

Renewed by the Holy Spirit

Lord's Day 32

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Bible Text: Colossians 3:10
Preached on: Sunday, May 19, 2013

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Our Scripture reading this afternoon is found in the book of Colossians 3. We read the entire chapter. Our text or the verse that we focus on in connection with Lord's Day 32 is Colossians 3:10. Colossians 3, beginning at verse 1.

1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. 5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: 7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. 8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: 11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. 12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. 14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. 18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. 20 Children, obey your

parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. 21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. 22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: 23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

That far we read in God's holy inspired word. May God bless that to our hearts.

Before we turn to the Catechism, we read from Scripture Colossians 3:10 which reads as follows,

10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

It's in connection with that verse that we treat the truth of Scripture as it is summarized in Lord's Day 32 Questions and Answers 86 and 87. They read as follows:

Q. 86. Since then we are delivered from our misery, merely of grace, through Christ, without any merits of ours, why must we still do good works?

Because Christ, having redeemed and delivered us by His blood, also renews us by His Holy Spirit, after His own image; that so we may testify, by the whole of our conduct, our gratitude to God for His blessings, and that He may be praised by us; also, that every one may be assured in himself of his faith, by the fruits thereof; and that, by our godly conversation, others may be gained to Christ.

Q. 87. Cannot they then be saved, who, continuing in their wicked and ungrateful lives, are not converted to God?

By no means; for the Holy Scripture declares that no unchaste person, idolater, adulterer, thief, covetous man, drunkard, slanderer, robber, or any such like, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Beloved congregation, in our Lord Jesus Christ we have been delivered from our misery, merely of grace, through Christ, without any merit of ours. But now the question that comes to us is how will you respond to that truth? How will I respond to that truth? Do we have thankfulness in our hearts and do we truly desire to manifest that thankfulness by doing good works?

In the previous Lord's Days leading up to Lord's Day 32, the Catechism has expounded the truth of Scripture as regards our misery and God's mercy in redeeming us. Now with

Lord's Day 32, the Catechism begins to expound the truth concerning the thankfulness that we owe to God for his gracious deliverance. That thankfulness will show itself in two ways and that's why the Catechism is divided the way it is. In the first place, the Catechism treats the 10 Commandments because if we are truly thankful, if we have been delivered by God's grace, we will also keep God's commandments. Some might argue that the treatment of the law belongs not in the section on thankfulness but in the section on our misery, and it's true that the law does teach us about our misery, but for the believer who is saved by grace, the law does much more than show us our misery, the law now is a rule of thankfulness and that's exactly why the Catechism treats the law in this third section on thankfulness. Our thankfulness will show itself in a desire to keep God's law, we will turn from sin and we will seek to obey God's law in every way.

But in the second place if we love God, if we are thankful for his great deliverance, we will also worship God in prayer and so the Catechism after treating the 10 Commandments, gives an explanation of the Lord's prayer because it summarizes the worship of the believer. How does that prayer begin? "Hallowed be thy name." It is the first petition because the believer who in thankfulness wants to worship God, will want his name to be glorified.

Thankfulness will show itself. It stands to reason when we see our misery outside of Christ, when we know our deliverance by Christ, we will be truly thankful. We will be truly thankful, but only if we have been renewed by the Holy Spirit will all of those be true of us. Only if we have been renewed by the Spirit, and that's the connection we bring in a connection with Pentecost. Pentecost was that day, 50 days after Jesus' death, 50 days after God sent forth the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit was poured out on Pentecost, children will remember the signs that were present when the Spirit was poured out. First there was the sound of a mighty rushing wind pointing to the fact that the Holy Spirit is irresistible. When he works in people's hearts, his work is irresistible. In the second place, there was the sign of the tongues of fire sitting on each of them, and there with fire is the picture of purifying. The Holy Spirit is a Spirit who purifies his people. And last, the disciples were given the ability to speak in different languages, pointing to the universal nature of the church. Christ gathers his church from every tongue and tribe and nation.

But what did the disciples speak about on that day? The Spirit wasn't just interested in them speaking different languages, the emphasis is on what they spoke about, and if you read Acts 2, you don't have to do that right now, but if you read Acts 2, you will find that they spoke of the wonderful works of God. They spoke of the salvation that is ours through Christ Jesus. And how was that wonderful work of God manifested on that first Pentecost day? Three thousand souls were added to the church. They were renewed by the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit that was poured out on the disciples was also given to Peter so that he preached boldly and it was given to the hearers so that they responded to the preaching.

When those hearers were renewed, when those 3,000 souls were renewed and added to the church, was that the end of it? No, the very same chapter, Acts 2, talks about how

then those souls manifested their thankfulness to God by their good works. Acts 2 tells us they sold their possessions. Not that we have to sell all our possessions and give it all to the church, but does that not show the love that was in the hearts of those people who before would have been selfish, now wanted to give of themselves? And they praised God, if you read Acts 2; the end of the chapter tells us how they praised God because they were renewed by the Holy Spirit.

That's the renewal that Colossians 3 is talking about. Colossians 3:10 again, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Why must we still do good works? Well, the Catechism begins that answer, "Because Christ, having redeemed and delivered us by His blood, also renews us by His Holy Spirit." Let's consider that this afternoon: renewed by the Holy Spirit. The truth of Scripture of our renewal by the Holy Spirit, first, let's note the fact; secondly, the goal of that renewal, that is the glory of God; and secondly, the benefit. There is a benefit to us and there is a benefit also to the church that comes from that renewal by the Holy Spirit. Renewed by the Holy Spirit: the fact, the goal and the benefits.

Pentecost ultimately is about not speaking in foreign tongues, that's not what it ultimately is about, but it ultimately is about the fact that the Holy Spirit renews the elect children of God and gives to them the image of Jesus Christ. The Catechism reflects that truth of Scripture as well when it teaches that our salvation does not stop with our redemption and deliverance by Christ's blood. That's not the end of our salvation. In other words, our salvation doesn't end once we have been justified. That's not the final goal.

Now, although forgiveness of our sins is absolutely critical, it is not the whole of our salvation. It's not. Rather, when God justifies his elect people, he also sanctifies them, and to use the words of the Catechism in Question and Answer 86, speaking that same truth, "Christ, having redeemed and delivered us by His blood, also renews us." That's talking about the process of renewal that begins with our regeneration. When God regenerates us, he begins a process of renewal in us. That's what theologians are talking about, that process of renewal when they talk about sanctification. They talk about justification, legal righteousness that God gives us; they also talk about sanctification and they are talking about this renewal. Now, it may be that we have different definitions of sanctification, let's not get stuck on a definition. If the Scripture teaches that we are renewed by the Holy Spirit, let's not argue about a definition and then throw away the truth of our renewal.

We are renewed by the Holy Spirit. Notice how the Catechism talks about the work of God, God's prior work, and then also talks about his present work. Why must we still do good works? First it says, "Because Christ, having redeemed and delivered us by His blood," that's talking about something that's already happened, something that's happened in the past. For those of you who like to hear a little bit of grammar and sometimes that's good for us to hear a little grammar, sometimes I break off into a grammar lesson with my Catechism students, the Catechism, the official Latin version of the Catechism uses the perfect tense. We've dealt with that tense before. It speaks of something that's happened in the past with a present result but it's finished, is has been perfected. That's

the perfect tense. That's the tense the Catechism uses, "having redeemed and delivered." It's done. It has a present result, we are still in that state of having been delivered, but it's something that happened in the past.

Then the Catechism goes on to speak about something that happened in the present. "Having redeemed and delivered us by His blood, also renews us by His Holy Spirit." There the word "renews" is in the present tense. This is not rocket science but it simply means this: the Holy Spirit is renewing us in the present. There is something that happened in the past, there is something that's going on in the present.

Now, if we have a problem with that, it's not a problem with the preaching, it's a problem with the teaching of the Catechism, and not only that, it's not just a problem with the Catechism because the Catechism is reflecting the truth of Scripture and the truth of Scripture is the teaching of God himself.

Colossians 3 has the same idea. It talks about a past work of God and it talks about a present work of God that is ongoing. Look at Colossians 3:1, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." That's talking about something that is already a reality. Christ has regenerated us. He has already translated us out of the kingdom of darkness, has brought us into the kingdom of light. He has taken us out of spiritual death. He has given us spiritual life. That's something that's happened already so that what's happened in the past has a present result.

The moment the Holy Spirit regenerated us, he raised us up in Jesus Christ. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." That's in the past. Now in the present, Colossians 3:10 says this, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." What does it say about the new man? The new man is renewed. Now, I admit that in the English that phrase "is renewed" is ambiguous. It might be taken in the perfect tense. We might read it that way as something that's already happened. We have been renewed and we are standing in that renewed state. It may sound like that in the English but the Greek is not ambiguous. The Greek uses the present tense. The new man, therefore, is being renewed in the present. It's not something that's already happened but it's something that's ongoing. This is the process of the renewal by the Holy Spirit. That's what the Catechism is talking about. Not only are we delivered by Jesus Christ, but the Spirit also renews us.

Really, that's exciting to think about. That's exciting to think about. Jesus Christ not only saves us and then leaves us stagnant. No, he doesn't leave us in a stagnant pond but he causes us to grow. Even as we hear the preaching he causes us to grow. Even as we are sitting here, the Holy Spirit by his grace is working in our hearts, in the hearts of his people so that we are being renewed. When we read in his word and meditate upon it throughout the week, he uses that to renew us. When we call upon God confessing our sins, he is in the process of renewing us day by day. That's what the Catechism is talking about.

But what is it that actually happens when the Holy Spirit carries out this process of renewal? What is happening in our sanctification as theologians normally speak about it? Notice what the Catechism says, "Christ, having redeemed and delivered us by His blood, also renews us by His Holy Spirit, after His own image." After his own image. In other words, when Christ renews us by his Holy Spirit, he gives us more and more of the image of Christ. That's what sanctification is all about. He gives us more and more of his image. More and more we reflect the attributes of Jesus Christ.

That's not just the Catechism that says that. It's not just your minister, God says that in Colossians 3. Colossians 3:10, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed," which is being renewed, "in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Who created us? God created us. Who created us as new creatures? Did we create ourselves? No. God created us. We are being renewed after God's image. We are being renewed in knowledge, which is one of the components of the image of Jesus Christ.

That knowledge, of course, is not just a head knowledge, it's not just something that we memorize something and we grow in that kind of knowledge. No, it's talking about an intimate knowledge of Jesus Christ, a personal knowledge, a knowledge of fellowship with Jesus Christ. He gives us that knowledge. We won't talk about the holiness and the righteousness but those are also aspects of the image that is renewed in us.

Somebody asks, "But how can I know that I know Christ? If Christ renews us in knowledge, part of the image of Christ, if he renews us, how can we be sure that we have that knowledge? How can we know that we know Christ?" Well, we find the answer to that in 1 John 2:3. 1 John 2:3 gives us this answer, "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." How do we know if we know Christ? If we keep his commandments. When we are being renewed in the image of Christ, well, that's the fruit of that, we will keep his commandments. Well, somebody says, "I don't keep his commandments, though. I don't keep his commandments." Well, maybe that's a sensitive conscience saying, "I don't keep his commandments," but the truth is if someone is being renewed by the Holy Spirit, they will be keeping God's commandments.

Now, what does it mean to keep God's commandments? Somebody might make a definition and say, "Well, to keep God's commandments means we do everything perfectly exactly as God says in his law. I don't keep his commandments," and they throw up their hands in despair. But that's not what keeping God's commandments means. That's not the word that's used in the Greek. It's not the word that's used in the Hebrew. To keep God's commandments means to have a regard for them; to diligently seek to obey them. To keep them does not mean we keep them perfectly. A lot of people like to add that extra word and then, "See, I don't keep them." That's not what it means and that's not what Scripture means.

So the question to that sensitive conscience would be who says, "I don't keep his commandments," the question would be, "Do you love God's commandments? Do you have any regard for God's commandments? Do you see that walking in the commandments is the best way for God's people? Do you see that? Do you see the misery

of walking in sin? Do you want to obey them?" Somebody says, "I don't want anything to do with those commandments. Get rid of them." Well, then you have a problem. Then you have a problem. But do you have a regard for God's commandments? Do you love them? Do you say, "Yes, I want to do this! This is what I want!" That's a regard for God's commandments. That's keeping God's commandments, striving, battling against the old man, the old man of the flesh that wants to lead us astray and we say, "I don't want to go that way and, there, I did it again." That's keeping the commandments because we are battling against the flesh. We want to walk in God's ways and then there is the flesh part of us that does not want to walk in God's ways.

Why must we still do good works? Because Jesus Christ not only redeems and delivers us by his blood, but he also renews us by his Holy Spirit and if we don't do any good works at all, if we don't keep the commandments at all, then Christ is not renewing us. That's the truth of Scripture.

The second reason why we must do good works is that they lead to the ultimate end or the ultimate goal of our salvation. What is the ultimate goal of salvation? Why did God save us? Did he save us so that we could have a good time? Not ultimately. God saved us so that his name would be honored and praised by us, but on the way to that ultimate goal, that's the ultimate goal, we want God to be glorified, that's why he saved us, but on the way to that ultimate goal is our goal of thankfulness to God. Obviously, if we were not thankful and did not express that thankfulness, God would not be honored by us. But the Catechism talks about that thankfulness. Question and Answer 86 again, "Why must we still do good works? Because Christ, having redeemed and delivered us by His blood, also renews us by His Holy Spirit, after His own image; that so we may testify, by the whole of our conduct, our gratitude to God for His blessings." Christ renews us by his Holy Spirit so that we will express our gratitude to God for his blessings.

Well, how do we express our gratitude to God? Do we merely think to ourselves in our hearts, "Oh, I'm really thankful for that," and nothing else changes? Is that how we express our gratitude to God? Or do we express our gratitude to God with our words, to say to others, "I'm so thankful to God for what he has done"? We can express our gratitude that way too. But notice what the Catechism says, "that so we may testify, by the whole of our conduct, our gratitude to God." In other words, yes, we ought to have in our hearts an attitude of thankfulness; yes, we ought to speak words of thankfulness with our mouths; but the whole of our conduct ought to express our gratitude to God, not just our words but also our works.

Our good works are a way to show to God that we are truly thankful for what he has done. Not good works in order to earn something from God but good works to show him, "Lord, I am so thankful for what thou hast done. I want to obey thy commands." The Psalmist in Psalm 116:12 has that attitude. He says, "What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?" How can I show my thankfulness? That's his desire. How can I show my thankfulness? And then verse 14 he gives the answer, "I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people." I will pay my vows. I will do good

works of worship. He will pay his vows with God's people. Works of worship show forth our thankfulness to God. Those are some of the works that we do.

God would have us show forth our gratitude to him but, of course, if we're showing forth our gratitude, the reason that we should show forth our gratitude is because we want him to be praised; that he may be praised by us. If we have been bought with a price, the precious blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, if we have been bought with a price, it stands to reason that we ought, therefore, glorify God with our bodies and our spirits which are God's. They belong to God. We belong to God body and soul. 1 Corinthians 16:20 talks about that, therefore, glorify God in your body and your spirit which are God's.

Why did God pay the ransom price of Jesus Christ on the cross? Why did he send him to suffer? So that we would glorify him in our bodies, that's talking about outward activities with our bodies, but also in our spirits, and that's not two separate things, by the way. But if we are truly to glorify God with our bodies, we also must glorify him inwardly. We also must glorify him in our spirits and that shows, does it not, the necessity of that renewal of the Holy Spirit. Somebody off the street can't just all of a sudden decide to glorify God, they wouldn't even want to. There has to be a renewal inwardly, a heart that has been washed by the Spirit. And does that not show that no matter how good a work may look outwardly, if it does not come from a clean heart, if it does not come from true faith, if it does not seek to glorify God, then it is not truly a good work. Augustine called them sparkling sins or glittering sins because they did not come from a regenerated heart.

Glorify God in your body and in your spirit, and we will do that, beloved. We will. When we have the light of God's grace and the life of God's grace in us, that light and life will shine out. It will. That's why Jesus says in Matthew 5:16, that familiar verse, "Let your light so shine before men." Your light. Is it really all ours? Yes, it's ours but where did we get it from? It's a reflection of God's light. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Whenever there are truly good works, God will use them to glorify his name. Why must we do good works? To testify of our gratitude and give glory to God. That's the goal but that's not all. I feel like one of those commercials where they say, "But there's more." And there is, there is also more to that. Not only do we seek to glorify God but those good works will also bring a present benefit. In the first place, the Catechism speaks of a benefit to ourselves. Sometimes there may be well-meaning believers who think that we should never try to benefit ourselves spiritually. As soon as we start to take a step and say, "I want to benefit myself spiritually," "Oh, now you're stepping overboard. Now you're saying salvation is not by grace anymore if you're trying to do something. That's blasphemous." But the Catechism says otherwise. The Catechism says this is a motivation for us. This ought to be a motivation, that we will benefit ourselves by doing good works. If I say to myself, "I want to benefit myself. I'm going to set myself a goal. I'm going to read Scripture every morning and mediate upon it." Are we going to condemn that and say, "Oh, see, now you're trying to do, now you're trying to earn your

own salvation again." No. We are seeking a benefit for ourselves and the Catechism talks about that.

Question and Answer 86, "Why must we still do good works? That He may be praised by us," and then it goes on, "also, that every one may be assured in himself of his faith, by the fruits thereof." By the fruits of that faith, the fruits of good works, we will be assured of our faith. That's a benefit to us by doing good works. Now, we don't go out with a hand and say, "See, I did good works. Where is it, God?" That's a mercenary spirit. But we still ought not to shun seeking to do good works knowing that it will lead to our assurance.

I think even the children can follow the logic of Matthew 7:17. Jesus says, "Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." Jesus is clearly talking about good works, the good fruit of a good tree, the good works, and that's evident in the next verses, Matthew 7:20, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." He that doeth the will, that's talking about good works.

When we can look at ourselves and see the good fruit of truly good works, and we ought to be able to see that, beloved, if we cannot see that, there is something wrong honestly. If we cannot see any fruit of good works, there is something wrong. We ought to be able to see the true fruit of good works and when we see that, that's an indication. When we see the fruit, that's an indication we have the root of true faith. The fruit comes from the root. Matthew 7:20 again, "by their fruits ye shall know them."

Now, it's certainly true that we can make a pretty good estimate if we look at others by their fruits but even that's not infallible. Somebody might be putting on a really good show. They do all these good works as long as we are around. They look good. Think of Joash, he did that. He looked good as long as Jehoida was alive. I say people can put on a good show so even that's not infallible but yet Jesus says, "by their fruits ye shall know them." Now, what's true of others, we can make an estimate of others, not that we should go around saying, "He's saved. He's not. He's saved. He's not." No, but we know them by their fruits but what's true of others is certainly true of ourselves.

It's certainly true that we can look at our fruits and now we can look at our hearts. We can see our hearts. By God's grace, we can make a proper estimation of our motives and say, "Do you know what? I really didn't want to do that but I did it anyway because God wanted me to." We can make that estimation of ourselves. We can say, "Yes, there was sin mixed with it, but there was also love. Yes, I put that money in the offering and I was thinking in pride how good I was to do that, but I also wanted to support this work of the kingdom." And I wouldn't want to do that, I wouldn't send my money away if I was a person who wasn't concerned at all about the kingdom. Now, there are people who give all kinds of money. They give money. They build huge, big, multi million dollar hospitals. Why do they do that? Well, they have to judge in their own hearts but often, if

not usually, usually if not always, not always but usually it's to get attention for themselves. Usually to get attention for themselves.

I say we can't judge others but we can judge our own motives. We can say, "This is fruit which the Holy Spirit has worked in my life." Now notice the Catechism when it talks about the fruits thereof, the fruits of a true faith, that which true faith produces, it does not talk about perfect fruits. It does not say, the Catechism does not say, "Also that everyone may be assured in himself of his faith by the perfect fruits that proceed from that faith," because if that was the case, if we had to see perfect fruit with absolutely no sin mixed with it whatsoever, we would never be able to assure ourselves of our faith. Then let's just delete that from the Catechism. Then the Catechism is teaching error. If we believe that, then we ought to be writing to our consistory, we ought to be writing to classes and to synods and say, "Our Catechism is in error. It's telling us that we can be assured of our faith by the fruits of good works and that's impossible." If that's true, we ought to be dealing with that but, beloved, this is the teaching of Scripture. This is what Scripture teaches. This is our confession: we are assured, we can be assured of our faith by the fruits of that faith, even though those fruits are not perfect.

Even though those works are not perfect. Well, how can that be? How can we gain assurance by looking at a work? We say, "Well, it's tainted with sin. Throw it out." Well, then we can't get any assurance for that. What we have to be able to see is that our works, though tainted with sin, nevertheless have a portion that is motivated from a true faith; a portion that truly seeks God's glory; a portion that is done according to God's law. It is good. So we should never ask forgiveness for a good work, beloved. Never ask forgiveness, "Lord, I just gave some money in the offering. Please forgive me. I just showed love to my brother today. Please forgive me. I just forgave somebody. Forgive me for my good work." What a bunch of nonsense, beloved. Do not ask forgiveness for your good works. Ask forgiveness for the sin that is mixed with it. Ask forgiveness for the wrong motives but do not ask forgiveness for a good work that the Holy Spirit has worked in you and say, "I need forgiveness for that work of the Holy Spirit." That is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit to say, "This work that the Holy Spirit worked in me is tainted and it's not good whatsoever. The Holy Spirit can't do that."

We are able to examine our faith by the fruits of that faith. That's our confession, beloved. "Also, that every one may be assured in himself of his faith, by the fruits thereof." That's our confession. We are able to gain assurance of our faith through those works because the Holy Spirit has renewed us.

Now on the other hand, those who live in sin, those who walk in sin and refuse to repent cannot have any assurance that their faith is real. That's not my teaching, beloved, that's the teaching of the Catechism as well. Question and Answer 87, "Cannot they then be saved, who, continuing in their wicked and ungrateful lives, are not converted to God? By no means; for the Holy Scripture declares that no unchaste person, idolater, adulterer, thief, covetous man, drunkard, slanderer, robber, or any such like, shall inherit the kingdom of God." You understand, the Catechism is not saying that God will not save these people, that God will not save an unchaste person, that he will not save an idolater,

that he will not save a robber, God can save anybody he wants. When the Catechism says "cannot they be saved," it is saying that those who continue in their wicked and ungrateful lives, if they continue in that wicked and ungrateful life, they are not saved. They are not saved. In other words, those who give no evidence that the Holy Spirit is renewing them should not fool themselves and say, "Well, I'm saved anyway because I go to church." They walk in sin in all of their life, they do not repent of sin and yet they go to church? Well, they shouldn't receive any comfort from that.

Those who have no interest in seeking the things above and we can examine our consciences, "Do I really want the things above? Do I really desire spiritual blessings?" We can examine ourselves but those who have no interest, who say, "I don't want to pray to God. I don't want to go to church. I don't want to praise God in any way. I want to live for myself." Those who have no interest in seeking the things above where Christ sits on the right hand of God, should not imagine that they have been raised up with Christ. They should not comfort themselves with a false comfort.

That's a serious warning, beloved, is it not for those who are walking in rebellion? Those words ought to distress those who have a false comfort, those who say, "Lord, Lord," but they do not do what he commands them. And if they do not repent, if they do not turn to God in obedience, then they ought to question whether they are truly children of God. They ought to question that. That ought to distress the comfortable, those who are wrongly comfortable. This word ought to distress them.

Now maybe there is sensitive conscience that again says, "Well, I don't do good works. The Holy Spirit must not be working in me, then. You make me feel like I'm not a Christian." But again as we've said before, part of the reason for that may be an overly strict definition of good works. The Catechism gives a definition of good works in Lord's Day 33, Question and Answer 90, and Lord willing, we'll get to that, and our Question and Answer 91, Lord willing we'll get to that next week. I say maybe it's an overly strict definition of good works but if somebody has that conscience that says, "Well, I don't do good works," my question again is, "Do you pray? Do you go to God confessing your sins and seeking forgiveness in Jesus Christ? Do you want to give up those sins and do you want to follow in God's ways?" Those are good works, praying to God, seeking God's glory.

The Lord's Day, beloved, is not seeking to distress God's people but it is seeking to help us see the necessity of good works. This is the teaching of the Catechism. If we see any who stubbornly refuse to repent, what should we do? Say, "Oh, you're saved anyway. Don't worry about it"? No. We declare to them what God declares to them. 1 Corinthians 6:9, "Know ye not," we could just read this passage to them, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Those who walk in those sins without repenting will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Why must we do good works? Because they will help assure us of our faith in God, true faith that brings forth fruits. And then one last benefit of our good works is that God uses these good works to gain others to Christ. The very last part of Question and Answer 86, "and that, by our godly conversation, others may be gained to Christ." By our godly conversation, others may be gained to Christ. Now, those others may be our children. God uses our godly conversation in the conversion of our children. God may use the godly conversation of a believer in the case that his spouse is not a believer. The Scripture gives us an example of that, 1 Peter 3:1 speaks to wives who are married to unbelieving husbands, the wives were converted into the church and here's the direction to those wives, 1 Peter 3:1, "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands," that's one of God's commands, doing good works in that way, "be in subjection to your own husbands that, if any obey not the word," that is, if any of those husbands are not believers, they don't obey the word, "if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear." They see the chaste conduct of their wives and they wonder, "What makes them so different?" And God uses that to draw them into the church that they may be won, w-o-n over to the Gospel. Well, obviously it's not just the good work that saves them but it is the Holy Spirit that convicts them and causes them to see that. The Holy Spirit uses that as a means. The good work in itself doesn't have that power. But God uses our good works to adorn the preaching. To adorn the preaching. To make it more real to say, "This is what the preaching does? I want that." God uses that.

Good works are a must. Why must we still do good works? The German, the official German version of the Catechism uses the word that has the idea of owing something. Why do we owe it to God to do good works? Why do we owe it? Why must we, why ought we? You understand that's not a must in the sense of fulfilling a requirement to get to heaven; we have to do this prerequisite, fulfill some condition and then we will be saved. No, not at all. It's not a must of earning anything but good works will be present in those who have been renewed by the Holy Spirit. It is inevitable. Maybe they are not totally evident but they will be there.

We have been bought with a price. We heard that this morning. God has saved us by his grace, by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit. That's a duty and that's a privilege that every believer has. Amen.

Our Father which art in heaven, we thank thee that thou art working in us. We thank thee for thy Holy Spirit who is renewing us. We pray that thou continue that work. Grant to us that we may glorify thee. Grant to us that we may be assured of our own faith as we see the fruits of that faith which thou hast graciously given us. And grant that others may be gained to Christ. Grant us the grace that we may live out of the grace that thou hast given us day by day. And we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.