

VIDEO SERMON SERIES

# Sermons on the Heidelberg Catechism

by Rev. Bartel Elshout

*Sermon #43, Lord's Day 34*

## The Holy Law of God



The John Knox Institute  
of Higher Education

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*Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide*

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1. The Christian's Only Comfort in Life and Death (Lord's Day 1–1, Question 1)
2. The Pattern of Christian Experience (Lord's Day 1–2, Question 2)
3. The Law of God and Our Misery (Lord's Day 2, Questions 3–5)
4. The Total (Radical) Depravity of Man (Lord's Day 3, Questions 6–8)
5. Man's Sinnership in Light of God's Justice (Lord's Day 4-1, Questions 9–11)
6. The Doctrine of Hell (Lord's Day 4-2, Question 11)
7. Perfect Satisfaction: A Requirement for Deliverance (Lord's Day 5, Q. 12–15)
8. The One Mediator Between God and Man (Lord's Day 6, Questions 16–19)
9. True Saving Faith (Lord's Day 7, Questions 20–23)
10. The God of Salvation: A Triune God (Lord's Day 8, Questions 24–25)
11. Faith in God the Father (Lord's Day 9, Question 26)
12. The Providence of God (Lord's Day 10–1, Question 27)
13. Rich Benefits Derived from Believing God's Providence (Lord's Day 10–2, Q. 28)
14. Jesus, the Savior of Sinners (Lord's Day 11, Questions 29–30)
15. Faith in Christ (Lord's Day 12–1, Question 31)
16. The Identity of the True Christian (Lord's Day 12–2, Question 32)
17. The Unique Identity of Jesus Christ (Lord's Day 13–1, Question 33)
18. The Lordship of Jesus Christ (Lord's Day 13–2, Question 34)
19. The Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ (Lord's Day 14, Questions 35–36)
20. Faith in the Suffering Son of God (Lord's Day 15, Questions 37–39)
21. Christ—A Savior Who Has Paid the Wages of Sin in Full (Lord's Day 16, Q. 40–44)



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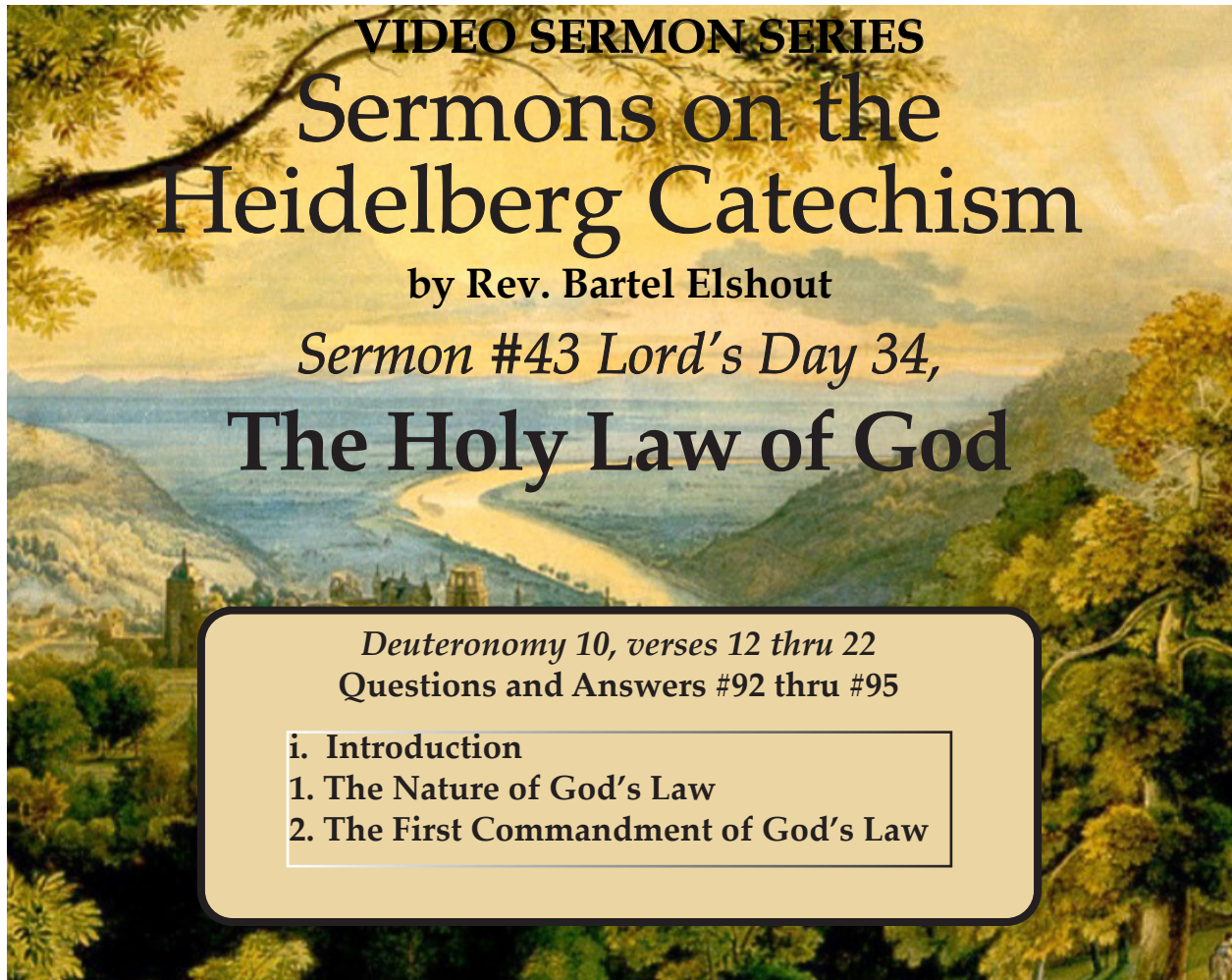
22. The Threefold Benefits of the Resurrection of Christ (Lord's Day 17, Q. 45)
23. The Ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ (Lord's Day 18, Questions 46–49)
24. Faith in the Exalted Christ (Lord's Day 19–1, Questions 50–51)
25. The Second Coming of Christ (Lord's Day 19–2, Question 52)
26. Faith in God the Holy Spirit (Lord's Day 20, Question 53)
27. The Holy Catholic (Universal) Church of Christ (Lord's Day 21–1, Q. 54–56)
28. The Church's Confession Regarding the Forgiveness of Sins (Lord's Day 21–2, Q. 56)
29. The Future of the Christian (Lord's Day 22, Questions 57–58)
30. Justifying Faith (Lord's Day 23, Questions 59–61)
31. The Believer and Good Works (Lord's Day 24, Questions 62–64)
32. Faith and the Sacraments (Lord's Day 25, Questions 65–68)
33. Holy Baptism and the Promise of the Gospel (Lord's Day 26, Questions 69–71)
34. The Water of Holy Baptism (Lord's Day 27–1 Questions 72–73)
35. The Baptism of Infants (Lord's Day 27–2, Question 74)
36. The Holy Supper of the Lord Jesus Christ (Lord's Day 28, Questions 75–77)
37. The Value of the Lord's Supper (Lord's Day 29, Questions 78–79)
38. The Observance of the Lord's Supper (Lord's Day 30, Questions 80–82)
39. The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven (Lord's Day 31, Questions 83–85)
40. The Good Works of the Christian (Lord's Day 32, Questions 86–87)
41. The True Conversion of Man (Lord's Day 33, Questions 88–91)
42. The Transcript of God's Mind (LD 34, Introductory to God's Law)



VIDEO SERMON SERIES  
**Sermons on the  
Heidelberg Catechism**  
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**43. The Holy Law of God (Lord's Day 34, Questions 92–95)**

- 44. The Second Commandment (Lord's Day 35–1, Questions 96–97)
- 45. Preaching of God's Word and Graven Images (Lord's Day 35–2, Question 98)
- 46. God's Commandment Concerning His Name (Lord's Day 36, Questions 99–100)
- 47. God's Name and the Oath (Lord's Day 37, Questions 101–102)
- 48. The Fourth Commandment, part 1 (Lord's Day 38–1, Question 103)
- 49. The Fourth Commandment, part 2 (Lord's Day 38–2, Question 103)
- 50. The Threefold Requirement of the Fifth Commandment (Lord's Day 39, Q. 104)
- 51. The Sixth Commandment (Lord's Day 40, Questions 105–107)
- 52. The Seventh Commandment and Marriage (Lord's Day 41, Questions 108–109)
- 53. The Eighth Commandment (Lord's Day 42, Questions 110–111)
- 54. The Ninth Commandment (Lord's Day 43, Question 112)
- 55. Final Observations About the Law of God (Lord's Day 44, Questions 113–115)
- 56. The Prayer of the Christian (Lord's Day 45, Questions 116–119)
- 57. The Address of the Lord's Prayer (Lord's Day 46, Questions 120–121)
- 58. Hallowing of God's "Father" Name (Lord's Day 47, Question 122)
- 59. The Second Petition of the Lord's Prayer (Lord's Day 48, Question 123)
- 60. The Third Petition of the Lord's Prayer, (Lord's Day 49, Question 124)
- 61. The Christian's Petition for Daily Bread (Lord's Day 50, Question 125)
- 62. Readiness to Forgive (Lord's Day 51, Question 126)
- 63. The Last Petition of the Lord's Prayer (Lord's Day 52, Questions 127–129)



## **Introduction**

Boys and girls, one day, a mother came home, and she noticed that the fish bowl was empty, and that the fish were laying on the floor, struggling to survive. And she asked her boy, “What did you do? Why did you take the fish out of the fish bowl?” And he said, “Mom, I couldn’t stand the fact that all they had was that fish bowl. I wanted them to have freedom, so I took them out of the fish bowl, and I’ve given them freedom.” And the mother said, “But, my son, those fish were not meant to live outside of the fish bowl. They were meant to live in the fish bowl. They cannot live unless they are in water. What you have done now will result in the death of those fish, unless we put them back in the fish bowl.”

And congregation, by way of that illustration, I want to begin this evening our exposition of God’s holy law. Because we were created by God to live within the context of that law. True freedom is found in obedience to that law. And what we see in our world, we see a fallen humanity that is determined to live outside of the fish bowl. That’s why our world is filled with death, with misery, with pain, broken families, broken homes. Because fallen man is determined to live outside of that fishbowl, and fails to realize that “the wages of sin is death.” Such is the foolishness of the human race. Nobody among mankind in their right mind would ignore the law of gravity. Everybody knows if you don’t honor that law, you will break your legs or worse. So everywhere in the world, people treat the law of gravity with utmost respect. And yet, it is not true for God’s law,

for God's precepts. That's why is it such a miracle, when, by the grace of God, we are brought back into that context in which God created us, the context of his holy law, the context of his revealed will, within which alone we can find the true purpose for which God created us.

And so, we're going to consider all of this by way of Lord's Day 34. So please turn with me to Lord's Day 34 of our Heidelberg Catechism.

Question #92: *What is the law of God?*

The Answer is: *God spake all these words (Exodus 20:1–17; Deuteronomy 5:6–21), saying, I am the LORD thy God which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*

- I. *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*
- II. *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.*
- III. *Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.*
- IV. *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.*
- V. *Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.*
- VI. *Thou shalt not kill.*
- VII. *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*
- VIII. *Thou shalt not steal.*
- IX. *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.*
- X. *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.*

Question #93: *How are these commandments divided?*

The Answer is: *Into two tables; the first of which teaches us how we must behave towards God; the second, what duties we owe to our neighbor.*

Question #94: *What doth God enjoin in the first commandment?*

The Answer: *That I, as sincerely as I desire the salvation of my own soul, avoid and flee from all idolatry, sorcery, soothsaying, superstition, invocation of saints, or any other creatures; and learn rightly to know the only true God; trust in Him alone; with humility and patience submit to Him; expect all good things from Him only; love, fear, and glorify Him with my whole heart; so that I renounce and forsake all creatures, rather than commit even the least thing contrary to His will.*

Question #95: *What is idolatry?*

The Answer is: *Idolatry is, instead of, or besides that one true God who has manifested Himself*

*in His word, to contrive, or have any other object, in which men place their trust.*

And so, we will focus, once again, on *The Holy Law of God*. I will briefly focus again on the nature of that law, and in some ways, I will be repeating what I said two weeks ago. But repetition is the mother of learning. Because this is so foundational to our understanding of the Scriptures, that some of this needs to be repeated, to set the stage, then, for the exposition of the First Commandment. And we will do that by looking, first of all, at what are the positive requirements of that Commandment; secondly, what is prohibited by that Commandment; and then, *Christ*, and the First Commandment. And that's where we will end, with God's help.

## **1. The Nature of God's Law**

So first of all, let us consider again, *The Nature of the Law*. Because, congregation, we will not understand the place of that law, the purpose of that law, unless we understand the intimate connection between the law and between God himself, between the very character of God. That's why the law is so profoundly important. That's why, as we've explained to you, that's why the law is absolutely foundational to the entire Word of God. That's why we cannot understand the Scriptures, we cannot understand the gospel itself, unless we understand the very nature of that law. And that's why, as I pointed out to you, that's why, when God gave that law at Mount Sinai, he did not delegate that to a man; he did not delegate that to Moses. And that's why he wrote that law with his very own finger, and he did that twice, so profoundly significant is the law of God. And as we pointed out two weeks ago, the Puritans called that law "The transcript of the mind of God." In other words, what the law unveils to us is God's thinking. The law unveils to us the very purpose for which God has created us as human beings. And so, we need to view that law in connection with the very being of God. And so, please bear with me, as I will try in all simplicity, to focus on that very profound reality.

And so, congregation, who is this God who gave his law; who, first of all, wrote it upon the hearts of Adam and Even and then gave it to his redeemed people at Mount Sinai? And what's so foundational is that we understand that God himself is a relational being. Let me explain again what that means. That's why God is a Triune God. Because, what God has unveiled to us about himself is that his being consists of that amazing love relationship between the Father and the Son, who are bound together in the Person of the Holy Spirit, who is the personal bond of love that unites the Father and the Son. That's why we can actually call the Trinity "a covenantal relationship." It is a covenantal, a binding love relationship between the Father and the Son, in the Holy Spirit. And so, God is a covenantal being. God is a relational being. And that's why, when he created us in his image, he created us as relational creatures. He created us in a covenant, in a love relationship with himself, because that reflects the very being and the very nature of God.

And so, that love relationship that God established with Adam is a love relationship that is governed by his will about that relationship. And that's why I explained two weeks ago that what Christ gives us in Matthew 22, verses 37 through 40, is the law in its original form—the law, as it was written upon the hearts of Adam and Eve; a law that was entirely positive, because God gave that law to two human beings who were sinless who were created in his image.

And what is it that God requires in his revealed will? What does God require from man? Well, two things. God requires that we love with heart, soul, mind, and strength the God who created us, in whom we live move, and have our being; and secondly, that we love our fellow human being created in the image of God. And so, God's law defines for us, congregation—this is so important—God's law defines for us the purpose for which God made us. God created us as relational creatures, to find our fulfillment in our relationship with our Creator, a love relationship

with our Maker, and a love relationship with our fellow man. And because there was no sin, God did not have to communicate that law in negative terms. At Mount Sinai, he did. There, the law is primarily negative. But the law in its original form, is entirely positive.

And that's why, congregation, as human beings, we cannot find our fulfillment, unless, by the grace of God, those two relationships begin to function again. Until we begin, by the grace of God, again to love our God with heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. It's like a family. In a family, where you have father, mother, and children, you have, each child has a twofold relationship. Each child has a unique love relationship with his parents, and a love relationship with his siblings who belong to that family. That's the structure, you see. That's the structure that God established in creation. And that's why, because God is a covenantal being, because God is a relational being, he created us to function in two love relationships. And those relationships were broken as a result of sin. And now the grievous reality of a fallen human race is that as fallen sinners, we only care about ourselves. We live for ourselves. By nature, we have no regard for the God who made us, and no regard for our fellow man. And so, the Bible states this sobering reality that by nature we hate God, and we hate our neighbor. That's the reality of our sinnership.

But because God is who he is, therefore, God has purposed, not only that he would create a creature in his image with whom he could have this intimate love relationship, but God has purposed that he would redeem fallen human beings and bring them back into an everlasting love relationship with himself. But in order to accomplish that, God had to send his only begotten Son into the world. So, if you were to ask me, "Why did God have to send his Son into the world?" That has everything to do with the law. Because it was God's good pleasure, God's good pleasure to bring fallen human beings like us sinners, to bring us back into a love relationship with himself. But he could not do that unless his law was fully vindicated. He could not do that in a way that would set aside his sovereign will regarding man. That's why God's eternal Son, the very Person in whom God makes himself known to man; the very Person in whom God enters into a relationship with man, that's why that Son had to leave glory. And that's why he came to deal with the reality of the law. For, in order for God to again have a love relationship with us, the demands of his law had to be met. Because God cannot compromise. That's why, as we pointed out two weeks ago, that's why Jesus came to accomplish two things. He came to honor that law, by perfectly obeying that law—his *active obedience*. His entire law, we read it this morning from Matthew 5, he said, I came to fulfill that law and to fulfill that law perfectly (verses 17–20). But he also had to pay the penalty for the transgression of that law, and he had to endure the curse that rests upon the transgressors of that law. And he accomplished all of that. And as a result of his amazing sacrifice in the fulness of time in which he came to secure the redemption of fallen sinners, of lawbreakers. That's what we are. We are lawbreakers. That's why the Lawgiver gave himself. The Lawgiver became the Law-keeper. And the Law-keeper subjected himself to the penalty and curse of his own law, and allowed himself to be condemned as the lawbreaker in order that lawbreakers could be reconciled with God, and become law-keepers again.

And that's why the fruit of that redeeming work will always be that God's redeemed people will again begin to function according to God's original intent. And so, when, by the grace of God, we are made a new creature, when we are made spiritually alive, what begins to happen? That relationship with God begins to function again, but it also will manifest itself horizontally in how we interact with our fellow man. In other words, by grace, our lives begin to be ordered again to God's revealed will. Because, as I said earlier, that's what God's law reveals to us. That's why the Puritans called the law "the transcript of the mind of God." Because the law teaches us how God

thinks about us. It reveals to us the very purpose and intent for which he made us. And that's why that law plays such a significant role in the lives of God's redeemed people.

Because Christ did not come to eliminate the law. It is true, as far as justification, we are not under the law, but we are under grace. And that's all true. But Christ came in order that through his work, we would begin again to honor that law. And so, when you become a new creature in Christ, that spiritual life wrought by the Holy Spirit begins to manifest itself in a love towards God, a yearning after him; but also in how we interact with our fellow man. And so, that law become our delight. It becomes our desire that our steps would be ordered according to that law. And so, the true Christian understands that it is his holy obligation to honor that law. We honor God, we honor his Son when we honor his law. Not to earn salvation—because that's impossible. That's why Christ had to come. But to honor his law, as an expression of gratitude to Christ, who gave himself to redeem such lawbreakers, such wretched lawbreakers as we are. And so, by his perfect work, Christ not only dealt with our transgression of that law, not only did he secure our pardon for having broken God's law, but he also secured our sanctification. And so, the true Christian is someone who is not only justified by faith, but a true Christian is someone who also begins to live a sanctified life. That's why justification and sanctification are inseparably connected. To put it very simply, in justification, God, in Christ, restores a relationship with us; and in sanctification, that relationship begins to function and begins to manifest itself by a life that honors God's revealed will.

And that's why the Heidelberg Catechism deals with God's law in the last section, the section of Gratitude. In other words, as we consider each law individually, as we work our way through the Ten Commandments, we are going to look at those Commandments as defining what the obligation of God's redeemed people is. And so, what this detailed exposition of the Ten Commandments does for us, it spells out very precisely what a godly life looks like. That's why, as I pointed out two weeks ago, it's very significant that God gave that law after he redeemed his people. He gave that law to his redeemed people. First he redeemed them. First he delivered them out of bondage, the bondage of Egypt. First, he miraculously brought them across the Red Sea. And then he gives his law to his redeemed people. So that means that he gave that law at Mount Sinai in the context of the covenant of grace. And that's why the law begins so remarkable, when he says, "I am the LORD *thy God*." And "thy God" expresses that relationship between himself and his people. He redeemed the nation of Israel to bring them into a relationship with himself. "I am the LORD *thy God*," and therefore you must obey my law; therefore, you must honor my law. It's in that context that we're going to look at each of the Ten Commandments.

## **2. The First Commandment of God's Law**

And so, let's focus now on the First Commandment. First of all, we're going to look at the positive requirements. Because each law, each of the Ten Commandments has a positive application and a negative application. I realize that eight of the Ten Commandments are negative. But as we work our way through the Ten Commandments, we will notice that, time and again, the Heidelberg Catechism not only focuses on the negative, that which is prohibited, but also that which is commanded. So there is a positive side, there is a negative side.

And so, the First Commandment is very, very simple in its language: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20, verse 3). And it was necessary for God to phrase that Commandment in that way. Because they had just come out of an environment, out of a context where they were surrounded by other gods, and they would be going to a land where people dwelled who served other gods. And so, the danger was very, very real for the people of Israel, that they would come

into an environment where they would be enticed by the gods of the land. And so, God is saying, “My people, I am your God. I have redeemed you unto myself. You are my people. You belong to me, and therefore, you may not have any other gods before me.”

That’s what Jesus meant in Matthew 22—what is the first commandment? Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and with all thy soul. In other words, Christ was saying, our obligation as human beings is to love our Maker with every fiber of our being. We were created to find our purpose and fulfillment in our wholehearted and unreserved commitment to the God who made us. Sometimes we use the expression that we must love God above all. But that expression itself is not found in Scripture. That’s not what Christ says. Christ is not saying among all the priorities, God should be your top priority. That’s not what he’s saying. He’s saying God should be your *only* priority. You should love him with heart, soul, mind, and strength.

So how does the Catechism unpack that for us? Well, it’s saying that we must learn that, *as sincerely as I desire the salvation of my soul*. And I like what a read in a commentator, he said that it should say that “I desire even more than the salvation of my soul.” And I like that. *That I would learn rightly to know the only true God*. A very simple statement, and yet very profound. And so, what does it mean to be preoccupied, reverently speaking, to be preoccupied with God? That means that I have an overarching and all-consuming desire to know this God, and to know more of him to know him rightly.

And of course, we can only know him rightly from what he has revealed to us. And so, it is in the written Word of God that God has revealed himself to us. We cannot know God rightly apart from his Word. But of course, most importantly, that means that we must know him as he has revealed himself in his only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Because it is in Christ that God has revealed himself to us. It is in Christ that we know God. It is Christ, of whom Paul says, that he is the express image of his Father’s person; he is the brightness of his glory (Hebrews 1:3). And so, we can only know God rightly when we know his Son. And that’s why the written Word, as you know—I repeat this often—that’s why the written Word of God is about the living Word of God. God has given us his written Word so that we might know him, in and through his Son, of whom those Scriptures testify.

Congregation, let me ask you something. Is that your desire? Can you say tonight that you have a deep yearning and desire to rightly know God? Is that why you came here today? Is that why you were desirous to hear God’s Word? Do you desire to rightly know this God, the God of salvation, the God of the Scriptures? Because, you see, this is the eternal quest of God’s redeemed people. They will spend an eternity to learn more and more about God. But that begins here, congregation, that begins here.

And so, what the Catechism is emphasizing is that the duty, the holy duty of God’s redeemed people is to make the pursuit of that knowledge the overarching priority of our lives. “This is life eternal”—John 17, verse 3—“that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” That’s why the great Apostle Paul, a man who had been so extraordinarily taught by the Holy Spirit, he says, Oh, “that I might know him, and the power of his resurrection” (Philippians 3:10). Oh, that I might know more of him. In other words, there was a deep yearning in the soul of this holy man, to know more of God.

And congregation, is that the priority of my life? Is that the priority of your life? Do we order our life in such a way that being in God’s Word is the most sacred moment of our day? When we come to our closet, do we read our Bibles prayerfully, with this intense desire to know God rightly, to know him as he has revealed himself? And that’s the glorious future of God’s redeemed people.

Oh, the glorious future that awaits God's people, that glorious new reality when there will be a new heaven and a new earth; when God's redeemed people will forever live perfectly in obedience to that law. God's redeemed people will forever love God with heart, soul, mind, and strength, and they will love each other perfectly. That law is an everlasting law, because God's law is as eternal as God is eternal. And one of the blessed prospects for God's children is to know that there will never come an end to that learning experience.

Oh, let me ask you, does that excite you? Does that stir your soul, to know that Christ, the Son of God, will forever be our Prophet, and Christ will forever lead his people deeper and deeper into the heart of God, a journey that will never end? But that begins here, you see. That's the mark of that new life, and the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, and the Spirit of God has made us alive, there comes this yearning, that desire to know God.

Secondly, the Catechism says, and that means, to have no other God's before him, that means that we will *trust in him alone*, that God alone is the reliance of our life. Rather than trusting in man, trusting in princes, is that we expect everything in life from him. Jeremiah 17, verse 7: "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is." Blessed is the man who learns to trust this God for every single detail of our lives. How blessed we are, when we thus live our lives in daily communion with God, in daily fellowship, in daily reliance upon God.

Thirdly, to submit to this *only true God...with humility and patience submit to Him*. And so, that means that my desire is that my whole life would be lived in surrender to his will; that my desire is to honor him in every aspect of my life; to obey his will; to follow him; to trust him as he leads and guides us in sometimes mysterious ways; to run the race that God has set before us, as we also mentioned last time; to submit ourselves, even when we face difficult and trying circumstances. First Peter 5, verse 6, he says, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." Oh, what a blessing it is, if even when we have to deal with perplexing providences, with difficult circumstances, to live in wholehearted surrender to this God, to trust him even when things don't make sense. That happened with Paul and Silas, as you know. They trusted this God. They worshipped him in the middle of the night, in a prison cell, when nothing made sense.

Next, it says, *expect all good things from Him only*. And I think far too often—and I begin with myself—far too often, we pay lip service to this, and secretly we expect it from ourselves, secretly, we expected it from others. But to live a God-honoring life means that we expect all good things from him only; that we recognize that all the good things of life, all the blessings that we enjoy, all of it comes from him, from his Fatherly hand. And what a blessing it is that we may live our lives this way, if every single day, we live in the awareness of how amazingly he cares for us, how he provides for us, when we recognize that everything we have, everything we possess comes from him, and we honor him accordingly. James 1, verse 17, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

So that I may *love, and fear, and glorify Him with my whole heart*. To live a life completely devoted to him and to his will—that's what it means, when God says, "I am the LORD your God," and because I am the LORD your God, therefore, therefore, you must have no other gods before me. This is what Asaph expressed so beautifully in Psalm 73, when he said, Whom shall I have in heaven besides thee? for there is none other that I desire besides thee (verse 25). Oh congregation, boys and girls, do you recognize, do you know of those moments where you have made that confession, where you have said, "Lord, who else do I desire? My soul yearns after thee. My soul longs after thee." "Whom have I in heaven but thee," or anyone that should desire besides him?

Well see, then it should make perfect sense that therefore, as sincerely as I desire the salvation of my soul, I should *avoid and flee from all idolatry*, and all the things that are mentioned there. Because, what is idolatry? Idolatry means that we worship a substitute god. As a result of our fall, we have become idolaters. That's the temptation that Satan so successfully foisted on our first parents, when he said, If you eat of that tree, you will be like God (Genesis 3:5). And ever since that wretched moment, man has become an idolater. Because, even though we're fallen, our very makeup is to be worshippers. To be a human being means that we need something outside of ourselves to devote ourselves to. In our fallen state, we worship idols. And even in our regenerate state, we have to be on the alert for idolatry. Calvin<sup>1</sup> said it rightly, that's a famous statement by Calvin. He said our heart is a factory of idols of substitute gods. Because you know how God's redeemed people that he redeemed out of Egypt, how vulnerable they were to idolatry. And congregation, we live in a world, we live in a world that is hostile to biblical Christianity, and where the temptation towards idolatry is so very, very present.

And how we need to be confronted with this. And I can be very brief here; I think you've heard plenty of sermons about this. But what are some of the idols of our culture today? Now we don't have, perhaps, physical images as they did in Canaan. The idols of our age is, first of all, the mammon. The idol of material prosperity is the great idol of our Western world. And that mammon has created such a comfortable environment for us, even for us, and we are so tempted—sometimes we do not realize it—to expect everything from mammon rather from the living God. Then there are of course, the other idols of our age. I think of the entertainment world, the fashion world, and the sports world. The Western world is obsessed with the worship of the human body, the body cult. It's incredible how, time and again, you see what people will do in worshipping that god. We just went through a couple of weeks of the Olympics, a whole world mesmerized, mesmerized by human beings who were performing extraordinary things. Because, you see, fallen man needs a substitute. As a fallen creature, we need something to worship. And the reason why we are so attracted to idolatry, you see, that an idol actually gives us what we desire. And of course, that can be in so many different ways. There's so many subtle ways in which even God's people can have idols in their life, where certain things in our life, whatever it may be, becomes so important that it consumes us. That's why this is so convicting. And of course, the worse idol is our own wretched selves. That's where it all begins. As fallen creatures, we have become worshippers of ourselves.

And idols always give what we desire. Idols do our bidding, you see. And when you worship God, you have to do *his* bidding. But idols do *your* bidding. They give you that which pleases you. That's why the people of Israel, time and again, were attracted to Baal worship; because it was the religion of sensuality. It was a god whom you could worship and indulge in the wicked pleasures of the flesh. Idols give us what we desire. And that's why, if we belong to God's redeemed people, we need to examine ourselves. Are there things in my life that a dominating my life? Are there things in my life that preoccupy me more than God? Are there things in my life that detract me from my sacred calling, to love and serve this God alone? That's why it says here, we are to *avoid* them, and we are to *flee from all idolatry*.

Oh, congregation, shamefully, we are all guilty of it. Christ said, "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34). And so, what is your and my conversation most about? Parents, what do our children see in us? Can they tell from your walk, can they tell from your life that God has the absolute priority in your life? Or, are they learning the opposite? Do they know much more about your idols than about God? Oh, God forbid. Out of the abundance of the

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<sup>1</sup> John Calvin, or, Jean Calvin, (1509–1564) – was a well-known French theologian, pastor, writer, and leading Reformer in Geneva during the Protestant Reformation, after whom many Reformers patterned their teachings.

heart, the mouth speaks. And so, we are to *avoid and flee all idolatry*. We sang together the opening section of Psalm 119, and in verse 4, it says this—this is the confession of someone whose desire it is to serve God alone. He says, “Thou has commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently.” And here comes this petition, “O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes.” That’s the yearning of the new soul. That’s the yearning of someone in whom the Spirit of Christ dwells. That’s the yearning of a redeemed man or woman, boy or girl.

And that’s why, congregation, what a blessing it is, also for God’s redeemed people, when we realize how often we come short; how compromised we often still are; how our obedience is so intermittent, so inconsistent. What a blessing it is to know that we have a Savior who has obeyed that law perfectly on my behalf. What a comfort to know that, even though I come short so many times, to know that my imperfect obedience, my inconsistent obedience, my intermittent obedience does not change my standing with God, a Savior who obeyed that law perfectly, who obeyed the First Commandment perfectly. He said, “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me” (John 4:34). If ever there was a man who was completely focused on God alone, it was the man Christ Jesus, but also, a Savior who has paid the full penalty for the violation of that law. That’s why we need to be directed time and again to Christ, and to rest in him; and to realize more and more that our whole salvation, our whole redemption depends on the doing and the dying of Christ. Try to remember those words: the doing and the dying of Christ; the doing of God’s law, and the dying to pay the penalty for our transgression of that law, in order that we might become keepers of that law.

And that’s why, in order to honor that law, we need to abide in our Savior. That’s what Christ is promising us in John 15. He’s saying, everything you need to live a God-glorifying life, everything you need to walk in God’s ways is found in me. And therefore, abide in me. Walk with me. Live in fellowship with me. Live out of me. He promises us that if we do, he will abide in us, and we will bear much fruit.

And so, my dear congregation, I ask you tonight, and I include myself, Whom do we serve? Whom do we serve? Do we serve this God? Do we desire to rightly know him? Do we trust in him alone? Do we submit to him? Do we expect all good things from him? Do we love, fear, and glorify him with our whole heart, and that we renounce and *forsake all creatures rather than commit even the least thing contrary to His will*. Oh, may God make us honest, and examine our hearts and our lives to see if there be any wicked way within us, and that we would cast out all idols, and that, by grace, we would live for this God alone. Amen.

### **Let’s pray.**

Our faithful God, we thank thee for the instruction from thy Word. We ask for thy blessing upon us. Give us grace to repent of our idolatry. Often that idolatry can manifest itself in such subtle ways, that by grace, we would cast out our idols, and that by grace, we would endeavor to rightly know thee in Christ. And so, enable us to abide in him, to stay close to him, to live in fellowship with him, to feed upon his Word, and that so, in union with him, and abiding in him, we may bear much fruit, to the glory of our heavenly Father. Forgive us all of our sins. Forgive us all the ways in which we fail in this regard, and cleanse, oh, cleanse us from our sins with the precious blood of Christ. Go with us into this new week. Grant what is needed as we engage in our daily calling. And Lord, we pray that in all that we do, it would be evident that we desire to live our lives in such a way that our whole life becomes an act of worship, even as we engage in our daily calling and fulfill our daily responsibilities. Gather with us again also in this coming Lord’s Day. Keep us safely in all of our ways. Forgive our sins for Christ’s sake. Amen.