

## Theologian of the Cross

### Part 3a: Our Works, and Mortal and Venial Sins

Summary: The cross condemns what the world calls good. The world and theology of glory condemns what God calls good.

#### God's Nature

We noted last session that God is \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, while noting he chose to live a dependent and changing life as a human for our sake. This is the Son of God in the flesh, Jesus.

Another characteristic of God is his **holiness**. To be holy is to be “set apart” from the others.

- Isaiah 6:3- “\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, is the Lord of hosts...”
- Romans 3:19- “Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be \_\_\_\_\_ and all the world may become accountable to God...”
- Matthew 5:48- “Therefore you are to be \_\_\_\_\_, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

#### Two Types of People

	Unbelievers (World)	Believers (Church)
Eph. 2	“....dead in your trespasses and sins...” following Satan (vv. 1-2)	“...because of His great love with which He loved us...made us alive together with Christ...” (vv.4-5)
John 3	“That which is born of the flesh is flesh...” (v. 6)	“...and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (v. 6)

The consequence of works from unbelief: Isaiah 64:6; Jeremiah 2:13

## Mortal and Venial Sins

**Mortal Sin:** “Sins that expel the Holy Spirit and bring spiritual death.”<sup>1</sup> “Mortal” is from Latin for “death.”

**Venial Sin:** “Sins that Christians commit without losing the Holy Spirit. They are sins of weakness or rashness and are sometimes called the ‘daily sins’ of Christians.”<sup>2</sup> From Latin for “forgiveness.”

**Is there biblical evidence?** See 1 John 5:16-17 and Matthew 12:31-32.

From *Luther’s Small Catechism and Explanation* (Ambassador Publications):

Question #200. “What is the work of the Holy Spirit?”

“To call, enlighten, sanctify, and preserve.”

	<b>Mortal Sin</b>	<b>Venial Sin</b>
Who?	Only can be committed by unbeliever	Only can be committed by believer
Who?	Committed by comfortable sinners and so-called “righteous”	Committed by uncomfortable sinners
Apparent good works	All of an unbeliever’s “good” works are mortal sins. What is “good” in various degrees to the world is actually wholly evil to God.	Luther: “The works of the righteous would be mortal sins if they would not be feared as mortal sins by the righteous themselves out of pious fear of God.” (see endnote 3) See Proverbs 1:7, Luke 17:7-10, Matthew 6:1-6

All sins would be mortal if it were not for Jesus Christ.  
 “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

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<sup>1</sup> C. F. W. Walther, *Law & Gospel: How to Read and Apply the Bible* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2010), 363.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 364.

<sup>3</sup> Gerhard O. Forde, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 38.