

New City Catechism

Question 35: Since we are redeemed by grace alone, through faith alone, where does this faith come from?

Answer: From the Holy Spirit.

Titus 3:4-6

Begin this session by doing some review: “We have been learning a lot about faith over the past few weeks in our catechism. Look at some of the questions leading up to this one to see what we have learned so far about faith.” (Sum up after each answer what it teaches us about faith).

Q 27: Are all people, just as they were lost through Adam, saved through Christ?

A: No, only those who are elected by God and united to Christ by faith. (Faith unites us to Christ and only those united to him by faith are saved).

Q 29: How can we be saved?

A: Only by faith in Jesus Christ and in his substitutionary atoning death on the cross. (Faith in Christ and his death is the only thing that saves us).

Q 30: What is faith in Jesus Christ?

A: Receiving and resting on him alone for salvation as he is offered to us in the gospel. (Tells us what faith means).

Q 31: What do we believe by true faith?

A: We believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. (Tells us what faith includes).

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Now let's look at our question and answer for this week (see Q&A 35 above).

- How would you explain what this question tells us about faith? (Tells us where we get faith).

Most of you have probably watched the movie *The Polar Express* with your kids. If you have, describe the scene toward the end of the movie where the boy was holding the bell from Santa's sleigh in his hand and shaking it with his eyes closed while repeating, "I believe... I believe..."

- Ask your kids, "What was the boy trying to do?" (*Make himself believe in Santa*).
- Did it work? (*Apparently*).
- Have you ever tried to believe something that you really don't?
- Why is it hard to believe in God, Jesus, or the good news of salvation in Christ? (We cannot "see" these things in the same way that we see other things that we believe).

Remember the story of the disciple Thomas who said he would not believe Jesus rose from the dead unless he put his finger in the wounds in his hands and side. Jesus appeared to him and told him to do exactly that! **Read John 20:27-29**

- What does Jesus call you if you have believed him even though you have not seen him? ("*blessed*"). He calls you that because you have been blessed with a gift.

Read Ephesians 2:8-9

- What does the apostle Paul call both "grace" and "faith"? (a gift of God).

You don't get faith by trying harder to believe like the boy in *The Polar Express*. You get faith as a gift from the Holy Spirit. Therefore, if you find yourself struggling to believe Jesus, and are afraid that maybe you *don't* really believe, what do you think you should do? (Ask God the Holy Spirit to give you faith). If you do believe spend some time praying and thank God for the gift of faith he has given you!

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