

Beloved of the Lord Jesus Christ, God speaks to us this morning from Isaiah 40:25 " *To whom then will you liken Me, Or to whom shall I be equal?*" says the Holy One. This is in connection with what we confess concerning the second commandment in Lord's Day 35!

Why choose a text from Isaiah 40?? Because You and need to remember that the second commandment is about loving God, and worshipping Him. It's not just about images, and carvings. It's about appreciating who God is, how great He is, when you are worshipping Him. Otherwise your worship is not real worship!

Isaiah 40 helps us greatly here. It powerfully condemns and even ridicules the worship of images, but it does this by focusing us on the greatness, the grandeur, and the infinite majesty and might of our God.

These character qualities of our Almighty God set Him so far above all creatures, and all the work of His hands, and that make Him therefore so that cannot and should not be represented, by any of them!

"To Whom then will you liken me, or to whom shall I be equal? says the Holy One!?"

God's rhetorical question here in verse 25 teaches the essence of what we confess in the Catechism, when we ask "May we, then not make any image at all? And our answer is "God neither can nor may be visibly represented. As for creatures, though they may be visibly represented, yet God forbids us to make or have any likeness of them in order to worship them or serve God by them!

Please understand... the more we realize of the greatness and glory of God, the more we will realize both the injustice and the silliness of trying to represent Him by anything else.

So do you and I really need this law in our life and situation. Someone might say, well I am not trying to draw God, or sculpt him! So I am in no real danger of disobeying this commandment! I am even good at keeping it!

Most of us could say, yes, I am pretty good at keeping the letter of this law! But remember the Pharisees could truly say that too! The young rich ruler could truly say that too, when He came to Jesus. But he still ended up still serving the riches of the world rather than Christ.

You see to really live in obedience to this commandment is to more and more realize how great our God is. It is to more and more to stand in awe and wonder, at amazement at His person. Yet how small, how puny all of our beginnings are in this!!

It's our pride that makes us fail here again and again. We break this command every day. Because we are constantly inclined to think of God as somehow being on the level of our understanding. When God says there are things beyond our understanding, beyond our comprehension, that we just have to accept by faith

We naturally don't like that.. it makes us feel so small and puny . And we should feel that, but our pride rebels against that. For instance, we say that we believe that God is so great that *"all things work together for good to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

But on the other hand, when we experience hardship. We object, how LORD, how on earth can this work for my good??? How can losing my wife or my husband, work for my good? How can my being jobless for a time benefit me? Look at the stress I am experiencing LORD!! How can this persecution I am experiencing allow me to be open about my faith? Can't you lighten it up a little LORD? You are going overboard! You're understanding can't really be that far beyond my understanding!

Do you hear yourself??? We all need to!! Because that is what will open us to grow... in magnifying God instead of belittling Him in our life and worship. This is what this command is all about.

Let's us hear something of what the prophet Isaiah has written about God. Listen to the the knowledge He has more than anyone else! ***"Who, who has measured the waters?"*** I don't think any of us can truly fathom, how great the measure is of the waters upon the earth! The canyons of the ocean are deeper by far than the grand canyon, or any other canyon on the face of this earth!

The fissures in the ocean floor are too deep for man to plummet, to measure, even with all his advanced technology.

What creatures may lurk in those depths no living person on this earth knows. The mountains in the ocean are higher than Mt. Everest.

Even if man was able to measure and map the ocean floor, which he most certainly cannot, it's topography is endlessly changing. The crust continually is changing. And then take all the volume of the countless lakes and rivers and streams, how could man measure it, even if it remained stable, but it is ever changing. Then take the tremendous amount of water frozen in the great ice shields, the glaciers, the icebergs, and the frozen oceans, even the entire arctic pole.

What a laughable notion, that anyone could even begin to measure the waters? But God can!! Can He? Is He really that amazing? How hard is that for Him? And now listen, He measures it, "within the hollow of His hand!"

He knows the exact measurement of water, not down to the ml, or the ounce, but down to every subatomic particle of every molecule!

Who has measured the heavens? No one! Don't let scientists give you the impression that they have it all calculated out and measured. So many millions, or billions of light years? Who has measured them with a span? A span was the measurement from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the little finger with the fingers apart.

Tell me whose Hand could extend to measure all the vastness of the heavens, the galaxies, the universes? Our God's hand! Yes He knows, He knows every measurement! He counts the number of the stars, He calls them all by their names. Great is our Lord and of great power: His understanding is infinite.

Can you imagine a human mind or machine capable of such astronomical calculation? Or think of how long would it take you or me, to count all the grains of sand in one handful. Then how about in one beach, lake or ocean. But lets reduce the particles, not to sand, but to particles of dust. God knows them, by measure.

So what needs to be our answer to this.... *"Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, or as His counselor has taught Him? With whom did He take counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of Justice? And taught Him knowledge, and showed Him the way of understanding? NO ONE!!!"*

We looked at God's knowledge, What about His power??

How powerful is He?. Take the most powerful nations of the earth. Take all their might, their strategies, their technology, their capability for warfare. Take all the weaponry, all the cunning, all the heroism. Yes take even all the nuclear warheads that have been made, and all that ever still will be made. Take all their energy. And then remember that the energy of nuclear weapons is but that which is released by a few atomic bonds being broken. But Who put that energy into the nuclei in the first place? God did! Add all that energy, stored in all created matter, and marvel at the power, the energy of our God!

What is the power and wisdom of the nations compared to the power of the LORD? It doesn't matter if you are talking about the most powerful nation on earth such as the USA, or some tiny little African or Island nation... *"All nations before Him are as nothing, And they are counted by Him less than nothing and worthless."*

There have been immensely powerful leaders and rulers upon the face of the earth. Like Nebuchadnezzar! But a touch of the the Lord, reduced him to eating grass like an ox in his insanity. Think of Napoleon. Think of Hitler. What has come of them? *"He brings the princes to nothing, He makes the judges of earth useless!"* All God has to do is blow on them, and they will wither and the whirlwind will take them away like stubble.

Where is God? Yes He is here, in a special way where God's people gather in worship. But does that mean He is only here? No He is present even in this special measure everywhere that God's people are gathered together to hear the faithful preaching of the Word!

Oh that we would remember this more, How much more important it would be to us, to gather with God's people in His name! But how can God be here, and there at the same time? Is that hard to understand children? Sure it is, not only for you, but for all of us, in fact it is impossible to understand

He is the One who sits above the circle of the earth - and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out

the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them out like a tent to dwell. Yes all the heavens are also His dwelling place?

And so, says verse 27 ^{NKJ} Isaiah 40:27 Why do you say, O Jacob, And speak, O Israel: "My way is hidden from the LORD, And my just claim is passed over by my God"? ²⁸ Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable.

Do you now understand why such a God, why your God is not interested in having men bow their knees and focus their eyes on some image, of an artists totally speculative, and unfounded idea of what God might be or look like?

No matter how beautiful and pleasing to the eye the image might be by human standards, no matter, how rich and vibrant the colors of the oils, and moving the texture of the paint. No matter how glorious the color of the lights streaming through the stained glass, no matter how smooth the surface of the marble, or how fine and living the sculptured detail...

God cannot be reduced, drastically, utterly, foolishly reduced to some physical representation. He is GOD. He is not a creature. HE is JEHOVAH GOD who fills the heaven and earth, who cannot be contained even by the Highest heavens of heavens. And He is a SPIRIT, infinite in glory, knowledge, power, and majesty. And He must be worshipped as HE is - IN Spirit and in Truth!

Proper worship is spiritual! It is about more than you and being here in body. It's about spirits realizing Who He is, how great He is, What He has done for us in His Son Jesus Christ. It's about communion. It's about being connected to God. It's about being recharged with an intense awareness of Who He is, What He says, and How much He means. We are recharged by being plugged in to Him through His Word. Worship is an intimate connection to Him in which we love, honour, praise, worship, and obey!

And what is the way, which the Catechism points us to, that He has commanded us to worship Him.

Through a product of artistic imagination, some representation via a carving, statue, painting, picture, or some electronic representation? NO *"we must not be wiser than God, who will not have His people taught by dumb images, but by the living preaching of His Word.* That is the essential part of true spiritual worship. That we more and more learn to know and glorify our God in the way in which He has revealed Himself - His very own Word.

There we come to know all that we need to know about Jesus Christ, who is the Way the Truth and the life. Who came to the world in the flesh, though no picture is left to us, except the glorious picture of the Gospel, the Gospel of a Saviour who died for the sins of mankind and rose again that in Him and Him alone men women and children may receive life!!

NO one comes to the Father but by Him. The One that no artist knows how to paint, draw or sculpt. *NKJ Revelation 1:14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; 15 His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; 16 He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.*

The God who transcends both heaven and earth is not to be known by an artists' hand, that cannot be. He is known in a saving way only by the Holy Spirit's power in conveying His Word to us. Power conveyed not by physical images, but by His Almighty, Word by which He reveals Himself.

You in turn need to respond to God and what He says, not by bowing your knee or fixing your eyes on an image. But by giving a spiritual response of prayer and praise in your hearts and lives. And by being truly filled with a such sense of awe and wonder out of which you will praise and worship Him always!!! Amen!