QA 2; Rom. 3:9-12; Rom. 5:1-6; What Must You Know? I. Sin II. Salvation III. Service

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, as you may know the number 3 is said to be the number or harmony. Just as every good sermon usually has 3 points- the Trinity is 3 in 1- the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. So today as we come to our QA 2 we find this summary of the gospel made up of three aspects. What must I know to live and die in the joy of this comfort? The answer is 3-fold. I must know my sin, how I am saved and what I called to do as a part of my service. These 3 points- sin, salvation and service- will be the three points of our sermon today- but these 3 also summarize for us the 3 sections of the Catechism as well. As you may also know, the Catechism is broadly based on the book of Romans. In fact, the major 3 sign posts on the Roman Road are these- Sin, Salvation and Service. Some of you have heard of the Roman Road as a way of summarizing the book of Romans as an evangelical tool. The catechism, as it summarizes the teaching of Romans, will then bring us time and again to the good news of the gospel. The fact is, we can have joy and comfort in this life- and even as we face death! Joy and comfort for my body and my soul- found in knowing and believing these 3 things! Now to be clear, the 3 points of sin, salvation and service are not 3 stages in life. We do not graduate from the sin stage in order to enter the salvation stage of life. Rather these 3 points express the 3 interrelated aspects of the Chrisitan life. We can know 3 things about ourselves- 3 truths that God has revealed to us about our lives! This truth changes us- motivates us- comforts us! And as we saw last week, these points are all part of a person’s faith! As QA 2 opens- how many things must I know? Like a good student preparing for a final exam, we ask the question. What must I know? But more than that- what must I believe? I must know about my sin, my salvation, and my sacred service! So a true and living faith is both a knowledge and conviction- I know and I believe something about myself and about my Savior! So this morning we consider this theme: Jesus Christ reveals the content and conviction of the Christian’s life.

**I. Sin**

In our first point we consider how great my sin and misery are. We are starting with the bad news if you will- we have to deal with the truth of the situation. Now this might seem strange. In order to have joy and comfort, I need to know that I am a sinner! Check that- I need to know how great my sin and misery are! Why would I need to know how bad I am in order to have comfort and joy? Well, if you do not know where you are starting you will not really appreciate where you will end up? It is the sick who need a physician! Like a patient in the hospital we ask the catechism, how bad is it? Give it to me straight doctor! The reason that we must know about our sin and misery is because only the sick will seek a remedy! One of the tricks of the Devil is to keep mankind so busy and preoccupied that they do not even think of their own future! They have no time to consider their own sin and misery! You are fine- the devil says. So many people are worse than you. But we have to know how sick we are so that we are open to the solution! So that we will take the medicine! So it is that as God’s people we want Jesus to teach us the truth by way of His Spirit! Help me to see my own sin and misery! Help me to know how much I need you- how far I have fallen! So what is the answer? What does our MyChart read? Rom. 3- no one is righteous. No, not one! No one understands, no one seeks after God! Instead, all men have turned aside. All fall short of the glory of God! The prognosis is grim, and it is shared by all men- we are all rebellious sinners! From the best to the worst- young and old -we all go astray in our hearts! We all do whatever is good in our own eyes! No one is good, holy and righteous in the sight of God! So how does the catechism put it? You need to know how great your sin is. Note, your sin is great! Not the sins of others- but your sin! Take the plank out of your own eye! Your sin is great- you have an immeasurable debt that you owe to the wrath of God! Your sins are your transgressions- your iniquity. Where you fall short and mess up- where you miss the mark. Your trespasses. The evil you do and the good you leave undone. Notice that sin and misery here is personal. I would add that it is to be specific as well. When you confess your sins, actually name and list the sin that commit. Sin is not just some shapeshifting fog on the horizon. It is concrete and personal. So what sins do you struggle with? What iniquity have you committed? Confess your sins to God- sins of anger, worry, pride, fear, doubt or laziness. Whatever sins you commit, these are to be identified and repented of! Added to this fact, the better you know your sins the more you will flee from yourself to the Savior! It is true then, that the better you know your sin and misery the greater your joy in the work of the Savior when you are forgiven! As Psalm 19:12 puts it, who can discern his errors. Declare me innocent from hidden faults. Or as Psalm 51 puts it, for I know my transgression and my sin is ever before me. If we do not understand our sin, we will not know what kind of Savior we will need! We commit sin because we are born in sin- having a sinful nature that leads us into sin. So any salvation we receive must deal with not only our actions but also our very nature! In the catechism, we will consider our sin more fully in LD 2-4.

**II. Salvation**

Now that we have come to know our sin and misery, the next aspect of this comforting faith is found in our knowledge of the Savior. As I said before, these 3 points are not chronologically separated. There would be no comfort if you just knew your sin and misery without knowing of your salvation. But it is also true that knowing about your salvation does not make you unconcerned about your sin. You still commit sin as a Christian- you still have to hate sin, flee from it and repent when you commit it. But as we move into our second point, we find that joy and comfort is found only if we know of a way to be saved! So we see that Jesus Christ has come to secure my deliverance from all my sins and misery. Note again the extensive and personal salvation we receive! Jesus saves me from all my sins and misery. Jesus is more than just a Savior who rescues some people. He is my savior who rescues me! He does not save me from some of my sins- but has rescued me from all my sins! As we confess when we celebrate the Lord’s Supper in a moment- His blood has secured the complete forgiveness of all my sins! Since Jesus is the complete and perfect savior, He is able to deliver us to the utmost! Those who are justified through His blood are fully secure! No sin remains that is able to condemn! As we read in Rom. 5:1- since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God though our Lord Jesus Christ! We are reconciled- we have peace! And again in 5:6- while we were still weak- at just the right time Christ died for the ungodly! The very ones born in sin and misery- as we found in our first point- are the ones that Jesus now saves fully! Remember, it is not the sick who tells the doctor what the solution to their sickness is! Rather, it is the good physician who tells the sick patient how they might be best helped! Do you need surgery, or do you need penicillin? No, you need a someone to die in your place! Well, Doctor Jesus comes to us and gives us the only remedy- and that remedy is Himself! He gives us His own body and blood to be the medicine! Not just to make us feel better- to really heal our disease! The good news we find in the gospel is that our sickness is not unto death! Our illness is treatable- it has cure and that cure has a 100% success rate! Not just to extend our lives so that we die from something else- but to grant us eternal life! For those who partake of this healing food and drink, we find that our body and soul is fed unto everlasting life! When you come to know- to believe in Jesus as your only Savoir- only then will you have true joy and comfort in your life. What did Jesus Christ need to do in order to save us? He had to be one of us- sharing our nature! He had to deal with not only our pollution but also our guilt! Paying the penalty for our sins and securing righteousness for us! Only then could we be fully and securely saved! In the catechism we will consider our salvation more fully in LD 5-31. So as Rom. 6:23 summarizes, the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**III. Service**

Now that we have considered both our sin and misery, in our final point we look at our service. How I am to thank God for such deliverance. Having been set free by the person and work of Jesus, the third point goes on to explain how we are now to live. How do those who have been healed by the good physician respond? Well, as we continue to find in Rom. 5:2- we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. The first response is that of joy and thanksgiving. We tell God that we are grateful for the riches and blessings that He has given. The second way we show our gratitude is by living a life of obedient. We commit ourselves to obeying His commands. As Jesus said, if we love Him we will keep His commandments. If you have been healed and made well- it is only fitting that you start living like you are indeed well! In the catechism, we see our call to thankful service explained in LD 32-52. In this third section of the catechism we will find the 10 Commandments and the Lord’s Prayer. Rom. 6:13 puts it like this, present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life. The life a Christian is one of gratitude and thanksgiving. A living sacrifice of praise. We offer all that we are and all that we do as an acceptable sacrifice. God is pleased to hear the praise of His people and He delights to see us walk in His ways. To be clear, this is not to earn our salvation but to show our thanksgiving! We are not meriting our deliverance, but our works are those of gratitude for the blessings we have received!

Now why is this obedience and sanctification a necessary part of our comfort? Why not just stop at the first two points? Why do we need to know about our gratitude and obedience in order to fully enjoy the comfort of belonging? Well, one the main reasons we need to know about our thanksgiving is because a Christian will be known by their fruits. One of the ways our hearts are encouraged is when we see the Spirit at work within us! The living fruit is evidence of a living tree! If I see good fruit in my life, I can be assured that the Spirit has indeed made me alive! So there is an aspect of comfort in assurance that we can find here! When I know I am a member of Christ and His people because I see the work of the Spirit within- when I see my progress in sanctification- I know that the Spirit is doing this! I too am a sanctified member of Christ and His people! And this fact does encourage and comfort my heart! He who began a good work within will complete it- because He is faithful!

This morning we have looked at 3 stepping stones- bringing us from despair to comfort- from sorrow to joy! The three steppingstones of the Catechism are these- Sin, salvation and service. Or guilt, grace and gratitude. In order to live and die with this joy and comfort, these are the truths that we must know and believe. So you must know what you believe- and believe what you know! These points come together and reinforce each other. If you do not know your sin, you will trust in yourself or boast in your own ability. If you know your sin but do not know your savior, you will despair and be without hope. If you know your Savior but do not know how to live, you will be restless and without direction. Jesus Christ reveals the content and conviction of the Christian’s life. Knowing all three- sin, salvation and service- forces us to look outside of ourselves as we trust in and live for the praise of Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.