

Catechetical Sermon, January 28th, 2024

Belgic Confession, Article 33, “The Sacraments”

Scripture Lesson: 1 Corinthians 10:1-22

Lesson Aim	To understand three things: first, the context and argument of 1 Corinthians 10, second, what the nature of the Sacraments is and third, how the application of 1 Corinthians 10 is applied by the Belgic Confession.
Steps to Learning	Read Belgic Confession, Article 33 and 1 Corinthians 10 . Discuss the sermon and the particulars of the lesson below. It may be best to work through the material over several days or sessions.
Discuss	<p>What is the context and argument of 1 Corinthians 10? In chapters 8 and 9 of 1 Corinthians, Paul discusses how those in the church were presumptuous to believe that they could participate in idolatry and not be judged by God because they were baptized. In chapter 10, Paul warns the church not to sin without repentance like Israel and exhorts the church to sanctify (keep holy) the Lord’s Table and flee idolatry.</p> <p>What is the nature of the Sacraments? According to the Heidelberg Catechism question and answer 66, the sacraments are visible, holy signs and seals that by their use God may fully declare to us the promise of the Gospel. In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul explains the nature of the Sacraments through Israel’s use of physical things that pointed to spiritual things like the cloud, sea, manna, water and the Rock. The right use of these physical things through faith caused the growth of faith in the Israelites.</p> <p>Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:4 that the Israelites drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them and the Rock was Christ. Paul uses figurative language here called “metonymy.” What is metonymy? Metonymy is a figure of speech where the name of the thing signified is transferred to the sign. In Paul’s use of this figure, the thing signified, Christ, is transferred to the sign, “the Rock.”</p> <p>Why do we need the Sacraments? We need the Sacraments because we are insensitive to spiritual things and weak, or sinful. The Sacraments strengthen our faith because they are means of grace. The means of grace refers to the work of the Holy Spirit through Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, the two Sacraments. The preaching of God’s Word is also a means of grace.</p>
Bible Reading	Ezra 6-10 [The exiles return to the Promised Land] (covering the great Bible stories)