

Catechetical Sermon, October 13th, 2024

Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 23, "Justification"

Scripture Lesson: 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

Lesson Aim	To understand three things: first, the problem of sin, second, how justification is the solution to the problem of sin and third, the result of being justified is having a clear conscience.
Steps to Learning	Read the Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 23 and 2 Corinthians 5:11-21 . 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>Discuss as a family: what if Christ were to return and find you in terrible sin. Do you believe you would still go to heaven? Why or why not?</p> <p>What text did we read to prove that God is holy? What does it mean for God to be holy? Psalm 99 reveals God's holiness. For God to be holy means that he is pure, perfect in his character and without sin.</p> <p>What text did we read that reveals the teaching of justification? What is Paul saying in this text? We read and discussed 2 Corinthians 5:21: For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." This text teaches what we call, "double imputation." That is, through faith in Christ, our sin is imputed to Christ so that he was considered a sinner (not personally) and Christ's righteousness was imputed to us. Imputation means to be accounted or credited with a certain status.</p> <p>What is the definition of justification? Justification is the biblical teaching that when we have faith in Christ, our sins are forgiven having been imputed to Christ and Christ's righteousness is imputed to us so that we are accounted righteous in God's sight.</p> <p>What is the Roman Catholic understanding of justification, which is also the default understanding of man professed Christians today? It is the understanding that justification is a change of heart; righteousness is infused into the heart. Therefore, the conclusion is that a person can lost his justification if he sins too much. If a person concludes that this is the case, then he does good works to be justified again. This is strictly unbiblical!</p> <p>What is the result from understanding the biblical definition of justification? It is to have a clear conscience. Even though we continue to sin, what counts is God's declaration that we are righteous in his sight through faith by grace. Being justified in God's sight doesn't make us presume upon God's grace, rather, it creates gratitude in our hearts so that we want to repent from our sins and turn to Christ.</p>
Bible Reading	Psalms 90-96 (Reading through the Psalms)