

Catechetical Sermon, November 16th, 2025

Canons of Dort, Head 3&4:14-15: "Faith as a gift"

Scripture Lesson: Ephesians 2:1-10

Lesson Aim	To understand two things, first, to understand how our confessions and the Scriptures teach that faith is a gift and second, how true faith generates gratitude in us.
Steps to Learning	Read the Canons of Dort, Heads 3&4, articles 14-15 and Ephesians 2:1-10. 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	Where in the Three Forms of Unity (our written confessional standards) is it stated that regeneration (being born again or having a new heart) and faith are gifts of God? The Belgic Confession of faith, article 24, the Heidelberg Catechism, question and answer 65 and the Canons of Dort, heads 3 & 4, articles 11, 12 and 14. We know that regeneration occurs, ordinarily, through the preaching of the Gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit in which new life is given. As we discuss true faith, what are the central elements that we should be aware of? True faith has <u>knowledge</u> of who God is and what it means to be saved, <u>assent</u> to those facts and a <u>heartly trust</u> in those facts centered on Jesus Christ. What passage of Scripture did we discuss today that makes it plain that faith is a gift of God? Ephesians 2:1-10. In this passage, Paul argues that before Christ, we were dead in our trespasses and sins. This meant that we would never choose God; we would never exert faith in him on our own. But God in his mercy and love saved us through the work of Jesus Christ to be crucified, buried and raised from the dead. Vv.8 and 9 say, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast." That is, the grace of salvation (the work of Christ) AND faith are the gift of God. Faith, therefore, comes from outside of us by the power of the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the Gospel. Given this great salvation, which is free, what is the natural response from us? Gratitude or living a sacrificial life pleasing to God.
Bible Reading	Genesis 6-9 (Reading the great stories of the Old Testament)