

Catechetical Sermon, December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023

**Belgic Confession, Article 29, “The Marks of a True Church”**

Scripture Lesson: Exodus 4:18-31

<b>Lesson Aim</b>	To be able to make the distinction between true and false churches.
<b>Steps to Learning</b>	Read <a href="#">Belgic Confession, Article 29</a> and <a href="#">Exodus 4:18-31</a> . Discuss the sermon and the particulars of the lesson below. It may be best to work through the material over several days or sessions.
<b>Discuss</b>	<p><b>What is the chief point of the Belgic Confession article 29?</b> “All things are to be managed according to the pure Word of God; Jesus Christ is to be acknowledged as the only Head of the Church. But the false church will not submit itself to the yoke of Christ.”</p> <p><b>What are the marks of the true church that reflect that a church is focused on doing what God wants and not what man wants?</b> The pure doctrine of the <u>Gospel is preached</u>; the <u>pure administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper</u> and the <u>exercise of church discipline</u>.</p> <p><b>What was the point of the sermon on Exodus 4:18-31?</b> The narrative in this passage is about the judgment of God upon Moses for not circumcising his son. It did not matter why Moses had failed to circumcise his son; he had sinned nevertheless. The point is that the church must teach God’s Law and hold its members accountable to that Law despite what people think. The specific application for the church in our own day is that it must require parents to baptize their kids despite what they think.</p> <p><b>How do we distinguish true churches from false churches?</b> True churches possess all three marks of the true church (word, sacraments, discipline). False churches miss at least one of the marks.</p> <p><b>What are examples of true churches?</b> Reformed, Presbyterian, Lutheran and Anglican churches.</p> <p><b>What are examples of false churches?</b> Roman Catholic, Baptist, Mormon, Methodist, Calvary Chapels and any independent church.</p> <p><b>What are we saying about false churches?</b> We are saying that they are not legitimate churches to join. We are not saying that there are no Christians in these churches; rather, we are saying that these churches do not honor God and will not rightly shepherd God’s people. Therefore, God’s people must separate themselves from false churches (article 28) and not separate from true churches (article 29).</p>
<b>Bible Reading</b>	<a href="#">2 Kings chapters 1-6</a> [Elijah replaces Elisha] (covering the great Bible stories)