



Guilt, Grace, and Gratitude: A Biblically Shaped Life

Key idea:

What must I know to be part of God's people? To be part of God's people I must know how great my sin is, how God has delivered me from my sin and misery through Christ, and how I can show my gratitude to God for delivering me and grow in my Christian life.

Key text:

Ephesians 2:1–10

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. ⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Key points:

1. The overarching structure of the Gospel and our response, and therefore of the catechism, is guilt, grace, and gratitude.
2. Before we can respond to the Gospel, we must understand that we are objectively guilty before God, dead in our sin, and helpless to save ourselves.
3. Once we understand our hopeless situation, we must understand and receive God's marvelous grace offered to us in Christ.
4. Salvation is by grace alone, is received by faith alone, and is all based on the work of Christ alone!

5. We respond to God's gift of salvation with gratitude, growing in our Christian life.

Questions for discussion/application:

1. Note: this is BRCC Catechism Question 4. 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 three questions in the catechism? Why is this question important to answer correctly to properly understand the first three questions? How does it prepare us for the rest of the catechism?
4. What does the word 'guilt' mean when referring to my sin before God? Why is it necessary for me to understand my guilt before God as the first step to becoming His child and part of His people?
5. How hopeless was my situation apart from Christ? What terms does the Scripture use to indicate my state before I became a Christian? What do these indicate about my ability to save myself or even participate in my salvation?
6. What does the word 'grace' mean? Given the hopelessness of my situation (question 5), why is grace the only hope I have of salvation?
7. What does it mean that I am saved by 'grace alone'? What does it mean that I am saved by Christ's work alone? What does it mean that I receive His righteousness by faith alone?
8. Why is it important that the result of the Gospel of God's grace is that no one may boast before God? How does this relate to question 1 of the catechism?
9. Why is gratitude the natural result when I consider my guilt and God's grace to me?
10. What does gratitude produce in my life? Is it just a feeling, or does it produce concrete actions? Is it possible for someone to truly be born again by God's grace and not have any change in outward actions? Why or why not? Can I see the fruits of gratitude in my own life since I became a Christian?
11. Whom can I pray for, share what I have learned, and invite to church this week?

Preview of next week: Identity (1 Peter 2:9-10)