Compass Life Adult Sunday School

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**“Calvin’s Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book Two – Knowledge of God as Redeemer”**

1. **The Knowledge of God and Ourselves** [Book 1 review]

Calvin revisits his opening statement: “Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves… [1.1.1] With good reason the ancient proverb strongly recommended knowledge of self to man [2.1.1].” Calvin does not begin with the \_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of God, but rather the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of God. And I must come to know myself, as I really am, to be able to know God as he has \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ himself (and vice versa.) The knowledge of God both leads to, and depends on, piety (devotion to him). God as Creator accommodates himself to our creaturely capability to communicate with us. He has done this by way of an innate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ “sense of divinity”, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ witnesses of God’s works in creation and providential oversight of history. These provide enough \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of God to leave man without excuse, but he \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ it in unrighteousness. God further provided a clearer, objective Self-disclosure in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Word. God speaks in intelligible human language in Scripture (“\_\_\_\_\_\_ talk”), and the Holy Spirit directly affirms its inherent inspiration and self-authentication. Scripture reveals (as summarized in the creeds) the one true God in the three Persons of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, coequal and co-eternal, particularly affirming the \_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Christ.

1. **The Need for The Redeemer – Inherited Corruption and Curse** [2:1-5]

Man was the epitome of God’s creation, designed even to reflect God’s image and thus glorify him. The sin of humanity in Adam, rooted in unfaithfulness, pride and thanklessness, resulted in radical \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the divine image, and a destruction of supernatural endowments. Whereas Pelagius had taught that Adam’s sin affected him alone, others only by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Calvin argues (e.g., from the counter example of Christ in Romans 5) that all of Adam’s posterity inherited his corruption – and guilt. “Adam, by sinning, not only took upon himself misfortune and ruin but also plunged our nature into like destruction.” [2.1.6] This places every person into bondage to sin, and he can no longer freely “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” true righteousness. Secular philosophers expect the right use of reason and proper free choice to suffice for life, and some church fathers partly agree: “One of [Chrysostom’s] common expressions is: ‘Let us bring what is ours; God will furnish the rest.’ What Jerome says agrees with this: ‘Ours is to begin, God’s to fulfill; ours to offer what we can, his to supply what we cannot.’” Calvin says, “they credited man with more zeal for virtue than he deserved because they thought that they could not rouse our inborn sluggishness unless they argued that we sinned by it alone”. [2.2.4] He demonstrates that, though man is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from compulsion, he remains \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by necessity because he is corrupt by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. He needs regeneration by grace – resurrection, not just reform. Spiritually dead, he cannot “cooperate” with grace. His will is “free” from coercion but bound to choose according to his heart’s desires. (Particularly with respect to “heavenly things”. Calvin values science and medicine, viewing these as gracious gifts from God. God \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ human endeavors and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ sinful behaviors by common and particular graces. But these neither signify nor attain to right standing with God). Romans 3 clearly declares the whole human race \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, not just by custom, but by nature. Citing Bernard, Calvin says, “Simply to will is of man; to will ill, of a corrupt nature; to will well, of grace.” [2.3.5] God does not adapt His holy law to the level of our capacity to \_\_\_\_ it but intends that it reveal our complete inability and so provoke us to look to His grace alone. God draws persons to salvation, not by forcing the will, but by graciously \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and renewing it. “Our” individual response of faith, and “our” good works that follow, are themselves also gracious gifts of God.

1. **Christ the Mediator, Through All Time, Revealed Through Law and Gospel** [2.6;2.7-9;2.10-11]

​Christ alone, the eternal Son, Author, Sustainer, and Head of creation, has always been sole Mediator between that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and the Triune God. But to accomplish the reconciliation of sinful and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ mankind to God, the Son had to take upon himself human nature, “the *likeness* of sinful flesh” (Rom 8:3). God gave the law, “not to lead the chosen people away from Christ; but rather to hold their minds in readiness until his coming”. The law \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the covenant with Abraham and provided \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ specifically to point to Christ. (Calvin says, “the whole cultus of the law, taken literally and not as shadows and figures corresponding to the truth, will be utterly ridiculous.” [2.7.1]) By these (and in *words* of promise) the “law” (i.e., the OT) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ gospel. More narrowly, “law” in Scripture variously refers to moral, civil, and ceremonial law. Calvin (like Melanchthon) identifies 3 “uses” of the moral law: (1) to reveal God’s complete righteousness, and so \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ man in his utter unrighteousness; (2) to provide \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of equity and love by which government restrains the expression of evil; (3) to instruct those who, already accepted by grace through faith in Christ, how they might to love and serve Him – both a “\_\_\_\_\_\_” and a “\_\_\_\_\_\_”. Luther heavily emphasized #1, opposing the principles of law and gospel. Calvin agreed with this but considered #3 the “principal use” of the law for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The law has not been set aside, only the condemnation and curse due to anything short of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ obedience (Christ having taken that curse upon Himself). Nor have the ceremonies been abandoned, but rather assumed their \_\_\_\_\_ purpose: to elaborate on aspects of Christ’s ministry as Mediator. Calvin deals with the “two tables” of the ten commandments [2.8.11-50]: duties toward God, and toward others. We owe God complete devotion and faithfulness, expressed in (1) adoration (2) trust, (3) invocation, and (4) thanksgiving. We must take the commandments not minimally prohibitive, but in their full \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ sense. The two \_\_\_\_\_\_ commandments summarize the two tables (Lk 10:27; Mt 22:37-9).

“Old” and “New” Testaments represent different administrations of the \_\_\_\_\_ eternal covenant of grace – having the same goal: eternal life; the same Mediator: Christ; the same means: grace; and the same sacraments (1 Cor 10). They *differ* in (1) temporal vs. spiritual (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) blessings; (2) shadow vs. substance; (3) laws written on stone vs. hearts; (4) “bondage” vs. “freedom”; (5) Israel alone vs. every people & nation. [2.10 & 11]

1. **The Person and Work of Christ the Mediator** [2.12-14;2.15;2.16-17]

The incarnation of Christ is God’s supreme accommodation. “Even if man had remained free from all stain, his condition would have been too \_\_\_\_\_\_ for him to reach God without a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” To bridge the distance between Creator and creature, the Mediator had to be fully God and fully man, all the more because of the fall. Only man, a “second Adam”, could offer complete obedience in place of disobedient humanity, offer his perfect life as satisfaction of God’s judgment, thus pay the penalty owed by man. Only God could then overcome death and sin and bring forth deliverance, acceptance, and life from the dead.

Calvin demonstrated the full \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Christ in Book 1.13. He referenced the Nicene Creed and supported the use of extra-Biblical \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (*ousia/essence/substance*, *hypostasis/subsistence*/*person*, etc.) to concisely and precisely express the teaching of the \_\_\_\_\_\_ of Scripture. Here Calvin focuses on the true \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Christ using the expressions of Chalcedon (451). “He who was the Son of God became the Son of man—not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For we affirm his divinity so joined and united with his humanity that each retains its distinctive nature unimpaired, and yet these two natures constitute one Christ.” [2.14.1] If Christ’s human and divine natures were “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_”, He would no longer be fully God, and fully man, but a different class of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, unable to fulfill the role of Mediator. Christ as Mediator bridges the gulf between God and us. He had to assume actual, though sinless, human nature to accomplish reconciliation. As man, he submitted his \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will to the Father. Statements that properly apply only to either Christ’s divine or human nature may still be made about him as one Person. They “crucified the *Lord of Glory*” (1 Cor 2:8), because the *man* Jesus who was crucified was also *God*. Calvin held that Christ’s divine nature was not “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” to his earthly body: “Here is something marvelous: the Son of God descended from heaven in such a way that, without leaving heaven, he willed to be borne in the virgin’s womb, to go about the earth, and to hang upon the cross; yet he continuously filled the world even as he had done from the beginning!” [2.13.4] Lutherans labeled this view the “Calvinist *extra*”, but it represented an historical view.

Christ fulfills his work as Mediator in three *anointed* roles: prophet, king and priest. As *prophet*, Christ who is himself the \_\_\_\_, faithfully relays the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Father’s grace in the gospel. He is the ultimate revealer, and revelation of God (Heb 1:1-2). The Spirit continues this ministry to and through the Church. Christ’s *kingship* is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, not of this world (Jn 18:36). He rules providentially and *sovereignly* on behalf of the church, and every individual believer, to secure our eternal destiny. “At the right hand of the Father” Christ “has in his possession the whole power of God’s dominion.” (Mt 28:19; Ac 2:33-36). As *priest*, Christ offered \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as the perfect sacrifice, presenting it with continuing intercession for us in the true sanctuary in heaven, securing God’s favor toward us. In him we share in this office as we offer prayer and praise, resting in Christ’s once-for-all sacrifice.

Calvin expounds Christ’s atoning work from the Apostle’s creed [2.16], teaching that “descended into hell” (an addition) refers to Christ suffering “the severity of God’s vengeance, to appease his wrath and satisfy his just judgment”, to fully deliver us from these. Finally, through his obedient life & substitutionary death, Christ fully paid the price of our redemption. God fully accepts us, “for the righteousness found in Christ alone is reckoned as ours.” [2.17.5]

**8/18 “Calvin’s Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book Three”**