

Communion Meditation 11/7/10 Our Duty

In the bulletin: Question 39: What is the duty which God requires of man?

Answer: The duty which God requires of man is obedience to his revealed will.

Before looking at Q&A 39 briefly, I'd like to go back to Q3 of the catechism. Q3: What do the Scriptures principally teach? A3: The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

So the catechism is divided into two main parts. Up to Q 38 it teaches us mostly what we are to believe, and then from 39 to 107 about what we are to do, what is the right practice of our faith.

And this second part focuses on three parts:

- the moral law as summarized in the 10 commandments,
- on the means God has given us to obey Him,
- and on prayer, the model being the Lord's Prayer.

About a year ago, maybe more, I started on Q 23 and skipped around some, and now we are starting the section on how we practice our faith with this question, "What is our duty to God"? What are we required to do, how are we to practice our faith?

Now the word **duty** implies that we are to obey, we are servants, created by God and for God. We were made to obey Him, and to put it more strongly it says, that we are required to obey His revealed will. He is the Holy, Almighty God and we were created in His image to love Him and serve Him.

And all mankind is under this obligation, but sin has so bent us that we worship ourselves or man's systems, and we don't really like the words "duty" or "required" or "obedience". You might hear the word "duty" in the military, you might hear the word "required" at a government office when filling out more forms, you might hear the word "obedience" from Christian homeschoolers, because you can't really home-school without it!

But as His children, those redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, we are required and enabled, through the finished work of Christ on the cross and by His indwelling Spirit, to live for His glory, to live out our faith, and to practice what we believe.

And His moral law has never been revoked or abrogated, nor can it be, because God is holy and unchangeable, and so is His moral law. His moral law is still in force, and we can and should obey it more joyfully as we grow in Christ.

Matt 5.17 Jesus came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets. "I did not come to

destroy, but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.”

Micah 6.8 “He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”

And Jesus is our example as the only one who has kept the moral law perfectly, completely. And before He comes, or when we meet Him in heaven, we will need His power in the Holy Spirit to obey His law, and all the ramifications of His law in our daily lives.

In the answer it says we are required to obey His **revealed will**. And we know from Rom 12. 2, that His will is good, and acceptable and perfect.

And our God is kind and full of mercy and grace, and has given us His word, His revealed will. And in Q&A 40 and 41 we will see that the rule for our obedience is the moral law as summarized in the 10 commandments.

Some Christians, and all unbelievers, say something like, “well, I didn’t really know what you wanted me to do, so I am not really responsible and I am not able to keep it or obey it.”

But this is like when your child, or let’s say “a” child, is about to be punished for disobedience, and just before the discipline says, “But you weren’t really clear about this or that”, but you know you have been, and often they know you have been!. And we adults try the same thing, we’re just more sophisticated about it (although I have been impressed by the creativity of my children and others I have observed, in seeking to avoid discipline!).

So for our Communion Meditations over the next several months, off and on, we will be looking at God’s moral law in the 10 Commandments.

One of His commandments is that we keep the Sabbath day set apart for Him. “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” We call this day now the Lord’s Day, the Christian Sabbath, the first day of the week. And every part of the worship service, including this communion meal, should be practiced with joy from our hearts. He wants our hearts in worship, not just rote obedience.

Jesus said to the Pharisees, quoting from Isaiah 29.13: “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me..” We don’t want to be like that. That kind of worship does not honor him, and there is no joy in our hearts; it does not change us or satisfy our longing for Him. Our duty is always to obey His revealed will, and to do so with the joy and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Lord, we want to obey your word, your will, joyfully and from our hearts. We come to this table in obedience to your revealed will, and because, Lord you instituted it and commanded it to be kept until You come. And we ask that You would fill our hearts with a joy and love for Your commandments, and a joy in the right practice of them. In the name of the Lord of the Sabbath, Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.