

Questions

- Q1: If there was a translation error with the word Metanoia which means repentance and not penance, then why doesn't the Catholic Church just change?
- Ans: I really liked this question because it hits on a number of key things. First is the translation issue. Catholics would agree that the word Metanoia in the Greek language (which is the language the scripture was written) is better translated as repentance or heart turning and not doing penance which refers to heart and action. There are two reasons why they won't change. First they believe that doing penance is what Jesus meant as Jesus would have actually been speaking in Aramaic and that the Greek New Testament missed the fuller meaning. I don't like this because I think it undercuts the Holy Spirit's role in forming Scripture. The second reason why they won't change is because the Council at Trent made it very clear that Penance and not repentance is required for faith.
- Q2: When did penance first become a thing?
- Ans: The Catholic Church would say that it began with the life of the church. There are at least three stages of growth that I found. Basically there was a form from the early church 50-200AD, a more public restoration to the church version 200-1000AD, and then 1000AD and on we have more of a version that we currently have.
- Q3: What is Purgatory
- Ans: Play "A Man Named Martin"

Narrative

- Narr: So if you'll remember we're in the 1500's and we're following the story of this guy named Martin Luther. He began to have questions and points of debate that pushed against some of the key doctrines. Specifically who in the Catholic Church has Authority and secondly how are we made right and justified before a holy God? What sparked the debate were 95 theses that Martin posted to a Church on October 31, 1517. Well over the next years Luther wrote some books and was a very controversial figure. In fact the Catholic Church had him excommunicated or kicked out of the Church but because Luther was so popular among the people of Germany they didn't go public with that but instead invited him along with the Emperor Charles the 5th to a meeting to try and get things settled. Watch on the screens to get the account of what happened at the Diet of Worms in 1521.
- Video: "A Man Named Martin"

The Church

- Intro: (drink cup of water) Ahh... Tastes good doesn't it. Water is essential for life to exist. God's grace is kind of like water. While water is essential for physical life so also God's grace is essential for spiritual life. How do I know this? This was one of the earliest controversies among Christians. There was no disagreement about the need for God's grace and not man's works in receiving salvation from sins but there became an issue about how to grow as a Christian or sanctification. Was it us trying harder to do all the right works or was it too by the grace of God?
- Gal 3: ***O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. 2 Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?***
- Ex: So at salvation they received the Spirit, how? Hearing with faith. Hearing the promise of God and responding.
- Gal 3: ***3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?... 5 Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith— 6 just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"?***
- Set up: Salvation and sanctification, or continued growth in Christ come by God's grace. Both Catholics and Protestants believe this. We both believe that to be a Christian and to remain living as a Christian then we absolutely need God's grace. We both agree that water for physical life and grace for spiritual life is essential. The point of these next few minutes will be concerning the major disagreement. What is the delivery method or how does God dispense his grace? The short summary is that Catholics believe that the Church dispenses God's grace primarily through the sacraments (we'll focus on these in detail next week) and Protestants believe that God's grace is dispensed through faith alone of individual believers. We'll begin this week with the Catholic View and then we'll compare that to the Protestant view.

Roman Catholic View

Set up: The Catholic Church believes that it possesses the keys to the kingdom. Like if there is a doorway to heaven and its locked then who is going to let you in? I want to be clear that this doctrine held by the Catholic Church isn't prideful or power hungry (though admittedly I think this doctrine has led to both). Rather it's something they believe is the way God has chosen to dispense his grace. Listen to Matthew 16:18-19

Read: **18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."**

Qt: CCC 553 Jesus entrusted a specific authority to Peter: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."²⁸⁷ The "power of the keys" designates **authority to govern the house of God**, which is the Church. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, confirmed this mandate after his Resurrection: "Feed my sheep."²⁸⁸ The power to "bind and loose" connotes the **authority to absolve sins, to pronounce doctrinal judgements, and to make disciplinary decisions in the Church**. Jesus entrusted this authority to the Church through the ministry of the apostles²⁸⁹ and in particular through the ministry of Peter, the only one to whom he specifically entrusted the keys of the kingdom.

Ex: So Peter received this ability to govern the house of God so that when he said you're in then you're in and when he says you're out then you're out. This power is entrusted to Peter and is passed down by the Church. **But how?**

Qt: CCC 986 By Christ's will, the Church possesses the power to forgive the sins of the baptized and exercises it through bishops and priests normally in the sacrament of Penance.

Qt: CCC 987 "In the forgiveness of sins, both priests and sacraments are instruments which our Lord Jesus Christ, the only author and liberal giver of salvation, wills to use in order to efface (***or erase**) our sins and give us the grace of justification" *added by me for clarity

Ex: So the Catholic Church gives out God's grace through the sacraments of the Church (there are seven of these we'll cover next week). So if salvation by God's grace is something that the Church hands out then what about others who want to receive God's grace but aren't Catholic? Particularly what about us as Protestants? This is a pretty substantial rabbit trail, but I think it's worth it. So let's do a little history of the Catholics position on this...

His: In the 3rd century, the bishop of Carthage, named Cyprian, said, "outside the church, there is no salvation". He went on to explain that the Catholic Church is like Noah's ark. He said it is necessary for a person to be concretely, really, and visibly within the membership of the Roman Catholic Church in order to be saved just like it would be necessary for someone to be literally on Noah's ark to be saved from the flood. (Sproul-AWT-54) Historically then, as Protestants we don't fit under that category so we can't be saved. But things have developed a lot since the 200's AD.

In the 1400's, just before this big schism in the Catholic Church, there was a council called the Council of Florence. They said, "All those who are outside the catholic church, not only pagans but also Jews or heretics and schematics, cannot share in eternal life and will go into the everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels, unless they are joined to the catholic church before the end of their lives." (AWT-57)

This became a problem soon after the Protestant Reformation. The Catholic Church had no problem with calling people like Martin Luther or John Calvin heretics who deserved hell but in the years to come, it became difficult to deal with seeing their grandchildren or great grandchildren not enter heaven. They weren't disagreeable they just were brought up as a Protestant.

I'm going to spare you a number of the details but essentially the Catholic Church has continued to loosen up on this idea through the years. In the late 1800's at the Council at Vatican 1, Protestants were labeled as "schismatics" but in Vatican 2, in the 1960's we were called "separated brethren".

So how do we fit in now? We find our answer in the section of the Catholic Catechism dealing with that famous line, CCC 846-7 "Outside the Church there is no salvation"

Qt: "**846** How are we to understand this affirmation, often repeated by the Church Fathers?³³⁵ Re-formulated positively, it means that all salvation comes **from Christ** the Head **through the Church** which is his Body: Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation" It goes on, "Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it."³³⁶"

- Ex: If we read this closely then Protestants shouldn't be able to be saved. But they have clarified what they mean: "847 This affirmation is not aimed at those who, through no fault of their own, do not know Christ and his Church: Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience - those too may achieve eternal salvation.³³⁷"
- Ill: Well I started with a drink of water and a question. How are we to receive God's grace? The Catholic Church believes that it is able to dispense God's grace. It's kind of like this water pitcher. God pours in his living water into the pitcher and they are able to contain God's grace and then give it out to whom they see fit.
- Con: Protestants (and I) absolutely deny this being within the Catholic Church's possession. And also this is a real problem because they are inconsistent. If God's grace is first given to the Catholic Church and they pour it out through the sacraments then God's grace shouldn't be accessible to anyone else. But they have shifted on this and allow for exceptions that somehow God's grace does get to other people. Where does this mystery water come from? It's the only true way to receive God's grace and it is the Protestant view.

Protestant View

- Ex: For Protestants we believe that Faith alone is the instrument, or the dispenser of God's grace. Rehear Galatians 3
- Gal 3: ***O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. 2 Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?... 5 Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith— 6 just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"?***
- Ex: God's grace is given through the faith of the believer. This is how you receive the Spirit. This is how God continues to give his grace to you. Another key verse:
- Ep 2: ***8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.***
- Ex: I would go back to three key "alones" of the reformation. By grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. It is by God's grace that we have salvation and sanctification, and it's through our faith in Jesus as sufficient for our sin. Another way to say this, we can know and love God because he opens our eyes to the beauty of Jesus.
- Ill: What does this look like in our water analogy? I get to go straight to the source. I can drink from the running water myself. I don't have to go through the water pitcher anymore.

Application

- Set up: So why does it matter if the Catholic Church is the dispenser of salvation or if it's merely faith in Jesus?
- RC: First in dealing with our Catholic friends. We should really press on their idea that the Church can give God's grace through sacraments. If they hold that to be true, then Protestants aren't believers. But if it is not true then their whole system collapses. Again our goal isn't to destroy the Catholic Church but to helpfully point out if there is truly gospel error.
- Prot: What about for us? I think that this week is a big one as far as our application. If God's grace comes by faith alone then we need to watch out for ways that we've just replaced the Catholic Church's dispensing God's grace. Three ways we have fallen into this error. First, is that we can believe that an act of an initial prayer is what saves us. There is no magical prayer that you can recite to be saved. It's not repeat these words after me. It's faith that Jesus, lived, died, rose again, for your sins and a repentance from those sins. Second, we can't fall into the trap that baptism is what saves us or even is a second level of faith that you receive. Thirdly, we can't believe that places like Miracle Camp somehow possess God's grace and are able to hand it out. Yes God uses Miracle Camp but they're not the dispensers. God is the dispenser of his own grace through our faith.

Just 100 years later, there was a controversy because the Roman emperor, Diocletian had an edict against Christians that produced many priests and others being killed for their faith. But there were some that denounced Christ and continued on. How would these priests be received back? If they denounced Christ then they weren't really Christians and so the grace that they gave out would have been invalid. There was questioning about how salvation could come even if given by a false priest.