

To Glorify and Enjoy God

LESSON 2: THE THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF THE CONFESSION

Intro:

BIG IDEA: The Standards seek God's _____ and our _____ in Him.

The Standards are a Protestant Confession

- Key Issues: _____ (how we are saved) & _____ (what's our final authority).
- *The Council of Trent* (1563) was the Roman Catholic _____ to the Protestants.

“But if any one receive not, as sacred and canonical, the said books entire with all their parts, as they have been used to be read in the Catholic Church, and as they are contained in the old Latin vulgate edition; and knowingly and deliberately condemn the traditions aforesaid; let him be anathema.” Fourth Session (April 8, 1546), *Decree Concerning the Canonical Scriptures*³

“... wresting the sacred Scripture to his own senses, presume to interpret said sacred Scripture contrary to that sense which holy mother Church, - whose it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the holy Scriptures,- hath held and doeth hold; or even contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers ...” *Decree Concerning the Edition, and the Use, of the Sacred Books*⁴

“... or if he denies that said merit of Jesus Christ is applied, both to adults and to infants, by the sacrament of baptism rightly administered in the form of the Church; let him be anathema: ... If anyone denies, that by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is conferred in baptism, the guilt of original sin is remitted ... let him be anathema.” *Decree Concerning Original Sin*⁵

“Justification itself, which is not remission of sins merely, but also the sanctification and renewal of the inward man, through the voluntary reception of the grace and of the gifts, whereby man of unjust becomes just...”⁶

“... no one can know with a certainty of faith, which can not be subject to error, that he has obtained the grace of God. ... faith co-operating with good works, increase in that justice which they have received through the grace of Christ, and are still further justified”

“As regards those who, by sin, have fallen from the received grace of Justification, they may be again justified, when, God exciting them, through the sacrament of Penance they shall have attained to the recovery, by the merit of Christ, of the grace lost: for this manner of Justification is of the fallen the reparation: which the holy Fathers have aptly called a second plank after the shipwreck of grace is lost.”⁷ Sixth Session (January 13, 1547), *Decree on Justification*

The Standards are a Reformed Confession

- They stand in the _____ theological tradition begun there by _____.

³ Schaff, Philip. *The Creeds of Christendom*. Grand Rapids, Baker Books. 1983. Vol. II, pp. 82.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 83.

⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 86-87.

⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 94.

⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 104-105.

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- That tradition produced 1st & 2nd *Helvetic Confessions* (1536, 1566), the *Heidelberg Catechism* (1563) and the *Belgic Confession* (1561).
- It also reflects the response to the _____ Articles (1610) expressed in the *Canons of the Synod of Dort* (1619).

“That, agreeably thereto, Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, died for all men and for every man, that he has obtained for them all, by his death on the cross, redemption and the forgiveness of sins’ yet that no one actually enjoys this forgiveness of sins except the believer ...” *The Five Arminian Articles*, Article II⁸

- They consciously reject the errors of the Radical Reformation, the _____.
- The Anabaptists _____ Word from Spirit; prophecies could _____ Scripture.
- They took over _____ in February 1534. They held to communal living; redistribution of _____.
- They had rejected _____ baptism. There were frequently _____.
- Armies from _____ and _____ cities helped the Bishop retake the city.
- On Easter 1534 the siege began and their leader Jan _____, was killed in battle.
- John of Leiden was recognized as his religious & political successor.
- He legalized _____, and had _____ wives.
- June 24, 1535: the city fell after a year of near starvation and conflict.

WSC Question 1: What is the chief end of man?

Answer: Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

WLC Q. 1: What is the chief and highest end of man?

A: Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him forever.

- Our chief end is related to God. We are to live a God-centered & ordered life.
- We are not to live a man-centered & ordered life.
- The Confession, following Scripture, wants to help us glorify God, not ourselves.
- The Confession, following Scripture, wants to help us find joy in God most of all.
- We can also find joy in God thru all things remembering them as from His hand.
- God will gain glory in each person thru salvation or judgment. May not enjoy it!

Glorify God

OT: *kabod*- glory, honor, splendor, dignity, reputation

From the root *kabed*- to be heavy, grievous, hard, rich, honorable, glorious

Figuratively it is the “weighty” person in society who is honorable, impressive, worthy of respect.

NT: *doxa*- opinion, estimate, splendor, brightness, magnificence, excellence, dignity, majesty

⁸ Shaff. Vol. III, pp. 546.

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God is great, full of dignity, splendor. We glorify God when we recognize His greatness, declare His greatness, and act in light of His greatness.

³¹ So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. **1 Corinthians 10**

- Seeking His glory is not limited to public or private _____.
- Do your _____ to the glory of God.
- _____ your spouse (parents, kids, neighbor, friends, enemies) to the glory of God.
- Enjoy all God's good _____ to the glory of God.

Enjoy Him Forever

- Enjoy is to find _____ in.
- It is a part of the Reformed heritage, expressed in Calvin, Owen, Burroughs, Edwards.

¹¹ And you shall rejoice in all the good that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house, you, and the Levite, and the sojourner who is among you. **Deuteronomy 26**

- Here the focus is expressing _____ to God for providing the firstfruits.
- We don't stop with the good things we receive, but remember they are from _____.

¹¹ You make known to me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. **Psalms 16**

- God is not a _____ God who lives in a shabby, _____ place.
- God is ever blessed, filled with _____ in Himself.
- Eternal life is viewed here as partaking of the _____ God provides to His people.

¹¹ Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, O righteous,
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart! **Psalms 32**

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. **Philippians 4**

- We have a responsibility to _____ counterfeit, _____ joys, to seek the highest joy.
- Joy is not opposed to _____ in heart, holiness. But a manifestation of holiness.

The Scriptures join them together.

¹⁰ Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice! **1 Chronicles 16**

³ Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice! **Psalms 105**

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- See the _____ commands in the parallelism: glory & rejoice.
- If we glory in His holy name, we will _____ Him and _____ joy in Him.

¹⁶But may all who seek you
rejoice and be glad in you;
may those who love your salvation
say continually, “Great is the LORD!” **Psalm 40**

- Again _____ God is joined with joy & gladness in Him.
- Our salvation is a _____ one, such that we glorify Him in our joy.

Orientation: The goal of the Westminster Standards is to help us to understand God’s _____, glorify Him and enjoy Him.

Theology From Below: theology done from a _____ perspective. It is rationalistic and usually human centered. For Stanley Grenz this becomes “the intellectual reflection on the faith we share as the believing community within a specific cultural context.”

Theology From Above: theology done from a _____ perspective. It is faith seeking understanding through revelation.

How does this help me see God’s glory so I will trust Him?

How does this help me praise & serve God?

How does this help me delight in God?

“God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.” **John Piper**⁹

“Looking back (to his late teens), I think of that as one of the most valuable investments of time and thought I ever made.” **Sinclair Ferguson**¹⁰

⁹ For further reading: Piper, *God is the Gospel; Future Grace; When I Don’t Desire God; Storms, Pleasures Evermore*; Burroughs, *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*.

¹⁰ Shaw, Introduction and Preface (no pagination).