

Catechetical Sermon, August 24th, 2025

Canons of Dort, Head 1, articles 17-18: "Infant death"

Scripture Lesson: 1 Corinthians 7:12-16

Lesson Aim	To understand the theology related to infant death and how this is comforting for godly Christian parents.
Steps to Learning	Read the Canons of Dort, Head 1, articles 17-18 and 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 . Also discuss the sermon and the particulars of the lesson below. It may be best to work through the material over several days or sessions.
Discuss	<p>When tragic events occur, like infant, death we are easily given to speculation and worry. But, rather, we are to think about what the Word of God says. What does the Word of God say about the infants and children of believers, which helps us to think rightly about infant death?</p> <p>1 Corinthians 7:14 says that the children of believers (including infants) are holy. But Ephesians 2:3 says that they are not holy by nature but are sinners. The children of believers are holy by virtue of their membership in the Covenant of Grace, which 1 Corinthians 7:14 speaks of along with passages like Genesis 17:1ff, and Colossians 2:11-12.</p> <p>The key text for the purposes of our discussion is 1 Corinthians 7:12-16. What is the context and situation to which Paul is speaking?</p> <p>When the Gospel was preached in the city of Corinth, some spouses believed while others didn't. The Christians spouses wrote Paul and asked if they should remain with their non-Christians mates or divorce them. Paul responds telling them to remain in their marriage, if their spouse will allow it, because "the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy."</p> <p>What is Paul saying in 1 Corinthians 7:14?</p> <p>He is <u>not</u> saying that the non-Christian becomes a Christian because he or she is married to a Christian. Rather, he is saying that the non-Christian is a legitimate spouse to the Christian spouse in a legitimate marriage even though the two people are different in their belief system. However, before people get married, they must "marry in the Lord," as Paul says in v.39; that is, a Christian must marry a non-Christian. Finally, even in a mixed marriage, the children are holy by which Paul means they are considered to be Christians, members of the Covenant of Grace.</p>
Bible Reading	Hebrews 7-13 (Reading through the New Testament)