

# Sin, Grace, Purgatory, & Indulgences

## Types of Sin

### - Original Sin

Roman Catholic View:

- Inherited from Adam; removed by baptism. (CCC 402, CCC 405)

Reformed response:

- All are born in sin, but it is through regeneration that we are born again.

### - Mortal Sin

- (CCC 1857–1859) In order for a sin to be mortal, three conditions must be met:
  - (1) The sin must have grave matter,
  - (2) one must have adequate knowledge that it is a grave offense, and
  - (3) one must commit the offense with deliberate consent.
- The soul falls from a state of grace, loses justification, and needs confession to be restored. If someone dies in a state of mortal sin they are damned to hell. (CCC 1861)

### - Venial Sin

- Lesser sins that wound but don't break relationship with God. (CCC 1863)

Reformed response:

- Every sin is deadly apart from Christ. The comfort of the gospel is that Christ's sacrifice covers both "small" and "great" sins fully.
- Believers cannot lose justification because it is grounded in Christ's finished work. While sin can damage fellowship with God, it does not undo adoption or justification.
- Believers cannot undo or lose their justification anymore than they can obtain or gain it.
- Hebrews 10:14, Romans 8:1, 2 Corinthians 5:21.

## Types of Grace

### - Sanctifying/Habitual Grace

- A habitual gift of God that perfects the soul itself to live with God and act by His love. It makes us sharers in the divine life, received initially in baptism, lost through mortal sin, and restored through the sacrament of penance.

### - Actual Grace

- Temporary help from God that enlightens the mind and strengthens the will to do good and avoid evil

### - Sacramental Grace

- The specific grace proper to each sacrament, given to help the faithful receive the fruits of that sacrament.

### - Special Graces (Charisms)

- Particular gifts of the Holy Spirit granted for the building up of the Church and the service of charity. These can be ordinary (teaching, service) or extraordinary (miracles, tongues). (CCC 799-801, CCC 2003)

Reformed response:

- There are different means of grace (Word, Spirit & Church,) but not necessarily unique kinds of grace.
- The state of grace is unmerited favor, not a "spiritual substance" you can gain or lose.
- WITHIN the state of grace, you can press into God's grace and blessings more or less, as your walk with Jesus will fluctuate, and that can have different results.

## Purgatory

Roman Catholic View:

- A final process of purification for those who die in grace but aren't fully cleansed of sin.
- Souls undergo temporal punishment to be purified before entering heaven.
- CCC 1030-1032, 2 Maccabees 12:39–46.

Reformed Response:

- Christ's sacrifice is fully sufficient, paying the eternal and temporal consequences of sin.
- There is no intermediate state of temporal punishment for the believer after death.
- 2 Corinthians 5:8, Romans 8:1, Hebrews 10:14.

## Indulgences

Roman Catholic View:

- A remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins already forgiven.
- Obtained through certain prayers, good works, or pilgrimages, applied by the Church's treasury of merit.
- An indulgence is completed by a believer on earth, applied by the church, and can be applied to either that believer themselves, to another believer, or to a soul in purgatory.
- Put simply: the purpose of an indulgence is to take away purgatory time.
- CCC 1471-1473.

Reformed Response:

- Christ's sacrifice is fully sufficient — no further remission needed. There is no punishment that we need to pay for 1) after death in purgatory, or 2) before death in indulgences.
- Indulgences undermine assurance and historically led to abuse and corruption

## Assurance and the (un)Finished Work of Christ

Roman Theology creates a culture that discourages assurance: salvation is always at risk.

The bottom line is: there is still punishment for your sins that YOU have to pay for, through purgatory and/or indulgences.

But the gospel recovered in the Reformation proclaims the finished work of Christ. "It is finished" (John 19:30)

In Christ, there is no leftover punishment: no purgatory, no treasury of merits to draw from — because His perfect righteousness is counted to us by faith alone, and the fullness of His grace and goodness is available and given to us as gifts.

This means believers can have assurance in salvation. 1 John 5:13 — "That you may know you have eternal life." Salvation is entirely of grace, fully secured by Christ, and freely given to those who believe.