

Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 1 – Craving Comfort

Beloved in the Lord: The Heidelberg Catechism(海德堡教理問答) is not equal to the Bible. But it is an accurate summary of what the Bible teaches. It is the approach of the Heidelberg Catechism that is somewhat unique. It is very personal. **So it begins with presupposition of what you need** and it tells you **how to get it.**

Your greatest need, the Catechism asserts, is comfort – knowing that you are secure. So the Catechism shows how you can get that one true comfort for life and in death! **To get that comfort you must know the doctrines, believe these doctrines, and evidence that belief by obedience.**

In this 1st sermon you will see the foundation of how you get this true comfort and keep this comfort through life and death.

Our headings are:

The Craving for True Comfort

The Christ of True Comfort

The Continuation of True Comfort

Our goals are: **That you will be comforted in your soul, knowing what Christ has done for you, and that you will then love him and live for him.**

Q1: What is your only comfort in life and in death?

A: That **I am not my own, but belong--** body and soul, in life and in death-- **to my faithful Savior** Jesus Christ. He has **fully paid for all my sins** with His **precious blood**, and has **set me free** from the tyranny of the devil. **He also watches** over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven: in fact, all things must work together for my salvation. Because I belong to Him, Christ, by His Holy Spirit, **assures me of eternal life** and **makes me** wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on **to live for Him.**

一問：你無論是生是死，唯一的安慰是什麼？

回答：我無論是生是死，身體靈魂皆非己有，而是屬於我信實的救主耶穌基督。他用寶血完全補償了我一切的罪債，並且救我脫離了魔鬼的一切的權勢；因此，他保守我，若非天父允許，我的頭髮一根也不會掉下；他叫萬事互相效力，使我得救。故此，他藉聖靈也使我永生的確據，並且使我從此以後甘心樂意地為他而活。

The Craving for True Comfort

1. There is an undeniable craving for comfort but no man naturally has comfort. It is not innate to our nature. So man needs to look outside himself. **It is true that some don't admit that they need comfort, but it is there.** This is what a famous PhD research showed. Most people said they were happy with their life, but after a few alcoholic drinks, most admitted that they were not really happy and needed something more. They didn't know what they needed, but they admitted they need something more in their lives.

2. A person might say: "I don't need anything because I have many things to make me happy," but that is not evidence of true comfort. These people may have the luxury box at the professional sport arena, the Lexus in the garage, a secured job, the perfect looking family, and best girlfriend money could buy, and the readiness to retire at age 55, **but those things only bring temporary comfort.** The sports team might change their name to Maple Leafs and start losing, the Lexus gets stolen, the family breaks up, the girlfriend finds someone better or with more money, the company falls apart and you lose that job – or you lose your mind, or another investment fraudster makes off with all your investments. Then what? Your comfort then disappears!

3. You can summarize the false sources of true comfort under the following three headings:

a. Lusts of the flesh (肉體的情欲) – illicit (不合法的) satisfaction of the flesh – like inordinate craving for food, or intimacy with someone who is not your spouse.

b. Lusts of the eyes (眼目的情欲) – a craving for earthly things that don't belong to you.

c. Pride of life (presumptuousness 自以為是) – thinking that you are greater than you are.

These are all appealing things which promise much, but always fail to deliver in the long term. These are the Devil's go-to candy for adults.

The Christ of True Comfort

1. You belong to Christ...he knows and loves you...and you belong to him body and soul.

1Corinthians 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? **20 For you were bought at a price;** therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

2. Women understand this well. There is a desire to be close with their husbands, knowing that their husbands will protect them, even to their death. Men know this too, knowing that they must die to protect their wives. These are pictures of what the Lord Jesus did for you – he gave his life to give eternal comforts to the soul.

Romans 14: 7 For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. 8 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.** 9 For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

3. So you now belong to him. This is true comfort! Knowing Reformed doctrines is good—even great, but that doesn't remove your sins. Being a good scientist does not save you – though you can learn many of God's truths. Living a moral life does not save you – though living a moral life might make people in society respect you. You need Christ's work.

Titus 2: 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave Himself for us, **that He might redeem us from every lawless deed** and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

1Peter 1: 18 knowing that you were **not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver** or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but **with the precious blood of Christ,** as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

1John 2:2 And **He Himself is the propitiation** (挽回祭) **for our sins,** and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

4. This work of Christ was so great and complete that the Devil has no rule over you – ever again. The chains in which he kept you were broken.

John 8: 34 Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. 35 "And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. 36 "Therefore if the **Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.**

Hebrews 2: 14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death **He might destroy him who had the power of death,** that is, the devil, 15 and **release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.**

This means that you cannot be controlled by the Devil or any evil spirit – ever. What rich comforts the Lord gives to his children – those whom he has redeemed from the pit. (1Jn 3:1-11)

The Continuation of True Comfort

1. This comfort, however, is not just in rescuing you from death. This comfort continues with you to the ends of the earth.

God nurses you back to spiritual health. He dresses you up with clothes of righteousness. He protects you from troubles and from falling back into the debts of sin. **He saved you to bless you.** It is therefore an immeasurable comfort...comfort that continues. The comfort continues without end because your salvation continues without end.

Psalms 45: 13 The royal daughter is all glorious within the palace; Her clothing is woven with gold. 14 She shall be brought to the King in robes of many colors; The virgins, her companions who follow her, shall be brought to You.

2. Consider some of these assurances of these continuous comfort. There are many others, but we will look at them more fully in the future.

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.** 40 "And **this is the will of Him who sent Me,** that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

This was not just a promise made by God the Son, it was a promise made by God the Father, and accomplished by the God the Spirit.

John 10: 27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. 29 "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and **no one is able to snatch** them out of

My Father's hand.

The Devil who will try to snatch you out of God's hand, like the unending attempts by the government to take more taxes from you, but the Lord will securely keep you for eternity.

1Thess 3: 3 But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.

3. And look at the extent to which the Lord cares. He not only cares for the big things in your life, but the small ones as well.

Matthew 10: 29 "Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. 30 "**But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.** 31 "Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Luke 21: 16 "You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. 17 "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. 18 "**But not a hair of your head shall be lost.**

4. In fact, he will use all the events of your life – even events that may seem bad – and use them for your good.

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.

Not "some" but "all."

5. And when you do go through troubles in life, you have the right and are encouraged to call upon your heavenly Father for help. This means you can always talk to him.

Romans 8: 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

6. And God makes you know this by sealing you with his Holy Spirit. That is why you are able to say, I know in whom I've believed. You know you belong to Christ because his Holy Spirit works in your heart. You are sealed for eternity by his Holy Spirit in Ephesians 1.

2Corinthians 1: 21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, 22 who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

2Corinthians 5: 5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. 6 So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.

Conclusion:

Everyone has a craving for true comfort, though not all accept this. Only Christ, who fully paid for the sins of the world, can satisfy God's anger and work that true comfort in your heart—a comfort that continues with you till you die...and then some. Let this message of Christ's work always be before you.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. You wouldn't forget your husband's birthday even though he doesn't always do the things he should and even though he isn't as nice as he ought to be. If you wouldn't forget one who brings you temporary meager comfort, **surely you must always be diligent to remember and thank and serve the one who gave you eternal comfort** – through the cruel cross!

2. When you are blessed with a warm and comfortable home, what good would it be if no one shares it? Similarly, won't you want to share this great comfort with others? **This means you will want to tell others of this comfort!** Do you? Do people in your work place know what you have?

Finally, if you are not a Christian, all you have are the things of this world...things that will fall apart, get old, stolen, or remain in this life after you die. But you can have true comfort that starts now and goes

with you when you leave. You can have this comfort if you ask God to count Christ's life and death as yours. He will make you a royal child!