



## Roman Catholicism – the heresy of the papacy

May 18, 2025                      Selected scriptures

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(Video 41:07)

As you know, for many, many months, and picking up again last week, we've jumped into the book of Romans chapter 12. And in Romans chapter 12, after the first couple of verses that talk about our 11 chapters of orthodoxy and what they're designed to do: to lead us into an orthopraxy of presenting our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. Paul then transitions in verses 3-8 to talk about our spiritual giftedness. And you'll recall, your spiritual gift, the definition of your spiritual gift is very simple. It's you. Whatever you are, whatever God's given you, that's what you're to use for His glorious purposes. And then He starts on a grocery list of injunctions in verses 9-21, the end of the chapter. 25 exhortations, basically of commands and reminders of aspects of godliness. And He starts out with attitudes and goes into various actions, and I gave you an outline on that last time. And we started looking at verse 9, where his first three, in terms of an attitude, he says, ***Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.*** And we started talking last week about, well, what is evil? And we went to Proverbs 6 and talked about the ***six things that the Lord hates, yea seven, which are an abomination to Him***, and we underscored those. And then I took you, if you will recall, to Isaiah 1, because I wanted to underscore something else that God finds incredibly abhorrent, evil, of course, that word I hate is anything that violates the word of God, anything that God hates, anything that violates God's holiness. That's what you and I are called upon to abhor, to hate. And so He says in Isaiah 1:11, in speaking through the prophet Isaiah to the organized religion of His day, what are your, verse 11, ***“What are your multiplied sacrifices to me?” says the LORD, of Isaiah 1:11, I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed cattle. And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls,***



***lamb*** or ***goats***. ***When you come to appear before Me, who requires of you this trampling of My courts? Bring your worthless offerings no longer, incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and Sabbath, the calling of assemblies- I cannot endure...***, stop right there, wait a minute. God, You told us to do all this. You told us to obey these feast days. You told us about these rituals. You told us to slay these goats and slay these lambs and this type of offering and the wave offering and the grain offering. You told us to do that. What do You mean ***“I can't endure it”***? What's He say? ***I cannot endure***, at the end of verse 13, ***...iniquity, sin, and the solemn assembly. I hate***, this is God, ***I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts. They have become a burden to Me. I am weary of bearing them. So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I'll hide My eyes from you. Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood. Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil.*** You know what that's God saying? He says, ***Love without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.*** And one of the primary things that Almighty God hates more than anything is spiritual hypocrisy, false religion. Religion that is not in accordance with the word of God, religion that even if the externals are in accordance with the word of God, the heart is wrong. The heart is wrong. I want you to hear one other passage of scripture because I wanted to talk about false religion. In Galatians 1:6-9, Paul says this, ***I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ for a different gospel.*** He says, I'm shocked that you could be deluded or swayed away, if possible, to a different gospel, which he says, ***is really not another***; There is no other gospel. There's only one gospel, the only one true gospel, the gospel of Jesus Christ. ***Only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be***



***accursed. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.***

I want to talk about false religion today. I set this up last week and most of you know where I'm going. I want to share some caveats. I love people. I really do. I like all people and I'm like you. I want to be liked. I don't want to fight. My temperament, quite frankly, and it's sort of ironic for a trial lawyer, all day I'm taking depositions and doing whatever and, rhetorically speaking, giving people forearm shivers from my clients. But in my interpersonal relationships, I don't want any hassles. I don't want to confront really anybody if I can avoid it. I'm very much of a, too much so maybe, a 'live and let live' kind of guy. I also want to let you know and just remind you, you don't need much reminding of this one, I'm a sinner saved by grace. I'm not perfect and I've had a certain series of life experiences and certain blessings. I've been given a wonderful spiritual gift of teaching, hope to always use it to the glory of God and your edification and so forth, but I've made some mistakes. I can remember a colossal mistake I made behind the pulpit of Scottsdale Bible Church over 20 years ago. I made a comment in the course of a sermon about a particular Christian denomination that did not advance the sermon, did not advance the explanation of the text. It was totally a gratuitous remark that was totally unnecessary and wouldn't you know, I offended one person, at least, who showed up that day from that denomination, first time ever in that church, wrote me a letter explaining how they would never be back. And there was no reason at all for me to do so. At that point in time, those years ago, God got a hold of my heart, I was terribly convicted and saddened by that. I decided I'm going to start doing what D.L. Moody advised his ministry students to do a long time ago. He said, look, don't spend so much time, or any time, saying, "You're wrong, you're wrong, you're wrong, you're wrong", pointing out somebody. He said, tell them what's right. Just tell them what's right. Actually, the way Moody expressed it was



this: If you've got somebody who's got a crooked stick, don't keep saying, "Your stick's crooked." Just lay a straight stick down beside it and they'll see the difference. And I've tried, for the most part, since then to live by that. I think it's a good standard. It's great advice, but every once in a while, something happens. Things happen in life, things happen in your own life, things happen in the culture. And for better or for worse, God's placed me in this stewardship role of this small body of believers in terms of preaching God's Word. And there comes a time when you need to point out some errors specifically, directly, and if you will, name names. And that's where I find myself this morning. And I approach this with a great bit of humility and concern. I started getting concerns 30, 40 years ago, I wasn't alone in this, many people smarter and brighter than me did, about the evangelical Christian's rush to embrace Roman Catholicism. But we're all just brothers and sisters in Christ. I'm going to tell you something, before I'm done today, I'm afraid I will offend some of you. I'll offend some of you who have loved ones who are in the Catholic system. I'll offend some of you who would just say, well, you were just unkind and you were divisive. That is not my intent at all. But I am really concerned and my concerns got heightened when I learned of a couple in our church thinking about converting to Roman Catholicism. And I thought to myself, "I've failed, I've fumbled somewhere. How could you be nine or ten months in this church under Bible teaching and even be thinking in that direction?" But then the events of the last couple, three weeks, with the death of Pope Francis, and the incredible media fanfare that has gone on with regards to the installation of Robert Prevost from Chicago, the 267th pope of the Roman church. And hearing believers in Christ, people who should really possess mature discernment, celebrating this with joy, a tremendous excitement about this new pope and how wonderful a thing this is.



Now let me, many of you know the story, but because this gets recorded and it goes out over and all sorts of stuff, I've got to get a lot of things in one sitting. Those of you who don't know, and many people who listen to this may not know, I was born and raised in an Italian Catholic family. My parents were Catholics, my grandparents were Catholics, I was raised that way. I studied to be an altar boy when the mass was in Latin. I went to a Catholic grade school; Christ the King grade school in Indianapolis when it was only nuns who did the teaching. Went there for eight years, kindergarten through eighth grade, every day, Monday through Friday, nine months of year during the school year, we lined up at 7:30 in the morning and marched to the church for mass, came back, and then of course there was mass on Sunday. Six days a week for a decade, or more, I was in mass. I prayed to Mary, I prayed numerous rosaries, I did novenas, I prayed for dead relatives to get the actual grace they needed to get out of purgatory and make it to heaven. I believed deeply in my Catholic religion. I treasured my St. Joseph's Daily Missal that I carried to mass all the time. I wore a scapular medal on occasion, always took a St. Christopher's medal with us on vacation because he was the patron saint of travelers. Planted a particular medal, unbeknownst to my parents, underneath their bedside to make sure that they would go to heaven and that Mary would pray for them. All of that to say, I have a deep, deep understanding of Catholicism and I have a soft spot in my heart for you Catholics, and people who have come out of Catholicism, and those who have relatives who are in Roman Catholicism. Know my heart on this.

Something else I want to share with you too. I know what religious prejudice, as well as racial prejudice, is all about. My Italian grandfather, Leonardo Politano, and my grandmother, Teresa Politano, one night are asleep in their home in 1924 when some hooded Ku Klux Klansman planted a flaming cross in their front yard, drug my grandfather, Leo, out of the house at night. He's screaming, "Perché?!" "Perché?!" ("Why?! Why?!") He had no idea why



they were doing this. And my eight-year-old father and his two older brothers, my uncle Robert and my uncle Tony, standing on the front porch with their mom watched as my grandfather got bullwhipped half to death by the Ku Klux Klan. Why? Because he was an Italian Catholic who dared venture into this white Anglo-Saxon Protestant community after dark. They had a sign on the outskirts of the town, **Blacks**, (and they didn't use the word black), **Italians**, (and they didn't use the word Italian, you know what I mean) **Catholics and Jews: Don't let the sun set on your back in this town.** My grandfather couldn't read English. And why would you share that story? The man that used the bullwhip was the deacon of the local Southern Baptist Church who worked on the same coal mining gang with my grandfather. They recognized his voice, they knew who he was. What's the point? I know what religious prejudice is all about, I know what hatred is all about, I understand all of that.

This is not about religion. This is about truth versus error. This is about God's Word versus heresy. At the end of the day, this is about life versus death. And the most kind thing ever done to me in my life was some people took the risk to share with an Italian Catholic the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And the kindest thing you can do to anyone is to share them winsomely, yes, humbly I hope so, carefully, yes, but boldly and honestly the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Let me say lastly, my last caveat, there's many people I know who are in a Roman system and who aren't even believers otherwise, I mean, aren't even religious I should say, who put many Christians, and myself at times, to shame in terms of their good deeds. They're kind, generous, benevolent, sacrificial, giving, winsome, wonderful people from an earthly perspective. That's what makes it all the more deceptive, because none of our good works get us eternal life, none of them.



So all I can say is, is Roman Catholicism a Christian denomination? Are Roman Catholics our brothers and sisters in Christ? If they believe, and by the way, I'm fully aware that just like all Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses or anybody else, there's many Catholics that don't have a clue what the church teaches. But if they believe the dogma of the Roman Catholic Church, as I certainly believed it, the answer is clearly no, no. Are you saying to me that the Pope is not in heaven? Pope Francis, he's not in heaven? My answer to that is if he believes that Mary is a co-redemptrix with Jesus Christ, if he believes that Mary is going to lead him to salvation, if he believes in the rosary, if he believes in the magisterium of the church, if he believes in purgatory, if he believes in salvation is not through the shed blood of Christ alone, but absolutely has to be based upon the merit you earn by doing a certain number of good works, if he believes that, and I'm sure he did because he's the earthly guardian of those statements, then no, he's not. Why? Because on the authority of Galatians 1, he has believed another gospel. Another gospel. This has massive consequences.

Roman Catholicism, friends, is idolatry. We worshiped saints. We venerated angels. We exalted Mary. We had a twisted sacrament called the Mass. Motivated by money, we invented something called purgatory. Selling forgiveness for money, idol worship, relics, prayers for the dead, a perverted forced celibacy, a false earthly priesthood, and most critical, a false gospel of works, and at the top of the pile, the pope, the pope. It's not a denomination.

I want to bring a couple scriptures to your remembrance, and then we're going to look at the text because we're here to study God's Word, and I want you to see a straight stick. Romans 3:20, what's it say? ***Because by the works of the law***, just think Ten Commandments. ***Because by the works of the law, no flesh will be justified in His sight.*** Romans 3:28, ***For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.*** Not faith plus works, faith apart from any works. Romans 4:3, ***ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS COUNTED***



**TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS**, therefore Abraham was justified by what? Faith. Romans 9:30 and 32, (I'm just picking these out) ***That Gentiles, who didn't pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness that is by faith.*** Romans 10:4, ***Christ is the end of the law...*** Meaning what? ***for righteousness to everyone who believes.*** We studied Romans 11:5-6, there's a remnant chosen by grace, and if by grace it is no longer by works, if it were, grace would no longer be grace. Galatians 2:16, ***a man is not justified by the works of the law***, meaning moral good, deeds, etc., ***through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.*** Galatians 3:10-11, and all who rely on observing the law are under a curse. ***CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY EVERYTHING WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW.*** What's he saying? If you fumble in one point, one aspect of the moral law, don't lie, don't cheat, don't this, don't that, one hard attitude that's wrong, one lustful thought, you've broken the whole law. Perfection is what He required, therefore Christ is the end of the law, why? Because he is our righteousness. He lived the perfect life. He paid the atoning price for our salvation. Philippians 3:9, ***not having a righteousness of my own derived from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.*** And here's the one that drives the death knell into it all, Titus 3:5. ***He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, ...***

That's the glory, friends, of the doctrine, of the justification by faith, and it is not what Roman Catholicism, sad to say, and I have relatives who are Roman Catholics. I have relatives I pray for every day of my life, and that is not what Roman Catholicism teaches.



Well, how do you know? Trust me, I know, but let me give you a few. The Council of Trent, 1545 to 1563, came out with many, many canonical statements. Here's some of them. Quote, just by the way, I'm taking a lot of this from a man named Ott, O-T-T, on the doctrine of Roman Catholicism. Council of Trent, that was published in 1955, by the way, and it's a great source book. *To those who work well unto the end and trust in God for eternal life is offered, is offered.* Doesn't sound like what we just read. Listen to this. *Eternal life is given as a reward promised by God Himself to be faithfully given to those who exercise good works and merits. By those very works which have been done in God, fully satisfy the divine law according to the state of this life, they have truly merited eternal life.* The Catholic system is something that you earn by works. Here's what Trent says is Catholic dogma. This is a powerful: *If anyone says that the sinner is justified by faith alone, meaning, I'm quoting now from Catholic dogma, meaning that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to obtain the grace of justification and that it is not in any way necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the action of his own will, let him be anathema.* In other words, you're cursed if you say that salvation is by faith alone. Here's another one. These are Council of Trent statements. *If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in divine mercy, which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that if this confidence alone justifies us, let him be anathema.* It goes on and on and on. I'll give you one more: *If anyone says that righteousness received is not preserved and also increased before God through one's good works, but that those works are merely the fruits and signs of justification obtained and are not the cause of its increase, let him be anathema.* In other words, the Council of Trent says, see, the Reformers understood this. If you genuinely know Christ, you're born again, it will usher forth in good works. Good works are the fruit of a changed life. Catholic doctrine says, if you believe that, you're anathema. You're cursed. No, those good works are the thing that must continue to keep you in eternal life.



Well, did Pope Francis believe this? Did John Paul II believe this? Did Benedict believe this? Does the new pope believe this? Sure, they're the guardians of this system, and that is exactly what they believe. "Holy Father", if I hear them say "Holy Father" one more time the last two weeks, I thought I was going to gag. Seriously, I don't mean that as a humor. Matthew 23:9, Jesus said it best, ***And do not call anyone on earth your father;*** (He's speaking in spiritual terms) ***for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is Christ.***

Okay, so many more things. In statements of Catholic doctrine, one of the things they teach is that the pope is infallible, meaning when he speaks *ex cathedra*, it's a Latin term, it means from his chair. When he speaks on faith and morals and practice and so forth, he is infallible. You may be interested to know that papal infallibility was voted in in 1870. It was voted in by the Roman Curia, the College of Cardinals and Bishops. And, by the way, it didn't pass unanimously, it took several votes. Papal infallibility. You wonder how anyone can believe in this, and by the way, believe in this they do, and I think Spurgeon said it best: *People can be so deluded by the titles of doctor and rabbi and pastor and exalted one and vicar and holy father, etc., and so long, he says, Their eyes get blinded by the poisonous human incense burned before them, and they get deluded into believing they really are what they claim to be.*

By the way, don't get me wrong, sincerity, they're very sincere. Most of them, in my experience, are very sincere. Sincerity is not the issue. I grew up in the 1960s when the Vietnam War was raging. Every night on television, I watched Buddhist monks sit down, pour gasoline on themselves in a lotus position and light themselves on fire, self-immolation, burn themselves up in protest of the Vietnam War. Let me tell you something, they were serious. Serious is a heart attack. Seriousness is not the issue. The issue is truth.



The Vatican Council, by the way, of 1823 is the one who installed Peter to his further role. *If anyone says that he, the blessed apostle Peter, was not constituted by Christ our Lord, prince of all the apostles and the visible head of the church (Peter), militant, or that he directly, and immediately received from our Lord Jesus Christ the primacy of honor only and not one of true and proper jurisdiction, let him be anathema.* In other words, if you don't think that Peter was the first pope given the jurisdiction to rule over the moral universe, the entire universe, I should say, from a moral standpoint, and that all the popes line up in succession to him, if you don't believe that, you are anathema.

By the way, St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, supposedly buried on the site where Peter had a church and where Peter died and is buried, there is no evidence whatsoever, biblical or otherwise, that Peter was ever in Rome, just so you know. And a few things on that, Paul wrote the book of Romans in the year approximately 56 A.D. We'll get there in a year or so to the end of Romans, and what does he say at the end of Romans? He has this litany, greet so-and-so, greet so-and-so, greet so-and-so, greet so-and-so, greet him, greet him, greet him. Never does he mention Peter. If Peter had been there, you would think Paul would have mentioned him. In the year 60 to 62 A.D., those two or three years, Paul was imprisoned in Rome. He writes four letters, his prison epistles, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and in the last one of those epistles, 2 Timothy, he writes that in about 64 A.D. And he gives a greeting and he has to 10 specific people in Rome, and he doesn't list Peter. By the way, Galatians 2:7-8, Paul makes it very clear that he, Paul, was called to be an apostle to the Gentiles. Peter was called to be an apostle to the Jews. We don't know that Peter ever pastored a church involving Gentiles for the most part. Paul, in Galatians 2 and later on in the book of Acts, talks about how he had to confront Peter, cowardly Peter, who got involved in spiritual compromise because of certain Judaizers, and Paul, it says, I confronted Peter to his faith. Peter isn't even



listed as the head man in the Jerusalem church. The Lord's half-brother James is the one who's talked about as the pastor of the Jerusalem church. Peter is treated like all others. Paul even says in 1 Corinthians chapter 1:12, some say "I'm of Apollos", some say "I'm of Paul", some say "I'm of Cephas". But what's he go on and say? Did Apollos grant eternal life? Did Cephas grant eternal life? Did I grant eternal life? He says no, one watered one plant, God gave the end. In other words, he makes no distinction between Peter and himself and others. By the way, Paul says in Romans 15:20, ***I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build on another man's foundation.*** Then if Paul was desperate to get to Rome to preach the gospel, but he says he never wants to go preach the gospel where the gospel has previously been preached because he doesn't want to build on another man's foundation, what's that tell you? It tells me Peter never went to Rome and preached the gospel. Well, great. How'd we get there? Oh, by the way, just so you know, listen to Peter's own description. First Peter 1:1, ***Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ...*** not 'the' apostle, 'an' apostle of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 5:1, what's Peter himself say? ***Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder...*** This doesn't sound like somebody who's at the top of the pile. This sounds like somebody who's in humble submission to God. ***I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also*** (I'm just also a partaker with you) ***of the glory that is to be revealed,*** Peter says, ***shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;*** Here we go. Here it is. Peter talking. What are shepherds to do? ***...nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge.*** It doesn't sound to me like he made himself a pope. Doesn't sound to me like he set himself up as the dictator and interpreter and controller of everyone's spiritual life.



So where do we get this? Where does it all come from? Believe it or not, Roman Catholic theologians have tried to justify papal succession by using the Word of God. You see, they will tell you, you believe in Jesus Christ. Oh, faith in Jesus Christ. Where Catholicism leaves for a different gospel is it's not in Christ alone. The solace of the scripture. It isn't faith alone, grace alone, through Christ alone, to the glory of God alone. They'll join league with you until you get to "alone". No, it's faith in Jesus Christ plus the magisterium. It's faith in Jesus Christ plus the tradition of the church. It's faith in Jesus Christ plus the papal bulls and announcements of the pope in Rome that have the authority of the word of God, have equal weight, the Council of Trent says, the Word of God; the magisterium, they call it. So it's the scriptures and man's word. It's faith plus good works. That is a different gospel.

Well, how do they justify it? Go to Matthew chapter 16. Go to Matthew chapter 16. This is where we left off, or at least we touched upon last time, and I want you to see it and I'm going to take you to a couple other places. I'm racing. I'm jumping into it. I'm trying to declare truth boldly and clearly without being overly nervous about it. But I don't mean to be unkind. But you know what? The cross of Jesus Christ is offensive. The gospel is offensive. Some people are going to be offended. But if you're going to be offended, I want you to not be offended by my manner or demeanor. If you're going to be offended, be offended by the truth of God's word. And hopefully by God's grace, you'll willingly submit to it. Matthew chapter 16, very well-known passage of scripture. Verse 13, ***Now, when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He began asking His disciples, saying, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others Elijah; but still others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." And He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And He asked that of all of them. Verse 16, And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are***



*you, Simon Barjonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you* (and here is one of the key verses where the papacy ostensibly they say is founded) *that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it. And I will give you* (good grief, look at this) *the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."* Sounds pretty strong to me. Improper exegesis of the passage.

What's he saying there? First of all, he's saying, thou art Cephas, the word *petros* (G4074), you're a stone. That's the nickname I have for you, stone. You're Petros, and upon this feminine noun, *petra*, I will build my church. If he was describing Peter, he would have had a masculine singular noun in describing Peter. He says, you're Peter, Petros, but it's upon this *petra* (G4073) that I'll build my church. Not Peter, the person. What's the *petra*? The statement that you just articulated, Peter. The statement that I'm the Christ, the Son of the living God. You've articulated the truth, and that truth is what I, Christ, not man, will build my church upon. And so that is what He's referring to there.

And He goes on, and He says, I'll give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. The key, well, sounds like pretty powerful to me. You give somebody the keys, the keys open it up and close it. Keys, it sounds like he's giving him a lot of authority. What's that talking about? Well, first of all, number one, he's not referring to Peter as the person. He's referring to Peter's bedrock truth, but there is a sense, I want to be fair-minded about this. There is a sense in which Peter is what's being referenced there. What do you mean? You just want to remember Ephesians 2:20. What's Ephesians 2:20? The church is ***built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, apostles***, plural. Not one apostle, Peter. It's built upon the ***foundation of the apostles and the***



**prophets.** How so? What did the early church do in Acts chapter 2? They met in one another's houses for the breaking of bread, for fellowship, for prayer and continuance in the apostles' teaching. What Christ is saying is this: on that bedrock principle that I'm the Christ, the Son of the living God, I will build my church. People will come into a right relationship with God through what I do as the Savior of the world. But it's you guys, prophets and apostles, and those who will follow after you, going out and articulating truth upon which My church will indeed be founded. The public proclamation, articulation of the truth that I'm the Christ, the Son of the living God, and all that entails, and that there's salvation in no other. And that is exactly what the Great Commission says. Go you now, all of us, into all the worlds, and do what? Make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, and instructing them, teaching them to do all that I've observed you to do. That's the foundation on which the church is built, not a man, a basic principle and truth. Yes, we used Peter and the apostles and the prophets initially to do that, but He's using men and women to share that truth and do it today as well.

Let me tell you why, another reason why, you know this isn't referring to the first pope. Good grief, look at verse 22 of this chapter. ***And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You."***, talking about His crucifixion. He's already denying the cross. In four verses, he's denying the cross. And what's the Lord say in verse 23? ***But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, pope. Get behind me, Satan. You are a stumbling block to me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."***

So, he's talking about that, by the way, gates. He says, ***the gates*** of heaven, ***I will build my church and the gates of*** heaven ***will not prevail***, gates ***of hell***, will not have victory over it. Gates are something that what? You lock people in with, you lock them out or you lock them



in, okay? And Hades is a reference to death. He says, the gates of Hades, the gate, and there are synonyms. Death and Hades are synonyms. Death is the condition, Hades is the realm of death, the location, if you will. And He's saying, look, death itself will not close in My church, this truth. You know what he's talking about? The resurrection, eternal life, you'll be granted eternal life. Satan doesn't want a group of redeemed people in a glorious heaven praising Christ forever and ever and ever. He wants people lost forever in the realm of death. And Christ has promised it on that foundation, that bedrock truth, thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God, in whom there is no other. ***There is life in no other. I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies.*** He who lives and believes in Me shall live even if he dies. Do you believe this? ***Let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in Me. In My father's house there are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go there to prepare a place for you.*** What comforting words in times when you've lost a loved one. What comforting words to know that has nothing to do with your loved one's lack of the treasury of merit; lack of enough good works. That you don't have to pray them out of purgatory, or go have a high mass for their soul, because they knew Christ as their Lord and Savior. And the chains of death itself will never hold them. And that's what he's talking about here. Henry Martin, the great missionary to India, said it so well to his persecutors: *You cannot harm me, you can only kill me.* That's exactly what he said. And he was so right. The resurrected Christ in Revelation 1:18 says, ***"...and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and Hades."*** Christ has the keys of death and Hades.

But wait a minute, he goes on and says, Peter, what you bind on earth is going to be bound in heaven. What you loose on earth is going to be loose in... So isn't he saying that Peter is God's earthly representative? Flip over two chapters to Matthew 18 real quick. Go to Matthew 18



real quick. What's he say in Matthew 18:50. This is the church discipline chapter. By the way, this has got really nothing, primarily, to do with prayer at all. ***For where two or three have gathered together in My name***, it's got nothing to do in the first instance with prayer. It's used all the time in saying, oh, God's here because two or more of us are praying. No, He is, but that's not the text to use for that. It's all about church discipline. He's saying where two or more of you agree on something because of something, heaven agrees with it. I'm in the midst of you. I'm with you. You have the right to do this. You have the keys to the kingdom of heaven. What are the keys to the kingdom of heaven? What's he talking about? Verse 15. ***“And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES, EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED.”*** Every fact may be confirmed. Verse 17. ***“And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax gatherer. Truly I say to you... (all of you disciples, not just Peter, he's talking to all of them.) I say to you, whatever you (and it's plural in the text) shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven. And whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again, I say to you that if two of you agree on earth about anything... The decision a person has made to accept or reject the gospel of Jesus Christ, if two or more of you agree on anything, it shall be done for them by my Father who is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name... and so forth.***

Now let me underscore what he is saying there. The keys of the kingdom of heaven are given to Peter and all the disciples. The keys of the kingdom of heaven are given to anybody who pronounces those bedrock foundational truths upon which Christ build His church. My goodness, a guy has the key, you can unlock the door and let somebody in. A guy has the key,



you can lock the door and let somebody out. You mean to tell me you have that kind of power, John? Yeah, I have that kind of authority and every believer in Jesus Christ has that kind of authority. How so? On the basis of what? On the basis, get this, of what people choose to do with the gospel of Jesus Christ. How many times? Some of you are, Scottsdale Bible Church years ago when Daryl and I were given the altar calls going through the gospel of John. How many times did we ask, if you've given your life to Jesus Christ today, just raise your hand. If you're in this section, raise your hand. And then somebody would, praise God, raise their hand. Bernie Cassidy, I keep referring to Bernie because he always sits over here, Bernie Cassidy one day raised his hand. You know what my comment was from the platform? Thank you for your hand, sir. Welcome to the kingdom of God. How could I welcome him to the family of God? For the same reason I can say that anybody who is presented with the gospel of Jesus Christ and rejects it, you can say, I'm sorry, friend, your sins aren't forgiven on the authority of the word of God based upon what you have done with the gospel of Jesus Christ, you're bound in your sins. And guess what? I know for a fact, heaven agrees with it. Why? Because the word of God makes it plain and He's given this authority to you and to me and to all who know the gospel and claim the name of Christ.

Well, there's so much more. Let me give you two more passages real quick because I want to try to get it in on this session. There's three passages they use. This Matthew 16 one is a big one based upon Peter's own description of himself and so forth. And then of course, where those texts are used later is pretty clear. But Luke 22:31 and 32 is another one. He says, Cephas, you're going to deny me, Peter, you're going to deny me. Before the cock crows, you're going to deny me three times tonight. But I have prayed for you, that Satan would not have you, though he may sift you as wheat. But after you have been restored, what's it say? ***Strengthen your brethren.*** They take that verse and say, you see, the pope is the supreme



strengtheners of the brethren. That is a real stretch. The other one is John 21:15 through 17, Peter, do you love me? Feed my sheep. Peter, do you love me? Feed my sheep. Peter, do you love me? Feed my sheep. And they take that as a call for him to be the supreme feeder of the flock. What did Peter tell us in 1 Peter 5, I just read it a moment ago? I'm a fellow elder with you. I'm also just a partaker in the glory to be revealed. We are all under the chief shepherd.

By the way, just so you know, the first pope wasn't even officially installed until the 600s. This idea of a constant succession from Peter doesn't even historically fly. There are whole gaps in history where there is no bishop sitting in Rome. I'll give you another one. This will shock some of you. From about 1373 to about 1417, about a period of 39 years in there, there were three popes. Urban the sixth, Clement the seventh, Alexander, I think the fifth, one in Avignon, France, one in Rome, one in Pisa, Italy. And they murdered, bartered, bribed, stole, cheated, connived, and fought wars to get the power of being the pope, ultimately to all be rejected at a council of Constance where they were forced to resign and a college of cardinals elected Martin the fifth as a new pope. It goes on and on and on.

The papacy is unbiblical, the papacy is unholy, and the papacy is idolatrous. The litany of moral depravity and degeneration that has been conducted by the papacy over the years is unbelievable. The feast of chestnuts hosted by one of the popes where 50 naked prostitutes would show up and perform for the college of cardinals and the pope. It goes on and on and on.

Now what I've just told you is the truth. How could you possibly know the gospel of Jesus Christ and remotely consider attaching your soul to such a heretical, false cult masquerading as a Christian denomination? Colossians 1:18, referring to Christ. ***He is also the head of the***



***body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.***

Let's pray as Brian comes to lead us. Father, there was so much more on my heart to share, and I trust by Your grace and Your wisdom You caused me to not do so. There are other passages of Scripture. There's all sorts of other theological doctrines and biblical errors and outright heresy in the Roman system. Father, we hate evil and sin, but just like You, we love the sinner. Oh God, I love my dear relatives who are lost in this system, and I have a tender spot in my heart for those who are believing they're following the truth. And I would just ask each one of us to pray for those we know caught up in this spiritual blindness, that You, Father, might lift that veil from over their eyes, that You might cause someone again to come into their life to share them the truth of Your glorious gospel, and that Your Word might take hold, that they would recognize Your holiness, their sinfulness. They would recognize that no church, no invention of man, no man-made religious system or organization can possibly save. Otherwise, it would not have been necessary for You, Father, to do it in the person of Christ for us, Father, that they might come to that place where they entrust their heart to You. Oh God, work that miracle in those we love before it is too late. We ask it again in the matchless name of Jesus our Christ. And all God's redeemed people said, amen and amen.