

Prophetic Insights

How Are You Justified?

October 6, 2015



April 30, 1863

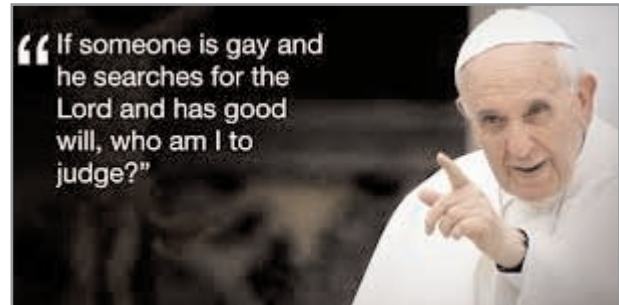
President Abraham Lincoln's Proclamation for National Day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer

“We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made this! It behooves us, then to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.”

This land has collectively forgotten the “gracious hand of God which has preserved us.” Presidents today don’t proclaim National Days of fasting, humiliation and prayer. Why doesn’t this happen, and how does our sinful disregard force our Lord to get our attention when we won’t repent? We’re awash in the same ugly environment of violent hatred that Abraham Lincoln faced—yet from top down in our society as well as within Christendom, *nobody seems dismayed*.

After the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center, David Wilkerson pointed out that it was an *act of God* against the greed and self-indulgence of this nation. Many clergy ridiculed him for voicing this. And if religious leaders spurn the truth about the actions our God takes to chastise a nation, what does that say to their congregants? We could summarize

the catchphrase of most clergy today, even the Pope, like this: ***“Play down the need for repentance so people feel comfortable just as they are.”***



Yet throughout Scripture our Father draws a *distinct demarcation* between right and wrong from *His* perspective!

We’d like to make a point that you might not accept but needs to be said. Pope Francis’s basic emphasis has been, ***“Because you’re a Catholic, you need to be a good person by doing good deeds toward others.”*** He’s also said, ***“Receiving the sacraments will make you a better person.”*** Catholics rave about his messages. And being marketed as the “People’s Pope” has given him a celebrity status which expands his audience of approving listeners.



“We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you”

(Galatians 2:5).

We who follow Jesus *as Lord* need to be very discerning. The purpose *why* we actively seek to bless others is entirely different than for a Roman Catholic (and as former Catholics we’re very familiar with Catholic dogma). The difference stems from how we view *justification*:

A biblical follower of Jesus views justification as the legal declaration by God to a sinner in which He declares that person righteous in His sight. This justification is based completely and solely on the atonement of Jesus on the cross. It's wholly by grace! We can't *earn* justification or *merit* justification in any way. If we could, then Christ died needlessly.

This is the bull's eye of salvation for a follower of Jesus. When you're born again, you are justified by the shed blood of Jesus once and for all time (Romans 5:1,2). Then you seek the immersion of baptism to affirm that you'll keep a good conscience toward God: "*Whoever trusts and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not trust will be condemned*" (Mark 16:16)

When Jesus is your LORD, you live to fulfill His purposes as His Spirit empowers you through the gifting He's apportioned you. And, the Spirit of our LORD continues to transform you into ever-increasing Christ-likeness—*sanctification*—until you reach heaven's narrow gate. You live for the glory of your Father through the grace of His unmerited favor.

"You nullify the Word of God for the sake of your tradition. You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. They worship Me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men" (Matthew 15:6-9).

The primary authority for establishing creed in the Roman Catholic Church is **Sacred Tradition** rather than God's commands in the Bible. In practice the Word of God is subservient to sacred tradition. Consider how "*anti-Christ*" the

sufficiency of Christ's victory over sin and death becomes through the sacred Catholic tradition that **being a good person through doing good works is their means to justification.**



That unscriptural teaching nullifies the finished, justifying work of Jesus on the cross for salvation. From the Roman Catholic sacred decree of Canon 14 of the Council of Trent (held from 1545 to 1563), anyone who trusts in the *finished work of Jesus by grace alone* comes under a curse:

"If any one saith that man is truly absolved from his sins and justified, because he assuredly believed himself absolved and justified; or, that no one is truly justified but he who believes himself justified; and that, by this faith alone, absolution and justification are effected; let him be anathema [cursed by God]." (emphasis added)

Did you grasp what this is saying? The sacred tradition which emanated from this pronouncement is that anyone who believes they are justified by faith in Jesus' death on the cross is *cursed by God*. This is why the crucifix of Roman Catholicism keeps Jesus hanging on the cross: to remind Catholics that His sacrifice to justify humanity before His Father is incomplete. Sacred Tradition also requires the sacraments and good works in order to obtain salvation.

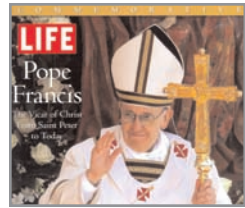


The call for "good works" to be *added to the Cross* becomes even stickier when we consider God's unfailing grace to mankind. We who love and follow Jesus as LORD of our lives recognize His grace as His *unmerited* favor to us—that's why it's grace. We *can't earn it* by anything we do (see Romans 11:5,6). Yet to a Catholic,

grace needs to be *merited* through human effort:

"No one can merit the initial grace which is at the origin of conversion. Moved by the Holy Spirit, we can *MERIT for ourselves and for others* all the graces needed to attain eternal life, as well as necessary temporal goods (*i.e. good works enable you to earn grace*)."
(Catechism of the Catholic Church 2027).

Therefore Catholic sacraments not only help you become a good person; they are *necessary for salvation*:



Pope Francis: "Every encounter with Christ, who gives us salvation in the sacraments, invites us to communicate to others a salvation... In this way, the sacraments push us to be missionaries..."

"This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed"
(John 3:19,20).

For Roman Catholics, it's not the LORDship of Jesus through His indwelling Spirit Who guides and empowers them to do good to others to the praise of His Father. Rather, by doing good through their own efforts they hope to obtain grace—but which by definition the heavenly Father *gives freely*.

Again, the sad result of sacred tradition overruling God's revelation of His love, His ways, and His commands in the Bible is that in Roman Catholicism **justification** before God is based on human effort and works *added to the cross*. By contrast, the Bible proclaims that justification/salvation is by trust in the atone-

ment of Jesus on the cross (Romans 1:17).

So many Roman Catholics are reluctant to pursue scriptural truth for themselves regarding justification because, again, Catholic sacred tradition states that justification begins not by faith but by *infant baptism*—a practice which nullifies the conscious and intentional pursuit of Jesus by a repentant, believing seeker.

"I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these, you did for Me"
(Matthew 25:40).

Throughout both Testaments you find that doing good to others is God's will. But your *motive* when you belong to Jesus as your LORD comes from *love for Him* instead of profiting yourself (2Corinthians 5:14,15). You act as His Spirit guides you to obey what our Father wants you to do, relying on the Spirit's power as you use your gift to do His will.

When people within either Catholicism or Protestantism don't take full ownership of *their own depravity* and of our Father's means of justifying them through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, they are vulnerable to pursuing good works as some sign of "Christian merit." By this deception they find it convenient to identify their "Christianity" *with what they feel like doing for God* rather than living in the LORDship of Jesus as His Spirit guides and empowers them to be His ambassadors to the world (see 2Corinthians 5:18-21).

"You nullify the Word of God for the sake of your tradition. You hypocrites!"
(see Matthew 15:6-9)

The sacred traditions of Catholicism came into existence over many centuries. Notice how this sampling blatantly violates the unchanging truth of God's Word, the Bible.

- 300 — Inauguration of prayers for the dead;
- 600 — Worship in Latin, used only by the educated elite, so commoners could not understand and would be in awe of the clergy;
- 700 — Catholic hierarchy begin killing and torturing those deemed “heretics;”
- 788 — Worship of Mary and the saints sanctioned along with worship of the cross, images, and relics;
- 1000 — The use of holy water endorsed;
- 1090 — Praying to Mary using Rosary beads;
- 1123 — Celibacy for priests is enforced;
- 1190 — Inauguration of sale of indulgences to save people from purgatory;
- 1303 — Roman Catholic Church declared the only one true church;
- 1545 — Declaration that justification for right standing with God is by good works, and not by faith alone;
- 1545 — Apocryphal books added to the Bible
- 1854 — Institution of immaculate conception, declaring Mary was conceived without sin;
- 1870 — Pope Pius IX convened Vatican Council I with his main agenda to be declared infallible (incapable of making mistakes or being wrong) when defining a doctrine concerning faith or morals;
- 1950 — The Assumption of Mary confirmed as dogma that the Virgin Mary was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory.

“Don’t be deceived, my dear brothers”
(James 1:16)

You may find it hard to believe that “nullifying the Word of God for the sake of tradition” could apply to an entire denomination the size of Roman Catholicism. But realize that their emphasis on *sacred tradition* as the dominant source for faith practice is both *anti-Christ* in making His

sacrifice insufficient, and *anti-Bible* in adding traditions alongside God’s Word.

One final warning if you’re prone to being seduced into donating to financial appeals by TV teachers. When someone promises you blessings in return for your giving, you’re acting just like a Catholic who lights candles to purchase God’s favor. Think about the promises which TV teachers give: “Put your hand on the TV and I’ll pray for you. Then send me \$100 and you’ll be healed.” When either guilt or promised blessing is used to gain money, an anti-Christ spirit is doing the asking. Beware trying to purchase God’s grace, His *unmerited favor*. You’re sinning directly against Him!



“Jesus declared, ‘I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again’” (John 3:3).

We’d like to recap for you the nature of an authentic follower of Jesus:

- He is born again when he realizes his own sinful depravity and need for forgiveness, and repents. He is justified by placing his trust in the shed blood of Jesus as full payment for his sins. (See Ephesians 2:1-10.)
- He receives the indwelling Holy Spirit guaranteeing the Father’s part of the Covenant (see 2Corinthians 1:21,22).
- The Spirit enables him to pray in accordance with the Father’s will; to receive spiritual guidance so Jesus is truly his LORD; empowers him through a spiritual gift to fulfill the purposes which Father prepared in advance for him to do (see Romans 8:26-28).
- He is immersed in water so he can identify with the death of Jesus and affirm his desire to keep a clear conscience toward God (Romans 6:3-5; 1Peter 3:21) .