

## **The Cracked Mirror**

### **Lord's Day 3**

**Reading:** Romans 5:1-21

I don't know what your experience is as a parent at dinner time,  
Especially with young children.  
The food is put on the plates...and beside the meat and potatoes is the Broccoli .  
The tears flow...the complaints come...  
The words 'I hate Broccoli!' fly across the table.

How often haven't I or Anita said to the kids 'Eat it; It's good for you!'

And that is what the Catechism does in these opening Lord's Days.  
The bad news of our corruption must be heard and understood.  
It must be heard so that when the good news (the ice cream) is heard,  
It will bring joy and comfort.

We don't like to be told we are bad, we are rotten...  
But that truth is clearly portrayed in the Bible,  
And clearly outlined in the Heidelberg Catechism.

Last week we looked at how we know what's wrong.  
We needed to acknowledge our inability to love God with all our heart and soul and  
mind and strength.  
How we fail to love our neighbour as ourselves.

One of the purposes of the law then, was to expose our sin and misery.  
God's law is given for a number of reasons, as we will see as we work our way  
through the Heidelberg Catechism.  
It also restrains evil...making this world a better place to live...  
With rules that we hold in common.

Our attempts at keeping the law are also a sign of gratitude and thanks to God for the  
salvation we have from sin and death.

The focus of the LD we read together tonight is to draw our attention to the  
understanding of how far we have fallen...  
and how far reaching effects of the fall have moved us from that good beginning.

This again leads to a focus on the wonder of our salvation through Jesus Christ.

**The first thing we need to consider is:**

**Man's place in God's good creation.**

The Lord's Day begins with the very important question...

One of critical importance.

"Did God then create man so wicked and perverse?"

This question is a very, very serious question.

You and I stand before the perfect law of God.

And we know our inability to keep that law perfectly.

So the question: "Did God then create man so wicked and perverse?" needs to be answered.

If the answer is yes, then there can be no hope at all.

If God created man wicked and perverse,

if God is the Author of this wickedness,

there would be no salvation possible.

But the answer in the Catechism immediately says,

'No way!' and then points us back to the beginning.

There we read of God's creation being good...

And the final assessment even says 'It was very good.'

And we read of the special place that people have in that good creation.

Listen to what it says in Genesis 1:

Ge 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

Ge 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Man is so important...man bears the image and likeness of God.

So what does it mean to be created in the image of God?

It means we are created to look like our creator...

But what does that look like?

Our New Age philosophy (even affects the church) would imply that we are created a god...

That is the idea of God in each of us.

All we need to do is find that god in us.

But that is not at all what is meant by man being created in God's image.

Man is not God. Man is and remains a creature.

Even into eternity, in the new heavens and the new earth, you and I will be known as creatures of the Most High.

It does not mean we are god, nor do we look like God.

Rather we *represent* God.

Like the sales person for a company must portray the qualities of the company...

Honesty, reliability, trustworthiness, graciousness.

I find it interesting to follow the events surrounding the Australian swimming team.

Nick D'arcy drinks too much and breaks the nose of a fellow athlete in a drunken fight.

His place on the team for the Olympics is under threat, because he doesn't represent the spirit of the team; the public image of swimming Australia.

So we display the characteristics of God; we reflect what he looks like.

We are like a mirror that reflects the glory and majesty of God.

We reflect what he is like in mercy, goodness, truthfulness, grace etc.

But there is more.

God created us not just with *mandate* to image Him, but with *capacity* to image Him.

When God created him, God gave him the calling to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it.

So we reflect the image of God in the way we care for the earth.

Notice how Genesis 1 weaves the notion of 'image of God' together with the concept of 'dominion'.

That is, man was to rule over God's creation, and in that ruling man was to image how God would rule over creation.

As God would rule over His handiwork with love and care, with justice and holiness, so man was to rule over that creation with love and care, with justice and holiness – and so image to all the world what God was like.

Here you see again something of the wonderfully high status God gave to man. God did not create the human race to be equal to the dogs and the cats.

This high-ranking position God gave to mankind is demonstrated in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In Heb 1 we read that Jesus was "the express image of [God]" (Heb 1:3).

Paul repeats the point when he tells the Colossians that Christ "is the image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15; cf II Cor 4:4).

Philip asked Jesus to "show us the Father," and Jesus replied, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:8ff).

Here is the glorious status God gave us in the beginning, exemplified in Jesus Christ.

How Jesus imaged the Father?

He had dominion over creation...calming the storm; feeding the crowds.

He had power of the demonic forces...casting out spirits.

He had control over sickness...healing all kinds of diseases.  
He even had power over death itself...  
raising Lazarus, a dead girl, and even himself.

### **But what went wrong?**

That is the substance of the next question in the Lord's Day.  
It deals with what we became because of the sin of Adam and Eve.  
The reality today is that we don't image God too well.  
We are like cracked mirrors that distort the picture.

How have we become like that?  
The Cato says: "from the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise."

It has nothing to do with evolution or education or environment.  
The problem began all those years ago in Eden, in paradise.  
When Adam and Eve fell, we fell with them, and so did the whole human race.

We were not born in Paradise, but in a world of sin.  
The whole fall of Adam was finished some 6,000 years or so before we were even born!  
And yet the consequences of that fall affect us today.

Why? Why am I suffering for what Adam did?  
We read about it in Romans 5.  
Death was inflicted upon everyone after Adam's sin.

Adam was not merely an individual...with individual rights; answerable only for his own actions.  
From him came the whole human race.

Adam and Eve, our first parents, bore the whole human nature.  
And since Adam and Eve corrupted that human nature,  
all who are born from then on were born in sin and misery.

That is the organic line of the explanation of our sin.

But there is also the representative line.  
Adam was not only the father and bearer of the human nature and race,  
but he was created the *head* of the human race in the legal sense of the word.

Just as Christ is the Head of the elect, and just as His righteousness is imputed to all who are legally in Him, so in the same way the guilt of Adam's sin was imputed to all men over whom he stood as the head.

Ro 5:16 Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification.

When Adam sinned...he did it as the representative of the whole human race.

We need to understand that concept...to understand where we stand before God.

The idea of representation is not strange to us.

In the OT we read how the actions of the kings were decisive for the whole nation.

The daily acts of ordinary citizens, like us, are not likely to affect the course of world history.

But the deeds of our Prime Minister can affect our whole country.

When Kevin Rudd stood up in Parliament and offered an apology to the Aboriginal people over the treatment they received in the past, whether we like it or not, he spoke for all of us.

What Kevin Rudd says carries weight, not because he is any different than us, but because of the position that he holds.

And there is no position quite as unique as that of father of the human race. The disobedience of Adam had an influence far beyond that of any other.

The action of Adam decided things for the whole of humankind.

Adam stands at the beginning as the cause and origin of sin.

In Paul's words (v12) sin is a power that came in through the door called Adam. Sin and death came in through Adam and spread to all...

'because all men sinned'.

Here Paul doesn't mean that all people are sinners because all people commit sins.

He means that 'all men sinned when Adam sinned'.

By his one representative act, Adam decided for all.

All sinned and died in him.

This is the perfect illustration of the one who represents the many:

'Adam was a type of the one who was to come'.

Adam was the door through which sin and death came in to ruin us.

But Christ is the door through whom grace and life came pouring in on all who are 'in him'.

Paul talks about Adam in order to bring a clearer perspective on the one decisive act of the other man, Jesus.

He teaches us the concept of representation so we can be completely assured that the lot of the many was decided by the deeds of the one.

The only ground for our salvation lies in the decisive acts of Jesus.

It is not what you or I have done...

But what Christ has done that brings us life and justification.

But all this doom and gloom leads us to the last point...

Which is drawn out of the last Q &A we read together.

**It tells of how God restores us.**

The tragedy drawn out in LD 3 is precisely the reason to praise God even more!

For what kind of people did God send His Son into the world?

Was He sent into the world for decent people?

For the healthy?

For the loving and the kind who exercise proper dominion over God's handiwork?

Those with great gifts of self-control?

No, no!

God knew how terribly we had fallen, knows how we don't have dominion over our emotions and our urges and our tempers.

God knows how we mess up His creation instead of caring for it as He does.

God sent His Son into this world, sent him to gain salvation for such fallen sinners!

Jesus himself said that he had come into the world...not for the healthy...but the sick.

Sick people like you and me.

And on the cross of Calvary Christ obtained that salvation;

On the cross he showed his dominion over Satan, and sin and death.

And he did that on our behalf.

In fact, we share in the riches Christ obtained on the cross.

How can all of us be saved by the death and resurrection of one man?

We can understand how this is possible when we think about him as representative, the one who acts on behalf of the many.

The greatest thing since Adam is the coming of Christ.

He was given to us as the 'second Adam'.

And therefore, because of that position, His acts have influence as wide as the human race:

His death is our death; his resurrection is our resurrection;  
and by his obedience sinners are made righteous.

We are saved by obedience...Christ's obedience

The battle between Jesus and Satan was not a power struggle, to see who was strongest.

The issue of the struggle was whether or not Christ would remain obedient.

When Jesus suffered and died for our sins...

This was part of the total obedience He gave to God.

And look at what we gain:

Through the saving work of Jesus we are renewed...

The image of God is restored....

True, that image is not yet perfect...

but through the ongoing sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in our lives we see regeneration.

It's like the beach regeneration you see along the coast line.

Sections roped off and planted with new grasses.

Those areas are set aside for the grass to take and regeneration to take place.

When the initial grass is planted the work is unfinished till it takes hold and takes over again.

That's what it's like in our lives.

The fruit of the Spirit grows in our lives.

Again we show better the fruits of the Spirit.

And, in the glorious future, we will reign with Christ over all creatures (LD 12).

The original creation mandate will be restored.

God will again call everything... 'very good'.

## **Conclusion**

We confess with Lord's Day 3 something of the greatness of our sins and misery.

When we compare the splendors of how God made us with the broken reality we see today, we can only marvel that God still bothered to save the likes of us.

And that's the point of the Lord's Day: what a wonderful God we have!

To send His Son to save wretches as we are: what infinite love this is for sinners!  
Amen.