

Because I belong to Him, Christ, by His Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me whole-heartedly willing and ready from now on to live for Him.

Q. What must you know to live and die in the joy of this comfort?

A. Three things: first, how great my sin and misery are; second, how I am set free from all my sins and misery; third, how I am to thank God for such deliverance. *(Heidelberg Catechism, #1 and #2)*

***Hymn 125** “Let All Things Now Living”

Let all things now living a song of thanksgiving
To God the creator triumphantly raise.
Who fashioned and made us, protected and stayed us,
Who still guides us on to the end of our days.
His banners are o'er us, His light goes before us,
A pillar of fire shining forth in the night.
Till shadows have vanished and darkness is banished
As forward we travel from light into light.

His law He enforces, the stars in their courses
The sun in its orbit obediently shine;
The hills and the mountains, the rivers and fountains,
The deeps of the ocean proclaim Him divine.
We too should be voicing our love and rejoicing;
With glad adoration a song let us raise
Till all things now living unite in thanksgiving:
"To God in the highest, hosanna and praise!"

Old Testament Reading

Psalm 26

Congregational Prayer

Dear God, Who elects saints to salvation and glory --

Blessed are the people You choose and call to Yourself.
With You is redemption, assurance, and forgiveness;
You have lifted me, a prisoner, out of the pit of sin
And pronounced my discharge,
Not only in the courts of heaven,
But in the court of conscience;
You have justified me by faith,
Given me peace with You,
And made me to enjoy glorious liberty as Your child.

Save me from the false hope of the hypocrite --
May I never assume that I am in Christ
Unless I am a new creature;
Never think I am born of the Spirit
Unless I set my mind on the things of the Spirit,
Never rest satisfied with professions of belief
And outward forms and services,
If my heart is not right with You.

May I judge my sincerity not by fleeting emotions
But by my fear to offend You,
My concern to know Your will,
And my willingness to deny myself.

May nothing make me forget Your glory,
Or turn me aside from Your commands,
Or shake my confidence in Your promises,
Or cause Your children to stumble.

Don't let my temporal occupations injure
My spiritual concerns,
Or the cares of this life make me neglect
The one thing necessary,
Or be insensible to Your rebukes.

May I learn the holy art of abiding in You,
Of being in the world and not of it,
Of making everything not only consistent with,
But conducive to, my life of faith.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Colossians 1:13-14

***Hymn 353**

"I Love Thy Kingdom Lord"

I love Thy kingdom, Lord,
The house of Thine abode,
The church our blest Redeemer saved
With His own precious blood.

I love Thy church, O God:
Her walls before Thee stand,
Dear as the apple of Thine eye,
And graven on Thy hand.

For her my tears shall fall,
For her my prayers ascend;
To her my cares and toils be giv'n,
Till toils and cares shall end.

Beyond my highest joy
I prize her heav'nly ways,
Her sweet communion, solemn vows,
Her hymns of love and praise.

Jesus, Thou Friend divine,
Our Savior and our King,
Thy hand from ev'ry snare and foe
Shall great deliv'rance bring.

Sure as Thy truth shall last,
To Zion shall be giv'n
The brightest glories earth can yield,
And brighter bliss of heav'n.

New Testament Reading

John 17:13-19

Message

"TRUE SEPARATION UNTO GOD"

***Hymn 521**

"My Hope is Built on Nothing Less"

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

Refrain:

On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil.

Refrain

His oath, His covenant, His blood
Support me in the whelming flood;
When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.

Refrain

When He shall come with trumpet sound,
O may I then in Him be found;
Dressed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne.

Refrain

***God Blesses His People** 2 Corinthians 13:14

“TRUE SEPARATION UNTO GOD”

Psalm 26; John 17:19

“Birds of a feather flock together.” “We are known by the company we keep.” Christians by definition identify with Jesus Christ and associate with His people.

Psalm 26 bears certain resemblances to the previous psalm. Both open with the same declaration of trust in God (25:2; 26:1); in both there is the same prayer that God would redeem (25:22; 26:11) and be gracious (25:16, 26:11) to His servants. See also 25:21/26:11; 25:5/26:3.

But here’s the striking difference. Psalm 25 has three confessions of sinfulness and pleas for forgiveness (v. 11). No unholy associations for the author of Psalm 26!

I. THE BELIEVER IS TO BE SEPARATED (BUT NOT ISOLATED)

A. His Heart is Upright

Ps 17:3; Isa 6:5; Luke 5:8; Rom 7:24; 2 Sam 12. We could say three things about these claims:

1. The author is certainly not claiming sinlessness.
2. The need of the moment of Psalm 26 (unlike Psalm 25) is to accentuate health.
3. Every Christian ought to be able to make the same claim. (Rom 8:5-9)

B. His Separation to God in His Separation from the Godless

Ps 1:1.

C. Separation is Not Isolation

1 Pet 2:11; Heb 11:13; Phil 3:20; Jn 14:1-3; 2 Cor 5:20; Isa 43:10-12; 1 Jn 2:1-2; Jas 1:27; Heb 7:26; Luke 5:27-32; 7:29-34; 7:36-50; 15:1-32; 18:9-14; 19:1-10. The believer in Christ has explicit responsibilities towards all men as he represents Christ in the world.

II. PHARISEES ARE ISOLATED BUT NOT SEPARATED

2 Cor 6:17. Susannah Wesley: "(Sin is) whatever weakens your reasoning, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes away your relish for spiritual things, in short, if anything increases the authority of the flesh over the spirit, that to you becomes sin, however good it is in itself." 1 Cor 6:12.

A. Who Were the Pharisees?

B. It's Possible to Be Isolated But Not Separated

Luke 16:14; Matt 23:5. Does the love of money and/or praise and approval ever motivate us more than the love of God? Haggai 1. Jer 48:10.

III. THE TRIUNE GOD SEPARATES US THROUGH CHRIST, THE SEPARATED ONE

A. Union with Christ Separates Us Unto God

Rom 7:1-4; Gal. 3:27; Col. 1:13. The Holy Spirit sanctifies us or separates us from sin unto God as our daily experience. Separation is not something that we must *achieve*, but it is something that we must *receive and then practice*. Every true believer is separated. One's practice must be consistent with one's position.

B. Heart-felt Worship is the Result!

Conclusion