

Table Talk with Pastor Dave

March 18, 2020

For this week's encouragement, I want to share where I normally run when things get really uncertain. Believe it or not, I go to question and answer number 1 of the Heidelberg Catechism. Now, I know many of you are thinking, "Boy I don't have any good memories of catechism class." I get that, and honestly, my catechism experience wasn't always enjoyable either. However, I memorized this question and answer several times during my years in the class. Even though I didn't really understand it at the time, it became permanently lodged in my memory bank. Later in my journey with the Lord, it actually became precious to me as it comforted me through various difficulties.

My prayer is that it will bring some comfort to you this week as well.

For those of you who aren't familiar with catechisms, they're actually a great discipleship tool because they're summations of what the scriptures teach on particular topics. The Heidelberg Catechism, written in the 16th century by Zacharias Ursinus and Caspar Olevianus, is the one I learned growing up. There are other good ones out there, too. Surprisingly, the first question and answer of this catechism written hundreds of years ago is still extremely relevant today:

Question: What is your only comfort in life and in death?

Answer: That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins, and redeemed me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, that all things must work together for my salvation. Wherefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live unto Him.

This question and answer is derived from the scriptures that follow. Please take a few minutes to read the passages. Then, reflect on the discussion questions with another believer.

- **Romans 14:7-8** For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.
- **I Corinthians 6:19** Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?
- **I Corinthians 3:23** And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

- **I Peter 1:18-19** Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.
- **I John 1:7** But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.
- **I John 2:2** And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.
- **I John 3:8** He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.
- **John 6:39** This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.
- **Matthew 10:29-30** Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.
- **Luke 21:18** But not a hair of your head shall be lost.
- **Romans 8:28** And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.
- **2 Corinthians 1:21-22** Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.
- **Ephesians 1:13-14** In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.
- **Romans 8:16** The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.
- **Romans 8:1** There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

Discussion Questions

1. Both the scriptures and the catechism make it clear that a Christian's only real comfort in life and in death is in belonging to our savior Jesus Christ. We know that's true, but often we live seeking comfort in other things. Times of uncertainty and difficulty have a way of exposing those other comforts. What have you been seeking for comfort outside of Jesus?
2. It's clear from this question and answer that Jesus is the ultimate comfort because we belong to Him even if the worst comes: death. What does it mean to you that you belong to Him not only in life but in death as well? How does that comfort you in life and prepare you to face your own death?
3. This question and answer is rooted in God's sovereignty over all things. The words "without the will of my heavenly father not a hair can fall from my head" are comforting, and at the same time hard to wrap our minds around with so much sickness, death, brokenness, and evil in the world. How do you see God's sovereign hand in your life and in the world in these difficult times?

Application Challenge: Try to memorize this question and answer over the next few weeks. Put it on a sticky note on your fridge or on your bathroom mirror. Keep it in your Bible or anywhere else you'll see it regularly, and allow it to become a part of you over the coming months. As you meditate on it the Lord will comfort you and reassure you through it. It will be well worth your time!