

## HC Q&A 86- The Law and Gospel

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: In the sermons from the Heidelberg Catechism...  
You have seen how sinful you are (Q&A 1-11).  
You have seen how you are saved (Q&A12-85).  
You will now hear how you are to serve (Q&A86-129).

Sometimes this 3<sup>rd</sup> part of the Heidelberg Catechism is called the “gratitude感谢” section because it deals with how you show your thankfulness to the Lord for his salvation from your sins. Thankfulness must be seen in service.

But the 1<sup>st</sup> thing you will learn is how you are able to do good works of service and the benefits of doing them.

Our headings are:

The **Basis of Good Works**

The **Benefits of Good Works**

Our goals are: **That you recognize that you are only able do good works because of your salvation, that you will recognize the benefits of good works, and that you will then do good works.**

Q & A 86 We have been delivered from our misery苦难 by God's grace alone through Christ and not because we have earned it: why then must we still do good?

A. To be sure, Christ has redeemed us by his blood. But **we do good because Christ by his Spirit is also renewing us to be like himself**, so that in all our living we may show that we are thankful to God for all he has done for us, and so that he may be praised through us. And we do good so that we may be assured of our faith by its fruits, and so that by our godly living our **neighbors may be won over to Christ.**

### **The Basis of Good Works – Jesus Christ**

**1. The Bible teaches that doing good works is a consequence to your salvation; you do good works because you are saved.**

**2. Arminians and Roman Catholics argue that good works help you earn your salvation.**

They might say: “You must go to church. You must help the starving kids in Africa. You must be kinds to animals. You must pray to God. You should buy flowers for your wife. You must give your tithe. You should not steal from your boss.” **They act as if good works would cause God to be more inclined to save you because you were reasonably good.**

**But the Bible teaches that no other work than the active and passive obedience work of Jesus Christ can earn your salvation.** This is why you hold to **covenant theology**契约神学. Jesus kept covenant law for you, so his obedience is counted as yours, and he took the punishment that you deserved for breaking the covenant, so his death is counted as yours. So there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:1. You did nothing to remove your condemnation.

**Those who hold that good works help earn salvation reject the clearly taught doctrine of predestination – the teaching that you were chosen for salvation before the world began, for if God chose man for salvation then man's good works cannot save him. Do you see how bad doctrines rob God of his glory and praise?** Instead, the Bible teaches that you are not only predestined预定 for your salvation, you are also **predestined to do good works.**

**Ephesians 2:10 - For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**

**Good works are not hindered by your belief in predestination.** Predestination helps you to do good works and **guarantees reward for good works.** Nothing done for Christ is unrewarded.

**3. Antinomians argue that Christ has freed you from the law and therefore you don't have to do good works as part of his law.**

In their mind (especially the "**health and wealth**" **gospel people**) you keep God's law based on **how much reward you want.** To them, good works are not required, but appreciated. **This is a devilish 恶魔 lie from hell.** The fact is, **Christ did not free you from the law. Christ freed you from the curse of the law.** This is a most important distinction. You are still bound to obey the law – to do good works.

**Galatians 3:13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"),**

Those **people** are called antinomians. They are anti-law.

**4. What are some Scriptural proofs to show that Christians are indeed commanded to do good works in response to the work of Christ in and for them?**

**a. You are commanded to Worship**

**1Peter 2:9** But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, **that you may proclaim the praises of Him** who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

Your greatest good work is worship. You could help thousands of poor people, remain faithful to your spouse, protect your boss' property, speak against abortion and perversion...but if you don't worship, you are ignoring your most important duty on earth – the greatest good work of all – Law 1-4.

**b. You are commanded to Work for your neighbors – Law 5-10.**

**Titus 2:14** [Christ] 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.**

**Romans 6:13** – And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and **your members as instruments of righteousness to God.**

You were chosen for salvation and heavenly appointment, and you have to respond in obedience.

**Matthew 7:17** "Even so, **every good tree bears good fruit**, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.

**The Benefits of Good Works – Your Redeemer, You, Your Neighbor,**

**1. What are the benefits from doing good works in response to your salvation? There are many!**

**2. Through your good works you bring glory to your Redeemer.**

**a. The highest goal of God's salvation is not to save you, but to bring glory to Jesus Christ.**

Ultimately, you are therefore to give yourself to God's service – to his law. Christ bought you and you belong to him. You express that love for Christ through **worship and work.**

**b. If you don't worship and work for Christ you show that you do not truly, know his love.** You are not a Christian. You need to become one.

**c. If you only work and worship Christ Jesus partially, then it shows you don't love him as much as you ought** to. Most are in this 2<sup>nd</sup> category.

**1Corinthians 10:31** - Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, **do all to the glory of God.**

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

**d. On the contrary, a Christian lacking in good works will make people laugh at the Lord and hurt him.** Strangers will think that Christ's salvation on the cross was useless or that it was not as important or valuable. **Do you see the call to a good life, not just a call to good doctrines?** Get this into your heart!

### **3. Through your good works you bring blessings to yourself and show you believe in Jesus Christ.**

2Peter 2:10 - Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;

**a. The Holy Spirit uses your good works to strengthen your faith.** Every time you do a good work, your mind must draw back to Christ's work for you. This nourishes your soul.

**b. Illustration:** It is like this: If you don't practice your computer programming, you forget the codes... If you don't practice your cooking you forget the recipes, and the rewards of not practicing are not good. Your families may be presented with burnt offerings. So the more you practice good works, the more the Holy Spirit is able to shine his light on you and bless you.

**c. The Canons of Dort assures you that you are God's children "by the serious and holy pursuit of a good conscience and good works."** (Chapter 5, Para 10).

**d. The Belgic Confession reminds you that if you have true faith you will "live a new life."**

### **4. Through your good works you bring good to your neighbor. How?**

**a. Doing good work as a Christian surely will add weight to your evangelism.**  
Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, **that you may prove what is that good** and acceptable and perfect will of God.  
Romans 14:18 For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and **approved by men.** 19 Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which

one may edify陶冶another.

Matthew 5: 16 14 "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they **may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.**

**b. Your evangelism – your good work – will lead men to salvation.**

1Peter 2:12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers作孽, they may, by your good works which they observe, **glorify God in the day of visitation**探视.

Even if the hearer rejects the Gospel, his condemnation will bring glory to God.

**5. On the contrary:**

**a. A Christian lacking in good works is a nuisance**滋扰**to the church of Jesus Christ.**

**b. If you do not do good works – if you live devoid**没有**of good works - your non-Christian observers see Christianity as only a Sunday religion and you will hurt the salvation of a prospective convert.** The Gospel becomes more powerful when it is accompanied with its effect in the lives of others. So to bring good to your neighbor live a godly life in words and actions.

**Conclusion:**

Good works show your obedience to Christ. Good works show you have faith in Christ. Good works show that you are a Christian who is thankful for his salvation. Good works honor your Savior. Good works bring great reward to you – in heaven and sometimes on earth. Good works are necessary to show the non-Christian that you are a Christian and you add impact to the Gospel. A **Christian is like a flower that cannot stop displaying its beautiful petals**花瓣 and attracting honey bees.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

**1. If you are struggling with doing good works, don't panic.** That struggle is a lifelong struggle with which every Christian can identify. But you still have to do good works. You see, not because a task is difficult does it mean that God will excuse you from doing it.

**2. Pray and ask God for help to go good things.**

**3. Look to God's Word and daily remind yourself of the greatness of Christ's good work for you on the cross.** See your covenant keeper's blood pouring down his face... and see the crown of thorns stained with blood... Reflect on your covenant keeper's active obedience...his humiliation...his physical suffering...his rejection by the religious

leaders of the day...his abandonment by his family...his denial by his own friends...He did it all for you! **Don't these things make you want to work for him!**

Further, you may have tried to do good works to save you...you hoped your good works would please God, and you hoped they would satisfy your conscience. You became disappointed because you now realize that you are not truly satisfied in your heart...and you are not pleasing God. But there is hope. Realize your good works cannot give you favor with God and go to God and 恳求plea the good work of Christ –how he lived and died for you. God will accept you as his child and then you will be able to do good works.