

# Unbelief - A Human Responsibility!

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Good morning saint! How is everyone doing today? Let's pray before we start!

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Last week John led us through Article 5 on the Mandate or better yet Command to proclaim the Gospel to All. We confessed - *Moreover, it is the promise of the gospel that whoever believes in Christ crucified shall not perish but have eternal life. This promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be announced and declared without differentiation or discrimination to all nations and people, to whom God in his good pleasure sends the gospel.* And if you have been with us through this study of the Canon of Dorts you might have noticed that there is an intentional repetition in article 5 and our article today article 6 to what we confessed in the first main in article 3-5. As a way of reminder we confessed the following - starting with Article 3;

**Article 3: The Preaching of the Gospel :** *In order that people may be brought to faith, God mercifully sends messengers of this very joyful message to the people and at the time he wills. By this ministry people are called to repentance and faith in Christ crucified. For "how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without someone preaching? And how shall they preach unless they have been sent?" (Rom.10:14-15).*

**Article 4: A Twofold Response to the Gospel :** *God's wrath remains on those who do not believe this gospel. But those who do accept it and embrace Jesus the Savior with a true and living faith are delivered through him from God's wrath and from destruction, and receive the gift of eternal life.*

**Article 5: The Sources of Unbelief and of Faith**

*The cause or blame for this unbelief, as well as for all other sins, is not at all in God, but in humanity. Faith in Jesus Christ, however, and salvation through him is a free gift of God. As Scripture says, "It is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this not from yourselves; it is a gift of*

*God” (Eph. 2:8). Likewise: “It has been freely given to you to believe in Christ” (Phil. 1:29).*

All this to say that our time in article 6 today will be a re-emphasis of what we have already confessed, nothing new. So, article 6

***Article 6: Unbelief, a Human Responsibility*** : *However, that many who have been called through the gospel do not repent or believe in Christ but perish in unbelief is not because the sacrifice of Christ offered on the cross is deficient or insufficient, but because they themselves are at fault.*

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The article is addressing - **WHY SOME DO NOT BELIEVE!** And just like anything else in this world, when things go wrong, who do you normally turn to? Yourself? Never right? It’s always ..... The other person, thing... and son on. And if that doesn’t explain it, then it’s ultimately God! It is like a deep-down written code that we all have, and guess what, we actually inherited from our first parents... God creates man and woman and gives them one simple command - *‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’* that it! They can enjoy EVERYTHING and ANYTHING else. Then what happens - **Gen 3:6** *So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.* They call God into question and side with the theology of glory, right! And then when it dawns on them what they have done, they are ashamed and scared. And then here is my point - when confronted by God what happens - *He said, “Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”* blame-shifting, right? So as you can imagine, when the question of **WHY SOME DO NOT BELIEVE!** Come up, guess who is often blamed? God!

Questions arise such as - ***did Christ die for all men or not?*** To be sure, we have to reckon with two options in the table - is the reason for unbelief:

1. Christ's fault (God.) or
2. The sinners' fault?

And I know in the culture we live in today due to extreme polarization, people are often prone to choose a middle ground, and I get that, but when it comes to this question, there isn't a middle ground. But that does not mean people have not tried to seek a middle ground, for instance, faced with this question, the Arminians - whom our confession is historically being addressed towards - jump into a middle ground situation where they suggested two possible explanations:

1. Sinners don't want Christ, or,
2. Christ didn't die for all people.

Coming from a humanistic perspective, they are afraid to lay the whole responsibility on the human. And as you can imagine, they sought to portray the Reformed as teaching a cruel doctrine: ***some may want to be saved but cannot be because Christ did not die for them.*** So it's Christ's fault that these poor people end up in hell. Note the intentional misrepresentation and caricature of what the Reformed believed and taught. Therefore in response to this accusation, we have article 6 which clearly asserts that - ... *many who have been called through the gospel do not repent or believe in Christ but perish in unbelief is **not** because the sacrifice of Christ offered on the cross is deficient or insufficient, but because they themselves are at fault.* Simply put, unbelief has nothing to do with the perfect sacrifice of Christ. We just confessed those very words in article 3 - *This death of God's Son is the only and entirely complete sacrifice and satisfaction for sins; it is of infinite value and worth, more than sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole world.* Let's be clear that the problem is NOT THE FOUNTAIN!

Come Thou fount of every blessing  
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace  
Streams of mercy never ceasing

So let's get one clear if a sinner does not believe, and so perishes in unbelief, **one can never blame Christ's sacrifice as if Christ's death were in**

**some way not adequate to pay for the sins of any or all people.** So out of the two reasons for unbelief: ~~Christ's fault (God)~~ or The sinners' fault? One is down! So what are we left with? **Sinners perish in unbelief "through their own fault"**. And just to be clear as we have confessed before, the preaching of the gospel always has a twofold response: **faith or unbelief**. This is nothing new or unique, it is threaded in the very metanarrative of Scripture: **John 3:16**, Our master and Lord brings the Gospel to His home in Nazareth what happens? Rejected and we read in **Mark 6:6** "*And he marveled because of their unbelief.*" I mean on the very cross dying for our sins, what do we shout - *Crucify Him! Crucify Him!* Are you then going to argue that if His blood was more sufficient than such ones would perhaps change our tone of voice from 'crucify him' to 'glorify him!' Friends, Yes, we should be grieved that many as our confession lays out respond in unbelief BUT hear me **it should not surprise us.**

Now, let me come back to an important distinctive we uphold in this church. We actually spent most of our time in the Wednesday bible study talking about this. The SIN OF UNBELIEF more specifically **Gospel Unbelief** among believers. Yes, you had me right! This is not a sin often talked about, nor even acknowledged in the church today, why? Because we assume it is only preserved for the unbelievers, right! Do you struggle with Gospel Unbelief, perhaps Gospel forgetfulness believer? In **Hebrews 3:7-11** the 'unknown author' (who I know is Paul) quotes the following words from **Psalm 95** "*Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tested Me, proved Me, and saw my works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, "They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known my ways." So I swore in my wrath, "They shall not enter my rest."* Remember, Hebrews is written to who - believers. The unknown author (who is clearly Paul) then continues in the verses **12 & 13**, "*Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*" And this is where I wish to end our study this morning, friends we have been called **TODAY**, you see that in the text, Today, to do what - diligently watch and fight against the sin of unbelief,

the sin of Gospel unbelief that easily creeps in without notice. Friends today as the preaching of God's word comes forth, we are responsible to see our sin exposed by the law, our need brought forth, and then seeing the Gospel meet that need, not for my neighbor but for me! But even better news we have believers, that even in the midst of our failures and Gospel unbelief, He still serves you what you need. I mean, how do you respond to that! Is God pleased with you? Is His sacrifice enough? YES. **He is more willing to save us than willing to go to him! Listen, Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.**" Stop and consider Jesus, not yourself.

**Turn your eyes upon Jesus  
Look full in His wonderful face  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim  
In the light of His glory and grace**

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