



Finding Comfort

The Heidelberg Catechism: Week 3

Context: Last week, Pastor Stuart reminded us that the bad news of sin is good news in disguise. Though confronting sin in our lives is a humbling challenge, it's also a necessary practice if we are serious about being in an authentic relationship with Jesus. When we admit that we have a tendency to be corrupt and self-centered, only then can we more deeply understand how profound Jesus' love and forgiveness truly is. This is why the bad news of sin is ultimately good news—it leads us to the cross of Christ, where abundant hope, transformation and peace can be found. After reading the Q&A below, reflect: What does it mean to be “born again by the Spirit of God?” What memory comes to mind when you hear this phrase?

Q6. Did God create people so wicked and perverse?

A. No. God created them good and in his own image, that is, in true righteousness and holiness, so that they might truly know God their creator, love him with all their heart, and live with God in eternal happiness, to praise and glorify him.

Q7. Then where does this corrupt human nature come from?

A. The fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise. This fall has so poisoned our nature that we are all conceived and born in a sinful condition.

Q8. But are we so corrupt that we are totally unable to do any good and inclined toward all evil?

A. Yes, unless we are born again by the Spirit of God.

Read Romans 5:12–21

1. What words are repeated in this passage, and which one gives you the most hope?
2. In your own words, summarize the passage in one sentence. What does your statement reveal about you?
3. Question 8 above says “we are totally unable to do any good ... unless we are born again by the Spirit of God.” Do you believe this? Why/why not?
4. We often talk about having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, but what's your relationship like with the Holy Spirit?
5. Where do you need hope in your life? What's one step you can take to receive this free gift from Jesus?

Closing thought: To paraphrase Richard Rohr, God came to us as Jesus not so we might learn how to be perfect, but to discover what it means to be human. When we recognize our bottomless need for God's grace, we're able to be born again by the power of the Spirit and discover who we were made to be—people of radical hope. **Pray** for those, including yourself, who feel weighed down by hopelessness.