***Catholic Doctrine, No. 2***

***(Tape Ministry - 34:00)

Colossians 1:21-23

COL-158***

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Hebrews 4:12: "For the Word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the dividing of the soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

2 Timothy 2:15: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the Word of truth."

Romans 15:4: "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope."

Our subject is "Reconciliation of the Colossians," segment number three in Colossians 1:21-23.

Preaching which explains to people what God has recorded in the Bible is seeking to stir up the minds of people rather than the emotions. You cannot defeat the devil with your emotions. When Jesus experienced the temptation horror in His confrontation with Satan, after His 40-day fast, that experience, out in the wilderness area – that temptation experience defeated Satan because Christ did not act with emotional indignation. What He acted with was a mind that knew Scripture, and declared what God had said.

Therefore, it is important that we understand that expository preaching is not geared to try to create a lot of hoopla in the service. When you see a church service with a lot of jumping and jiving and carrying on, you know that that's of the devil, and that is not God's program that's operating. Biblical preaching is designed to stir up your thinking, not your emotions.

So, if you've come here to have a jolly good time, you came to the wrong place. We don't intend to make you a sitting duck for the devil who cannot be conquered by your feelings, but he can be conquered, to your protection, by the Word of God.

So, when we talk about preaching in biblical terms, we're talking about teaching. Here are a few verses.

Matthew 4:4: "But Jesus answered and said, 'It is written, man shall not live breaded alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." How many Christians do you know who violate that all the time? Lots of them. They'll stay away from church for any reason under the sun, as long as it has some material objective and material gain. And the Bible says "No!” – for something physical: even sleeping or resting. You don't stay away from a church service even for bad weather, because you can't live on that. But you will live on the Word of God. Without it, you're doomed.

Over in 2 Timothy 4:2-5, "Preach the word. Be ready in season and out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine. But wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves, teachers in accordance with their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths. But you be sober (Gravitas – dignity) in all things. Endure hardship. Do the work of an evangelist. Fulfill your ministry."

I met with our Explorer Colonist girls this week at their meeting to try to orient them to why we have the Berean Youth Clubs. Why these achievement programs, and why this association? And to try to alert them that they live in a world of extreme spiritual hazard to themselves, especially the people their own age. And that what we are seeking to do for them is to give them a chance to grow up and to be women of dignity. And then I related a few stories to them.

One girl, who used to be very active in the various things we do at Berean – she's in the occult. She had to drop out of her spiritual associations. It's very undignified. Another girl was into the same kind of thing, and ready for 11th grade, but she's pregnant. That's very undignified to become pregnant without a husband, let alone that you associated with a dog who would do such a thing with you – engage in an activity that was of such potential hazard to you without any consideration for you? Just for his own fun. Is that a dignified thing to do?

Everything in our society; every deviation; and, every sin has been dumbed down. It's been wretched down so that the things that were horrible we no longer are appalled at.

I told these girls that, in American society, morality has been deregulated. You do whatever you want to do, you make up your own rules. And I said, "That's the devil's game. You will play the fool. And you will not find God's best for your life." And wouldn't you know that some girls were not there? It was probably one of the most important meetings they'll have all year. It was one of the most important things they'll hear.

I took the 21 or 22 principles of selecting a husband – selecting someone to marry, off the tapes that we have. I pulled out the notes, and I went through them, one-by-one. I didn't have time to discuss them – I just mentioned them. And I said, "Now this is a basic guideline." And as you listen to these, you'll see that this is not the way things are done today. The first thing teenagers do is want to get somebody to go steady with." I said, "That's undignified. You are a princess. And our purpose in the Berean Youth Clubs is to help you to live like a royal person.

"You've all been hearing about a royal person who lived a very un-royal lifestyle, and everybody is embarrassed by it. You don't get as a child (which is what you are as a teenager), hooked up with somebody else in a steady. You always go out with other kids and other activities, because someplace out there is a young man that's going to discover that you are a dignified gravitas woman. And boy, they will want to chase you."

I told them that I had done this one time with a previous Girls' Club, and one girl said, "Well, all you want us to do is marry somebody who's perfect." And she proved that she didn't. She learned how to marry the dog and the pig. She would've been smarter to listen to me. In fact, that was my opening remark to the girls: "Do you know who I am?" And they thought, "You know, yeah, well yeah, I know your name." I said, "I'm a guy who just didn't drop off the turnip truck last week. I know something you don't know." I've been there. I've been your age, but you haven't been mine. Not many people have. Therefore, you better listen to me, because I know a lot. And I've been through the mill to see how girls lose their dignity, and very often just so they can be part of the gang, and do what the other kids do." I said, "The Lord Jesus Christ always stood above the crowd, even when he was a kid." And that's what our children must be taught to do. It is very undignified to do all kinds of things, not the least of which is not coming to church and feeding upon the Word of God in its most authoritative opportunity that you will have.

So, this passage in 2 Timothy: "Preach the Word so that you can be sober in all things" is what preachers are supposed to be doing. And you can only do that by teaching people (explaining) what the Word of God has to say.

Then there's 2 Peter 1:12-13. Peter says, "Therefore, I shall always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you. And I consider it right as long as I am in this earthly dwelling to stir you up by way of reminder." There are some people who get out of touch with the Lord. And one of the reasons they do is that they think that if they hear something taught that they've heard before, they think, "Oh, I know all that. I know what you're going to say. I don't have to come to church and listen to that again." Peter says, "Oh, yes you do." There is something in man that is always revolting against the mind of God, and you have to be reminded that that's what you are revolting against. Therefore, it is the preacher's job to remind you of things that you've heard before, but you may have gotten careless about. You may have gotten slippery about.

2 Peter 3:1-2: "This is now, beloved, the second letter I'm writing to you in which I'm stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder." Expository preaching appeals to the mind, not to your jumping emotions. Verse 2: "That you should remember the Word spoken beforehand by the holy prophets, and the commandments of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles." He's talking about Bible doctrine.

Then there is 2 Timothy 1:13-14: "Retain the standard of sound words, which you have heard from me in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard through the Holy Spirit, Who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you." What treasure? The treasure of doctrine. And how do you guard it? By living up to it, and by not letting people around you dissuade you from it.

I listened to Bill Bennett and some feisty feminist (I didn't get her name) for a while this morning on "Meet the Depressed." And the lady was pounding away at the freedom of women, and being able to be like men, and to be able to go out and live their lives, and have freedom from having to be hung, like her mother was, with rearing a family. And Bill Bennett was very nice. She kept talking and punching, and talking and punching. And he could hardly get a word in edgewise. And he said, "The latest poll shows that 85% of women would rather stay home and rear their little children and not have to go to work." And in another sentence later, she said, "Well, you just referred to an opinion here about. . ." And he said, "It's not an opinion. I said, 'A poll." I said, "That's it Bill. Sock it to her." Well, Bennett didn't do it either, but he's speaking from a biblical frame of reference. But they're talking about morality. They got off on the homosexual thing. Not once did anybody say: "There is a regulation about this. There is a God. He's out there. He set the rules. And there are certain things you can do, and you cannot do. And the things you cannot do, you won't get away with trying to do." And I'm saying, "Why doesn't somebody just say, "There is a standard for this above the deregulated standard of American society." But they don't go back to the Scriptures.

Paul tells Timothy, "Remember that the treasure of doctrinal truth has been given to you by explanatory teaching. 2 Timothy 3:14-17: "You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of knowing, from whom you have learned them." Paul says, "You stand by the doctrines, and, Timothy, remember who I am. I'm the apostle. I had a personal confrontation with Jesus Christ. For three years, He personally taught me in the Arabian Desert. What I am teaching you is the Word of God. So don't treat it as something optional for you to revise by your human thinking. And don't let people treat the Word of God that way."

Verse 15: "And that from childhood, you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God in profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

There is nothing so sad is to see some youngster who has grown up in a Christian home and surrounded by Christian instruction, and then to blow it all, as if that kid was nothing but a pagan – to let the devil destroy their lives and all the potential.

1 Timothy 6:3-5: "If anyone advocates a different doctrine, and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, which are now recorded in Scripture, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness." This is doctrine of the moral standards that are in Scripture. Those are the godly standards: "He is conceited, and understands nothing, but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words out of which arise, envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind, and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain."

The lowest level of degeneracy is where material things become the focus of life. They become the most important thing of life. Like Midas, you'll grab them; you'll hang onto them; you'll go out of this life kicking and fuming, but you're going to hang on to material things. What a great thing that Job understood this principle. We're discovering in our morning prayer meetings in the faculty at BCA that the book of Job is filled with enormous advanced doctrine. And one of them was Job's statement. In Job 2:9-10, his wife says, "Job, you're nothing but a festering mass of boils. You're sitting here in agony that's driving you out of your mind. God's doing this to you, and you know it, and I know it. Why don't you just curse Him and check out. Just chuck Him." And he says, "You foolish woman. Shall we only accept the blessings of God? God has given, and God has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." The Lord has given. The Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

What was Job saying? Job says, "When I was a very rich man, doing a lot of good with my riches, I had the Lord. Now that I'm a poor man, not even with my health, I still have the Lord. I'm just as rich as I ever was." His wife said, "What are you talking about? Curse God, and die." Godliness is not great gain. Now, your great gain can be a source of your acting in a godly way, but that takes that special decision of maturity as a Christian, because your eyes are on eternity, not on this life.

Let’s look at one more in Ephesians 6:10. Biblical preaching appeals to stir up the mind. It tends to stir up the mind, not the emotions. Starting at Ephesians 6:10 – that great passage on the Christian soldier's armor. And as I review this, to remind you of what the parts of the armor are again, you'll notice that every one of them is nothing that you can achieve by your emotions. You'll not go to church and have a jolly good emotional time, and have any of the parts of the armor. It's only as we have explained them to you, bit-by-bit, that you're able to put them on, and to defeat the devil.

Ephesians 6:10-11: "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might." There's our strength. There's our power base: "Put on the full armor of God that you may be will to stand firm against the schemes of the devil." "Stand firm" means that you're not going to be knocked over. You're not going to be losing your dignity. You'll not be made a fool by Satan, because you'll let somebody in life treat you like a fool morally.

Ephesians 6:12-17: "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of the darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places." We fight against demons: "Therefore, take up the full armor of God that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything to stand firm." You're never defeated. You're just standing firm.

"Stand firm, therefore, having girded your loins with truth (doctrine), and having put on the breastplate of righteousness (your personal, temporal fellowship conduct), and having shod your feet with the preparedness of the gospel of peace." You know that you're saved. You have no question that you're going to heaven, so that you can be at ease at that in the midst of the battle: "In addition to all, taking up the shield of faith, with which you'll be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one."

That's what Job had. He had such faith in God that all the things that Satan was shooting at him (all the fiery arrows) didn't make any impact. And you need that faith and confidence: "The Lord has given. The Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. And the worst thing happens to me – I die, then the best thing has happened to me. I'm in His presence."

"And take the helmet of salvation." That is the protection for your mind – salvation with all that it brings in understanding God: "And the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God." The Word of God in the Greek there is not the usual "logos" word for God, which is a concept. This is another word "rhema" (hray'-mah), R H E M A. And this is the word which means "doctrine." Isn't that interesting? What you take is doctrinal principles, and you beat the fool out of the devil with them. But if you don't have those principles (and most Christians don't), and you're going to go from thinking to feeling, and your whole religious system is touchy-feely and you're going to go down a pauper at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Now, having the armor, you need this tactic, which is why we stress prayer: "With all prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit." This is why we ask people who are in the Berean Youth Clubs to come to prayer meeting. It's the most important time of being in touch with God, so you can stand up before your kids. We ask our teachers in the school to come to prayer meeting, so when they stand up before their children, they have the capacity to have the tactics to beat it. For all of us on the staff – we come to prayer meeting. For all of us in positions of authority in this church, you can't keep in touch with what God is doing here, if we're not in prayer meeting. And certainly, when the people come who are in dire circumstances, and under the hard times like Dennis is now, people are sitting at home are not nearly as effective as that combined effect – those of us who are prayer meeting, making that impact together. It's a chore? You bet. But someday, in heaven, you'll surely be glad you made it. And the saddest thing is not to see your children there. It's not to see you telling your children: "There's nothing more important in life."

I told our girls at the club meeting: "You should plan ahead. If you have a paper to write, get it written, so that you're not saying, "Oh (the day before), I have to do this thing. I have to get this done. If things don't pull together, forget the school stuff. You go with the things of God first. Matthew 6:33, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these other things (including the good grades) are going to be added to you." Don't play it the devil's way, even if your parents don't have enough sense to teach you that. Forget the schoolwork. Be in prayer meeting. Be in club. Be active in the place where you should be in the things of God. If you don't learn it as a kid, you're just going to be another adult muddling through life.

Ephesians 6:18-20: "With all prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit. And with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints. And pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that in proclaiming it, I may speak boldly as I ought to speak." Paul says, "Don't let me be intimidated. I know that preaching and teaching has to be to the mind. I'm here in a tight situation in prison, and I'm under restrictive chains. And I don't want to let this, in any way, intimidate me, and undermine my boldness."

And when people reject what you know about the Word of God in our society, your boldness is going to take a beating (a blow).

Recently, speaking to a person who wanted to do something, and it was relative to the Berean ministry, and I said, "No, it's not a good thing to do." And I said, "I've had a similar experience." And I recounted that experience. And I said, "When it hit me, I was just overwhelmed with the sense of what God was wanting me to do. It was just a sense of relief." And then something else came up, and I didn't follow that inclination, and it was a very bad move. So I said, "I have learned that when I have the intuitive direction from God, I don't gamble with it." The person said, "Oh well, there's no use talking to you then, if you have some kind of a magical formula." That's how the world treats you when you talk about divine guidance. They don't think that you can be in touch with God in a very day-by-day, significant, powerful way. But I have learned my lesson, I hope, about ignoring those intuitive directions. They come in a very gentle way. And I stop. And I back up. And I check again. And I wait until I'm sure that I've got the signal right, and I don't ignore when it comes. The only way that can happen is when your mind is oriented to God's thinking. And the only way that can happen is in these church services where you're instructed because the appeal is to your mind and not to some emotion.

I went by my favorite, big church in Irving to see the sign. This week, the preacher is preaching on a subject. It's a salvation verse, of course. And this time, the title was something like: "The Salvation of God." And I said, "Hot dog. This time he's got the right title." All of his sermons are titled "The Salvation of God." But that doesn't look good to have the same title every week. So, he changed the title, but the Scripture passage is always on how to go to heaven. And I think to myself, those poor people, they're pouring their money in. There are crowds of them. They're smiling at one another. They're grinning after the service. They're having a wonderful time. And they went as poor out of that service every Sunday spiritually as they were when they came in. They have lots of social programs, and lots of activities. But the one thing people cannot find: Christians being fed on the full counsel of the Word of God. Instead, they're told the gospel again, about which the people say, "I know that, and I believe that. Now tell me how to survive in the devil's world." And usually, that gospel message is presented with a lot of hoopla to try appeal to your emotions.

Our study of the book of Colossians has brought us to Colossians 1:21. There the Colossians are reminded of their unsaved days. They were told that they were in spiritual darkness, and that they were estranged from God. They were hostile in their minds toward Him. And they were engaged, consequently, in evil deeds – the evil deeds of sins and human good, all from the sin nature. They were in a condition of total depravity as is always the case of unbelievers. Therefore, they are the enemies of God, and that makes it impossible for them to secure salvation by personal works of merit, because everything that comes from a human being, who is not born again (who is not saved), is, in God's sight, to quote Isaiah 64:6, "filthy garments" – "filthy rags." All of your righteousness, Isaiah says – all of those good things you do that people applaud, and which people might need: food; shelter; hospital care; medical care; and, all those good things come from the sin nature. With God, it is a condemned sin. It is the sin nature. It's tainted by evil.

**Roman Catholic Church Salvation**

Now, the Roman Catholic Church, in view of this, we must be astounded to observe that they teach that salvation is by a twofold operation. One is the payment of Christ for your moral guilt on the cross. Two: the payment of your own suffering through various penances and good works, in temporal punishment for your own sins, until you are fully purified. So, it takes Christ dying to take care of your moral guilt. That's certainly biblical. It takes your works to pay for your own sins, in time, until you have purified yourself. The two go together.

Yet, as if they had never read it, Romans 11:6 says, "If it's of works, it's not grace. If it's grace, it's not works." Romans 4:4 speaks of Abraham being saved by believing God, and pointing out that if a man is saved by works, and it's to his credit, but if he saved God's way, it's to God's credit. And God only saves His way, which is by faith in Christ.

So, here we have this huge church of millions of members. And let this teach you about the significance of numbers, relative to authority of truth. The Roman Catholic Church is teaching that one is saved by Christ's works, and a suitable purification of yourself in time. Merit for salvation has to be earned in the Catholic Church through seven sacraments, especially the Mass, which we refer to as the Lord's Supper. The mass is the continual re-sacrificing of Jesus Christ for securing merit for salvation. The temporal payment you must make. That's part of the temporal payment. Every time you go to a Mass, you drink the blood of your god, and eat his body, and you have gain for yourself a little more time of personal purification out of purgatory.

However, anyone who spends a life under the Roman Catholic system in such great good works and service to God (human good all the way, but esteemed as works of God) – anyone with excessive grace for salvation has that grace placed in the Pope's treasury of merit upon the death of that individual. This is then added to Christ's merit; the merit of Mary; the merit of the apostles; and, the merit of other saints, so that there is this huge treasury from which the Pope dispenses grace (merit) for people to speed their time out of purgatory. When sufficient merit is secured after one's death, then one is finally fully justified and released from purgatory. Only then does he go to heaven.

A person could die justified in the Roman Catholic system but not have paid sufficiently in temporal punishment for his sins. He goes to purgatory. He will not be fully justified until there has been sufficient suffering on his part, or others who have paid for him after death, so that he can get into heaven.

However, as we pointed out last time, the Bible teaches us that the Lord Jesus Christ was sacrificed once for all. He doesn't need to be sacrificed again for the sins of mankind. And the only way you benefit by His sacrifice is faith in God's gospel promise that He will save you if you accept what the Savior has done for you. It is not by works added to the death of Christ.

Mother Teresa is being considered for elevation to sainthood currently. She is being prepared to be venerated by Roman Catholics so that she can be prayed to for favors. This is because of her excessive life of works of mercy so that she earned more merit than she needed for salvation, which are then going to be placed in the pope's treasury of merit.

This is a totally unbiblical plan of salvation. It will not take one to heaven. Justification is not progressive. Acts 16:31: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved." Bingo! There is nothing else added, and no more to do. If you don't live up to that royal position, you will be disciplined by God, but you are not going to be taken back out of the family. The Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory and of papal indulgences is a deadly doctrine, taking its adherents into the lake of fire. And I want to let the Catholics speak for themselves this morning. And I do want to say that some Roman Catholics might be saved. Some Roman Catholics are saved if they don't follow their own church's plan of salvation. It is possible that they can be saved. But very often, those people finally leave the Catholic Church, because they realize that Catholic doctrine is contradictory to the biblical grace salvation.

So these false doctrines are now being dignified by the furor over Mother Teresa. And all the world, because of adulation to her, is getting the idea that the way you deal with God is getting more good than bad in your life.

**The Roman Catholic Doctrine of Purgatory**

This is important for you to understand for a variety of reasons. You need to know what Roman Catholicism teaches on this subject so that you will not be fooled by words. You talk to a Catholic, and they'll say, "Oh yes, I believe in Christ." They'll say all the right things, and you'll say, "Well, what's the difference? We're all on the same page. We're all on the same wavelength." No, you're not. And if you believe that, you can make a major mistake.

You might marry a Roman Catholic and think there's no problem. What a devastation that's going to prove to be! The power of Satan should not be ever underestimated.

The Bible, in 1 Corinthians 10:12, says, "Let him who thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall." And those of you who are well-taught, and who are sincere in your personal life following Christ, are the high targets of priority for Satan. You've just opened the crack, and he'll come in. The younger you are, the sooner you need to learn this.

**The Beginning of the Berean Tape Ministry**

Who could believe that probably 25 years ago, we began making tapes of the services? We did that because eight of our young people from Berean Church were students at Wheaton College up in Wheaton, Illinois. And my number two son wrote and said, "We're not really getting significant doctrinal instruction in the churches. Why don't you make a tape of the service and send it to us, and we'll all get together." So, Sarah, and John, and David, and all the gang that was up there together got the tape, and they would sit and listen to it. And we said, "Let's put out the tape on the table, and if people want to take a copy, they can. These were all unedited. So, people would come by, and they'd pick up the last Sunday service on a tape if they wanted it, so they could study it more. And we were doing it in this room back here, and we were holding a little microphone up to the speaker there. And that's how we were recording. And every time somebody moved in their chair, it squeaked, and the squeak would get on the recording. And then somebody would whisper something, and that would be on the tape. We all had to be perfectly still.

We had a young man who came by and said, "What are you doing?" So I said, "Well, we're making these tapes. We send them to the college people, and give them to people who want them." He was in electronics. He said, "Oh, we can do this better than that. And he produced that sophisticated setup that we have today of the Berean Tape Ministry, which has since been refined. This man was a devotee of the Word of God. He was a serious student of the Bible, and he delighted in this. In those days, he would do the editing with me. We'd do it together until I just did it on my own to save his time. Who would believe that today he's a Roman Catholic? Who would believe that today, this tape ministry which is reaching to distant places; bringing people to Christ; bringing people to the full knowledge of the Word of God; and enabling Christians to earn spiritual rewards left and right – he's a Christian, and he's getting great rewards someday from what he started in this tape ministry? But there's going to be an iron wall. He's going to discover that the day he became a Roman Catholic, that his service to God became empty, useless, and nothing. And all of the things that you've been hearing about Roman Catholicism is what he now believes. How could that happen? Beware of . . . the devil.

If you want to lose your dignity as a Christian, just stay home as often as you can from the church services. Just stay away from your club meeting as often as you can. Just stay away from the Sunday school and the Training Union meetings all you can. Just be sloppy in your Christian service activity, and you'll see what the devil will do for you.

**Roman Catholic Catechism**

In the Roman Catholic catechism, I want to read to you, and I'm quoting from the book The Roman Catholic Controversy by James R. Wright.

**Proposition 1030**

On page 183, there is a doctrinal statement in the Roman Catholic Catechism: statement number 1030: "All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified." Did you get that phrase: "imperfectly purified." You die in God's grace. You're not in a mortal sin. You're in His friendship, but you are imperfectly purified because you don't have enough temporal punishment: "Are indeed assured of their eternal salvation. But after death, they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven."

Now these are propositions that Catholic children memorize like we have some catechismal statements that our kids in the academy memorize. Here a Catholic child says: "After you die, you must be purified to be able to go to heaven."

**Proposition 1031**

Proposition 1031 says: "The church gives the name 'purgatory' to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. The church formulated her doctrine of faith on purgatory, especially at the Councils of Florence and of Trent.

What is this statement? The statement is that you can die in friendship and grace of God. You're on your way to being justified, but you're not fully purified. Yet the book of Hebrews tells us that what the death of Christ does is fully purify us. "The blood of bulls and goats couldn't purify, but the blood of Christ fully purified – exactly the opposite.

**The Council of Florence**

Now the Council of Florence that this refers to was in 1439. Let me read what that says: "It has likewise been defined that if those truly penitent have departed in the love of God before they have made satisfaction by worthy fruits of penance for sins of commission and omission, the souls of those are cleansed after death by purgatorial punishments. And so that they may be released from punishment of this kind, the suffrage of the living faithful are of advantage to them: namely the sacrifices of Mass; prayers; alms giving; and, other works of piety which are customarily performed by the faithful for other faithful according to the institutions of the church."

Proposition 1439 was before the Protestant Reformation, making the statement that a person may die in friendship with God, in a state of grace, but be morally impure because he hasn't suffered enough temporal punishment for his sins. Thus he will go to purgatory, a weigh station on the way to heaven."

**The Council of Trent**

The Council of Trent is a definitive statement of Roman Catholicism beliefs. It was the answer to the Protestant Reformation. It was held in 1563, and it ran for several years. Here's what it says, "~Since the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Spirit, in conformity with the sacred writings and the ancient traditions of the fathers in sacred councils."

Where do you and I get our information? From the Bible. Where do the Roman Catholics get their information? From the councils of the church; from the ancient traditions; and, from what the Pope says. That's very different. "The Word of God is alive and powerful and active. All Scripture is inspired by the in-breathing of the Holy Spirit" – the inspiration: the breathing in of the Spirit of God. That's very different from sacred writings, ancient traditions of fathers, and sacred councils.

Very recently, the ecumenical synod has thought that: There is a purgatory, and that the souls retained there are assisted by the sufferings of the faithful, and especially by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar. The holy synod commands the bishops that they insist that the sound doctrine of purgatory, which has been transmitted by the holy fathers and the holy councils be believed by the faithful of Christ, be maintained, taught, and everywhere preached." Here we're told that the living may suffer and perform good works for those who are in purgatory in order to hasten their cleansing for their release into heaven. How unbelievable that is!

What does the Bible declare? The Word of God declares absolute full holiness for all born-again believers. Those who have trusted in Christ have imputed to them immediately the absolute righteousness of God. Therefore, they are fully purified. Is this because we have decided it in church councils, in church meetings, and in church fathers' records? No. It is the declaration of Scripture that you are fully sanctified upon the moment of your salvation in Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:30-31: "But by His doing, you are in Christ Jesus who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification (setting aside to eternal life), and redemption; that just as it is written, 'Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.'" This is declaring to us that you have everything that you need to go to heaven. You have absolute righteousness. You have sanctification (you're set aside) to heaven. You have redemption. You've been bought out of the slave market.

How about 2 Corinthians 5:17 that we love to quote. It says, "Therefore if any man (anyone) is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things pass away. Behold new things have come." These old things are old things of death in Adam. The new things are the new things of life in Christ."

Then, in our book of Colossians, in Colossians 2:13-15: "And when you were dead in your transgressions, in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, and which was hostile to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them having triumphed over them through Him."

Sometimes, in the old days, stores used to have a little spindle (a little sharp spike), and when a bill was paid, they would write "Paid" on it, and then they'd put it on this spindle, and it would be poked through with a hole, and the clerk would know (the treasurer would) know that this one has been paid. And that's the picture here. Christ says, "I nailed it to the cross. I put a hole in it. I declared it paid." Furthermore, He said, "I even took all of the forces of Satan, and I did what the Roman rulers do. I had a victory parade through town." When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities of Satan, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them. He marched them before all humanity and said, "The devil has been whipped."

We have one more in 1 Peter 2:24: "And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross that we might die to sin and live to righteousness, for by His wounds you were healed." He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross that we might die to sin, and live to righteousness, For by His wounds, you're healed."

When I was going through my doctoral examination at Dallas Seminary, they asked me, "What authority do you have that Christ has covered sin?" Here it is. 1 Peter 2:24, what authority do you have that He solved the problem? Where does the Bible say that? 1 Peter 2:24: "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross that we might die to sin (that is, we would be neutralized; separated; and, freed from sin authority) and live to righteousness (because we are now righteous), for by His wounds we were healed."

Now, the Roman Catholic theologians come out with a totally different story. And the most hair-raising things of official doctrinal statement from their theologians we will look at next time. This is not just a difference between two churches who are going to the same heaven. One is never going to make it there. And people who believe the Roman Catholic doctrine of salvation will spend eternity in the lake of fire. Perhaps that should give you a new perspective on the fact that you're, by the grace of God, one of the elect. So, what are you doing fooling around with the world, and waiting for some future that's never going to come?

Our Father, we do thank You for our place in Your royal family. And we ask You to help us to rise to what we are in Christ. How we thank You. We could have been born into this benighted system of Catholicism, but is only by Your grace that we have been preserved from it. We have seen others fall by the wayside to its machinations, and its intrigues, and its appeals. Therefore, we pray that we will not (any of us) think that we're sure of standing. The only way we're going to stand is because we're here in the support of a fellowship like Berean, supporting one another, encouraging one another, as Hebrews says, until that day of the rapture arrives. We encourage one another to assemble ourselves faithfully together each Lord's day. May we have a new sense of devotion to You because of what we have escaped by Your grace. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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