

## *From Your Pastor*

### *A Study on the Shorter Catechism*

**WSC Question 29:** How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ? A. We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit.

**Scripture Memory:** "...He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior..."

**An Explanation:** The work of Jesus Christ in redemption must be applied to believers by the Holy Spirit for it to be effectual. As John Calvin wrote helpfully "...We must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from Him, all that He has suffered and done for salvation...remains useless and of no value to us" (*Institutes*, 3.1.1). In other words, people can affirm that there is a Jesus Christ, and that He has lived perfectly and exemplary as a mighty man of God's Spirit (cf. Acts 2:22), but if we are not bonded to Him by faith through the effectual application of the Spirit, then Christ and His work are of no value to us.

The Spirit is pleased to work faith in the needy and helpless elect sinner in real time that persuades and enables us to take hold of all of the salvation that Christ has accomplished for us (see WSC, 30-31). The Spirit uses the means of the word of God, particularly the preaching of the Gospel to apply the redemption purchased by Christ. "...We know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction" (1 Th. 1:4-5; also, 1 Cor. 3:5; Acts 16:14b, 31-33). The Spirit is the bond objectively from God who unites us to all of the blessings and benefits of Christ's redemption. Faith is the bond subjectively from our side that unites us to Christ, and both of these are given by God, though faith is an action that we perform in response to His powerful effectual calling and regenerating work: "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God..." (John 1:12). Calvin wrote: "This...is the true knowledge of Christ, if we receive Him, as He is offered by the Father: namely, clothed with His Gospel" (3.2.6).

Because of God's mercy planned before the ages for our good and His glory, and not on account of our works, God was in Christ redeeming His people (2 Tim. 1:9). As 2 Corinthians 5:19-21 teaches: "...In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them...We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." The Spirit applies this righteous standing in Christ to us when we are effectually called by the Word through the Spirit, granting us faith to receive Christ, thus becoming by imputation, the righteousness of God in our union with Him (1 Cor. 1:30-31).

Note that Christ has "purchased" our redemption in the words of WSC, 29. It was a payment Christ made for us. It was costly; it cost Christ His own precious blood (Heb. 9:12). It was a loving sacrifice. Let us offer up ourselves to Him as those now possessed by Him through His Spirit. Let us be thankful as we remember that we were wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked (Rev. 3:18) before the application of this redemption made possible by Christ, through the Holy Spirit, because of the Father's love.

**A Prayer:** You have redeemed me, kind king, to love and serve you. To realize the glorious purpose for my life, and the joy of serving the triune God who has saved me. Give me strength to live joyfully in Christ today. Amen.

In Christ's love,  
Pastor Biggs

*"What is true piety? Piety is reverence joined with the love of God which the knowledge of His benefits induces. It exists when men recognize that they owe everything to God, that they are nourished by His fatherly care, and that He is the Author of their every good."*

- John Calvin (*Institutes*, 1.2.1).