

## *From Your Pastor*

### *A Study of the Shorter Catechism*

#### **WSC Question 19: What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?**

**Answer: All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever (Gen. 3:8,10,24; Eph. 2:2-3; Rom. 6:23).**

An explanation: What is the estate of misery that sin has brought mankind into? We have lost our communion with God. We see this from the very beginning of our rebellion in Adam, when God came seeking fellowship after Adam, he and his wife hid from their Creator-Lord (Gen. 3:8ff). We still have a disposition to seek to hide from our Creator, and seek to avoid Him in our fallen condition (although we cannot in reality, Psa. 139:7ff). Now, we are miserable in that we have lost fellowship with our God, and thus have lost the communion with Him we were created to enjoy.

Although we are made in God's image, we have lost the sweet fellowship with God that brings peace and comfort to our souls. We have lost His gracious presence and kind favor toward us by nature. The Bible speaks us of being hopeless by nature, **"without God in the world"** (Eph. 2:12). We should understand that we can find no other satisfaction and lasting hope for our souls. We have been made for God, and there is no true satisfaction except in Him (Psa. 63:1-5; 73:25, 28). God is man's chief good, though in his sin He suppresses this truth and seeks after idols (Jer. 2; Rom. 1:19-32). Man has lost his way and his true identity as a creature and servant of God.

Another aspect of our misery is that we are now under the wrath and curse of God. The Bible tells us that we are **"children of wrath, even as the rest of mankind"** (Eph. 2:2-3), and condemned to eternal punishment, and that the wrath of God even now abides upon us by nature (John 3:18; 36). God's favor and mercy is wonderful and life-enriching, and to be without it makes us miserable by nature. We also must struggle against all kinds of sicknesses, evils, diseases of body and mind, and living in turmoil and conflict with other human beings for most of this life. And on top of that, we must also face death. Romans 6:23 says: **"The wages of sin is death."** Because of our sins against God, we will suffer death because of the fall (unless Christ returns first), and this brings great sadness and misery to our lives in at least two ways: 1. In the sad loss and helpless estate it brings to us when we lose loved ones (1 Thess. 4:13ff); 2. In the fear and threat of it that hangs over our lives all of our days (Heb. 2:14-16). The fear of death is a chief reason for many psychological and spiritual problems in this present age.

Let us be thankful for the Lord Jesus Christ who willingly came to take our sins upon Himself; to be made a curse for sinners on the cross; to bring reconciliation with God and other men. Jesus came to bring us hope, holiness, happiness, and spiritual health in Him. What a Savior! Although we struggle, there is no longer condemnation and wrath hanging over us, death has been defeated, and Christ has made it a doorway of hope to eternal life with God. We yet live in an estate of sin and misery on our pilgrimage until heaven, but we are being rescued from it daily as the Life-Giving-Spirit of God brings change, comfort, rest, peace and power from the Age to Come into our present circumstances as we walk by faith!

A Prayer: Lord and Father, thank you for the hope you bring in a world of sin and misery. Though we still suffer and experience death, and oftentimes struggle in our relationships, nevertheless, you have begun our healing. We have been justified by the righteousness of Christ, and have been adopted into your family, and in our sanctification, you are renewing us, and giving us hope, and filling us with the love of Christ to help us to live joyfully in this fallen world. Forgive us for our ingratitude. Let us live joyfully before you!

In Christ's love,

Pastor Biggs

*"Our Heavenly King is pleased with all of our graces: Hot zeal and cool patience pleases Him; cheerful thankfulness and weeping repentance pleases Him; but none of them are welcome to Him without faith, as nothing can please Him without Christ."*

- Thomas Adams