

## The Sixth Commandment

Psalter	150: 1 - 4
Read	Genesis 4: 1 -13
Psalter	10: 1 - 3
Psalter	69: 5, 6
Psalter	435: 7

Beloved,

The order of instruction is Lord's Day 24 of the Heidelberg Catechism which we will read together:

Question 105. What doth God require in the sixth commandment?

Answer That neither in thoughts, nor words, nor gestures, much less in deeds, I dishonour, hate, wound, or kill my neighbour, by myself or by another; but that I lay aside all desire of revenge: also, that I hurt not myself, nor wilfully expose myself to any danger. Wherefore also the magistrate is armed with the sword to prevent murder.

Question 106. But this commandment seems only to speak of murder?

Answer. In forbidding murder, God teaches us that He abhors the causes thereof, such as envy, hatred, anger, and desire of revenge; and that He accounts all these as murder.

Question 107. But is it enough that we do not kill any man in the manner mentioned above?

Answer. No; for when God forbids envy, hatred, and anger, He commands us to love our neighbour as ourselves; to show patience, peace, meekness, mercy, and all kindness towards him, and prevent his hurt as much as in us lies; and that we do good, even to our enemies.

We are then instructed about *The Sixth Commandment*. We will consider in order:

1. What God Forbids
2. What God Teaches
3. What God Demands

### 1. What God Forbids

Death has come into the world through sin and therefore death threatens us from day to day and from hour to hour, yes, from moment to moment. Death follows us throughout our entire life as a shadow. We always exist in mortal danger. And then we are always to consider that death comes from an angle that we do not expect. Hence any moment could be our last, any moment the thread of our life could be severed. That could happen in our house, that could happen outside our house; that could happen in a car, that could happen while you walk along the street. That could happen when you are sitting on your chair, whether you are lying on your bed or not. In a glimpse it could be eternity. We hear of it and we read of it. Actually, we are confronted with it daily.

With that understanding how necessary it is to pray: "Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is: that I may know how frail I am. Behold, thou hast made

my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before Thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity.”

How necessary it is to live close to death, because a life close to death is a life far from sin: that is also a life close to the Lord. Thus we dwell continually, each day again, day and night, in mortal danger.

But then you will understand that this mortal danger is not what this Lord’s Day means. Here the issue is another threat to life. What does it deal with then? Well, the instructor desires, by the means of the sixth commandment, to clearly hold before our eyes that our society is mortally dangerous, yes, that it could cost us our life. Because the people that we associate with are hateful and hate each another. That is an unsettling fact. God’s Word says: “All men are liars.” But it is also true that all men are murderers, all men are deadly assailants, all men are out for your and my life. However friendly they may present themselves, however innocent they outwardly may be, yet, all people, without distinction, are murderers and deadly assailants: they are out for your and my life. Any moment, our neighbour could take my life. People are inclined to that. That what is most precious to a man can be snatched away from him in the most unexpected and violent way by somebody else.

That began immediately after the fall. There you have the first murder. Cain slew his brother Abel, and that beside the borders of Paradise. What a grizzly revelation of sin. Abel, the first martyr. Cain, the first murderer. And why did Cain kill Abel? Because his works were evil and his brother’s righteous. And it did not remain with the first murder. After the first murder, the second followed, and the third, and since then such an enormous amount of innocent blood has been shed that we can hardly imagine it. And that blood calls to heaven for vengeance.

Yes, we live in a dangerous society. Living amongst murderers is dangerous. That is a disturbing and serious truth for us. Because here we are together as people who externally love peace, but ultimately we are here together as murderers, deadly assailants: hateful and hating each other. And that does not only mean that your life could be taken away at any time by somebody else, that one is after your life and could take that life away from you, but that also means that you are just as dangerous for somebody else. You are a threat towards the life of your neighbour. And that includes every one of us, each one individually.

The evil mentioned in the sixth commandment does not just live in the hearts of some people, it lives in the heart of every one of us: it lives in your hearts, and it lives in my heart. By nature we are after the life of those around us; even though it may be that we do not express it in a brutal fashion, still, at the bottom of our hearts, we are murderers of each other. There is not one sin that we are too good for, and not for this sin either. And when it would come to it, when God would let us go, it would come to the deed. Then indeed it would come to the most brutal revelation of this sin. Then we would kill each other. Then we would murder each other. It is only the Lord’s restraining grace that prevents us from falling into that evil.

It is and remains true: by nature we are inclined to all evil. And that does not mean that we are open for it, that we are exposed to it, no, that means that our heart is full of sin and thus it is only because of common, restraining grace if the evil that lives in our heart does not come out in all its wretchedness. Incapable of any good and inclined to all evil. That is a dreadful truth.

The sixth commandment, that we are now considering, condemns us and declares us to be guilty, you and me. Because the spirit of Cain also lives in us. We are, when it comes to it, gladly agreeing with Lamech. No, not the God-fearing Lamech, but the Lamech from the posterity of Cain who took two wives - Ada and Zilla - and who was the first to sing the revenge: “I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.” One only had to point to Lamech and one lay prostrate upon the earth. Lamech immediately took action and instantly struck so that the spirit of life departed.

That is really how it also is in your and my heart. Don’t let anyone have the courage to point towards me, to harm me, because then... Now, there you have it. How many people, young and old, have we not murdered in our thoughts? That is why the Catechism begins with saying:

“What doth God require in the sixth commandment?” And the answer begins with: “That neither in thoughts. I dishonour, hate, wound, or kill my neighbour.”

When we are honest, we need to confess that we are mass-murderers. No, then we no longer need to look down on that Eichmann who was sentenced to death because he was guilty of the deaths of so many Jews. He did it, but we are not one whit better. We are mass-murderers. We deserve to be locked up, we belong in prison, we belong behind bars, we are mortally dangerous for each other. “In thoughts,” it says. When our envy is only slightly aroused, we threaten to kill the other person, we begin to curse the other person in our thoughts. When one hams us, when man does not honour us sufficiently, we murder each other in our thoughts.

Just think of Mordecai. That was one who did not render the necessary honour to Haman. He sat in the gate and when Haman walked past he remained sitting. He did not stand up, he did not bow down: it really says that he did not move. He did not even nod his head. He did not show Haman the honour that Haman thought he was entitled to receive. And then in Haman’s heart there was: vengeance. He did not take long and he made gallows such as never had been made before. In his thoughts he already saw the irritating Mordecai hanging on there. And he had devilish pleasure in that. Away with that Mordecai. No bowing for Haman, then revenge. He had to be hanged on the gallows, cleared out of the way, killed: in his thoughts the sentence had been executed.

How many gallows have we erected? Gallows higher than the one Haman caused had to be made. Certainly, we have not come to the deed. And again, that is only common grace. But we did in our thoughts. And that is what the instructor’s explanation begins with. Then we have to consider that the Lord also judges our thoughts. He knows them. Remember well: the thought is the start. And then it does not take long for the thoughts to come.

It states: “That neither in thoughts, nor words, I dishonour, hate, wound, or kill my neighbour.” That is also possible: kill someone with our words, either spoken or written. Then we express our thoughts, our thoughts are revealed, then we write our thoughts down, then we put our thoughts into words. Having first dishonoured, hated, wounded, or killed our neighbour in our thoughts, now we will do it with our words.

Then those words can be as sharp as a sword. No, not just needles, but they can be swords that pierce through the soul of somebody else. Yes beloved, then those who write their words down achieve their purpose, because that is the purpose: to hurt the other, to painfully wound him. So painfully, that he gets upset, to wound him so painfully that he needs to be admitted to an institution. To wound him so painfully, that if possible, he will give up the ghost. To kill him, that is the intention, hurt him, and tread him underfoot.

And then it says in Psalm 55: 21: “The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.” See, there you have it, every word is a sword. Drawn swords are on their lips. Oh that we would consider our words. How harsh we can be, how bitter and how sharp. How our words can be as a dagger that we put to the heart of our neighbour. Thoughts, words.

And then it states: “Nor gestures.” So we can also dishonour, hate, wound, and kill with our gestures. The gesture of despising, mocking, minimising, disregard. How we can humble, grieve, wound, hurt, or even kill somebody with a certain gesture or expression.

The poet of Psalm 22 called out: “All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head.” There you have the gesture. A shaking of the head as if man sympathizes with the other while their gesture reveals a devilish delight. A delight in the suffering of somebody else. They shoot out the lip. We would say: “They stick their tongue out.”

Christ experienced it on the cursed wood of the cross, but also before that, in the hall of Caiaphas, with Herod and with Pilate. They hit Him on the cheek, they spat in His face. That is the worst gesture of contempt. Not just turning your head from someone, no, but turning your head towards someone and spitting in their face. Christ had to endure that. And when He hung

on the cross, how they tried to pierce Him through with their words: "If Thou art the King of the Jews save Thyself! The Christ, the King of Israel, come now off the cross so that we may see and believe." With words and with gestures.

Further it states: "Much less in deeds." The deed itself is clearly the worst revelation of this evil. But hate is the beginning. And that is in our heart. The thoughts, the contemplations, the words, the gestures, and then comes the hand, then comes the clenched fist, then comes the sword, then comes the deed itself.

Hatred: the desire to eliminate someone. Hence hatred can become so bad that we no longer want to see the other person and that in the literal sense of the word. Then we become insane with hate, then we hardly know what we are doing. Filled with hate and we only have one purpose, to eliminate the other,, to murder.

And we can also do that by using others. As David did by means of Joab. Because he ordered Joab to assign Uriah to the most dangerous position and then quickly withdraw the troops so that Uriah would perish. A murder.

Beloved, of course, that can also be applied to those words and gestures. Cause someone to be murdered by others by razor-sharp words, and by contemptuous gestures.

To say it very simply: how many are there not who are busy to instigate each other, to incite each other, to set people against a certain person. And then that person's rest has vanished. And also the rest in the church. How many there are who are busy to make some office bearers look suspicious. And then they themselves remain in the background, but they incite somebody else. They instigate here and incite there, and the other person is the spokesman, while they remain in the background. And should one visit them, then they know nothing about it. They are not at fault of anything. They have not said it. They have not done it. That is killing one by another.

Let us be careful. It is a sin against the sixth commandment. Then we are dangerous toward other people. But we are also dangerous towards our self. Because it also states: "That I hurt not myself, nor wilfully expose myself to any danger." We are not only a danger to others but we are also a threat to ourselves.

How many are there not who shorten their life by an unruly life. Because the way in which someone lives can also be sin against the sixth commandment. And how many are there not who try to flee a life of despondency, who lay violent hands on themselves. That is what is meant here. Uncalled, these people appear before the Judge. That is something: not summoned, and yet to appear before the Judge, uncalled. Awful.

Because let us say it very clearly, there is no hope for the self-murderer or the self-murderess: for those who commit suicide. A self-murderer will in nowise inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, neither will a murderer, unless he repents. But for the self-murderer there is no hope that he or she will repent.

I know, the modern spirit is different. But let us keep ourselves far away from that. What would the self-murderer have thought, said, or prayed at the last moment? No, they would not have thought or prayed at the last moment. There is no hope for a self-murderer. It is remarkable that God's children who are also inclined to all evil, are preserved from this sin. They are preserved in the power of God, by faith, to salvation. God keeps them from this dreadful evil, so that they will not put their hand to their own life. It can go very far. Just think about the jailor. He stood ready, with his sword towards his heart. But God intervened. When we then read in God's Word of those who did put their hand on their own life: Judas, Ahithophel, Saul, then there is no hope for such people.

"Nor wilfully expose myself to any danger," the Catechism also says because that is also suicide. What do we mean? Well, carelessly darting through the traffic, recklessly driving. And now I am not even speaking about driving under the influence of alcohol. That is pure murder. That is not man-slaughter, that is murder, culpable homicide, intentional death. Because anyone who is under the influence of alcohol, does not belong behind the steering

wheel. Let us never do that. Such a person is censurable, because he sins against the sixth commandment. "Thou shalt not kill." And when that person causes his own death, you cannot regard it as an accident: it is suicide. Let us consider that when we go into the traffic. Because then indeed we are a danger for others and a danger for ourselves. How often does it not happen, that one wants to show off, that one wants to brag, which is the cause of all sorts of accidents.

"Wherefore also the magistrate is armed with the sword," it states, "to prevent murder." Not to forbid but to prevent. Forbidding is not enough. To prevent murder, the magistrate has been given the sword. Not as an ornament, but to use that sword. A sword has the intention of killing. What then is the task of the magistrate? To apply the death sentence when it is necessary. The abolition of capital punishment in our country is a step backwards. Because God's Word says it so emphatically: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed."

And then one can come with all sorts of arguments and say: "Yes, but just imagine if someone was innocently condemned to death." For sure, one has to ensure that this cannot happen. One needs to use the greatest care with the application of capital punishment. Then it needs to be evidenced from all sides that the one who is to suffer capital punishment is indeed the guilty person. But however, capital punishment needs to be applied. The magistrate really uses the sword not at all or completely wrong. Because when one has killed another person, when one has murdered somebody else, in whatever way this was done, then he often receives a relatively light sentence. Human life no longer counts. You can see that everywhere.

## 2. What God Teaches

"But this commandment seems only to speak of murder?" Yes, that seems so. But appearances are deceptive. And let us not be deceived, because God's judgement - that is what the Lord teaches in the sixth commandment - not only applies to the act, but also to the root from whence the deed grows.

A person only sees what is before the eye, but God looks upon the heart. For the earthly judge we are all neat, tidy people, but that is not how it is for the Judge of heaven and earth. The Lord judges according to the inclination of the heart.

See it in the answer: "In forbidding murder, God teaches us that He abhors the causes thereof, such as envy, hatred, anger, and desire of revenge; and that He accounts all these as murder." The Lord sees our heart and He knows our heart. That is what He teaches us here. He teaches us that He is the One who knows the Heart. And what does He then see in that heart of ours, what does He see in your and my heart?

Oh, have you ever looked into your own heart? What a filthy fountain of all sorts of wickedness. Because the thoughts of the human heart are continually evil. "Out of the heart," the Lord Jesus says, "proceed murders." In plural. It does not state that the person just commits a murder. No, out of the heart come murders, evil thoughts. What lives in our heart is revealed. Not much good lives there, only evil.

Oh, learn to examine your heart closely, have a look inside your heart. Because God does that too. And when we then come to see our heart by the light of God's Spirit, who is innocent **then**? Oh sure, then the branches can be cut away, but the root is there, and we will be judged according to that root. Because that root is found in our heart, we are no less guilty than when the branches would be seen. Really, whoever hates his brother, is a murderer. That is what God's Word teaches.

Oh listen, haters, envious, angry people, those who desire revenge, we are here accused before the Judge of heaven and earth of murder and killing. The earthly judge may well make a mistake, but not this Judge. The earthly judge does not know everything, but this is an all-knowing Judge and higher appeal is not possible. He knows what lives in your and my heart and according to that heart we will be judged. Then He sees the hate that is hidden deep in your

heart, even when there is a smile on your face. He see the envy, the anger, while you generously stretch out your hand. Because we can camouflage that hate so nicely, hide the envy so beautifully. But God looks into the heart. You cannot hide that from Him.

When it is like that, that God judges the heart, will we then go free? Is the root of envy not in you? Envy, when it goes well with somebody else, better than with you? Is there no envy in your heart when he receives more honour than you do, when his business is doing better than your business? Envy and hate. Hate, that is that inner, deep revulsion of the other. Hate is that irreconcilable anger that causes us to be incensed immediately when we are not backed up, or when we are only a little harmed, or when our honour is offended. And then the desire of revenge, that brooding on revenge. Who has never thought: "My time will come; I will exact my due"? That is swearing revenge.

There you have it, the root of evil. Beloved, how guilty we are. God sees that root and according to that evil we will be judged.

No, we do not need to look for killers and murderers in prison. They not only sit in a cell, they also sit in church. We are all guilty of this, even if we have a very good name in the world.

Even God's children are guilty of this. That is apparent in the practice. What discord among God's children. What church division because of nothing. What is that other than hate, envy, and the desire of revenge? When someone for example does not become an elder, then they withdraw their membership. Someone does not become a minister despite having made repeated attempts. Okay, then just go somewhere else or begin a new church for yourself. And then one suddenly has a point of difference. The one will have it stricter than the other. How sad this all is. Do you know what kind of differences they are? They are certainly often not any differences of doctrine. That is what one makes of them. What are they then? Well differences of honour. Envy, hate, desire of revenge. When I do not get my way, when my rooster cannot rule, when one is more than I, well now, then I will leave.

There you have it, the root of the evil. How sad that all is. But consider, God will judge us accordingly. When we come before Him with such a corrupted heart, what will He say to us? How can it be any different than: "Depart from me, you workers of unrighteousness, you murderers and killers." How great it would be when we today learned to know ourselves as guilty. When we became killers, when we became murderers before God. Because that is how it is. It is not exaggerated.

Maybe there are those in our midst who say: "Well that is going a bit far." Beloved, this commandment seems only to speak about murder, but that is not true. The reality is that God teaches us that He hates the root. So God also hates too, only he does not hate the person but the evil within the person. He angers dreadfully, both over original and actual sin. We may hate, yes, but not our neighbour. Just hate yourself, have a revulsion, a loathing of yourself, and then hate the sin in yourself. When we may come to that, we will go to our knees, then we will beg for grace.

Let us now sing from Psalter 69 verses 5 and 6.

5. Let not the judgment fall on me  
For evil men decreed,  
For cruel men and violent,  
Inspired by bribes and greed.
  
6. But I in my integrity  
Will humbly walk with Thee;  
O my Redeemer and my Lord,  
Be merciful to me.

### 3. What God Demands

So we have seen what God forbids in this commandment and what He teaches in this commandment. We will still consider our last thought: what God demands. And what does God demand in this commandment? Well: "When God forbids envy, hatred, and anger, He commands us to love our neighbour as ourselves; to show patience, peace, meekness, mercy, and all kindness towards him, and prevent his hurt as much as in us lies; and that we do good, even to our enemies."

So what does God demand? In one word: conversion. Our heart needs to be renewed. We do not just need to leave certain things, no, we need to hate the root of the evil. We need to be inwardly renewed according to God's image. Conversion is necessary will it be well with us. Because we cannot exist before God with that filthy fountain. Then it will go wrong. We need to appear before God with a cleansed fountain, with a renewed fountain.

Now, it is such a wonder that conversion is possible, that grace is to be received, that our sins can be washed away. Yes, that God through the working of His Spirit can cleanse that vile heart, can renew it, desires to renew it. He does that with all His children. He desires to grant that in the way of prayer. May we strife with Him for that in a holy way. Then it is so necessary that we are burdened with ourselves, burdened with that sinful heart. Then God is burdened with us, but then in a good way. Then we, with David, will burden God: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."

When the Holy Spirit begins to work in us to salvation, the fruits of that Spirit become immediately apparent. Then renewing comes, also in our life. Because with God's true people it will always come from within, never from without. With the nominal Christian (see it with the rich young man) it comes from without. But that never goes within. It needs to come from within. And then it goes well. What does the Lord demand? Conversion.

And then the fruits will be seen. Which? Love. What does God demand? It is sufficient that I do not kill my neighbour? No, then you have not sufficed. I need to love him. Love is the fulfilling of the law. The mark of God's law is love. Love to God and love to the neighbour. As soon as God begins to work in a man, as soon as a man is converted to God, is renewed, new fruits become apparent. Then there comes a longing for God, then there also comes love to the neighbour. Both the one and the other will be seen. A longing for God causes a longing for His people, a longing for His service, a longing for His Word, but also a longing for His law.

And where there is a longing for His law, then there also comes an inner joy to live according to that law. Then we will also love our neighbour. It needs to become apparent in our life that we have been converted, that we have been renewed, that we have been turned around. And that is revealed in the love to the neighbour. But consider carefully, that love to the neighbour is the fruit of the love to God, and the love to God is the fruit of the love from God. Because: "We love Him because He first loved us." And when that love is poured out in our heart, we will love Him in return. But also our neighbour.

In our days a lot is spoken about humanity and about horizontal relationships. And then one sees that as the fulfilling of God's law. But the true love for our neighbour is the fruit of the love of God. And now the truth of God's work, wrought in our hearts, must become apparent in our lives. God's work must be seen. And then God's work in the first place is not the knowledge of all sorts of deep convictions, of extraordinary experiences, then it is not to be recognized in wonderful deliverances, but then God's work is to be known in the love. Love, also to our neighbour. "We know," John writes, "that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death" So love.

When that love is there, then there is patience towards the neighbour, longsuffering. Then one is not quickly inclined to wrath. No, when we may taste something of God's love, then there is indeed also love toward the neighbour, love that becomes evident in having patience with the neighbour. Then we will not strive for our rights. Then we can bear with the insults and also easily forgive. Not just once, but seventy times seven. Then one must have something

of that love, otherwise it is not possible. Otherwise one is hateful, envious, rebellious and hot-tempered.

God demands that we show patience and peace towards our neighbour. When we may taste something of that peace with God and from God, then there will be also peace with the neighbour, because where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is no desire for envy. When God's children live in disharmony with each other, they do not exercise what God commands in this Lord's Day. Because where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is no desire for envy. Then one does not quarrel. When God's children are where they belong, try to make them angry. You will not succeed. When they are where they belong, there is no desire to envy. Then they let everything go over them. Then they are peace-makers. When there is discord somewhere, they will try everything to resolve it. Then they desire, oh so gladly, to be the least.

And also meekness. No, that is not weakness, no softness. That has got nothing to do with it. It is not permissiveness. Moses was meeker than all the people that were on the earth, but that does not mean that he was permissive and sweetly inclined. No, he was not weak, on the contrary. What actually is meekness? It is in fact self-denial. And self-denial is putting a line through your own interests, that is saying no to yourself. That is not putting yourself to the fore. That is rather suffering injustice to yourself than accusing or hurting somebody else.

Beloved, what a precious gift of grace that is. Christ has lived it out before His Church, has given an example of it. When He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not. The apostle says: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Jesus Christ." To be meek, that is contrary to our existence. Self-maintenance suits us much better. We are maintainers of ourselves, and that is now exactly the root of murder. I out of the way, or he out of the way; I never, so him. Self-maintenance, the cause of discord. Self-denial, in contrast gives peace. That is the fruit of love.

What a privilege it is when we may exercise something of that. That is also why the apostle writes: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." What a grace it is to follow Christ's footsteps. "Learn of me," He says, "for I am meek and lowly in heart." Did that not appear in His life?

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." That is also dealt with in this answer. Mercy, that is having a warm heart, a burning heart, full of empathy for the neighbour, to be compassionate with his suffering, to sympathize with him, to suffer beside him. When the other **one** suffers, to **empathize** and when it may go well with the other, to be glad with him. And show it. That needs to be expressed, also when the other one is in distress. Mercy is really the opposite of malicious pleasure. Those who have malicious pleasure have pleasure in the suffering of the other. That is murder. Let us have delight when it goes well with the other and suffer when it goes ill with him.

And then still: kindness. That is the opposite of cruelty. How cruel and wrathful we can be at times. And then it states in the book of Proverbs: "A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger." How often do we not give hateful and spiteful answers. It is the root of murder. We are so quickly annoyed. And yes, murder lurks within. Kindness, and then not just once, one day, but day and night. It needs to control our lives.

"Prevent his hurt as much as in us lies; and that we do good, even to our enemies." So promote his well-being. That is enclosed in all of that. Indeed, also do good to our enemies. Enemies, they are people that hate you, that are people who would like to murder you. And now do good to these people. Heap coals of fire on their heads," and so win them for Christ.

They are precious fruits. From our field? Oh no, not one. Precious fruit of the administration of the Spirit of Christ. Are they found with us? With you? You have laid your own heart beside this word, have you not? That was a remark that Smytegelt often made: "Lay your heart beside it." And I hope that you have not listened for somebody else. Did you consider your own heart under the preaching and did you think: "It is not so bad with me; I will

be alright. This is good for this person and that is good for somebody else.” Then you have not listened correctly. How is it in your heart? Are these fruits that have been mentioned found in your heart?

Oh, not by nature. And that they are not there, sadly by nature does not bother us at all, it leaves us indifferent. We calmly live on. Soon we will go back home and then we will say: “That was rather sharp. It dealt with the sixth commandment. I did not realise that there was so much in it, that it went so deep. I do believe that I am not how I should be.” But we do not lay awake about it all. We do not have any sorrow because of it, it does not cause us pain.

Beloved, I truly desire that God’s Word would penetrate to the very depth of your heart, that you no longer would find any rest for the hollow of your soul’s foot. Who knows how soon you will have to appear before God? And you cannot exist before God with that vile fountain. That arouses His anger. Then you will experience God’s wrath. And that will be dreadful. Seek to receive a cleansed heart. There is a means of cleansing. There is One who can renew the vilest heart, can cleanse it, can re-create it, so that it becomes as is taught here. Then we will begin to answer to what God demands from us. May we learn to beg for it today, and not to give up until the Lord gives it to us. It is the highest time. It is not found in us by nature.

And with God’s children? Well, God’s true people desire to be as is depicted here. They would so gladly be like that. And it is to their sorrow that they are not like that. Because consider carefully, when God converts someone he does not change from a sinful man to a holy man, but then he becomes from a sinful man, a double-man and then it is to his sorrow that he cannot be as he would so gladly be. “Oh wretched man that I am, who shall ever deliver me from the body of this death so that I could be how God desires me to be?” That will happen one time: “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” That causes them to sigh: “Oh Son, conform us to Thy Image.” That causes them to pray: “Grant grace Oh Lord that we may treasure Thy law.” They need a daily conversion. And so they certainly do not lay themselves down beside their unconformity, but with the apostle they strive for perfection, knowing that they will never reach it in their own strength.

That is true, but they know that they soon will reach it and that they then will be as perfect as God created them, as God desires them to be. That comforts them at times and it gives them all the more joy. That causes them to glory in tribulations. Yes, that causes them to run with patience the race that is set before them. Beloved, the people who may have a daily conversion can be recognised by their life. They are a humble people, a meek people, because they are daily served out of the fullness of Christ. A people who need Him for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

Amen