

Catechetical Sermon, May 26th, 2024

Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 7, "True Faith and its Object"

Scripture Lesson: Genesis 22:1-19

Lesson Aim	To understand what true faith is and how it is demonstrated in the narrative found in Genesis 22:1-19.
Steps to Learning	Read the Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 7 and Genesis 22:1-19 . 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>Will all people go to heaven when they die? No, only those who by true faith are ingrafted into him and receive all his benefits (Heidelberg Catechism, answer 20).</p> <p>What is true faith? True faith is not only a sure knowledge whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in his Word, but also a hearty trust, which the Holy Spirit works in me by the Gospel, that not only to others, but to me also, forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness, and salvation are freely given by God, merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits (Heidelberg, 21).</p> <p>What are the three elements of true faith? Knowledge, assent and trust.</p> <p>What is the object of true faith? Jesus Christ and his work to obey God the Father all of his life and his crucifixion and resurrection from the dead.</p> <p>As we think about the story of Abraham and Isaac in Genesis chapter 22, what does it mean that God is testing Abraham? It means that God is putting Abraham through a trial to prove that he has true faith in God, ultimately in Christ. The trial was for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, the son of promise.</p> <p>Did Abraham pass the test, as it were? Yes, he was in the act of sacrificing his son when an Angel from heaven stopped him and a ram was provided in Isaac's place. According to Hebrews 11:17ff, Abraham believed that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead. Abraham had true faith!</p> <p>How does James, in chapter 2 of his letter, interpret what happened to Abraham? James argues that Abraham's actions proved that he had true faith. He says that Abraham was justified by works by which he means his works demonstrated that he had true, saving faith. James agrees with Paul in the definition of true faith; James is just teaching that true faith will always be attended by works.</p>
Bible Reading	Acts 16-18 [The story of the early church] (covering the great Bible stories)