

# A Plea to Roman Catholic God-Seekers on Reformation Sunday

October 30, 2022

John 8: 31-32, Various

Spiritual freedom is in truth and salvation in Christ alone.

There are many doctrines that Catholics and Reformed Believers have in Common: Trinity, attributes of God, God is creator of all, virgin birth, deity of Christ, the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming, nature of the Holy Spirit, morals, ethics, value of life, man made in the image of God, value of family, children, and marriage.

### 3 Truths to Consider Concerning the Catholic Church:

- 1) **History of the Catholic Church:** Ignatius of Antioch in 110 AD coined the term “catholic” as the meaning “universal” for all those who made up the church of Christ. Then from there the term came to represent an institution through which salvation came. Over 100s of years, elders and deacons were affirmed as the biblical view of church leadership as shown in Acts 14 and Tit. 1:7. Bishops and elders started to have a slightly different meaning, Churches were organizing and having leaders provide more centralized control. It started as administrative and then began to be spiritual control. Bishops began to be elevated and people were told to follow the bishops and was followed by an unbiblical connection between the church and salvation. From there, good works began to be needed to overcome the sins that we commit in our lives and eventually salvation couldn't be determined until the end of life. References to Peter in Matt. 16:18 were taken out of context.
- 2) **Truth of the Gospel:** 3 Errors of the Catholic Church in their gospel:
  1. **Justification:** Eph. 2:8-9 is the truth and a free gift of God. In the Catholic Church justification happens as an infant and then as an adult. It is a process over a lifetime after baptism. James 2:24 is used as the basis of salvation which requires good works but it is taken out of context. Why? A) true faith manifests after salvation, Gal. 2:16 states clearly that we are **not** justified by the works of the law. B) Justification by means of baptism ignores that Jesus never baptized people, the thief on the cross was saved without baptism, and Cornelius was baptized after receiving the Holy Spirit. Paul in 1 Cor. 1:17 was sent not to baptize but to preach the gospel. C) Salvation never seen as a team effort with God and man, Rom. 8:33, 3:22, and 2 Cor. 5:21. D) Paul calls the addition of works a different gospel with a non-existent Jesus, Gal. 1:6-10, 2 Cor. 11:4. E) Justification is not a process it is an instantaneous event, see Luke 18:14, John 5:24. F) Justification is not something that happens to the soul, it is a positional change in the courts of heaven. It is being made right with God as if you've never sinned. We are declared righteous, Eph. 1:7, Rom. 5:1, 8:1, and 1 Jn. 5:13.
  2. **Sanctification:** Catholic Church believes in 2 ways for increasing grace in your life: sacraments and merits. Doing good works keeps your salvation. Deeds with emotion are even more helpful. Bible says in Eph. 2:4-7 that salvation is a decision on God's part to save. Rom. 11:6 is clear that salvation is by grace alone
  3. **Mass & Eucharist:** Lord's table seen as vital to keep salvation. Seen as a reenactment of the crucifixion and a sacrament that portrays the wine and bread as the actual body and blood of Jesus. Why incorrect? A) Taking of the Lord's table is a remembrance, Luke 22:14-20, 1 Cor. 11:17-34. B) Jesus didn't mix his blood in the wine. C) We are commanded not to worship any images of God, Ex. 20:4. D) He died once for all time, He doesn't die over and over during the taking of the Lord's table by each Christian, Heb. 9:25-26.

## A Plea to Roman Catholic God-Seekers on Reformation Sunday

October 30, 2022

John 8: 31-32, Various

3) **Truth Concerning the Church:** 5 Troubling Aspects of the Catholic Church:

A) General nature of Church acting as prophet, priest, and king. The church determines what is truth. The priests act as a mediator to God. Obedience to the church is required for salvation and acceptance. B) Scripture & Tradition: Traditions passed down and Scripture make up truth. Scripture not revered as sufficient and infallible; Jesus confronted traditions in Matt. 15:1-9. C) Papacy: Peter seen as 1<sup>st</sup> pope. Scripture never places Peter, nor does Peter himself or Paul in his writings, as the head of the church. Christ is the head. The “keys” of the kingdom was not the authority over the whole church given to Peter – else all the apostles would have been included in the giving of the keys. In Jn. 21, Jesus is commissioning Peter to feed Jesus’ sheep and Peter refers to himself as a fellow shepherd, 1 Pet. 5:1, not as the 1<sup>st</sup> head of the church or pope. Rome never referred to as the head location of the church. D) Infallibility of the Pope: this started more recently in 1870 but this belief has no Scriptural basis. E) Priesthood: a man standing before God on behalf of man only applies to Jesus who is our mediator and not another man. Celibacy of the priesthood is also contrary to Scripture as family and marriage are qualities that help confirm a man as a qualified elder and overseer, 1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1. Celibacy has had disastrous effects on the Catholic Church.

### Further Discussion and Application

Consider James 2:24 and the context of the passage. Why is justification by faith alone in Christ alone the basis for salvation and righteousness in Christ? Why are works not capable of bringing salvation? What is the purpose of sacrifices under the Old Covenant? What is the result of the sacrifice of Christ? See Heb. 9:23-28, Heb. 10:11-18, Rom. 3:21-26, Rom. 5:18.

Why is the local church the proper place for elders who have been qualified and approved by faithful men who are known by the congregation and have been tested within their local body? Why would leadership thousands of miles away be problematic to provide local control and oversight as commanded in Scripture by elders and overseers? See 1 Peter 5, Heb 13.7-8.

Looking through the errors of the Catholic Church and the doctrine they espouse, how has wandering away from the plain reading and understanding of Scripture over the centuries caused practices and traditions that are harmful to the most important cause of bringing glory to God and proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus to the lost? What commandments of men have derailed the Catholic Church?