

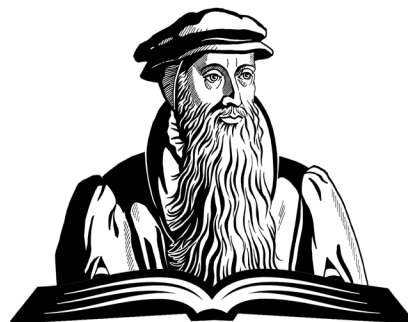
VIDEO SERMON SERIES

Sermons on the Heidelberg Catechism

by Rev. Bartel Elshout

Sermon #11, Lord's Day 9

Faith in God the Father



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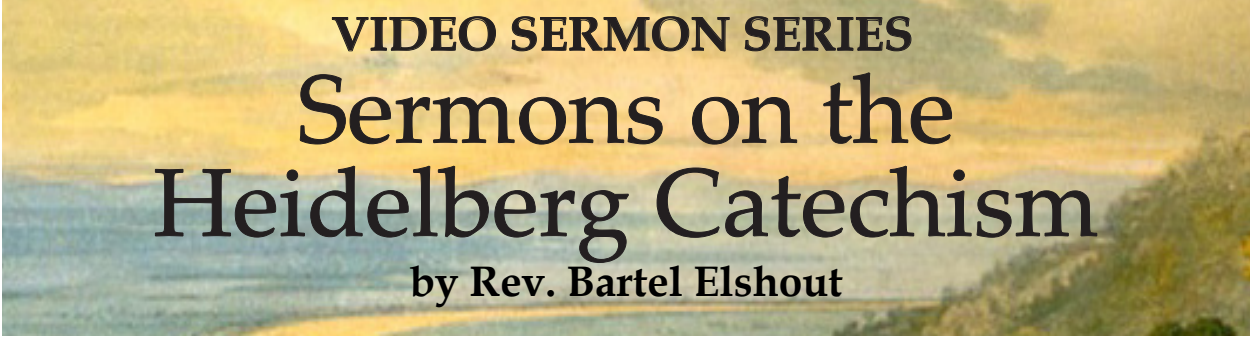
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VIDEO SERMON SERIES
**Sermons on the
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Sermon #11, Lord's Day 9

Faith in God the Father

Matthew 6, verses 30 to 33

Question and Answer #26

i. Introduction

- 1. Faith that He is Also My Father**
- 2. Faith that He Will Provide for All My Needs**
- 3. Faith that He Will Bless Me Spiritually**

Introduction

Congregation, turn with me for a moment again to Matthew 6, and we're going to look at verses 30 through 33, by way of introduction. "Wherefore"—and just before that, of course, and whenever we read "wherefore," we have to ask, Why is it there for? "Wherefore," in light of God's extraordinary care for the animals, for the birds, even for the grass of the field—"Wherefore," Jesus then says, "if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven." We would translate that today, and say, "The grass which grows today and is mowed tomorrow." If God, as Creator, if God even cares for the grass of the field, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought"—be not anxious—"saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithall shall we be clothed?"—How will our daily needs be met? How will we be able to make ends meet?—"(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:)" The point Jesus is making is, "the Gentiles" here stands for those who do not know God. "The Gentiles" are the ungodly. They are completely preoccupied with the things of this life—"What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewithall shall we be clothed?" And Jesus is saying to his disciples, "Don't act like the Gentiles. Don't act as if those are the only things that matter to you in this life. "For"—and then this wonderful statement—"your heavenly Father

knoweth that ye have need of all these things.” Your heavenly Father knows your circumstances. He knows your concerns. He knows your needs, also your temporal needs. And then he says, “But”—instead of acting like Gentiles, act like children of the Father, and therefore, “seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

And that brings us to Lord’s Day 9, which has a marvelous, marvelous statement about the fatherhood of God—Lord’s Day 9; because now we’re beginning to look at each of the twelve articles of the Apostles’ Creed. And as you know, the Apostles’ Creed begins with the confession, “I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.” And that is the thrust of Question #26, of Lord’s Day 9, so,

What believest thou when thou sayest this?

And so, again, a very personal question for us all tonight, because how many times have we not made that confession without realizing what we are confessing? *What believest thou?*

And the Answer is this: *That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (who of nothing made heaven and earth, with all that is in them; who likewise upholds and governs the same by His eternal counsel and providence) is for the sake of Christ His Son, my God and my Father.* So, the main clause, the main sentence is that the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is, for the sake of Christ his Son, my God and my Father. *On whom*—on this Father—*on whom I rely so entirely, that I have no doubt but He will provide me with all things necessary for soul and body; and further, that He will make whatever evils He sends upon me, in this valley of tears, turn out to my advantage; for He is able to do it, being Almighty God, and willing, being a faithful Father.*

And so, this Lord’s Day focuses then on *Faith in God the Father*, the opening article. First of all, a faith that this God is my Father; secondly, that faith in him who will provide for all my needs, as my heavenly Father; and thirdly, that he, as my heavenly Father, will bless me spiritually, because, when he says here that he will turn all things to my advantage, the implication, as we will see, is to my spiritual advantage. That is God’s overarching objective in all his dealings with his children, that we would prosper spiritually, and he will use whatever circumstances are needed to bring that about. So, *Faith that He is My Father, Faith that He Will Provide for All of My Needs, and Faith that He Will Bless Me Spiritually.*

1. Faith that He is Also My Father

Congregation, this opening sentence, this powerful opening sentence, this main clause, is so extraordinary in its contents, that *The eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is, for the sake of Christ his Son, my God and my Father.* And so, what the Catechism here confesses, as it echoes the Word of God, it grasps this astounding truth, that there is a very significant connection between the eternal Fatherhood of God towards his Son, and the Fatherhood of his children. Those two are intimately connected.

And congregation, that’s why I want to briefly focus on that extraordinary love relationship between the Father and the Son. And I will emphasize it as often as the Lord gives me the opportunity. Because, congregation, one thing I’m convinced of, as little as I understand of it, one thing I’m convinced of, that until we begin to grasp that astounding love relationship between the Father and the Son, we will not ultimately be able to interpret God’s Word correctly. We must view all Scripture, all that is revealed to us through the lens of that relationship, the Father-Son relationship. As we pointed out last week, when we talked about the Trinity, that’s the Trinity, congregation. Let me state it again. The Trinity is that covenantal love relationship between the Father and the Son, who are bound together in the person of the Holy Spirit, in whom the Father

communicates his love to the Son, and in whom the Son communicates his love to his Father. And yet, because, in the Trinity, it is the Son who is the begotten of the Father, that's why, especially in the Gospel of John, the primary emphasis is on the Father's love for his Son. And so, therefore, I want to emphasize that again briefly as well.

And so, what the Catechism grasps correctly, is that we do not understand who God is, unless in some measure we begin to grasp that he is the eternal Father of the Son. Nothing so defines the character of God and the being of God as that eternal Fatherhood of God. That defines his very being. That's who he is. As I said last week, God does what he does because he is who he is. God does what he does because he is who he is. And because he is who he is—eternal Father of his only begotten Son—all of his actions, all that he has ever done, and all that he will ever do, all flow out of that love relationship, all flow out of that love that the Father eternally has for his Son.

So, boys and girls, what do your fathers do? Well what they do is, in many, many ways, they show you that they love you. Everything they do in your family, your fathers, the work that they do, all the things that they do, they all do because they love you as their children. They are committed to your wellbeing. A loving father will go to any length to promote the wellbeing of his children. And you see, that human father-child relationship is but a faint reflection of the eternal love relationship between the Father and his Son. So our fatherhood is a reflection of God's Fatherhood. So, all that the Father does, he aims for the glory of his Son. And why does he aim for the glory of his Son? Because he loves his Son. He loves his Son with an infinite, unspeakable love. And so, in all of his doings, in all of his deeds, the overarching objective the Father has is to bring glory to his only begotten Son.

So we read of this eight times in the Gospel of John. John 3, verse 35 is the first one: "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." So because he loves his Son, he has committed everything into the hands of his Son. That's why it was by his Son, and for his Son, that he created the universe, because he loved him from before the foundation of the world. Jesus was very much aware of that.

And so, this Lord's Day speaks of creation. And I will say something about creation but not much, because it is a subordinate clause, like to support the main clause. Our focus must be on the main clause, *That this eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (who of nothing made heaven and earth, with all that is in them; who likewise upholds and governs the same by His eternal counsel and providence)*. So in other words, the Catechism here focuses on God as Creator, and on God as Provider. But we have to connect that to the love that he has for his Son.

So as I pointed out last week when we talked about the Trinity, the Trinity is that relationship in which the Father and Son love each other in the Spirit, in which they are fully satisfied within themselves. In other words, God did not have to create to find satisfaction in that sense. And yet, we know from Colossians that the very reason why he purposed to create the universe, and the very reason why he has purposed the complete redemption of the universe is precisely because he loves his Son. So we read these profound words in Colossians 1, verse 16: "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and [all things were created] for him." As I said earlier, that's why the Father rested on the seventh day. That's why he beheld the magnificent work of his hands; and he saw that it was very good, because the heavens—Psalm 19—"The heavens declare the glory of God" (verse 1); and how the glory of God revealed in his only begotten Son, who is the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person (Hebrews 1:3). And so, all of creation reflected the glory of God's Son, and especially, of

course, man, as the image-bearer created in the image of his Son.

But we also know that the ultimate outcome of redemption will be, again, the glory of God's Son. Let's look at a few passages, important passages. Ephesians 1, verse 10, and there we read this: "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together"—and read carefully—"in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him." That's the ultimate outcome of redemption. And so, the Father who created all things by and for his Son, his overarching goal in redemption is that all things will come together in Christ, "which are in heaven, which are in earth, even in him."

That's also the reason why the God who created the world for his Son, is also preserving it for his Son. And so, the whole work of Providence that is alluded to—and which will be unpacked for us in Lord's Day 10—the whole work of Providence has one objective: God is preserving this world, he's preserving this present universe, he's preserving this earth, for the sake of his Son. That's the only reason why the world continues, in spite of all the wickedness that is manifested everywhere. Why does God continue to preserve this world of ours? For the sake of his Son. Because all those, for whom he gave himself in the fullness of time; all those for whom he purchased redemption, they have not yet all been saved. And until that number is complete, the world will continue. So again, the overarching objective of Providence is God does everything that he does, he does it for his Son; he does it because he loves his Son. That's why, ultimately, when the day will come when everything will be restored, it will be God's Son who will forever have the preeminence.

Turn with me to Acts 3, Peter's second sermon after Pentecost, Acts 3, verse 21. Well, let me begin with verse 20: "And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you"—and here it comes—"whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." The time of restitution—and so, why is God committed to redeem this fallen, broken world? Why will he restore this fallen, broken world? Why is God eternally purposed to redeem fallen human beings? Because it was created for the glory of his Son. And therefore the whole work of redemption, the whole work of restoration has as its overarching goal the glory of God's only begotten Son. Then turn with me to Colossians 1, verse 20, where we see the same thing: "And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself: by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

And that's why Satan is the mastermind behind the great lie that has been foisted upon our world, that strong delusion that now affects every aspect of our society—the lie of evolution. Evolution is not just a harmless scientific alternative. It was contrived by the archenemy of God's Son, the enemy of the Lord Jesus Christ. We know that the Reformation was followed by the time of the Enlightenment. And what happened during the Enlightenment, is that rather than science being subject to the Word of God—many of the great men who invented remarkable things were men who feared God, and for whom the Word of God was preeminent—but rather than science being subject to Scripture, Scripture was now made subject to man's enlightened thinking, his enlightened mind. And that set the stage for Charles Darwin to introduce the whole idea that this magnificent universe is not the work of a glorious, Almighty, infinitely-wise Creator, but is merely the result of chance. And what a judgment has come upon our Western culture, so profoundly influenced by the Reformation; oh, what a judgment! That's what Paul talks about in 2 Thessalonians 2; it says that God will send them a strong delusion that they will believe a lie (verse 11).

And Satan knows exactly what he is doing. Satan is a brilliant theologian in that way. He understands that all things were made by and for God's Son, and he hates God's Son with an

unspeakable passion. And he realized that all of creation is an ongoing testimony to the greatness and glory of God. And so, there had to be a way to blind men to that obvious reality. Turn with me to Romans 1, where we read of this; Romans 1, verses 19 through 22. There we read this: “Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.”—and here it comes—“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made.” So Paul is saying, creation, in all of its beauty and glory, is an obvious testimony to invisible truths. “Even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.”

Dear congregation, that’s why, what evolution has done to our culture is stunning indeed. And in that sense, we can say Satan has been enormously successful in blinding the eyes of men from the obvious; blinding men, for this glorious book of nature, as the *Belgic Confession*¹ calls it, this glorious book of nature that declares to us the glory of God. That’s why we have to be thankful that there are organizations right now who are going out of their way to reeducate the people of God that we can completely trust what we read in Genesis 1 and 2; that Genesis 1 and 2 is not some poetic legend, but that it is a record of God’s marvelous work of creation. Of course, we have several organizations today that are immensely helpful in that sense. Also, for parents. You, as young parents, you have much more available than I did when my children were young. I think of the work of the Institute of Creation Research—ICR. I sent you a link this week; CMI—Creation Ministries International; and of course, Answers in Genesis. All three of these organization have done an extraordinary work in reaffirming to the people of God that they can trust the witness of God’s Word about the creation of the universe. And let’s not forget, it’s Satan, ultimately, who is behind it; Satan, who blinds the eyes of men. But thanks be to God that he will not succeed. Thanks be to God that the truth continues to triumph. Thanks be to God that God has evidently blessed these ministries as well, to open the eyes of many.

But now, let’s get back to the focus of the Catechism, because this is a book of comfort. The Heidelberg Catechism is a book of comfort. And so, the question is, what is the comfort for God’s children? What is our comfort in knowing that God, the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who made all things for him, who upholds and governs that magnificent work of creation for his Son, that he is *for the sake of Christ his Son, my God and my Father*. What a beautiful statement that is! What an extraordinary statement that is! Because that statement alone affirms the purpose of creation and redemption. God created us in Adam to be his children. God was Adam’s Father. Adam and Eve were his son and daughter. And the whole purpose of the work of redemption is to being fallen sinners back into that Father-child relationship. And so the overarching goal of the work of redemption is that sinners, taught by the Spirit, and through embracing the Lord Jesus Christ, would come to the realization that, for the sake of God’s eternal Son whom the Father loves; and for the sake of that Son and what he has accomplished; that his Father is also my God and my Father. As you know, that’s what Jesus so wonderfully emphasized to Mary Magdalen the day of the resurrection. He said, “Go tell my brethren that I am ascending unto my God and your God, to my Father and your Father” (John 20:17).

And so, my dear people, I want you to understand, that’s God’s desire. God’s desire is that you would recognize him for who he is in Christ. I want you to understand that God desires his children

1 The Belgic Confession of Faith, written 1559 by Guido de Brés to plead for freedom from Roman Catholic persecuton against the Reformed churches in the area which later became Belgium and the Netherlands.

to be assured of that blessed reality, that by grace, you have taken refuge to Christ, and by grace, you have embraced him and have come to him, and that he is your God, and that he is your Father. That's not presumptuous. It's not presumptuous for a believer to speak of God as his Father and his God. It's God's desire that you be assured of that reality. And Satan goes overtime to try to rob believers of that comfort. He goes overtime in deceiving us, in somehow troubling the waters, in somehow confusing our minds, so that we do not understand and grasp the essential truths of the gospel.

It's so clear from Scripture that the overarching goal of redemption is that we would know ourselves to be the adopted sons and daughters of God. Listen to the witness of Scripture, Ephesians 1, verse 5: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." Having predestinated us—so God's eternal purpose in electing his people, the ultimate goal and destiny of that was that we might become his adopted children, through Jesus Christ.

Romans 8, verses 15 and 16, Paul writes: "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Listen carefully to that phrase: "The Spirit itself"—the Spirit of the Father and the Son. That Spirit bears witness with the spirit of God's children "that we are the children of God." That's his aim, that's his goal. That's why it's so important for us to interact with God's Word, because he uses that Word to instruct us; he uses that Word to overcome all obstacles; he uses that Word to deliver us from all of our doubts and fears; he uses that Word to direct us to the glorious reality of what Christ has accomplished. So that as we interact with that Word, it is his work to bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.

And I realize that believers struggle with death. I realize that so often we have difficulty appropriate for ourselves what Christ has accomplished for us. But let me reassure you, it's your Father's will that you be assured of God's truth. That's why we, as servants, have such an enormous responsibility in dividing God's Word rightly. Oh, it is our calling, as I've said here repeatedly, it is our calling to obey God's direction to Isaiah, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people...Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and [declare] unto her that her warfare is accomplished; that her iniquity is pardoned: and that she has received...double for all her sins" (Isaiah 40:1-2)—*For the sake of Christ His Son, my God and my Father*.

And so, dear believer, if in your own closet, in your private prayer, if you call upon God as your Father, let me assure you, you are not being presumptuous. You are doing something that the Father delights in. He delights in it, when you understand the gospel to such an extent that you call upon him as your heavenly Father, because we believe that the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is, *for the sake of Christ His Son, my God and my Father*. Oh, what a price was paid for that privilege! Because implied, of course, is the fact that God's eternal Son had to become the Son of man in order to be our Mediator; in order to secure that privilege by his sacrifice. We, who were God's sons and daughters in Adam and who have lost that privilege, the eternal Son of God became the Son of man—why? so that the sons of men might become the sons of God. That's why the Son of God became the Son of man, so that we, the sons of men, might again become the adopted sons and daughters of the living God. That's why we read in 1 John 3, verse 1: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we"—sinners—"that we should be called the sons of God." Ephesians 1, verses 6 and 7, Paul writes: "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace"—in whom we have redemption; in whom

we have full and complete restoration.

2. Faith that He Will Provide for All My Needs

Then, it goes on to say: *On whom*—on this God, this God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator of this vast universe, the one who upholds it by his power, that God, who for Christ’s sake is *my God and my Father; on whom I rely so entirely, that I have no doubt but He will provide me with all things necessary for soul and body*. This is so beautiful, congregation. Do you believe it? Does it ever dawn on us what it means to have this God as your Father; this God who has made the heavens and the earth; this magnificent God whose glory we see displayed for us even in this broken world of ours; that that God is my Father, who cares for me, who cares for you individually, as if you were the only one in the universe; who is completely committed to your wellbeing.

He will provide me with all things necessary—interesting word, “necessary”—*for soul and body*. Look at the order, *for soul and body*, things necessary. So he provides us with that which we need, not with that which we want. But with that which we need—*things necessary*. And congregation, most of the generations of God’s people never even remotely had what we have today. It’s not too long ago that our forefathers could not have dreamed that we enjoy the luxury that we enjoy today. We have what is far more than that which is necessary. In 1 Timothy 6, Paul talks about the spirit of contentment. What are we to be content with? We are to be content, with the things mentioned in Matthew 6, if those things are met. If we have something to eat, something to drink, and that we have clothes, that our temporal needs are met. That’s why, in the Lord’s Prayer, Christ teaches us to pray for that which we need: “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11). Why?—so that, as our physical needs are met, our basic needs are met, we may be able to serve this God. And there is a priority to serve, because God’s number one, dear believer, your Father’s number one concern is your spiritual wellbeing; that’s number one; and secondarily, your temporal wellbeing.

And, *I have no doubt*—you see, that’s the language of faith—*I have no doubt but he will provide me with all things necessary for soul and body*. In that sense, I’m jealous of previous generations, even of our ancestors, who sometimes did not know from one day to the next how they would be able to meet the needs of their families; and who experienced in a very real way, and often in extraordinary ways, how their heavenly Father provided for their daily and for their temporal needs.

3. Faith that He Will Bless Me Spiritually

And further, that He will make whatever evils He sends upon me, in this valley of tears, turn out to my advantage—striking language, that *He sends me in this valley of tears*. And evil things do happen in the lives of God’s people. God never promises his people that the life of the Christian will be smooth-sailing; never promises his people that everything will work out exactly as we would desire it to work out. No, the lives of God’s children, in Scripture, and throughout the ages, have often been filled with perplexing providences. Evil things do happen to God’s people. Evil things are happening in Nigeria right now. Think about it. When people are sleeping in their villages, and suddenly, Boko Haram² comes upon them and begins to slaughter people mercilessly.

2 Boko Haram is a self-proclaimed Islamic militant jihadist group in Nigeria, founded in 2002 to spread Sunni Islam and destroy Shia Islam. Since 2009, Boko Haram has brutally attacked all non-Islamic peoples in that region, resulting in hundreds of thousands of deaths and displaces peoples, targeting churches, individual Christians, schools, police, and other civic organizations.

Those are evil things that are happening there. But this is saying that even those evil things are not outside of God's control and sovereign purpose.

And when evil things do happen, God will turn them out to our advantage, our spiritual advantage. God's goal, as your heavenly Father is not to make you comfortable in this life, to make you comfortable in this world. Your Father wants you to be godly. He wants you to prosper spiritually. And he will even use evil things for your spiritual advantage—evil events, trials, afflictions, perplexing providences, so that we die to ourselves, so that our flesh, our wretched flesh dies, that we might be conformed to the image of his Son. As you well know, that's the whole point of Romans 28–29. Often verse 28 is quoted without quoting verse 29, and then we misunderstand verse 28. And even the ungodly will happily quote 28, and say, “Well, all things will work together for good.” For whom?—“for those who love God, and are the called according to his purpose.” For, Paul says, we have been predestined “to be conformed to the image of his Son.” There, you have it again. The Father who loves his Son, loves his children to resemble his Son, because we have been chosen in the Son, to become like the Son; chosen in Christ to become like Christ. And God will use any means, even evil things to accomplish that goal, till we begin to resemble his only begotten Son.

Think of Joseph. What his brothers did to him was evil, it was an evil thing (Genesis chapters 37 & 39). And they realized it later, when they came back. And when God had worked savingly in them, they realized what they had done, they were fearful that after Jacob died, that he would still get even with them. Then Joseph made that remarkable statement, he said, “You meant it for evil—you meant it for evil, but God meant it for good” (Genesis 50:20). And so, God used that evil sequence of circumstances. Even when he was in the house of Potiphar, when he was godly and upright, and when the wife of Potiphar sought to seduce him, he ended up in jail. Another evil thing happened to him. But we know, from Psalm 105, and then, of course, the evil thing, that the butler forgot about him. But Psalm 105 tells us that he was there exactly as long as God wanted him to be, to purify him, and to prepare him for that great assignment that he had as the viceroy of Egypt. Joseph, he was a proud, arrogant young man, cocky, very impressed with his own talents, with his own gifts, and he was brilliant, he was bright. That had to be crucified. He had to be taken down; then he was ready to be God's servant. And so, God turned an evil thing, and turned it for good.

Often, I've mentioned the situation with Paul and Silas. What they did in Philippi was an evil thing, when they threw them in jail, and they subjected them to great physical torture in that jail. That was an evil thing, but God meant it for good. And certainly, Paul and Silas were exercised by that evil event, to such an extent that they were singing God's praise in the middle of the night with their feet in the stocks. And then we see God's overarching goal was to bring Paul in contact with a jailor who needed to hear the gospel.

And so, *He will make whatever evils He sends upon me, in this valley of tears*—and that's what this life is, it is a valley of tears. And sooner or later we will all find out, we will all get our portion, that this life is a valley of tears. Even God's children, even they will have to shed many tears, many tears. That's why the promise that the day is coming that Christ will wipe away all of your tears. Oh, what a blessed promise that is! And yet, in that valley of tears, your heavenly Father will provide for you, he will care for you.

For—and that's the conclusion—*He is able to do it, being Almighty God, and is willing to do it—being a faithful Father.* What a beautiful conclusion. He is able and willing. Earthly fathers sometimes are willing, very willing, but are not always able to help their children. Then there are sinful fathers who are able, and who are not willing to help their children. Dear believer, your

heavenly Father is able and willing. He is able, being Almighty God, and the Creator and preserver of heaven and earth—Almighty God. And so, Paul refers to this, in Romans 4:21, when he talks about Abraham: “Being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.” Your God, your heavenly Father is a God for whom there are no impossibilities. Nothing is too hard for him, and he is willing, *being a faithful Father*. What a beautiful statement that is: *a faithful Father*.

How faithful are you? How faithful am I? Are we faithful sons and daughters of this heavenly Father? How often are we unfaithful? How often do we misbehave, as his children. And our unfaithfulness will never annul his faithfulness. He will remain faithful. Why?—because that faithfulness is rooted in Christ, in his Son. That faithfulness is connected to his Son and his finished work. And for his sake, for his sake, and for the sake of his finished work, you heavenly Father will never, never abandon you. He will never forsake the work of his own hands, as we confess every Lord’s Day. That’s why we read, in Matthew 7, verses 9 to 11. Jesus says: “Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?” Or, “Like as a father pitieth his children”—Psalm 103—“so the LORD pitieth them that fear him” (verse 13). An able, and a willing Father.

Congregation, boys and girls, is this God your Father? That’s a very important question. Is this God my Father? Is he your Father, in Christ? Because, if he’s not, then you are, of all men, most miserable. Because then, you will once meet your Creator. He is your Father by virtue of creation, but you will then meet him as your Judge. But it’s still the day of salvation. Oh, this Father of our Lord Jesus Christ still delights to receive sinners into his everlasting embrace. It is still his work to bring fallen sons and daughters of Adam, to bring them into an everlasting love relationship with himself, through his only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And it is that Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is that Father who promises this in the gospel, and with that I want to end: 2 Corinthians 6, verses 17 and 18, beautiful verses, where Paul quotes the Old Testament: “Wherefore”—quoting God here—“Wherefore come out from among them”—come out from this perishing world—“and be ye separate, saith the Lord...and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” Amen.

Let’s pray.

Our faithful God, how extraordinary is the witness of thy Word regarding thyself and thy Son. And Lord, we pray that thou wilt bless the instruction that has been provided for us also by means of the Heidelberg Catechism echoing the testimony of thy Word. And Lord, teach us by thy Spirit to grasp this blessed truth for our own soul. Thou knowest how often thy children live below their privileges, and how Satan often works overtime to rob us of the joy of thy salvation, to keep us from appropriating by faith, this glorious truth, that thou, for the sake of thy Son art also our God and our Father. And so, Lord, continue to bless thy Word, and to instruct all those that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, to bring them to that assured knowledge that thou art their God and Father, on whom we can rely so entirely that we need not doubt but that he will provide us with all things necessary for body and soul. And so, bless us. And we pray for those who do not yet know thee as their reconciled Father. O that they would seek thee while thou art yet to be found in Christ. Go with us in this coming week. Bless the labor of our hands. Keep us safely when we travel. Bless times of vacation and restoration, and gather with us this coming Lord’s Day. We ask it in Jesus’ name alone. Amen.