

Heidelberg Catechism 8-9 – Good Works: 3 Points

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: You have already seen last week the extent of the sinfulness of man – he is sinful from the core of his being – from sins he inherited from his parents and his actual sins. God's demands did not change because of man's fall from grace to sin. God still demands that every living creature live for his pleasure and do his will. But you can see today that 95 % of Torontonians will not worship the Lord with the saints. Ninety-five percent of Toronto will not even know the 10 commands – know what is good, let alone do what is good. So you see the tip of the iceberg of disobedience. Today you will see specifically why you can't do good works and what has to happen in order for you to do good works.

Our headings are: **You can't do good works because of your Corruption, You can do good works because of your Regeneration**再生, **The Fairness of God's Demand to do Good Works.**

Our goals are: **That you will praise God for his regenerative work and that you will endeavor 努力 to do the good works you are called to do.**

You Can't Do Good Works Because of your Corruption

8 Q. 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.

1. If you go back to time before the flood you'll get a sense of the extent of man's corruption.

Genesis 6: 4 There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. 5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

These "mighty men" or "men of renown" were "fallers upon men." They were not tall men with big muscles. In other words, they were warriors, murderers or kidnappers. And God described them as **corrupt in their ever "intention."** They works reflected what was in their hearts.

2. Even after Noah and his family's rescue from the wickedness of the time through the ark, God pointed out the continuous state of man's heart – a sinful state.

Genesis 8: 21 And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma 芳香. Then the LORD said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.

Job reiterated the same theme...and Moses and Isaiah, years later.

Job 14:1 "Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. 2 He comes forth like a flower and fades away; He flees like a shadow and does not continue. 3 And do You open Your eyes on such a one, And bring me to judgment with Yourself? 4 Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?"

Deuteronomy 32: 5 "They have corrupted themselves; They are not His children, Because of their blemish: A perverse and crooked generation.

Isaiah 53: 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

3. Today, you can practically see the extent of man's corruption when men call something good while God calls it evil, and what man calls evil what God calls good. Heart beliefs come to the outside. The civil government appears to be the provider of man's needs from the cradle to the grave and it expect devotion. God says that he is the only God and there should not be another one before his face. He is the provider of everything good.

Teachers train children to make idols of themselves – and love themselves- while God condemns such actions bluntly率直地. Earthly things are made into gods.

Taking God's name in vain is a punch line 关键语 to jokes and exclamations, while God considered that to be a capital crime for Israel.

Governments take your money and operate schools on Sunday so people are drawn away from worship. They reject their responsibility to keep the Sabbath holy.

Reporting to the government when parents spank their children is considered good, while God demands that you spank your children for their training in godliness.

Abortion and euthanasia 安乐死 are considered to be good, (72% of women who have abortions say they are Protestant Christians) while God considers them an attack against his image in man. Society views all forms of adultery as the norm – as acceptable behavior. God says that intimacy is between a man and his wife alone.

Civil authorities now overwhelmingly believe in squeezing those who work hard to support those who don't. They print money, cause inflation, and rob everyone...but God warns against unfair measurements.

These cases show a complete reversal of God's law. Man isn't just falling short... he is doing the opposite. It is not that man thinks that what he is doing is wrong, but still does them. Man thinks these his actions are right and does them. Man is convinced that euthanasia/abortions are right! He is reflecting the contents of his heart.

4. Now, like in the time of Noah, there are many who view the world through their own eyes and have concluded that the way the world is going is fine. They don't see moral problems in society. They don't believe that God's laws are being broken. This is always the case when men turn away from God. The only way his problem can be fixed is that they need a new heart...our next point.

You can do good works because of your regeneration

1. In order to do good works (which you are required to do to please the Lord) you need to be regenerated.

You will notice right away that you don't contribute one iota 极少量 to your regeneration. You are passive in your regeneration, just like you were passive in your physical birth. Jesus himself emphasized that this was the case: man had to be reborn...not from his mother's belly again, but through the work of God's Holy Spirit.

John 3: 3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Now let me address a few concerns of our day of people who don't understand what regeneration is: Some pastors preach that in order to be born again you have to believe you are a sinner, you have to believe Christ died for you, and you have to ask Jesus to come into your heart. As long as you do this, they say, you are regenerated. This is wrong – terribly wrong. To believe you are regenerated that way is to rob Christ of the glory that belongs to him and to exalt man as an agent in his salvation. You are not regenerated by any action of yourself. **Yes, you do repent and live for Christ, but that is a response to your regeneration**. (Revelation 3:20) No dead person can respond. He has to be awakened first. God is the first mover, not man. Regeneration is not caused by your good parents, your pastor, by going to a Christian school, or by attending worship services. (And the phrase "ask Jesus into your heart" is not even mentioned in the Bible.

3. When you are born again you are then able to do good works. You have new desires. You want to please the Lord. True, you never will do good works perfectly because of the sin that remains in you, but you will start to do good works to please the Lord. And you can! For a work to be considered good by God it has to be done from faith in Christ, for the glory of Christ, and by the law of Christ.

4. This is a **motivation for evangelism**, isn't it? You know that the Moslem, Hindu, Buddhist, or any other religious person cannot please God because his work cannot please the Lord – which he is commanded to do. You desire for him to please the Lord...so you speak to him about Christ.

The Fairness of God's Demand to do Good Works

9 Q. BUT DOESN'T GOD DO MAN AN INJUSTICE BY REQUIRING IN HIS LAW WHAT MAN IS UNABLE TO DO?

A. No, God created man with the ability to keep the law. Man, however, tempted by the devil, in reckless 不顾后果的 disobedience, robbed himself and all his descendants of these gifts.

1. God demands that you do good works because he is your Creator who made you very good and gave you the full ability to keep his law. It was man's deliberate decision to defy the Divine persons and devour the forbidden fruit and bring damnation on his head. Man had the will and the ability to keep the law of God.

Genesis 3: 11 And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" 12 Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." 13 And the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

But man chose to listen to the Devil instead of listening to his Heavenly Father and he behaved recklessly. It was man who robbed himself and all his descendants of being confirmed in faithfulness forever. This confirmation in righteousness would have been a most precious legacy to give to his children – to be born in a confirmed state of perfection. Adam stole it from you.

Genesis 3: 4 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 "For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

John 8: 44 "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

It took the work of the 2nd Adam, Jesus Christ, to restore to man the ability to do good by bringing him in good relations to God. That ability will be perfectly restored in heaven when man will be confirmed in righteousness.

2. God, then, is simply doing a rational thing when he demands that you must keep all of his laws perfectly. And those who don't obey them perfectly are under his eternal curse.

Galatians 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."

Conclusion:

You can't do good works because you are corrupt. You don't have true faith, you don't have the right motive, and you can't properly obey God's law. You can do good works because you have been given a new birth – a new heart... you have been regenerated. The fact that you could not do good works and fulfill your obligation to God before your regeneration was not God's fault but your parents fault. They passed on their sinful nature to you. They brought curses on your head.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Praise the Lord for your new heart. Don't let this song get old. Praise him in the morning and praise him in the noon time. Praise him with voice and music. Let the Lord know that you have a new heart and you love him for giving it to you. Maybe your praise of the Lord will be used by him to draw others to him. Don't ever be shy to announce to the world that Jesus is real. He lived and died for you. He is your hope. He gives you assurance. His Holy Spirit is living in you. Yes, there was no hope without him, but now you have a hope that none can take away. And then join your singing with showing God's love. Love speaks louder than voice. Voice is loud. Love is louder.

Finally: How hopeless you are without a new heart! And you can only get that new heart and new life by calling to Christ for it and receiving it. The new heart and new life came because Jesus gave his life for the wicked. If you know you are wicked, call on him to take away your sins and give you that new heart.