



Catechism: Foundations of the Faith

Can I Keep God's Law?

Key idea:

Can you live up to all of this perfectly? No. I have a natural tendency in thought, word, and deed to not love God and my neighbor as He has commanded.

Key text:

Romans 3:10–24

As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one; ¹¹ there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. ¹² All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.” ¹³ “Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit.” “The poison of vipers is on their lips.” ¹⁴ “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.” ¹⁵ “Their feet are swift to shed blood; ¹⁶ ruin and misery mark their ways, ¹⁷ and the way of peace they do not know.” ¹⁸ “There is no fear of God before their eyes.” ¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. ²⁰ Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. ²¹ But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Key points:

1. All human beings are sinful in their very nature, so our problem is not just external sinful actions but a sinful nature.
2. Our sinful nature produces sinful thoughts, words, and actions.
3. Our sinful nature prevents us from loving God and our neighbor as we are commanded, and produces sin in every area of our lives.

4. Salvation includes the washing away of the stain and penalty of our sinful actions, the giving of Christ's perfect righteousness to us, and regeneration so that the power of our sin nature is broken and we are given a new nature that desires to follow God. Thus, biblical salvation includes justification and sanctification.

Questions for discussion/application:

1. Note: this is BRCC Catechism Question 11. 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. According to Paul's words in Romans 3:10-18, how deep a problem is sin? Is this true for only some people, or does Paul say it is true for all humans?
4. Are people born with a natural tendency to love God and others, or with a selfish desire to love themselves more than anyone else? Why is this?
5. Do I sin because I am a sinner by nature, or am I a sinner because I do sinful things? Which is the root and which is the fruit? Does it really matter?
6. How does our culture think of our basic human nature? How do they react if confronted with the idea that our deepest desires may actually be our problem rather than our identity, and that they will have to be resisted?
7. Why is it important for me to love God in thought, word, and deed? Is it possible to act like I am loving God with my actions but have thoughts and a heart far from Him? (See Matthew 15:8). Is it possible for me to think nice things about people but not really love them in action?
8. Since my sin problem includes a sinful nature and also sinful thoughts, words, and deeds that flow from that sinful nature, what type of salvation is needed? Is it enough to merely address external sins?
9. How does salvation as described in Scripture, including justification and sanctification, both adoption and regeneration, answer the depth of my sin problem?
10. Whom can I pray for, share what I have learned, and invite to church this week?

Preview of next week: The Persecuted Church (Jon Hicks will be sharing)