

The Importance of True Self-Knowledge

By Prof. Barry Gritters

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Bible Text: Jeremiah 8:4-12
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Grace Protestant Reformed Church

O-11225 8th Ave NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49534

Website: www.graceprc.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/graceprc

In connection with the Catechism's teaching in Lord's Day 2, this morning we read two passages of the Old Testament, first in Jeremiah and then in Isaiah. Beginning in Jeremiah 8 and verse 4, we'll read through 12 and then the last two verses of Jeremiah 8. Beginning at verse 4 of Jeremiah 8.

4 Moreover thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD; Shall they fall, and not arise? shall he turn away, and not return? 5 Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return. 6 I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle. 7 Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the LORD. 8 How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of the LORD is with us? Lo, certainly in vain made he it; the pen of the scribes is in vain. 9 The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD; and what wisdom is in them? 10 Therefore will I give their wives unto others, and their fields to them that shall inherit them: for every one from the least even unto the greatest is given to covetousness, from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. 11 For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace. 12 Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the LORD.

Then the last two verses of the chapter,

21 For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; [now the prophet is speaking] I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me. 22 Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

And then just briefly in the book of Isaiah 58. Notice just the first verse and in light of Isaiah 40 that we called attention to last week, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people," now this is how he's doing it. God says,

1 Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

That's how God's people are comforted, when the prophet lifts up his voice like a trumpet and shows them their sin.

It's on the basis of passages like this in scripture that we have the teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism in Lord's Day 2. Lord's Day 2. Above Lord's Day 2 is the heading, "The first part of the misery of man," so you see that Lord's Day 1 really is introductory and Lord's Day 2 now begins the Catechism's explanation properly of what Question 2 had tipped us off was coming. Lord's Day 2, Question 3,

3. Whence knowest thou thy misery?

A. Out of the law of God.

4. What doth the law of God require of us?

A. Christ teaches us that briefly, Matthew 22:37-40, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first and the great commandment; and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

5. Canst thou keep all these things perfectly?

A. In no wise, for I am prone by nature to hate God and my neighbor.

Question 4 and 3, how do you know your misery? God's law. What does God's law teach us? Very simply, I am prone by nature to hate you and to hate God. That's the confession that we need to learn to make this morning and from a certain point of view that may seem disappointing because Lord's Day 1 was so exalted and comforting and hopeful in its comfort, and now Lord's Day 2 says how do you know your misery, and that's a bit discouraging at times. We might say, "I don't want to know my misery. I want comfort." And then Lord's Day 2 comes immediately with misery. But we ought not be surprised because last week if we were listening, we saw in Lord's Day 1 after that beautiful question and answer 1, "What is your only comfort in life and death?" And I confess I am not my own, I belong to him, with all that implies, comes this question, "How many things must you know that enjoying this comfort you live and die happily?" And they are three and we start with the first. The first as even the Catechism students know is, "How great are my sins and miseries?" If I don't know that, I can't have comfort. That's the burden of the sermon this morning. The second, "We want to come to prematurely my

deliverance in Jesus Christ." In the third, "We all want to talk about how many we express our gratitude to God?" And the answer to that question is by praying and obeying. Pray the Lord's Prayer, obey the 10 Commandments. We are all entrusted in dismissing the first part of the Catechism because we don't want to be miserable, we want to be delivered. Here's the burden of the sermon: you can't be delivered unless you know your misery.

The law teaches us that. The law is still useful for us. How do you know your misery? Question 3 says out of the law of God. So although we New Testament Christians aren't under the law anymore, and by that we mean that we aren't slaves to sin and the law, and we aren't under the mass of regulations, minutiae, detail of all of the Old Testament, the law is still useful for us, and when you want to know what that law is in sum, here it is: love God and love your neighbor. When you hear that law, you must say about yourself, "I'm prone not to love him but to hate him and I'm prone by my nature not to love you but to hate you." When we're able to confess that, then we're ready to hear the comfort of the gospel that we are delivered by a faithful Savior and through faith in him.

So let's hear the word of God this morning that is based on, hear the Catechism's teaching this morning that's based on those passages that we read and passages like Romans 3:20, "by the law is the knowledge of sin," and Romans 7:7, "I hadn't even known sin, but by the law." Let's hear the word of God this morning under the theme the importance of true self-knowledge, and probably you say, "I've never found a four-leaf clover but I've never heard a four point sermon either," and here we have one this morning. First of all, the necessity of true self-knowledge. In the second place, the manner in which that knowledge comes to me. In the third place, the difficulty in learning that about myself. And in the fourth place, the benefits of that true self-knowledge. The importance of true self-knowledge: necessity, manner, difficulty and benefits.

I don't know if it comes up in you, and it doesn't come up very often in me, but it is our nature to say, "Please don't make me miserable. Please don't talk about my sin. What I need as a child of God after a week of struggling with sin and struggling with sickness and struggling in the world, what I need when I come to church on Sunday morning is comfort." Maybe you've said that and then maybe you say, "No, what I need is to learn how to live the Christian life. I've been delivered from my misery. I'm saved by Jesus Christ. Tell me how to be a good father, a good husband, a good mother, a good wife, a good student, a good workers, and so forth, but don't talk to me about my misery." Or you say, "Those who need to know about their misery are the unbelievers, the unconverted. Talk to them about their misery so that they may come to faith in Jesus Christ. I," you say, "need comfort." We mustn't dismiss what you and you and you say about our needs and the needs of the unbeliever because there's truth to that. We do struggle all week long and we need to come into the house of God and receive comfort, and we do need to know how to live the Christian life, that's why I prayed what I did because Paul says in Titus, which is my own devotions with my wife last night, that we have to have a life that adorns the doctrine, a godly life that adorns doctrine. We need to know about that and it also is true what you said that an unconverted man needs to hear about his misery in

order to come to Christ. But that doesn't mean that we don't need to know that. The knowledge of my misery is necessary.

It's because of what Jesus said in Matthew 9:12, those who are well need not a physician but those who are sick. That was Jesus' testimony to us, "You who are well don't need a doctor, you who are sick do." And he didn't mean you who are actually well because no one is actually well. He meant by this little parable type saying, "You who know you're not well need a physician. You who don't know that you're not well don't want a physician." And we need to learn that we are not well. The word of God, the law of God as it shines, as it were, its bright spotlight on us, must expose us to the very depths. The very depths, not like a spotlight though that only sees outside of us, not like an x-ray that vaguely sees within us, but like an MRI that sees all of the details in us. The law of God does that, it must or we'll never want Jesus Christ. We won't need Jesus Christ. So that's necessary for the believer always.

Now the Catechism makes that clear. Let me remind you of that and then show you that that's the truth of the scripture. The Catechism makes that clear in Question 2, "How many things are necessary for you to know?" And not in the past but in the present. In the present I must know how great my sins and miseries are. In the present I must know how I may be delivered from them. And in the present I must always be learning how to express my gratitude to God. Don't put the knowledge of your misery aside anymore than you put the knowledge of your salvation. That's a process, the knowledge of my misery. This is a process, the embrace of Jesus Christ in my salvation. And this is a process, how to show my gratitude. I'm always learning of my sin and every day my knowledge goes deeper. I'm always learning of my salvation and receiving more benefits of that salvation, and every day they are richer. And I'm always learning how to express my gratitude to God for that great salvation, and I realize that when I was young, I didn't know very much about obedience. I knew the commandments. I knew how to pray, but I did not understand them as I ought to, every day all three.

That's the Catechism's approach but the Catechism is based on the scripture as we know, and the scripture I'm thinking of now especially is Isaiah. You all know that the first part of Isaiah, the first 39 chapters, are one section exposing the people of God in their sin, calling them that they're going to come under the judgment of God because of their sin, and then in Isaiah 40 comes the beautiful, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith the Lord. Speak to the heart of Jerusalem my comfort and love for them." And then the rest of the book explains how the prophet is to give the people of God that comfort, and it's not a tidy this, that and the other thing but all mixed together with various prophecies come these elements, not just, "I'm going to deliver you," but "I'm going to deliver you from your sin."

You need to know your sin and that explains, again, why we read what we did in Isaiah 58. Now remember, 66 chapters in Isaiah, starting at 40, comfort. All the way in 58, this is the message of God to the prophet, "Cry aloud. Spare not. Lift up your voice like a trumpet." And do what, the prophet asks? This, "Show my people their transgression and the house of Jacob their sin." I can't think of an instrument that's more decisive, clear, not

shrill but there's no mistaking the sound of a trumpet and that's what the voice of the minister must be when he shows the people their sin. He mustn't spare. He mustn't hold back. He needs to make the message clear and he needs to keep on doing it, keep on doing it. The people of God need to know their sinfulness.

So to sum up so far, what we're saying is that in order to know the beauty of Jesus Christ and come to faith in him, we need to understand our misery, we need to have the light of the gospel shine all the way in us so that we see how bad it is for us. That brings up the passage that we read in Jeremiah 8 where it's all in medical terms. There's a physician, there's a hurt, and there's a balm. There's a doctor who addresses the hurt of the people with a balm, a medicine, and those three things we need to keep in mind to understand what was going on in the time of Jeremiah also. What was happening is that the people, the daughter of God's people, the chapter says were hurt. They had a wound. They had an illness. They had a disease. They had something wrong with them and the physicians that were addressing those wounds were dealing with those wounds as though there was nothing significant wrong. They were saying, "Peace, peace," but there wasn't peace. They were saying, "God loves you, he's going to bless you and do good to you," but he wasn't. They were looking at the wound of the people of God and minimizing it, slighting it. That's why Jeremiah says what it does, "They healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace."

So the chapter concludes with the prophet saying, "For the hurt of the daughter of my people, I'm hurt. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why is not then the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" Well, because the physicians who came to them were minimizing the seriousness of the illness, and if ever a man stands behind this pulpit and minimizes your sin and sinfulness, then you're in trouble, you're in deep trouble. The kind of trouble that you would be in if you were becoming fatigued like a girl I read about recently, a college student who went to the doctor and said, "I'm getting weaker and weaker and more tired and more tired," and actually she had leukemia but the doctor said to her, "Anyone with a schedule like yours would be exhausted. You just need a little bit more rest and you need a little bit better diet." What's going to happen to her if the doctor doesn't diagnose properly what her illness is? She's going to die obviously. Now in this case, the problem was not malpractice because the doctor simply didn't know and soon he did know, and then he diagnosed what she needed to be healed, but there are times in the church of Christ with regard to spiritual illness that the doctor appointed to be here doesn't want to tell you, wants to say your illness is not serious and you who are in the pew don't want to know. And so complicit in this sin, you say, "Don't tell us," and the minister says, "I'm glad to comply. I won't tell you." And then they're all involved in healing the hurt of the daughter of God's people slightly.

Then comes Lord's Day 2 and reminds us, "You must not do that." How great is my sin and misery? Doctor, how bad is it? Is it basal cell or is it melanoma? I need to know because I get basal cell but I don't have melanoma, and if I did, I want to know. What is it? We must not have, one of the translations of the Old Testament here, doctors who treat it as though it were not serious. And so you have ministers who don't want to talk about sin, they want to talk about the social gospel, they want to talk about establishing the

kingdom, about the importance of digging clean wells in Africa and seeing to it that the economy in this place is good, all of which may be important on their own terms but that's not the business of a preacher. It's the business of a preacher to say, "You are a sinner and you always will be and you need Jesus Christ and you always will need him. You are and I am prone by nature to hate God and my neighbor."

I said something about you not wanting to hear how bad it is. There is the fault of the doctor who says, "Peace, peace," and there really isn't peace, but there is also the people who love to have it so. You think of Jeremiah in chapter 5, you may look at that on your own, "They prophesy falsely and my people love to have it so." Or Micah 2:11 and this is Calvin's paraphrase of that passage. I'll read you his paraphrase in a moment. "You wish to have prophets who will speak to you of rich provisions and of every kind of affluence and you don't wish them to prophesy evil. You would not have them denounce on you the punishment which you fully deserve." And what Micah really said, and this is my paraphrase is, "If a man lies and deceives you, prophesying only about wine and wealth, that's what you like." Those are the prophets of the Old Testament.

The physicians may be at fault but the patients also may, and that reminds me of a time when I was early in my pastorate, a young 15 year old boy began feeling a lump in his abdomen and he didn't want anyone to know. He didn't tell his mother until one evening lying on his back on the living room floor, his mother noticed on his abdomen. "What is that?" And then she went to feel and said there's something wrong, and they immediately went to the doctor and found that it was a cancerous tumor and it was removed and he's alive yet today, unable to bear children but alive yet today because what he didn't want to know they found out about.

That's the kind of thing that we have in our own lives and there's evidence of that too. We mustn't imagine that those people who don't want to know about their sin are all out there in the other churches, and the people who don't want the preachers preaching about sin are all in those other churches, it's our affliction. We love to have it so and the evidence, I think, of that is all over. If, for example, you had marriage problems and you came to the pastor and the pastor said after he listened to you very very carefully, "This isn't going to be an easy remedy and the remedy really is an overhauling of your whole life, a restructuring of everything you do, a reconstruction of your house and the plans that you have in your house, not the physical building but everything. You're mainly interested in sports and you're a workaholic and you don't have devotions with your children, and you let them do what they may, and you don't sit and pray with your wife, and so we're going to construct your life in obedience to God differently." And you say to the minister, "I came to you because I wanted a fix and I wanted a quick fix and I don't like what fix you give to me." And so he goes to another marriage counselor or a psychologist or a psychiatrist for the fix that he wanted. There's evidence among us that this is the kind of people we are, "Don't tell me how bad it is." Or a man who has a drinking problem and won't admit it and finally his wife asks him to go to the pastor or the consistory and he won't admit how bad it is, and the pastor of the consistory says, "You need to go to AA. You need to stop. No more because you can't handle it." And he doesn't like that fix because he doesn't want to admit how bad it is that he's become a slave to that sin.

And we could go on and on with examples, multiplying them. You understand that you and I don't want to hear how bad it is for us and those examples were merely examples with regard to the surface of things, and that's bad enough that we resist hearing how bad it is on the surface and how the light of the law of God is going deeper into the very being of us and showing that in you, in your nature, it's that bad. And so it's not surprising that I don't want to hear about that and so the same is true with regard to the preaching. "Show my people their sin," says God to the prophets. So the prophet shows the people their sin and the people are never so angry as when their own sin is exposed. We perhaps inside of us say, "Yes, I'm very glad that the preacher preached about that sin because these families need to hear that and they're not listening." And then when the preacher exposes my sin in the preaching, that's when I become peeved and upset with the minister. Maybe my besetting sin is that I don't treat my enemies like the way I ought to treat my enemies in love and grace and carefulness and patience, praying for them and blessing them and seeking their good. Maybe that's my besetting sin and then the minister preaches about that and we're unhappy with that. Maybe my besetting sin is that I love the world and the things of the world, and though I'm here in church often on the sabbath, and I come to Bible study, I'm still out there in the world hobnobbing with the world, and when the preacher comes and exposes that as a sin, "Don't be friends with the world," then I become angry at the preaching. I don't want to hear what the word of God says when it exposes my sins. Maybe my sin is overeating or overdrinking or whatever it may be, and because I respond the way I do naturally and the minister hears that response, he becomes hesitant and so it snowballs, doesn't it? The people don't want to hear it and the minister hesitates to say it. So you need to pray not only for yourselves that you are willing to hear, but for your minister so that he has the boldness to say it from the word of God.

I don't like to be hurt. I don't like to have the doctor press on that place and I say, "No, that's not a problem," and then he presses on another place and I says, "Yes, there it is. Please don't press there. I don't like that. It hurts." It hurts to know that in me is a nature that hates God, and it hurts to hear that in me is a nature that hates you, but I need to come to the point that Jeremiah comes to in chapter 10 where I say, "Woe is me for my hurt, my wound, is grievous." Are you there? Woe is me for my hurt, my wound, is serious.

The manner in which I come to that is by the law of God, the law that shines on me so that I learn my misery. That's the Catechism's teaching based on scripture, Romans 3:20, by the law is the knowledge of sin. The diagnostic tool to analyze and expose and reveal what I am by nature is God's law. I say again what Romans 7:7 as Paul says, "I hadn't known sin but by the law, but when the law came, then I died, that is, I realized I was spiritually dead by nature." Nothing but the law of God. Don't read books to learn about your illness. Don't go to Freud to learn how bad it is. Don't go to the newspaper to see what's going on in the world or some other place that's the source of news. Go to the law of God. Read it, study it, meditate on it, know it, explore it because in that law of God you are going to see a light that is brighter than any light you've ever known and it is the light of the glory of God himself, the perfection of Jehovah in heaven, the spotless purity of the one who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And when you stand in the light of

that law, no one can measure up. When you stand in the light of the newspaper and what other people do and how bad they are, and read books of history, how abominable men have conducted themselves, and maybe go to Freud and his descendants in psychology, then you're going to be able to say, "Yup, I'm all right, not quite as bad as they are, and the troubles that I have are really not to be explained by anything in me but by my parents' influence on me or my surroundings."

Compare yourself, people of God, to the standard of God's law and let it shine upon you, and when you do that, don't go immediately to the 10 Commandments, go immediately to the sum of those 10 Commandments in Matthew 22 and Mark 12, because if you go immediately to the 10 Commandments you might be able to get away with saying, "Yes, yes, yes," and check all of the boxes. "I have no idols, images. I don't take God's name in vain. I honor my parents. I haven't committed adultery and all the rest. Now I can go to work. I'm all right." Now when you look at the 10 Commandments properly, you can't get away with that, but when you look at them at their heart, that's what's important and that's why the Catechism here does what it does. It's interesting to notice that how the Catechism deals with the law of God. In the first part of the Catechism to expose me in my misery, it doesn't list the 10 Commandments. How do you know your misery? Out of the law of God, and then list the 10 Commandments. No, not here. That comes when you want to know how to live a life of gratitude, the 10 Commandments. Here it gets right to the point. This is an MRI, as it were, as opposed to a doctor shining his light in your ear or down your throat. The law says, "Love me with all your being. Love your neighbor as yourself." Let's not dodge or run from that light of God's word.

So the law requires not only that I do certain things but that I be something, be a God lover, be a God lover from within, and be a neighbor lover and be a neighbor lover from within. That's what you must be and when the law shines on me, I say, "That's not what I am in myself." You see, isn't that the way Jesus treated the law? Do you know why the Pharisees didn't know Jesus, didn't want Christ? Now we come to the very end of the sermon but we can't but do that now. Do you know why the Pharisees didn't need a Savior? Because they weren't sinners. Do you know why the Pharisees crucified Christ? Because they looked only at the 10 Commandments on the surface. And then Jesus came and Jesus exposed them in their sinfulness and said, "You have heard that it hath been said of old time, Thou shalt not kill, but I want you to know that if you hate, you've violated my law, and my law looks within you as to attitude. You think it's enough merely not to hate or to kill, my law says you must love and you must love him who hurt you, and you must love her who said all kinds of manner of evil against you, and I must love you who slander me." That's the law. That's what I must be, a neighbor lover.

So Jesus said and now even you children remember that, "You've heard that it was said of old times, Thou shalt not commit adultery," we all know that, Pharisees didn't commit adultery, they're okay, they can go to work. Not so. Jesus says, "But I say to you if you look at a woman to lust after her with your heart, you've committed adultery already in your heart. My law doesn't deal with the surface, my law deals with what's in you, your heart and your mind and your will and your emotions." And that's why Paul said in Romans 7, "I hadn't known sin until I saw the law as I ought to have seen the law, and

when finally I saw the law, then I died." Paul was a Pharisee of all Pharisees. He was going out to kill the Christians. He did everything right. He was rising in the ranks of the Pharisees until Jesus came to him and showed him the law and said, "Paul, we need to go deep and analyze your problem within you."

So I say again I learn from the law not only that I do wrong, but let's not pass over that too quickly, when I do wrong let me admit that. When I sin against my wife, I need to say, "Hon, I'm sorry. I sinned against you. Please forgive me." I sinned. Those words, don't they choke in your throat, I sinned? Maybe you say, "I shouldn't have done that. Sorry, I blew it." Or anything else to cover the confession that I need to make, "I sinned," so that they're able to say, "And I forgive you." But the law also teaches me that I am a sinner and I need to say, it's even harder yet to say, "I'm prone by nature." That's my nature, it always will be. I'll never have another nature than that except I die. "I'm prone by my nature to hate God and my neighbor." And that's why it takes the Holy Spirit to teach this. We're going to say it takes the law to teach us this and that the Holy Spirit uses the law as the teacher, but it takes the Spirit, the powerful, mighty, miracle working Spirit of Jesus Christ to make me confess that. It's not that a Catechism teacher can teach you that and give you the logical syllogism that goes something like this: the human race is depraved, I'm a member of the human race, therefore I'm depraved. That's a good start, by the way, but that's not what's required. What's required is that we say what Jeremiah said, "Woe is me. I'm undone. I'm a man of unclean lips. My wound is grievous," says the prophet. "I have sinned. I am a sinner. O wretched man that I am."

And I want to say something about that work of the Holy Spirit as a wonder of all wonders and make it personal now just for a moment not so that you pity me but that you understand what I mean. My mother is dying right now. She may have right now just passed. I'm going to get on the next plane to see her in case I can visit her before she dies. I talked to her on the phone yesterday but she's almost ready to die. She's 93. She's ready to die. She's glad to die but I don't want her to die. If God would perform a miracle and not only heal her lung disease but give her the strength that we could fellowship for years in the future, I'd be so glad and I would be amazed at the power of God to perform that miracle. But I'm not interested in those miracles and you mustn't be either. Praying for healing is not wrong but praying for repentance and an ability to confess sin, praying for an ability to say, "I am the man. I'm sorry. I did it. That's who I am." That takes the power of the Spirit that is so much greater than the power to heal someone from their deadly disease and that I'm going to pray a thousand times for healing from sin for every one time that I pray for healing from disease.

It's a miracle and it you can convince the Pentecostals who are always praying for miracles that the lame man can walk and the blind man can see, and the deaf man hear, and the dumb man speak, all of which in the New Testament were pictures of spiritual things, if you can convince the Pentecostals who are always looking for those miracles that they're not the ones we need, then you've come a long ways. A long ways. And then I think you understand, people of God, the benefit of learning that. The need for that, the manner in which it comes, the difficulty in which we learn those things because it's so painful, then you see the benefits. I think you understand the benefits in light, again, of

the physical realm. The benefits of me knowing whether it's melanoma or a basal cell is very significant. The benefits of that young college student of knowing that it's not a need of more sleep and better rest and diet but that it's leukemia, is very important, and so also for us it is so so important and it starts here that when I know that, who I am, and confess who I am, I can't live with you in any other way than humility. But when I'm proud in my dealing with you and act as though by my words or my attitude or my conduct that I'm better than you, then I am dealing with my own sins as though they were not serious and putting a band-aid on a lump under which lump is a cancerous deadly tumor. But when I know and when I confess that I am what I am, a sinful man, that goes all the way deep, then we can get along and we will and we're going to be patient with one another, then we're going to overlook defaults that we can and deal with the faults that we can't and be gracious to those who make mistakes that they call mistakes and we realize they're sins.

We're going to be gracious with one another, patient with one another. That's the benefit. What a beautiful benefit of being able to confess this, but the main benefit, people of God, is that we're not going to be interested so much in the preaching about a social gospel and improving the world and digging clean wells and seeing to it that these economies are well-oiled machines so that the people can prosper outwardly. We're not interested in that. We're interested in this, the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. I need him. I need him. I am tempted to say desperately but I'm not desperate unless I'm in my sins and I don't see him. I need him. You need him. I love him. You love him. Why? Because he saw everything in you and found a cure for what you have, that deadly disease, and he brings it to you now in the gospel. You won't come to him with your needs unless you know your misery and when you know your misery and you come to him with your needs, there's no more blessed reality than to say as my mother says on the phone to me just yesterday, "I'm going home. I need him." Amen.

Let's pray.

Our Father which art in heaven, we thank thee for Jesus and we pray for miracles, wonders, Father, that we cannot accomplish anymore than the Israelites could have divided the sea and gone through on their own, or opened up a rock out of which would have flowed water, or caused the heavens to rain bread. No more can we, O God, work repentance in our children, in our spouse, in our fellow church members, and in ourselves. O Father, work a great work, a work of grace, a work of mercy and show us who are impenitent that on the other side of repentance is a salvation that is amazing. So send us home now with thy blessing and favor and give us a good sabbath and give us the hope of heaven. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.