

Roman Catholics Worship a Counterfeit Christ & Gospel While Denying "Christ Alone"

By Larry Wessels

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Christian Answers would like to announce a conference called "Former Catholics for Christ Conference" in Springfield, Illinois. The conference will cover "In Defense of Sola Scriptura (Scripture alone), Sola Fide (Faith alone), Sola Christo (Christ alone), and Sola Gratia (Grace alone). Four guest speakers: Robert M. Zins, Director of A Christian Witness to Roman Catholicism, author, conference speaker and apologist; Mike Gendron, Director of Proclaiming the Gospel, author, conference speaker, evangelist and apologist; Tim Kauffman, author, conference speaker and apologist; Cecil Andrews, Director of Take Heed Ministries from northern Ireland, conference speaker and apologist.

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May 2019

Scripture Alone, Faith Alone, Christ Alone, Grace Alone

Part 2

Mike Gendron

Director of Proclaiming the Gospel,

Author, Conference Speaker,

Evangelist and Apologist

Mike Gendron. What a joy it is to be with like-minded believers this weekend to open the word of God and to look at. The reason for the Reformation for over 1,200 years, the doctrines of grace were hidden from the people because the Roman Catholic religion hid them and they took the Bible from the people so the people had no way of knowing the truth from God's word, in fact, many people don't know this but the Bible was actually

placed on the list of forbidden books at the Council of Trent, and if you were a Roman Catholic in the 16th century, if your sins, if you wanted your sins forgiven you had to return the Bible to the Church before they would forgive your sins. And so that's why it was called the Dark Ages, the light of the Gospel was not given to the people.

Well, we're here this afternoon to talk about Christ alone and it's an important subject, as you can imagine. We've talked about the importance of the foundation of the Gospel, that being Scripture alone, and then we talked about grace alone in the last session, and now we're gonna talk about Christ alone. Many people don't realize the reason for the Five Solas. If you're a Roman Catholic in the 16th century and prior 1,200 years, you were told that you were saved by grace plus merit, faith plus works, Christ plus other mediators, Scripture plus tradition, and to the glory of God and Mary and the saints, and so the Reformers came on the scene and they said, "No, the Bible teaches that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, according to Scripture alone, all for the glory of God alone."

The reason this topic is important, Christ alone, is because as you engage Roman Catholics with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and you talk to evangelicals who are trying to reach them, oftentimes they will say, "Well, I know this Catholic who is saved already," and we'll ask the question, "Well, how do you know they're saved?" "Well, because they believe in Jesus. They love Jesus." My response is, "Which Jesus do they love? Which Jesus do they trust?" And you're going to see in the presentation now that they do indeed worship a counterfeit Christ. He is an impostor. He's not the Christ of the Bible, nor is he the Christ of the Gospel, and so it's important, then, as we witness to Roman Catholics, to recognize they belong to a different church, an apostate church; they submit to a different authority; they worship a different Jesus; they believe a different Gospel; they have a different view of sin; and they have a different view of Mary. Ultimately this leads to a different path to eternity. I have great compassion for Roman Catholics because they are where I was for most of my life, believing I belonged to the one true church and destined for heaven, albeit I detour through purgatory, but I believed that my religion would ultimately save me. So my compassion for Catholics that are in this religious system, they are indoctrinated and they do not know the truth and they're very resistant to the truth which is why we need the sovereign grace of God to penetrate their stubborn hearts.

Well, never before has there been such a need to preach Christ that is so gloriously revealed in Scripture. The person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ today is being compromised and distorted like never before. Whether it is a deliberate act or an act of ignorance, those who preach another Jesus need to be confronted and they need to be exposed. They are pawns of Satan who has created a variety of different Christs. You have the Christ of Roman Catholicism. You have the Jesus of Islam. You have the Jesus of Mormonism and the Jesus of the Jehovah's Witnesses. They are impostors, they are counterfeit Christs. The world believes in Jesus, the historical Jesus, but unless you believe Jesus as he is gloriously revealed in Scripture, you have no hope of eternal life.

So like the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 3:8, we must preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, a biblical proclamation of Christ is needed to correct the

faulty depictions of Christ. Lost people must come to the true Christ of the Bible. They must come God's way and that is with empty hands of faith. The only thing a sinner can bring to the cross of Christ is his sin. He must leave everything else behind. So like Paul, we proclaim Christ alone, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom so that we may present every man complete in Christ.

We look at the Lord Jesus Christ as the sovereign Lord. He has all authority to rule over his entire creation with power over sin, with power over death, sovereign power over diseases, demons and nature. He has judicial authority to condemn men to eternal death or justify them to eternal life. There will come a day when at the name of Jesus Christ, every knee will bow of those that are in heaven and those on the earth and those under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father, Philippians 2:10-11. So the uncreated, infinite and eternal nature of God was fully integrated with the finite created nature of man. Deity and humanity came together in perfect unity. Man's perfect God became God's perfect man to satisfy divine justice for his people. Deity and humanity came together in perfect unity so that Jesus Christ could become the kinsman Redeemer of mankind. Divine justice had to be satisfied by a sinless man and he had to be the eternal God in order to cancel the eternal sin debt. Finite man can never do that which is why hell is eternal; it took an eternal God to become man to cancel the sin debt.

So the Gospel is about Christ alone. In fact, if you look at 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, I often take Roman Catholics here. I show them there is only one name mentioned, the Lord Jesus Christ, he is the eternal God Incarnate, his virgin birth and his perfect life. There is no other name mentioned. Your name's not there. Mary's name is not there. Your pope's name is not there. There is only one name in the Gospel.

The Gospel is only about two events: the unique, historical, unrepeatable atoning death of Jesus Christ and his glorious resurrection from the dead. "Well, Mike, why do you have to define the death of Jesus Christ with those words, unique, historical, unrepeatable?" It's because the Roman Catholic religion believes that the Roman Catholic priests have the power to call the Lord Jesus Christ down from heaven to be represented on an altar to continue the work of redemption. They deny the words of our blood-stained Savior, "It is finished!" We are saved because of a historical event that happened 2,000 years ago.

Let's look at the Christ of the Gospel. He is the eternal Lord God and Savior. Those who come to Christ must receive him both as Lord and Savior. As Pastor Gary mentioned earlier, there are other apostate churches and denominations that dare to say that you can receive Jesus as Lord but not take him, I'm sorry, receive him as your Savior but not take him as your Lord. No, Christ cannot be divided. When the Philippian jailer asked Paul, "What must I do to be saved?" did Paul say, "Believe on the Savior Jesus Christ"? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." And Paul wrote in Romans 10, "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved."

He is the Lord God. He is also prophet, priest and king and he cannot be divided. Jesus is the last prophet who represents God to his people. As our prophet, he instructs us in the things of God and heals our blindness and ignorance. He is God's Son and God demands that we listen to him, Matthew 17:5. He is also our perfect high priest representing his people to God, and as the perfect high priest, he offers himself the perfect sacrifice to a perfect God who demands perfection and then he cried out in victory, "It is finished!"

The sacrifice of Jesus took place once, only once, but he still continues as our great high priest and makes continual intercession with the Father for us. We do not need a sacerdotal priesthood any longer. When the Lord Jesus Christ gave up his spirit, the veil separating the Holy of Holies from sinful man was torn open from top to bottom, showing that now through faith in the shed blood of Jesus we have direct access to God, we no longer need a priesthood offering sacrifices, but yet the Roman Catholic Church continues the priesthood, the sacerdotal priesthood. In a sense, it's an extension of Judaism. They deny the work of redemption is finished and the Roman Catholic priesthood is superfluous, it's unnecessary and it brings shame and not glory to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is the one mediator between God and man. Could Paul have made it any more clear? "There is one God and one man, one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." He is the only one qualified to come between two warring parties. That's the role of a mediator. Prior to us coming to Christ, our relationship with God was one of enmity and hostility but through the mediation of God's perfect man and man's perfect God, he has changed that relationship to one of peace and harmony. How dare the Roman Catholic religion put forth another mediator in the name of another Mary who dares to say that she is the mediatrix of all grace, denying again the words of Scripture. He is the only head of the church. He is the only one that died for his church. How dare the Roman Catholic pope claim to be the head of the church? He not only steals that title from the Lord Jesus, he also steals the title Holy Father from the one and only Holy Father. That phrase, "Holy Father," is only mentioned once in Scripture and that's when Jesus prayed his high priestly prayer in John 17. But the pope doesn't stop there, he also steals the title Vicar of Christ, a title, of course, given to the Holy Spirit.

Well, what is the message of the Gospel? It's an exclusive Gospel. It dares to say that all other faiths and all other religions are false and that's because it speaks of the Lord Jesus who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life and no one comes to the Father except through me." He is the way for those who are lost. He is the truth for those who are deceived. And he is the life for those who are dead in their sin. That's the offense of the Gospel. We live in a pluralistic society, how dare you say there's only one way to paradise? Well, that's because the Gospel is about one person.

The Gospel is also eternal. It was first pronounced in the garden right after Adam and Eve fell into sin. The Gospel was given to Abraham. The Gospel will go throughout the world and then the end will come. Everybody in heaven will be there because they believed the one and only Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Old Testament saints looked forward to the coming Messiah that would die on Calvary's cross, the New

Testament saints look back 2,000 years to the Lord Jesus who died on the cross, but it's one Gospel.

The Gospel is also according to Scripture alone as we heard Cecil present last night. The Bible doesn't point us to any other authority. It doesn't point us to any other book. If you want to know how to be saved, you read the Scriptures. Paul wrote to Timothy, "From infancy you have known the Scriptures which are able to do," what? "Make you wise unto salvation."

The Gospel has the power to save, Romans 1:16. The Gospel is the very power of God for the salvation of all who believe it, and as Rob Zins just presented, it is of grace alone. Nothing can be added to its divine power. In Romans 11:6, Paul said, "If it is of grace, it is not of works otherwise grace is not grace."

If you have your Bibles, turn to Galatians 1. Let's look at verse 6 through 9. This is how important it is to recognize divine grace is the only means by which God saves sinners. Paul writes in verse 6 of Galatians 1, "I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!" In verse 9, Paul repeats what he's already said, "As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!"

Let's look at three observations from these verses. Since there is only one Gospel, it must remain pure. Even the slightest deviation, distortion or perversion of it creates another Gospel. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the greatest news anyone could ever hear because it offers the greatest gift anyone could ever receive. The gift is made available by a sovereign act of God and through his grace and mercy. It is through Christ's all-sufficient sacrifice and completed work of redemption, no works or merits of man can be added to it.

The second observation. The Judaizers were promoting a distorted version of the true Gospel which condemns those who teach it. By adding the works of the law to the Gospel of grace, the Judaizers had nullified the only means by which God saves sinners. They had renounced the free gift of God's grace with a works righteousness salvation which cannot save anyone.

The third observation. Paul emphasized the utter important of maintaining the purity of the Gospel of grace by calling down a divine curse on anyone who would distort it. They are to be turned over to God for destruction. That means anyone and everyone who distorts the Gospel is accursed. It does not matter who you are, whether you're a pope, a priest, a cardinal, a bishop, or a pastor. It does not matter how many works you have done in the name of Christ or how diligently you have served or how sacrificially you have given or how fervently you have prayed, if you preach a false Gospel, you are accursed. You are condemned. You are to be turned over to God for destruction. This is why I have

such a compassion for Roman Catholics. We need to rescue them out from under a Church that is under divine condemnation. Every priest, every bishop and every pope that distorts the Gospel of Christ is accursed and Catholics need to be aware of that. The only other time the Apostle Paul mentioned this word "accursed, anathema," is if you do not love God. So Paul is elevating the love of God with the purity of the Gospel and that's how important it is to maintain the purity of the Gospel of Christ.

Let's look at his exclusivity. Peter said, "There is salvation in no one else for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." His sermon in Acts 4:12, Paul said, "For there is one God and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," and the Lord Jesus himself said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me." So John 14:6 is a positive statement followed by a negative statement. "No one comes to the Father except through me." He is the only way for those who are lost. There is no other way other than through Jesus Christ and yet the Roman Catholic religion dares to say that the Muslims are part of God's plan of salvation. Paragraph 841 of the Catechism in the Catholic Church dares to say that the people who deny the deity of Christ, who deny that Jesus went to the cross, they are part of God's plan of salvation but you and I who believe in the sufficiency and the exclusivity of Christ, we are accursed over 100 times by the Council of Trent. This is how wicked the Roman Catholic religion is, it not only condemns born-again Christians but it preaches a false gospel that sends people to hell, and I hope you agree that there is nothing more wicked in this world than to deceive people about life's most critical issue. The most critical issue for every human being is, "What must I do to be saved?" and Rome deceives people with a false and fatal gospel.

When you look at the exclusivity of Christ, Jesus said in Matthew 7, "The gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life and only a few find it," and it really concerns me because from a human perspective, putting aside a divine perspective for a moment, but from a human perspective, I believe the reason only a few find it is because there are very few people that are compassionate for those who are lost. Why isn't the church of Jesus Christ pointing people to the narrow way and showing them Christ alone is the gate they must enter? Many false teachers are pointing to the broad way. Matthew 7:13-15, Jesus said, "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few."

My uncle was a Roman Catholic priest and any time he came to Dallas, we opened the Bible at the kitchen table and we asked him to believe the word of God and put aside the traditions of his religion and I will never forget one night he threw up his hands, he had no answer for God's word and he said, "Mike, how can 1 billion Catholics be wrong?" And so I took him to Matthew 7 and I said, "Read the words of Jesus. This is why 1 billion Catholics are wrong."

Well, the pope is the most influential false prophet in the world today and he is shutting the narrow gate to those who want to enter with a false and fatal gospel. Jesus said, "You must strive to enter through the narrow door," he said that in Luke 13:24. Why did Jesus

say many will seek to enter but not be able? Well, the context is there are false teachers and they're going to be misleading people and deceiving people saying it's not the narrow gate, it's the wide gate, that is the only way to heaven. Satan has a fierce opposition to the Gospel. He's got many false teachers who are redirecting gullible souls to the broad gate which is cleverly marked "Heaven," but it leads to hell.

My last year at seminary, 30 some years ago now, I put together these two paths to eternity. It's available in our red Gospel tract, "Roman Catholicism: Scripture versus Tradition." This is an excellent graph to show Roman Catholics because I can tell you, for 30 years every time I've opened this up and showed it to Roman Catholics, they all agree that they are on the Roman Catholic path to eternity. They believe that they're born into this world destined for hell because of Adam's sin, but as Rob told you earlier, water baptism puts them on the road to heaven. When they commit venial sins, which are not deadly, they lose some of their right standing before God. A mortal sin causes them to be de-justified, they're now destined for hell again. They must do good works and confess their sins to a priest and earn indulgences in order to gain heaven again. Catholics go through this cycle hundreds of times, never knowing where they stand before a holy and righteous God. You see, there's a treasury there that's invisible in the Vatican but it's said to contain the inexhaustible merits of Jesus Christ co-mingled with the merits of Mary and all those who died with more than enough merit to get them to heaven. The pope has the ability to transfer these indulgences, these extra merits and good works, to those who are suffering in purgatory but he refuses to do so unless people pay for them. This is why the Catholic Church is the richest institution on the face of the earth, the buying and selling of God's grace through indulgences, and that was one of the sparks of the Reformation, as you know.

Well, at the end of a Catholic's life, if he's never heard the Gospel or if he's heard it and rejected it, he will stand before the Lord Jesus at the Great White Throne and hear the most terrifying words anyone can ever hear when Jesus says, "Depart from me, I never knew you," and they're cast into the eternal lake of fire. It's for this reason I have such compassion for Catholics. I traveled this road for 35 years. If God had not extended his grace and mercy and opened my eyes to see the glorious truth of the Gospel, I'd still be traveling that wide road to destruction. We need to point people to the biblical path. It is not water baptism, it is faith in Jesus Christ. At that very moment, the gavel in heaven comes down acquitting you of your sin, declaring you righteous, and then there's that great promise in Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ." We never have to fear eternal punishment. As children of God, though, we do fear his discipline and that's good, it brings us back into a right relationship with him, but at the end of a believer's life as he has been through the power of the Holy Spirit putting to death the evil deeds of the flesh and conforming his life to the life of Christ, he will stand before the Lord Jesus at the Bema Seat and there hear the words hopefully, "Well done, my good and faithful servant," and then we'll sing his praises throughout all eternity. Amen? Two different paths. We must rescue those who are on the wide road to destruction.

When you look at the sufficiency of Jesus Christ, we need to communicate this with Roman Catholics. Think for a minute, the reason Roman Catholics are doing everything they're doing is to gain eternal life. Until they know that Christ is sufficient, they will continue to do and do and do. We must show them that Christ has done everything necessary.

The Lord Jesus set us free by his truth as we see in John 8:31-32. We have been born-again by the seed of his word as we see in 1 Peter 1:23. We have been purified by his blood as we see in 1 John 1:7. We have been forgiven by his substitutionary atonement as we see in Isaiah 53. By the way, as a Roman Catholic for 35 years, I never heard that taught in the Catholic Church. Oh, they taught that Jesus died for the sins of the world but that's just history. When I found out Jesus died for me, that was salvation, the substitutionary atonement. He went to the cross to take on the sin burden and the wrath of God that I deserved so that I could escape judgment. I never heard that as a Catholic.

When you look at the sufficiency of Jesus, we are saved by his grace and mercy, Titus 3:5, he saved us not because of righteous things we have done but because of his mercy. We're reconciled to God through his death, 2 Corinthians 5:18, and we are eternally secure by his promises. "Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you." He promises eternal life, not conditional life which is all that Catholics have. So the only hope for sinners is Jesus Christ. He did for us what we could never do for ourselves. He lived a sinless life of perfect obedience, then offered himself, the eternal God-man, and canceled the eternal sin debt for those who repent and believe his Gospel. The perfect high priest offered himself the perfect sacrifice to a perfect God who demands perfection and cried out, "It is finished!"

The Apostle Paul warned us in 2 Corinthians 11:3, "If someone comes to you and preaches another Jesus or if you receive a different Spirit or a different Gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it," another translation may be, "You bear this beautifully." Rather than contending for the purity of the Gospel and the sufficiency of our Lord Jesus Christ, you allow another Christ to be proclaimed and whenever another Christ is proclaimed, that always produces another gospel. Think for a moment, if Christ is proclaimed in all of his sufficiency, you can offer salvation by his grace, but if Christ is not sufficient, then you need another gospel to instruct people what they must do that Christ had not accomplished. Another Jesus always leads to another gospel.

Let's look at Rome's distortion of the Gospel. It is a heavy burden for Roman Catholics to get to heaven. They must be baptized. The numbers in parenthesis are paragraph numbers of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. This is not Mike's opinion. This is the official teaching of the Roman Catholic religion. After baptism, they must have faith but if you ask a Catholic where his faith is, the object of his faith is his religion, the priesthood that dispenses saving grace to them. They must also receive the sacraments in order to be saved. Paragraph 1129, they must participate in the sacrifice of the Mass in order to have the sins they committed in the previous week offered up on the altar with the eucharist of Christ being another sin offering. They must also believe that purgatory will purify their sins; that indulgences will remit temporal punishment for their sin. They must do good

works in order to be justified. Paragraph 2016, they must also keep the law. They must not have read Galatians 3 in the Catholic Church, anyone who attempts to get to heaven by obeying the law places themselves under a curse because it's impossible to get to heaven by obeying the law. The law must become a tutor for those who are lost, pointing them to the only one who obeyed the law perfectly.

Catholics must do all of these things in order to be saved. Can you see why 1 John 5:13 would be a great verse to open the Bible and show Roman Catholics? "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know right here and now that you have in your possession eternal everlasting life." Eternal life, not conditional life. The promise of our Lord.

Well, you can see that the Roman Catholic gospel is a total perversion of the Gospel of grace and what happens to those who teach this false gospel? They're under a divine curse. When you look at the false gospel of Rome, we can see that it rejects the supremacy of God's word, it rejects the sufficiency of God's Son, it rejects the sovereignty of God's grace through their sacramental water baptism. The Catholic Church rejects the severity of God's punishment daring to say that some sins only cause temporal punishment. The Roman Catholic religion also rejects the security of God's children. There is no assurance of eternal life with the false gospel of the Catholic Church.

When you look at this, you have to wonder why is it that we have evangelical leaders today calling for unity with the Roman Catholic religion, signing unity accords daring to say that we have faith in the same gospel. This is why the average evangelical and Protestant is confused today. This is why you don't see many people reaching out to Catholics with the Gospel because they don't know if the Catholic Church represents a huge mission field or if they believe these evangelical leaders, it's merely another Christian denomination. We must instruct evangelicals of the need to reach Roman Catholics. When we started this ministry 30 years ago, our primary purpose was to equip the saints to reach out with the Gospel of Christ to Catholics but today we're seeing that an equally important priority needs to be instructing evangelicals that Catholics need to hear the Gospel. There is so much confusion.

Well, when the Lord cried out, "It is finished!" it speaks volumes. Righteousness was perfected, divine justice was satisfied, blood was shed, redemption was paid, sins were forgiven, reconciliation was achieved, death was conquered and salvation was secured. The Gospel is a very simple Gospel but when you look at the depths of it, you can see everything Christ had to do in order to save sinners. Theologians spend a lifetime going to the depths of the Gospel but yet a seven-year-old can hear it, repent and believe it and be saved.

Let's look at each one of these. Righteousness was perfected. From the cradle to the cross, Jesus lived his life in perfect obedience, perfect obedience to the law. He now offers his righteousness as a gift to those who trust him, Romans 5:17. "By one offering he has made perfect forever those who are being sanctified," Hebrews 10:14. How long is forever? How perfect is perfection? Jesus Christ offers his perfect righteousness forever

to those who are being sanctified. In order to be sanctified, you have to be first justified. Roman Catholicism denies this, daring to say that you can be de-justified when you commit sins.

But how I love to take them to Romans 4:8, "Blessed is the man whose sin God does not take into account," and Paul echoes those words in 2 Corinthians 5:18, that God is reconciling the world to himself through Jesus Christ, not counting men's sins against them. Why doesn't God count our sins against us once we are born-again, once we are justified? Because they were all imputed to Christ, all of our past sins, all of our future sins. Do you know what the average Roman Catholic says when I share that good news with them? "Oh, so all you have to do is believe, Mike, and then you can keep on sinning?" I take them to Titus 2:11, the grace that brought us salvation teaches us to say no to ungodly practices, no to worldly passions and to live a self-controlled upright life. No, once I recognize that the sinless Son of God went to the cross to be immersed in the wrath of God so that I could go free, I want to live my life out of love and thanksgiving for the great sacrifice he made on my behalf.

Righteousness was perfected. Jesus is our righteousness as we read in 1 Corinthians 1:30, "As the perfect high priest, Jesus offered himself the perfect sacrifice to give us his perfect righteousness." Do you realize that biblical Christianity is set apart from all the religions of the world? Every religion in the world teaches a works righteousness salvation, in other words, you have to obtain your own righteousness through good works. Biblical Christianity says, no, Christ has done it all. Your only passport to heaven is his righteousness because what did the prophet Isaiah say? Our best deeds, our best righteous efforts are but filthy rags in the sight of a holy God.

Divine justice was satisfied. Oh, how I love to ask people the question as I engage them with the Gospel, "Why did Jesus have to die?" Do you know what they often say? "Because he loved us." Well, that was his motivation, why did he have to die? And these are both Protestants and Catholics that can't answer the question. He had to die because divine justice had to be satisfied because every sin that has ever been committed by everyone who has ever lived must be punished by a holy and righteous God. Divine justice must be satisfied and it's satisfied in only one of two places, either at Calvary's cross or by faith you can make Christ your substitute and he will take upon your sin and suffer the wrath that you deserve, or you could say, "No thanks, Jesus. I'll trust my religion." But one day you're gonna meet him at the Great White Throne and there divine justice will be satisfied when unbelievers are thrown into the eternal lake of fire and they are punished for the sins that they committed.

We must warn people. God, the righteous judge, cannot let the guilty go free and justice was satisfied when God provided a sinless substitute. Jesus bore the sins of his people and was crushed for their iniquities. All the righteous demands of the law were upheld so that believers could be acquitted. The substitutionary atonement, my favorite verse in the whole Bible is 2 Corinthians 5:21, there we read, "He who knew no sin became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in him." Does it get any better than that, the great exchange, my sin for his righteousness? The innocent Son of God stood in the

place of guilty sinners and bore the righteous wrath of God for the sins of his people so that the guilty could be forgiven and declared righteous.

Blood was shed. The blood of Jesus Christ purifies all sin, as we see in 1 John 1:7. Whenever I travel, if I have the time I will set up an appointment with a Catholic priest wherever we go and I remember calling the priest in Emporia, Kansas, and he was too busy to meet with me so after I equipped the church to reach out to Roman Catholics all Saturday morning, we went out to the Catholic Church Saturday afternoon as people were gathering for the sacrifice of the Mass and as we went into the church, we were gonna pass out Gospel tracts and engage Catholics. I saw the red light over the confessional and that told me the priest was in the confessional hearing confessions, so I looked to the elder of the church and my wife and I said, "Pray for me. I'm gonna go to confession." I went in there and there's no longer a screen separating you from the priest. He was sitting there waiting on me and I said, "I don't even know where to begin. It's been over 30 years since my last confession." He said, "Well, don't you worry, when you leave this confessional box, I will forgive you of all of your sins." Then he said, "Why has it been 30 years?" I said, "Well, I've been reading the Bible." He said, "Well, how has that kept you from the confessional box?" I said, "Well, what I've been reading in the Bible goes directly against everything I was taught as a Catholic." He said, "Give me an example." I said, "Well, in 1 John 1:7 it says the blood of Jesus purifies us from all sin, so why do we need purgatory?" "Give me another example." I said, "Well, in John 19:30, Jesus said, 'It is finished!' so why do you continue on an altar with Jesus finished on the cross?" He said, "I can see this is gonna take longer than I first thought. Why don't you call me on Monday and we can continue the conversation."

So I did. I flew back to Dallas and I called him and by then he knew that we were there at his church engaging Catholics and he said, "Why would you do that? Why waste your time with us? We're already Christians." I said, "No, I was a Catholic for 35 years and I was not a Christian. I did not know the Gospel of Christ and we have a great compassion for the Catholics in your church. We want them to know the truth." And so I started sharing the Gospel with him and he said, "Do you know what? I was born a Catholic and I'm gonna die a Catholic." I said, "No, you were born a sinner and you're gonna die a sinner unless you repent and believe the one and only Gospel of Christ." Well, then he hung up on me.

But do you know what? I was successful because what are we called to do as ambassadors for Christ? Deliver the message and leave the results to God. When you deliver the message with clarity and with completeness, you've done what God has asked you to do. Our responsibility is to take the message of the Gospel from the pages of Scripture to the person's ear, it's God's responsibility to take it from the ear to the heart. So be encouraged even though you get rejected so often, as long as you are faithful in delivering the message, you have been successful.

The animal sacrifices foreshadowed the Savior's blood being poured out for the forgiveness of sin. According to the law, without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. Well, Rome's Jesus as I just shared with you, did not purify all sin. All who

die in God's grace, according to the Catechism, but still imperfectly purified are assured of salvation but after death they undergo purification through a purifying fire in purgatory so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter heaven. You see a graphic on the screen, the souls in purgatory waiting for the sacrifice of the Mass to be said to get them out. No priest will tell you how many Masses must be said, nor will they tell you how many years you must spend for each sin you've committed. You see, Roman Catholics are in bondage to their false religion not only in this life but even in the next life. We know of Catholics who have willed their entire estate to the Catholic Church so that when they die, perpetual Masses will be said to get them out of a place that doesn't even exist.

Redemption was paid by the Lord Jesus Christ. Since everyone is born enslaved to sin and under the curse of the law, Christ had to pay for our redemption, Galatians 3:13. And what was the price, you ask? Peter answers the question, "You were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold but with the precious blood, the blood of Jesus Christ." That makes the blood of Jesus Christ the most valuable commodity the world has ever known.

Rome's Jesus did not finish the work of redemption. The Catechism teaches in paragraph 1405, every time this mystery is celebrated, the work of our redemption is carried on. In the Council of Trent, Canon III, if anyone says the sacrifice of the Mass is not propitiatory, let him be anathema. In other words, if you don't believe that the sacrifice of the Mass turns away God's wrath on the sinners that come to the altar, you are anathema, you are condemned, one of the 100 anathemas that condemn you and I.

Redemption continues on Catholic altars. Listen to paragraph 1367, "The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice. The victim," I thought Christ went to the cross willingly, "The victim is one and the same. In this divine sacrifice, the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner." Don't you find this fascinating? The one element of the sacrifice of Christ, the efficacious blood, is removed from the sacrifice of the Mass but yet they call it the same sacrifice. This is Roman Catholicism.

But this one is really troubling. This is a quote from Richard John O'Brien, a Roman Catholic priest. This has got the imprimatur of the Catholic Church, in other words, this is official Catholic teaching. Every time the Mass is offered, this is what takes place: the priest announces the words of consecration, he reaches up into the heavens and brings Christ down from his throne and places him upon our altar to be offered up again as the victim for the sins of man. It is a power greater than that of saints and angels. The priest speaks and, lo, Christ the eternal and omnipotent God bows his head in humble obedience to the priest's command. Roman Catholicism, the beck and call of a sinful priest is said to have the power to call the omnipotent God back down from heaven to continue what he finished on the cross.

We need to share this with Catholics. This is blasphemy. The eucharist is a false Christ. It is the sin of idolatry. It is no different from the Israelites who worshiped the true God who delivered them out of Egypt in the form of a golden calf. What was the result of their

sin of idolatry? Three thousand were put to death. God hates idolatry and any Roman Catholic who says they've been born-again, they must come out and not participate in this sin of idolatry any longer.

How do we know the eucharist is a false Christ? By the authority of God's word. In Hebrews 9:28 we read he does not return every day. That's not the quote. He will appear a second time, that's the quote from Hebrews 9:28, in other words, he's not coming every day, he's gonna come a second time and the Bible tells us when, how and where. He will return with power and great glory, Matthew 24:30. His second appearance is not in relation, he will not deal with sin because he was already offered once to bear the sins of many and yet that is exactly what the Catholic Mass is, a propitiatory sacrifice. The eucharist of Christ is dealing with sin. This goes against Scripture.

When will he return? The Bible gives us the answer: immediately after the tribulation, Matthew 24:29-30. He will return to the same place he ascended. Where was that? The Mount of Olives. In that day, his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Zechariah 14:4. Acts 3:21 tells us that he must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything. We also know that he will return in a body. This Jesus who was taken up to you from you into heaven will come in the same way as you've seen him go into heaven. Did Jesus leave in the form of a eucharist? He will come back in bodily form.

We can go by the authority of Scripture and tell Roman Catholics the eucharistic Christ that you are worshiping and trusting is a false Christ, it's a counterfeit Christ. But Rome dares to say that the sacrifice of Calvary and the sacrifice of the Mass are the same, and yet Calvary was offered by the sinless Son of God, the Mass is offered by a sinful man. Calvary was for the living, the Mass is for the living and the dead. Calvary was one perfect, finished, sufficient sacrifice, the Mass is offered thousands of times daily throughout the world and they are said to be insufficient which is why they must be repeated every day. Calvary was for all sin, the Mass is only for past sins. This is why Catholics need to come to the Mass every Sunday, so that the sins committed in the previous week can be forgiven. Calvary was bloody, the Mass was bloodless. The Mass must be continued, Calvary is unrepeatable. And yet Rome says it's the same sacrifice.

What does God's word say? In Hebrews 9, he appeared once to do away with sin, then entered the holy place once for all having obtained eternal redemption. Look at the verb tense. It's already been done. Past transaction. He obtained eternal redemption. The work of redemption is finished. The body of Christ was offered once as one sacrifice for all sins, for all time. Could the writer to Hebrews make it any more clear? These verses destroy the Roman Catholic Mass. We need to open our Bibles and show Catholics this.

Two weeks ago I had the privilege of meeting a Roman Catholic priest for coffee at Starbucks. The pastor in Fort Worth had pointed him to our website. He began reading articles. He came across Hebrews 9 and 10, the word of God penetrated his heart. He recognized that what he was doing every time he offered the eucharist was idolatry. God granted him repentance. He told me that morning after an hour conversation the only choice he has is to leave the priesthood. He was flying back to Pittsburgh the next day.

It's all we've got to do, unleash the power of God's word. It's transforming power when the Spirit of God applies it to their heart.

His offering made perfect forever those who are sanctified. There are no more offerings for sin. God's word says that Jesus cried out, "It is finished!" and the curtain of the temple was torn open, direct access to the Father, no need for priests offering the same sacrifices repeatedly which can never take away sins, Hebrews 10:11. When Jesus cried out, "It is finished!" sins were forgiven. He made you alive together with him, having forgiven us all of our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us. He's taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Rome's Jesus did not cancel the eternal sin debt. The sinner must make satisfaction for or expiate his own sins.

Jane and I went to the Philippines for two weeks to minister to the saints there to encourage them to reach out to the 96% population of Roman Catholics. I taught at the University of the Philippines and equipped the believers to go out and share the Gospel. I don't know if you're aware of this but every Holy Week, Filipino men come forward to be nailed to a cross so that they can expiate their own sin. They don't leave them up there to die, only to suffer for a period of time because they do not believe that Jesus expiated their sin. They do not believe that Jesus made satisfaction for their sin. They're trying to gain heaven through their own sacrifices. Oh, how the Filipinos need to hear the Gospel.

Indulgences will remit temporal punishment for sins for the living or the dead. That's what the Catholic Church teaches.

Well, you may know that the Roman Catholic is utterly dependent upon his priesthood from the cradle to the grave, and even after the grave. Listen to how much they depend on the priest. The priest baptizes for regeneration and justification. The Catholic priest hears confession and absolves sin. The Catholic priest offers the body and blood of Jesus in the eucharist. The Catholic priest imparts the Holy Spirit during confirmation. The Catholic priest gives last rites. Some of you are old enough to remember when JFK was assassinated on the streets of Dallas. Do you know they did not pronounce him dead until the Catholic priest had a chance to give him the sacrament of extreme unction so that his sins could be forgiven and he could be prepared for eternity? Then after the person dies, the priest offers Mass for the soul suffering in purgatory. Utterly dependent upon the Catholic priesthood. We need to show them the veil was ripped open. You have direct access to the Father through the High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We also know reconciliation was achieved. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them. Christ died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust so that he might bring us to God. 1 Peter 3:18. Death was conquered. The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15, "Death is swallowed up in victory. The sting of sin, the sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law, but thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." The tomb is empty and salvation was secured. To every believer the Good Shepherd says, "I give them eternal life and they will never perish and no one will snatch them out of my hand." We sit in the palm of the

Son's hand, the palm of the Father's hand. No one can snatch the born-again believer out. The Lord Jesus protects his flock and loses not one that the Father gives him, John 6:39. Salvation is secure by the power and the promises of Almighty God, the omnipotent power of God and the faithful promises of the Good Shepherd.

Well, Rome's Jesus is not sufficient to secure salvation. Here's the invisible treasury that I pointed out. It's said to contain the prayers and good works of all the saints. In this way, they attain their own salvation. Please don't miss this: Catholics attain their own salvation and at the same time they can cooperate in saving their brothers. Why do they need Christ? Well, when you read the Catechism, he was merely a gate opener. He opened up the gates of heaven, now each Catholic must do their part.

Paragraph 2027 of the Catechism says that we can merit for ourselves and for others all the graces needed to attain eternal life. How do you merit the unmerited favor of God? You see, Roman Catholicism has redefined God's grace. That's why when we witness to Catholics, we need to make sure they understand the biblical terms and what they mean. Catholics will tell you they're saved by grace but they must merit it. Psalm 49:7-8 destroys any concept of indulgences, "No man can by any means redeem his brother Or give to God a ransom for him--For the redemption of his soul is costly, And he should cease trying forever." Two verses that have set so many Roman Catholics free, "For by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not as a result of works that no one should boast."

On a short-term mission's trip to Acapulco, I went into the cathedral there. I saw a Bible open on a kneeler in front of the statue of Mary. I went over there and knelt down on the kneeler. I turned to Ephesians 2:8 and 9 and I brought out my highlighter and I highlighted those two verses. I wanted them to jump off the page so that when Roman Catholics went down and looked they could see these two verses that could set them free.

From death to life. Three days after Jesus finished his perfect work of redemption, God gloriously raised him from the dead to prove he is who he said he is, the eternal Son of God and victorious Savior. He opened the way for others to follow.

Now all of this is how God has gloriously revealed his Son through the Scriptures, but now let me introduce you to the false Christ of Roman Catholicism. It truly is amazing how they have perverted the person and the work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The false Christ of Rome did not finish the work of redemption, it continues on an altar. He did not save sinners completely which is why you continue to have the Mass. He did not give the assurance of salvation. Did you know that the Roman Catholic Church teaches that if anyone says that they have the assurance of eternal life, they are committing the sin of presumption? So to believe the promises of God is to commit a sin in the Roman Catholic religion. A Catholic Jesus did not pay the complete punishment for sin. He did not purify all sin, which is why you need purgatory. He returns physically to the earth every day in the form of the eucharist at the beck and call of a priest. He did

not redeem man from the curse of the law, which is why Catholics must obey the law to be saved.

He is not the only sinless mediator, they offer another one whose name is Mary, and he is not the only way. Pope Francis has recently said that atheists can make it to heaven as long as they are sincere in what they believe. He is a false prophet and yet many believe he is infallible and what he says must be taken as truth.

Well, we must contend for the exclusivity of the Gospel. We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, according to Scripture alone, and all for the glory of God alone. I hope you can see that Catholics and evangelicals are totally divided and there can never be any unity between blood-bought Christians and Roman Catholics. We are divided on the essentials of the Gospel. We are divided on how one is born-again. Rome says the waters of baptism, the Bible says the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit. We're divided on how one is justified, the Bible says by faith, Rome says, no, it's by faith plus works. We're divided on how one is purified of sin, the Bible says the precious blood of Jesus, Rome says, no, it's the fires of purgatory. We're divided on who mediates between God and man, the Bible says there is one, Rome offers other mediators. We're divided on the efficacy, the sufficiency and the necessity of Jesus Christ.

We must confront our evangelical leaders that are signing unity accords and tell them there can be no unity with Roman Catholicism. We need to point out what Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18. Believers and unbelievers have nothing in common. Light and darkness cannot coexist together. Light will always dispel darkness. We can never have unity with unbelievers.

So what must we do with a message like this? Proclaim the sufficiency and the exclusivity of the Lord Jesus Christ and his Gospel. Recognize Catholicism is an apostate religion with a false and fatal gospel. Reprove those who embrace Catholicism as a valid expression of Christianity. And if you want to go deeper into how to be an effective and faithful witness to Roman Catholics, we have an online training program that's called "The Ambassador Training Program." You can look to our website and sign up for it. You can go at your own pace. People that have gone through this have come away fully equipped to reach out to this huge mission field.

We also have Gospel tracts and based on the message you just heard, one of the most popular messages, popular tracts to give to a Roman Catholic is "Which Jesus Do You Trust?" And what I do in this Gospel tract is I contrast the Jesus that is gloriously revealed in Scripture with the false Christ of the Roman Catholic religion.

I've also written a book, "Preparing For Eternity," and the byline is, "Should We Trust God's Word or Religious Traditions?" And I present the case for trusting God's word over the teachings and traditions of the Roman Catholic religion. This is not only an excellent book to equip you with the verses to use as you witness to Catholics, but I wrote it with the idea that a Roman Catholic can pick this up and they're challenged because they must

make a decision, should I trust Christ and his word or my religion? It's impossible to believe both.

We also have DVDs with all the PowerPoint keynote slides. This is how we began this ministry 30 years ago, inviting people over to watch a Gospel video and then answering questions. Jane would serve dessert. We did this for three months, 17 Roman Catholics exchanged their religion for a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. That was the genesis of this ministry. What do you do with 17 new babes in Christ? You invite them back over on Wednesday night to help them grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord. The next thing you knew, the churches were inviting me in, seminaries were inviting me in. We've pretty much gone throughout the world twice now. We stand in awe of what God has done with a couple of broken vessels that have a desire to see Roman Catholics come to know the true Christ as he's gloriously revealed in Scripture.

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