

Orthodoxy - The Redeemer Leads the Dance

New City Catechism Q.24 Why was it necessary for Christ, the Redeemer, to die?

Answer: Since death is the punishment for sin, Christ died willingly in our place to deliver us from the power and penalty of sin and bring us back to God. By his substitutionary atoning death, he alone redeems us from hell and gains for us forgiveness of sin, righteousness, and everlasting life.

And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him. - Colossians 1:21–22

The Redeemer of God's elect leads the dance. God calls to his image bearers who have made a ruin of life in their way of sin. His call is to come to him and dance in his life. His call is to take his hand as he leads you from the tyranny and shame of sin and death into his freedom through forgiveness. His call is to come exchanging your filthy ragged garments to be arrayed in his robes of righteousness. His call is to come from the horrors of everlasting torment into the halls and gardens of his everlasting kingdom. He calls for us to come and dance in his love and delight.

How can this call to the dance be freely offered? Jesus Christ, the anointed Son of God, offered himself freely in death. His death was a sacrifice of atonement satisfying God's justice. His death was a punishment for the sins of the world. His death cleared the guilty of the penalty of sin. His death triumphed over the power of sin to enslave and destroy us. His death brought to people everywhere the forgiveness of sins and a record of righteousness and acceptance before the living holy God. His death defeated death and gives to all who trust in him his everlasting life. He freely calls us to come and dance in his great halls because he has loved us by putting the Son of his love forward to die in our place.

What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world but forfeits his soul? The world calls out offering peace, approval, prosperity, power, freedom, love, and joy. We hear the music playing and we dance. But when the dance is over there's something missing. It's never enough. Our souls are empty though we ate and drank and laughed and danced. Only God can give us those things our souls long for. And the only way he's given them is through the beautiful, powerful, and horrid death of his own Son. He calls to us to see his love in his Son and come and dance in his loving delight. This is how he brings us body and soul into his presence where there's an eternal world of delights. It was necessary for God's Redeemer to die that he might be just and the God who lovingly and mercifully delights to reconcile his wayward broken children to himself. Take his hand and learn to dance.

Life Together - Investing in Our Covenant Children

The psalmist writes,
O God, from my youth you have taught me,
and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds.
So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me,
until I proclaim your might to another generation,
your power to all those to come. - Psalm 71:17-18

He is reminded that God has been teaching him of Himself since he was a child, and that he continues to teach him into his old age. Therefore, he will be used of God to teach the generations after him, "all those to come."

Parents have a privilege and responsibility to teach their children leading them to trust and love their Lord (Deut.6:4-9; Eph.6:4) through the gospel of Jesus Christ. But so do those who are members of the particular church where those parents and their children do worship, life, and ministry together.

When an infant or child is baptized in our congregation the believing parents and the believing congregation take vows.

The parents take these vows:

Acknowledging their child's need for the cleansing blood of Jesus and the renewing work of the Holy Spirit.

Trusting in God's promises and looking to God in faith for the salvation of their child.

Dedicating their children to God and relying upon his grace to set an example before them, pray for and with them, to teach them God's doctrines and raise them up in the nurture and admonish of the Lord.

The congregation takes this vow:

Do you as a congregation undertake the responsibility of assisting the parents in the Christian nurture of this child?

Our Lord takes the children of believers seriously and so should the church. God in his covenant love establishes a relationship with his children that is inviolable. Jesus promises his disciples, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand." (Jn.10:27-28). Therefore he welcomes those who come to him with their children (Mk.10:13-16). The children of believers are members of the visible church, and they should be nurtured in the grace of God toward faith in Christ, repentance of sin, and a faithful obedience by grace. This takes parents and church members.

There are numerous ways we can do this in our Life Together.

For Parents of Covenant Children:

We can pray for and encourage the parents of our children. We can spend time with those parents listening to their joys and concerns as parents. We can encourage them with the gospel and help them seek the truth and wisdom in their various situations with their children. We can offer to watch their children for them to give them a time of refreshment or so they can get something practically done.

For Our Covenant Children:

We can carry on conversations with children and students on Sunday's before and after worship to listen, understand, empathize, and encourage them in areas of their lives through the gospel. With the parents permission, we can offer to take a child out to do something simple or special just to get to know them or build a more trusting relationship with them.

For some more structured approaches to encourage our covenant children and students through our life together:

We can commit to keeping the nursery. We can commit to teaching children's church. We can commit to teaching a Sunday School class for children or students.

We can host a student gathering in our home or at church one evening of the month.

We can become a Gospel Encourager (GE) of a student age 12 - 22. A GE is a person living a gospel centered life who is older than the student. They build a relationship with the student to know them and encourage them to be followers of Jesus through a gospel centered life. They build a trusting relationship where they listen and can help answer questions, and give guidance with accountability through the gospel. They come alongside the student to encourage them to pursue a life glorifying to God. The GE can build this relationship with the student by meeting with them at least once a month.

If you're interested in any of these more structured approaches to encourage our covenant children and students at CCC please contact the church office and we will assist you in getting prepared and getting involved.