



Catechism

The Central Message of the Bible

Key idea:

What is the central message of the Bible? The central message of the Bible is that God is bringing glory to Himself through the Person and work of Jesus Christ as He creates and redeems a people in whom He lives by His Spirit so that they will glorify and enjoy Him forever.

Key text:

John 17

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: “Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. ²For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. ³Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ⁴I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. ⁵And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

⁶“I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. ⁷Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. ⁸For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. ⁹I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours.

¹⁰All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them.

¹¹I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name — the name you gave me — so that they may be one as we are one. ¹²While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

¹³“I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. ¹⁴I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

²⁰ “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³ I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

²⁴ “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. ²⁵ “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

Key points:

1. Jesus’ primary concern in His coming was to bring glory to His Father, and the glory of God is central to all creation and the message of Scripture.
2. God primarily brings glory to Himself through the Person and work of Jesus Christ.
3. The central Person and focus of all Scripture is Jesus Christ. This means that every promise, every command, every character, every passage of Scripture needs to be read through the lens of Jesus Christ.
4. A core purpose in the work of Christ is creating and redeeming the people of God. The result of His work is one, united people of God across the ages in whom the Spirit dwells so that they will glorify and enjoy God forever.

Questions for discussion/application:

1. Note: this is BRCC Catechism Question 3. The catechism has many other verses, questions, and resources for further study related to this question.
2. What part of Sunday’s text and teaching stood out most to me? Why?
3. How does this question (and teaching) build on the previous two questions in the catechism? Why is this question important to answer correctly to properly understand the first two questions?
4. Why is this answer given in a Trinitarian structure? Is it possible to correctly understand and explain the Scripture and the Christian faith and message apart from the Trinity? Why or why not?

5. Jesus indicated all of the Scripture is focused on Him. Can I think of places in the New Testament where the writers see Christ in the Old Testament? What does this teach me about how to read the Scripture?
6. Have I ever read Scripture in ways that were not Christ-centered? Can I think of teachings, especially on the Old Testament, that did not focus on Christ? What is the effect of doing this?
7. When you consider Jesus' prayer in John 17, how does He view the Church? How much does He love the Church? Do I view the Church as Jesus does? Do I love the Church as He does?
8. According to the answer to this question, is it possible for me to fully glorify and enjoy God apart from God's People, the Church? What part should the Church play in my desire and attempts to glorify and enjoy God?
9. Can I glorify and enjoy God apart from the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit? What is the effect of not consciously relying on the work of the Spirit as I attempt to glorify and enjoy God?
10. Where do I fit into the central message of the Bible? Is the Bible focused on me and my needs, or God and His glory? How do I fit into God's plan to redeem a people to glorify and enjoy Him forever?
11. Whom can I pray for, share what I have learned, and invite to church this week?

Preview of next week: Guilt, Grace, and Gratitude: A Biblically Shaped Life (Ephesians 2:1-10)