

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Romans 3:9-20 & 1 Cor. 13:1-8

SINGING: 41:1-5 – 123:1-3 – 140:1-4 – 232:1-3

Opening observations

- Main purpose of diagnosis is to lead to healing: *same with preaching the law of God*

- Reason many ignore God's diagnosis: *unbelief that is about me!*

- Romans 3 contains sharpest diagnosis of all fallen men

GOD'S DIAGNOSIS OF NATURAL MAN (1)

- I. We miss our purpose II. We are deplorably self-centered
III. We are completely unable to change this condition

I. WE MISS OUR PURPOSE FOR WHICH GOD MADE US

- A. Our purpose of existence is *to creatures to reflect God*
1. That's why the Catechism begins with *holding up God's mirror*

 2. Our chief purpose is summed up in one word: *love*
“ a. consider 1 Cor. 13:4-7 & Matthew 5:43-48

b. apply this standard to *all who are your neighbors*

c. what God speaks about love *He speaks about doing* rather than feeling
- B. This brief review indicates *how we miss our supreme purpose*
1. 'Missing the purpose' is one Hebrew word for 'sin'

II. WE ARE DEPLORABLY SELF-CENTERED - EXPERT SELF-LOVERS

- A. God calls us to 'dig deeper' to expose the under layers of the heart
1. His will is to *love God & love our neighbor as yourself*

 2. According to Mark 12:28-34, love is more important than the observance of all the details to the ceremonial laws!
 - a. compare with 1 Cor. 13:1-3
- B. We are to love with every fiber of our being
1. Reflect upon this inner reality of *how* we love God and neighbor
 - a. though the *what* isn't unimportant, the *how* is most
 - attitude – motive – spirit of all actions, reaction and inaction

- C. So let's submit ourselves to a 'cross-examination' with God's law
1. Remember the purpose: *diagnosis to alert us to our condition so we learn to pay heed and value God's given Physician of souls*
 2. Cross-examination about the *second table of the law*
 - a. How much do you love yourself?
 - b. Do you love all others as you love yourself?
 - c. What evidences are there to support your claim that you love them all as yourself?
 - d. How consistent to you apply every demand upon others to yourself?
 - e. Is your love to others anywhere near to the love Jesus as Son of man showed to others?
 3. Cross-examination about the *first table of the law*
 - a. Do you love God above all?
 - b. Do you love God with 'all of your all? '
 - c. When you pray, is God's honor higher than our needs?
 - d. In all we do, are we more concerned about what God thinks or what man thinks?
 - e. Is it within us as it was in Jesus all the time, "I delight to do Thy will, O Lord?"

Reflection: Lens of God's Law *brings into sharp focus our sins* in order to make us focus all the more on Christ Jesus, the Lord and Savior.

Thoughts to Reflect

The surest evidence of our love to Christ is obedience to His laws. Love is the root; obedience is the fruit. (M. Henry)

True love is service rather than sentiment of feeling. (J Stott)

Love is the leading affection of the saved soul. (M. Henry)

Love to God and neighbor should be the silver thread that runs throughout all your conduct. (J. C. Ryle)