result of Comfort.

Our goals are: That you will be comforted in your soul, knowing what Christ has done for you, and that you will then love him and live for him.

Q&A 1 What is your only comfort in life and in death? That I am not my own, but belong-- body and soul, in life and in death-- to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with His precious blood, and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven: in fact, all things must work together for my salvation. Because I belong to Him, Christ, by His Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for Him.

The Need For Comfort

1. There is an underlying need for comfort in every man and woman's life, though some think they have all the comfort they need. Sometimes you might hear a non-Christian say: "I don't need anything. I am happy. I have the two newer cars, the big house, the good job, and a good family. I can afford to go on vacation. I can help my needy relatives. I don't have to worry about the future financially." But that is not what the Bible says. The Bible says they are lying. And that is what a famous PhD research showed. In that PhD research, most people who said they were happy with their lives, when they had a few drinks, admitted that they were not really happy and needed something more. They often didn't know what they needed, but they admitted they needed something more in their lives. They were confirming what the Bible says. Man needs a deeper comfort – in his soul – comfort that shows him that his sins are removed!
2. And this is where the Catechism takes its starting point. You need comfort and God gives that comfort to you – that true comfort that you can't buy with money, that you can't get from a wife, and that you can't get from a beer bottle.

The Ground of Comfort

1. You belong to Christ...body and soul.

1Corinthians 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price...

The Father chose you. The Son redeemed you. The Spirit sealed you. You belong to him. And knowing who God is – his great love and care – what a comfort must be for you.

Romans 14: 7 For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. 8 For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

9 For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord...

1Peter 1: 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

It is true that knowing Reformed doctrines is good, but knowing Reformed doctrines doesn't remove your sins and give you comfort. Being a good scientist does not save you and make you safe. Living a moral life does not save you and give you that comforting feeling. It is being a child of God through Christ that gives you comfort. Roman 8: You are adopted as true children.

2. Christ was willing to pay for your body and soul because he loved you.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Illustrate: A good husband loves his wife and knows he must be ready to die to keep her safe – regardless of the danger. She is his and he will die to keep her. A woman with a good husband understands this well and she enjoys her husband's provisions and protection. Similarly, Christ loved his Bride with such deep love that he died to keep her safe. Of course Christ's love was infinitely more, and his work was infinitely more so his comfort is infinitely more to his Bride.

Look at how Christ's Bride is because of Christ's love and work for her.

Titus 2: 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us...

3. This work of Christ was great and complete and completely frees you from the Devil's control. The Devil can never control you again.

John 8: 34 Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. 35 "And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. 36 "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

Hebrews 2: 14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

What rich comforts Christ's children have– those whom he has redeemed from the pit! 1Jn 3:1-11

The Continuation of Comfort

1. This comfort that Christ gave is not just in rescuing you from death. This comfort continues with you to the ends of the earth – to the end of your life. Christ raised you from the spiritual dead. He nursed you back to health. He now dresses you up with clothes of righteousness. He protects you from troubles and from falling back into debts. This immeasurable comfort you keep till you die.

2. Consider some of these words of assurance of comfort – a comfort that continues.

John 6: 39 "This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. 40 "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

John 10: 27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch 抢走 them out of My hand. 29 "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.

1Thess 3: 3 But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.

3. And look at the extent to which he cares... not just in the big things in your life, but the small ones as well-things so small you might not even be worried about them.

Matthew 10: 29 "Are not two sparrows 麻雀 sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. 30 "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 "Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Luke 21: 16 "You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. 17 "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. 18 "But not a hair of your head shall be lost.

4. In fact, God will use all the events of your life – events that may seem either good or bad – and use them for your good. You can't lose with Christ as your Lord.

Romans 8: 28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

5. And when you do go through troubles in life, you have the right and are encouraged to call upon your

heavenly Father for help. What a comfort prayer is by itself-just the fact that you can talk to your heavenly Father anytime! And he hears and answers, giving you only what is good for you, and ignoring your foolish requests. This is even more comfort.

Romans 8: 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

6. And God makes you know the fullness of the comfort he gave to you by sealing you with his Holy Spirit. That is why you are able to say, I know in whom I've believed. You know you belong to Christ because his Holy Spirit works in your heart and confirms that you are God's child. Rom 8:16. Of course you remember that you are sealed for eternity by his Holy Spirit in Ephesians 1. 2Corinthians 1: 21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, 22 who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. 2Corinthians 5: 5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. 6 So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.

The Result of Comfort – Your Actions

1. When you read the Romans 8:1-17, you will see many verses that teach the of the results of the comforts you have in Jesus Christ. Consider some of Paul's words:

Romans 8:12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

2. So when you receive these comforts you will change the way you live: More and more your cravings渴望 for the world and the things of this world will disappear. You won't be controlled by comforts of this world, but Christ who comforts of the soul, which begin now and come in fullness in heaven. God's Holy Spirit will lead you.

Conclusion:

Every honest man realizes that he needs true comfort. The trouble is he often does not know how to get it. Someone has to point him to God's Words so he can learn of the sufficient sacrifice of Christ on the cross for his sins. When he sees the sacrifice of Christ he can then claim Christ's work as his own. He also learns that that comfort continues with him forever. He is of the elect so he never loses what Christ has secured and has given to him. Then he is able to serve Christ who gave him true comfort.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: My wife said this past week that one food we had was a "comfort food." And it was true...but it was only a comfort to the body. Don't mistake physical comforts as fulfilling your need for spiritual comfort. Christ gives you true comfort. Because you have true comfort, you don't need to remain a slave to the comforts of this world. If you have a nice home, and good family, a decent job, and a safe country, thank God for them. But if you think your true comfort is in any of these things you will then worship that thing more than you worship God. That thing will control your life. If your job is your comfort, you will choose work over worship. If your wife is your comfort, you will choose what she wants instead of living for Christ. To make matters worse, you will find that the thing you trusted in for comfort only offered temporary comforts. So let me remind you today that Christ is your comfort. He chose you. He predestined命定 you. He made you acceptable to his Father. He keeps you. He blesses you. And he told you all about it in his Word. Rejoice.

Finally, if you are not a Christian, why not admit the truth – that nothing in this world has truly comforted your soul? Why not surrender to Christ, the only one who can give comfort to your soul? Without that work of Christ your soul will die in hell...eternally separated from God...and you will have eternal guilt.