

The Bible and the Catholic Mass, #1

The Bible & Roman Catholicism

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We are continuing tonight our biblical examination of the Roman Catholic Church. We started this a couple of three weeks ago. We've covered the pope, the Bible and the pope, the Bible and Catholic tradition, and we are doing this in part because coming up at the end of this month is the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation and we are glad to be able to honor that significant date in world history, let alone church history, with this series. But also I want to be very very plainspoken with you here this evening, that there should be no question in anyone's mind about the utter necessity of this study for the times in which we live. We are not simply marking a historical occasion here, we are speaking about things that distinguish a true church from a false church and make no mistake about it, the Roman Catholic Church is a demonic false system of religion and that cannot be stated clearly enough or often enough. But it's important for us to realize that we can't simply fling that accusation and then move on with our lives, we have a responsibility if we are going to make such a strong statement to support it with the truth and that's what we're trying to do in the series.

Now again, just about the necessity of this study, just six weeks ago on August 31, 2017, the Pew Research Center released survey results that measured Protestant and Roman Catholic beliefs and the results show that many who self identify as Protestants hold what are actually Catholic beliefs. There is great confusion among those who would claim to be Protestants about the most basic and simple elements of truth. Listen to these, I'm just going to give you a couple of statistics. I don't often do this, as you know, and keeping in mind that this survey was released just six weeks ago. The Pew Research Center reports that over half of self identified Protestants, 52%, believe that good deeds and faith are needed to get into heaven. Both good deeds and faith are needed to get into heaven. That's a Catholic belief. Only 46% believe the biblical truth that salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone, 46% of Protestants. This is staggering. They go on to report that less than half of professing Protestants, 46%, believe that the Bible is the only source of religious authority for Christians. More than half believe that Christians should look to the Bible and to the church's official teachings and tradition for guidance, over half of Protestants echoing things that are the foundation of Roman Catholicism. Why are we doing this study? It's because there is mass confusion among those who wouldn't even claim to be Catholic about what is true and what is false.

And beloved, there is no getting around the fact that the professing church of Jesus Christ is reaping the harvest, the bitter harvest, of two generations of pastors and teachers who have loved entertainment and large crowds more than the accurate teaching of God's word. It is because churches have failed to instruct their people on these kinds of doctrines that this kind of theological chaos can come to pass. Well, it is our privilege as a church tonight, it is my personal privilege this evening, to stand with the Reformers of 500 years ago, to stand with Luther and Calvin and Zwingli and others like them, to stand with them rather than the prevailing spirit of our age. We don't mind that. We count that an honor to be able to stand with men like that as we bring the Bible to bear and we bring the searchlight of the Bible to bear on the teaching and the false doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church.

Tonight, what we're going to do is we're going to focus on what they call the Mass or the Eucharist and to greatly oversimplify just to get it started here this evening, to greatly oversimplify and to even distort, to some extent, but just to have a starting point for those of you who may not be familiar with this: the Mass, the Roman Catholic Mass is their version of Communion. That's basically a starting point. In order to teach unfamiliar things, you start with something familiar. That's the best way I can do it. But let me quickly say that their practice of the Mass bears absolutely no resemblance to biblical teaching and certainly the significance that they attach to it is counter to everything that the Bible would teach.

Now to just to kind of give you a starting point on this and what we have tried to do in this series if you are new to it, maybe watching for the first time over our live stream, what we're trying to do in this, we are taking care to quote carefully from their current catechism of the Catholic Church that was released in 1994 in English, I believe it was 92 in French; this is their official catechism that states what they believe. It's a fairly thick, nicely produced book with 2,000, 3,000 paragraphs of teaching in it articulating their official doctrine. I'm quoting it and quoting the specific paragraph numbers so that everyone can know that we are doing our very levelheaded best to represent their teaching accurately in their own words, and then we take that and we apply Scripture to it and see what Scripture would have to say about it.

Here is what the catechism of the Catholic Church at paragraph 1365 says about the Eucharist or the Mass, they use both words to describe the same ritual in their system, and they say and I quote, "The Eucharist is also a sacrifice. In the Eucharist, Christ gives us the very body which he gave up for us on the cross, the very blood which he poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." The operative words here when they say "the very body, the very blood," they mean literal flesh and literal blood. They are not talking symbolically. They mean when the priest holds the wafer in his hands, he is literally holding the body of Christ in that, not a wafer, and we will talk about that more next week. There is so much here that we are going to have to cover this over two weeks and not deal with it all tonight. What the Catholics are saying in the Mass is that, "We are sacrificing the very body and the very blood of Christ literally." They mean this.

They go on to say that this Mass is a sacrifice of the very body, the very blood of Christ and in paragraph 1414, a summary paragraph, they say, "As a sacrifice, the Eucharist is also offered in reparation for the sins of the living and the dead and to obtain spiritual or temporal benefits from God." Let me say that again, "As a sacrifice, the Eucharist is offered in reparation," reparation is a word that means "to make amends for," "is offered to make amends for the sins of the living and the dead," for the dead, "and to obtain spiritual or temporal benefits from God." They are saying that this ritual that we practice involves the literal blood, the literal body of Christ, and we offer it to atone for sin as we do. Now, we'll have more to say about that later. I'm just trying to get some basic information on the table. So what Catholics believe occurs in their Mass, a perverted version of Communion, is that the substance of the bread and wine is changed into the literal body and blood of Christ and the priest offers these elements to God as a sacrifice to make amends for their sins – and don't miss it – also for the sins of the dead. You want to spring a soul from purgatory, offer a Mass for them and you can speed it up by an uncertain number, a certain amount of time.

Now, to us that are used to biblical teaching, we are used to what we are use to, this all sounds really strange and bizarre and even grotesque, but 1.27 billion people, as we have made the point repeatedly, are baptized in a religion that teaches this and practices this and so what we want to do is this, we want to ask this question to start with tonight: how do they get to that view? How do they get to that view and we're going to spend, like I say, two nights, tonight and next Tuesday we're going to address this and we're just going to piece it all together hopefully by the time we're done next week. How do you get to what I just described from the Bible, is the question, and it's not entirely dependent on the Bible but we want to look at it this way. So let's start here with our first point explaining the Catholic view of the Last Supper when Jesus had the final meal, the Passover meal with the disciples before he was crucified. That's what we're referring to, explaining the Catholic view of the Last Supper. That's our point 1 here.

Now, let me just say this and make a couple of introductory comments that perhaps I should have moved up earlier in my notes but I didn't. You can see me afterwards if you want to register a complaint. That won't be necessary. First of all is this: the Catholic Mass is difficult to untangle and as you hear things tonight and next week, you may very well find it difficult to follow what I'm saying, and don't be surprised if that happens because you are not the first person that has struggled to even understand what they mean by the Mass. As one teacher said, they are all over the map on this and so it's very difficult to present it in a concise streamlined way that goes in a linear manner from Point A, to Point B, and you say, "Oh, okay, I've got it." It's not that simple but we are trying to do the best that we can.

To give you an idea of how complex this is, their catechism devotes 98 paragraphs to explain what they mean by the Mass in paragraphs 1322 to 1419, and that does not even include the other places throughout the catechism where it is referred to indirectly; 98 paragraphs is devoted to their teaching on the Mass. They have, I believe it is, six paragraphs devoted to the doctrine of justification. That gives you a sense of the distortion that's in their system. But with 98 paragraphs, beloved, it is inevitable that we

are going to pass over important details, we are going to omit things that they would contest, and that's okay. We're just trying to give an overview that allows us to get a grasp on what we're doing and not just for the sake of the academic exercise of this, but as many of you have approached me privately and said, I know that you work with, you interact with Catholics, you are interacting with people. It will help you to understand their perspective so that you can interact with them intelligently and hopefully under the blessing of the Holy Spirit, be an instrument to bring the Gospel to them and that God would use your witness informed by an understanding of Catholicism in order to lead them to a true saving knowledge of Christ. That would be the ultimate goal of what we're doing here this evening.

So it's difficult to untangle, that's one preliminary comment. Secondly, again going by their official teaching, you should understand that Catholics consider the Mass to be central to their entire system of religion. This is no incidental matter to them, this is at the very core of what they believe, what they practice and what they put their hope in. Listen to what they say at paragraph 1324 of their catechism and I quote, "The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life for in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself." To call it the source and the summit is to say this is the origin of the Christian life; this is where you find it. To call it the summit is to say this is the climax of our existence; this is the purpose of everything that we do is the celebration of the Mass or the Eucharist, and they assert that you literally find the Lord Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. Not a symbol. Not a remembrance. Not a memorial.

I debated whether to say this, I'm going to say it because, you know, it's helpful. When I was a very brand-new Christian, I went to a Catholic Mass. I didn't know any better. I was with a friend and, you know, hey, you know everything is Christian. I had been a Christian for days or weeks. I didn't know any better so I have to preface it that way so that you don't say, "Oh man, what was he doing at a Mass? And why is he even a pastor, he went to a Mass?" It's not like that. So I'm in this utterly foreign environment. I don't believe I had ever been in a Catholic church before. I didn't know what was going on and people start going up to the front after the priest had gone through his ritual where they say that they converted the elements, the bread and the wine, to the body and blood of Christ. So I walk up and I follow, you know, I'm just kind of going along with the crowd doing what I think I'm supposed to do at this point. Well, the person who handed me the wafer, as I recall it was some kind of altar boy, it wasn't the priest himself or some kind of, maybe it was a female servant up there. Whatever it was, it doesn't matter. She took that wafer and she presented it to me and she said, I believe it was a she, she said, "This is the body of Christ." Now, in my heart and in my mind and I may have even shown it on my countenance and I was just like, "Yeah, right. You're holding a cracker." And so I'm going to play along with your game and say, "Okay, it's the body of Christ," because it was just so absurd to think and it never crossed my mind that she actually meant that but that's what they believe, and we'll talk about that more and how they understand that when they are holding a cracker in their hands, and I'm being deliberately derogatory and pejorative in what I say. How can you hold a cracker in your hand and say, "This is the Lord Jesus. This is the body of Christ."

Well, that's what they believe and my whole point of saying it, going into this detail with you, is that you must understand that they mean these things literally. They are not kidding. They are not speaking symbolically or metaphorically. They mean what they say and they say it over and over and over again in their catechism and they have been saying this for centuries. So I just want to help you to see that when they say the body and the blood of Christ, you should not think, "Oh, they are talking symbolically like we do when we have Communion." No, they mean it. They are not saying the same thing that we are in Communion and if you can start with that understanding, you've come a long way toward being able to grasp the significance of the Catholic Mass.

So it is convoluted, admittedly, but the fact that it's convoluted isn't my fault. They were teaching this long before I ever got on the scene. It's convoluted and it's literal and it's central to them. It is essential to them. How do they get to that, that's the whole point here. There are two biblical steps that they go through to do this just in terms of their system. They may not explain it to you this way but their system works like this and we'll go to these passages in just a moment. They will go to John 6 to start with, and then based on what Jesus said in John 6, they say, "See, this is what he was doing at the Last Supper."

So with that in mind, turn to John 6 and you can begin to see the path that they take from Scriptures to what we've been describing here today. John 6:52, actually verse 51, Jesus said,

51 "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."

Now, we understand that Jesus is pointing to the cross there. He would give his literal flesh on the cross at Calvary 2,000 years ago. That's what he's talking about. And then he begins to teach people that they need to personally appropriate him by faith, that they need to internalize him by faith and he uses symbolic language in the verses that follow. Look at verse 52,

52 Then the Jews began to argue with one another, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" 53 So Jesus said to them [he presses the point], "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. 54 He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. 55 For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. 56 He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him."

Now drop down to verse 59 because the geographic reference will be helpful in just a moment. In verse 59 it says,

59 These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.

So Jesus makes these statements in John 6 earlier in his ministry describing that his flesh and blood were the key to salvation. He uses a metaphor of eating to say you need to internally appropriate that, and it becomes a picture of what he is about to do. Now, understand that as you go through the Gospel of John, we'll talk about this more next week, Jesus repeatedly uses metaphors to help explain his mission. He said, "I am the door. I am the shepherd." And on and on. He doesn't mean that he is a literal wood panel on hinges. You can't take all of these things literally. It's obvious that he's talking in metaphors but the Catholics take this and say this is literal here, and so they take John 6 and they apply that text to interpret the Lord's Supper.

Look at Matthew 26 now. Matthew 26. Again, we're just trying to give you a little sense of how they think so that we can deal with it and refute it as is the responsibility of church elders to do. Matthew 26:26. You are familiar with the narrative account, Matthew 26:26,

26 While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."
27 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. 29 But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

Now, as we've said many times, every time we have a Communion service we say this is a symbol that the Lord was giving to the church; that the bread is representative; it was a physical reminder of a different reality when Christ literally died on the cross. But the bread is bread and that's what it looks like bread, that's why it tastes like bread, that's why it smells like bread. You know, it's like the duck thing, if it looks like a duck, quacks like a duck and walks like a duck, do you know what it is? It's a duck. Well, if it looks like bread, tastes like bread and smells like bread, do you know what it really is? It's bread. It's not human flesh. But here's what Catholics say, Catholics say that when Jesus said, "This is my body and this is my blood," that at that time he was literally converting those elements into his literal flesh and blood and then he gave them to the disciples to eat and they cross-referenced two unrelated passages, John 6 with the narrative accounts of the Last Supper, and they say, "See, this is what Jesus was talking about in John 6." There is a perverse superficial plausibility to it if you haven't read anything else in the Bible, basically. You know, there has to be a certain level of plausibility or, you know, you have to depart from something in the text in order to get this.

Now, is that what Catholics truly teach? Have I fairly represented what they teach? Listen to paragraph 621 of the catechism, the Roman Catholic catechism which says and I quote, "Jesus freely offered himself for our salvation beforehand. During the Last Supper, he both symbolized this offering and made it really present." "This is my body which is given for you." He made it really present. The blood and body were really present in what he gave to the disciples, not a symbol, by what they say. And they go on to say in

paragraph 1339 of the catechism, "Jesus chose the time of the Passover to fulfill what he had announced at Capernaum," that's why we mentioned verse 59, "giving his disciples his body and his blood." I appreciate their comparative clarity and to put it in print so that we can hold it up to the light of Scriptures. Catholics say he gave them his literal flesh and blood to eat and they say the elements were changed to his literal body and blood through a miracle known as transubstantiation, that the elements were transformed from bread and wine into literal human flesh and human blood, not simply any human flesh and blood but his, the blood and body of Christ itself. We'll talk more about transubstantiation next week. I just want to introduce the term for now, simply meaning that the elements are transformed into something else by a miracle that takes place, a so-called miracle.

Now, why, you might ask, why would Christ do this? What is the point of that? Well, the Catholics have an answer to that and they say and I quote from paragraph 1380 of the catechism, "Since Christ was about to take his departure from his own in his visible form, he wanted to give us his sacramental presence." In other words, Jesus was about to leave the earth and he knew that. He was about to be crucified, buried, resurrected and ascended. He was going to be leaving soon and so what Catholics say is that in order to compensate for his imminent physical absence, Christ instituted a ritual with the apostles as the first priests, in which his literal body and blood would be present with them after he had departed. You see, this is why it is so significant to them. Christ to them is present in this ritual that they call the Mass, that they call the Eucharist. So when they hold up the wafer and say, "This is the body of Christ," this is an act of worship to them because they believe Christ is literally there, and the modern Mass continues the ritual. They believe that they are literally receiving flesh and blood in the Mass, the flesh and blood of Christ himself. And if you step into their mindset, if you accept that for the sake of the argument, you can see why it would be so central to their beliefs because they believe they are encountering Christ himself at that moment in the Mass.

Now, that's an overview of how they get to it. We'll talk more next week about other things that it means to them and we'll address things in more detail. This is the departure point. The Lord's Supper, John 6, this is their departure point. This is the interpretation that they place on those key passages of Scripture. Now what we want to do here, the second point here this evening is this: we want to examine the Catholic view of the Last Supper. Examine it. We explained it in point 1. We explained it, now we want to examine it. Now we want to test it by the truth of Scripture and bring things to bear on it. Could this possibly be what was happening at the Last Supper? Could this possibly be a true explanation of what Scripture teaches us in John 6 and in the Gospel accounts of the Last Supper? Could it possibly be true? I'll answer that question for you: no. Absolutely not. It cannot possibly be true. It cannot possibly be true and I'm going to give you three reasons why it cannot possibly be true from Scripture, from God's word in every instance explaining why that cannot possibly be the case.

Now, my brothers and sisters in Christ, friends and visitors, we have a word to describe people who eat human flesh and human blood. We call them cannibals and I can assure you from God's word that the disciples would not have practiced cannibalism on that

night of the Lord's Supper. Impossible. Absolutely impossible. Let's approach it this way: would these disciples who were steeped in the Old Testament think that they were celebrating the first Mass when Jesus handed them the bread and the wine? No way. Absolutely no way.

Turn in your Bibles to Leviticus 17. In Leviticus 17 in verse 10, God explicitly forbids the drinking of blood, particularly as it is connected with an atoning sacrifice. Verse 10,

10 'And any man from the house of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from among his people. 11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.' 12 Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, 'No person among you may eat blood, nor may any alien who sojourns among you eat blood.' 13 So when any man from the sons of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, in hunting catches a beast or a bird which may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth. 14 For as for the life of all flesh, its blood is identified with its life. Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, 'You are not to eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood; whoever eats it shall be cut off.'

This was the Old Testament pattern of the sacrificial system that Israel had known for 1,500 years. This is what the disciples had grown up on, was these Old Testament Scriptures, and this is what they knew and they knew the significance that God attached to blood and God said, "Don't drink it."

There is absolutely no way, there is absolutely no way that these 12 men in the presence of the Son of God could think that he was handing them his literal blood to drink and take it without asking any questions or raising any objections. "But Lord, what about Leviticus 17?" There is no way that that happened and the reason that it didn't happen that way is because Christ wasn't giving them literal blood to drink and they knew it. They knew that he was speaking in symbols just like we do. Think about it this way, you've all got pictures on your phones, most of you do, and you meet somebody new and you say, "Here, let me show you something." You pull out your phone and you pull up a picture and you say, "This is my wife or this is my husband." Now, everybody understands that that image on the phone is not your literal wife, this is a picture that represents your spouse. Everybody understands that. We talk about that, this is ordinary communication. No one looks at that and says, "Oh, you're married to that image on your phone? You're married to those images?" It's absurd. No one thinks that way. No one communicates that way. Well listen, it was the same way 2,000 years ago. People understood symbols when they were being used and didn't foolishly take them as something literal that was never intended and which would have contradicted the text of Scripture which Jesus came to fulfill. No way.

Now, go to the other side of the cross in the New Testament. You can bookend the point that I'm just making here in Acts 15. You'll remember that there were questions about what the relationship of the Mosaic law to the new Gentile Christians that were coming into the church, the Gentile Christians needed instruction on how to move forward now that they had come to Christ and there was a big council in Jerusalem where these issues were hashed out. And the church leaders wrote to the Gentiles in Acts 15 and in verse 28 they make this interesting comment to us, remembering this, beloved. In fact, let's back up. I hadn't planned to do this. I love it when this happens. Acts 2, back up to Acts 2 for just a moment. Acts 2:41-42, where we read about what the early church was doing. In Acts 2:41,

41 ...those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. 42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

They were celebrating Communion. This was part of what they were doing in the early church and so the chapters of Acts go along, Gentiles come into the church. Now remember, remember and follow with me here, we're making some contrary to fact statements here: if what the Catholics teach is true and that from the very first Last Supper the church understood that they were drinking the literal blood of Christ and eating the literal flesh of Christ when they broke bread, then they knew all along, they knew all along that they were eating flesh and drinking blood, right, if what the Catholics say is true? Now, when you get to Acts 15:28, the council at Jerusalem wrote to these Gentile Christians in order to give them a sense of liberty,

28 "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials: 29 that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell."

How could they have possibly said that, how could they possibly tell Gentiles being incorporated into the church that was practicing Communion on a regular consistent basis, "Don't drink blood," if they were drinking blood at Communion? It's impossible. There is no way that that's true and so you see before the cross and after the cross, these statements against drinking blood that diametrically oppose and refute the Catholic perversion of what they do. So with such clear biblical guidelines, there is no way the disciples would have passively agreed to drink blood if that's what they thought they were doing.

Now, there is another utter absurdity to the Catholic view of the Last Supper. Think about it this way: these disciples had walked with Jesus and been at his side for some three odd years. For three years they walked with him, in fact, they make a point, the Apostle John makes a point in 1 John 1 that they handled his flesh. They knew his flesh. They had interacted with him. They had enjoyed intimate communion with him. They had heard him speak. They had literally rubbed shoulders with him and touched him and here they are at the Last Supper, Jesus is physically present with them in his Incarnate body just as he always had been over those prior three years, could they have possibly thought that his body was present with them as I stand before you here today with arms and legs and a head and all that, could they have possibly thought Jesus is with us here but now also his body is here in this bread as well? This is contrary to all human thought. This is contrary to all human reason. No one thinks that way. They could not possibly have thought that his body was there across the table and also that they were holding it in their hands with a piece of bread that looked like bread, smelled like bread and tasted like bread. There is no way they thought that and that means that there is no way that the Catholic version and interpretation of the Lord's Supper is true. It is not possible. It is not possible.

And why do I get animated about this? Beloved, listen: Galatians in Galatians 1, the Apostle Paul said, "If anyone preaches to you a different Gospel, let him be accursed." You must understand that the Catholics are teaching a different Gospel. It cannot be reconciled with biblical truth. We cannot have it both ways. We can't be flabby and sentimental and say, "But I don't want it to be that way. Can't we all just consider, we all love Jesus, let's just all be together and call ourselves Christians and not get too precise about doctrine?" No. We cannot do that, not when they are teaching lies as though they represent the truth of God. Not when those lies are a different Gospel that lead people into damnation. We don't have the freedom to be generous on this. The most loving thing that we can do is to be clear, decisive and direct and state these things for what they really are. Nothing else is going to honor God at this point. So yeah, we'll be clear and dogmatic despite the postmodern truth is relative, not absolute, spirit of our age.

James McCarthy says this in his book "The Gospel According to Rome," which I am happy to acknowledge that I rely heavily on this work in this series. James McCarthy says this pages 134 and 135, he says, "The Roman Catholic interpretation of Christ's words at the Last Supper requires the eating of human flesh. One would think that such an absurdity would be enough to throw out the Roman Catholic interpretation but to the contrary, the Church presses its point saying that the Lord likewise instructed his disciples to drink his blood." He's right.

So examining the Catholic view of the Last Supper, the disciples would not have practiced cannibalism. Secondly, the second way to examine this is to address, remember what I said, the whole point of the Mass

to them is that this is a way to have Christ present with us now that he has departed and ascended into heaven, and so they say the Mass is the means by which that is done. Now, Jesus was very clear on something. This is our second subpoint of examining their view of the Last Supper. Brothers and sisters in Christ, Jesus did not give the Mass for their future comfort, Jesus did something far better, Jesus gave the Holy Spirit for their future comfort. Jesus gave the Holy Spirit for their future comfort, not the Mass, and we'll look at that in just a moment.

Here's the point: at this point, the Catholic teaching has identified a legitimate aspect of our Savior's ministry for us and to us, and specifically to those disciples that were used to his presence. When Jesus departed, that left a great vacuum. It left a hole in things. He is the Lord and it was his presence that enabled the whole ministry to take place and they loved him and for him to be taken away was a major loss. So the question is, okay, so what is done, how did the Lord provide for his people to compensate for his literal physical absence until he returns again from the skies to be with us forever? Catholics say, "Well, he gave us the Mass so that we have him represented and literally in," I'm not being real precise with my language now, "literally with us in this bread and wine which is his literal flesh and blood." That's how Catholics say he is with us. This is the compensation for his absence. Well, the only problem with that is that Jesus was very explicit on how he was going to compensate for his absence and he assured his disciples that he would provide for them in his absence but, beloved, it was not through a ritual; that you could go to daily once a week or once a year depending on how faithful a Catholic you want to be, how devoted you want to be to the Eucharist. That's not it. Make no mistake that that's not it.

Jesus was explicit on how he would be with us and if you will turn to the Gospel of John, I'll show you a handful of passages where he made it very plain. John 14:16, Jesus said,

16 "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."

Jesus is telling them, "I realize when I depart you're going to be in a position that is like being an orphan but understand, I'm not going to leave you in that vulnerable position. I am going to send the Holy Spirit who will be with you and who will indwell you in my absence."

Look at verse 26, he said,

26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."

John 15:26,

26 "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, 27 and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning."

And finally, John 16:12, he says,

12 "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. 15 All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you."

Beloved, do you see the vast infinite difference of what we are saying here? On the one hand, you have the promise of this ritual, this cannibalistic ritual, as being that which would be the presence of Christ while he is away in heaven. The truth of the matter is that what Jesus did was that the Holy Spirit was sent by the

Father to be the comfort, the helper, the advocate of believers, to indwell them when they believed, and to lead them and to sanctify them and to supply them with all spiritual power, the very power of the resurrection to dwell within them as they lived the Christian life. That's the reality of the presence of God in the life of the believer, it is the indwelling Holy Spirit rather than a presence in physical elements delivered in a ritual.

1 Corinthians 12:13 says,

13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

We drink of the Spirit. We have the Spirit within us. The eternal Holy Spirit, the third person of the Blessed Trinity, entitled to equal worship and devotion as God the Father and God the Son, that's who Christ gave and that is a gift of infinite value. So, as you know, the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples as they were gathered together in Acts 2. It's the Holy Spirit that Christ has sent. One of like essence with himself that is with us, not a ritual. Blessed be the holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ who did not leave us as orphans but gave us the very essence of God to be with us during our brief sojourn on this earth.

Now, thirdly, Christ was only offered once for sin. We'll talk about this a whole lot more next week. I'm just going to state it briefly here now. Remember that we said earlier that the Catholics look at their Mass as being a sacrifice of Christ. To speak it with greatest precision, they say it's a continuation of the sacrifice of the cross. It's an ongoing sacrifice.

Well, that cannot be true. That is absolutely false. What did Jesus say before he drew his last breath on the cross, John 19:30? He said, "It is finished. It's done." Catholics say, "No, it's not." They say, "No, it continues every time we perform a Mass." Day after day after day for 2,000 years this sacrifice has been continuing and, look, it's maddening sometimes to read their catechism because of the way they speak out of both sides of their mouth and they'll say things like, "This is a continuation of the once for all sacrifice of Christ." I'm paraphrasing at that point but that's the gist of their teaching. So at the one hand they know that they can't say we are repeating the sacrifice because that's just too clear in Scripture that that's not the case, so they just say it is continuing. Well, if it's continuing, then do you know what? In basic human language it's not finished. The fact of the matter is that the sacrifice was finished after the three hours of darkness and the temple curtain was torn from top to bottom. It was done. It was over. There was no more to be done because Christ in his infinite perfection offered a sacrifice of infinite perfection to satisfy the wrath of God against your sin, to pay the perfect and final price for your sin.

Imagine this, imagine this, this just occurred to me. I don't know if this illustration goes well or not but I think it will. Imagine that you go and you buy a car at a car lot. You give them \$10,000 for your car and everybody understands that's the final payment for the car and the car now belongs to you. Then the dealer shows up at your house the next day and says, "I want to continue the payment." You say, "Well, wait a minute. I gave you full payment back then." He says, "Well, no, this is just a continuation of that full payment that you have already given." You'd say, "Man, you are nuts! You're crazy! Get out of my house! Something's wrong with you!" If a payment is finished, you don't keep making it and you wouldn't give that guy a check. Catholics say, "Well, it's continuing." Jesus said, "But it's finished."

In the book of Hebrews and Romans and 1 Peter and other places say again and again and again that this sacrifice of Christ was made once for all. Listen as I read Hebrews 10, beginning in verse 11 and we'll probably draw upon Hebrews more next week. Hebrews 10:11 says,

11 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;

Here the writer of Hebrews is talking about the Old Testament priests which when this was written, were still offering their sacrifices according to the Mosaic law. But in verse 12 he says,

12 but He [referring to Christ], having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, [no continuation; there is no room for it] sat down at the right hand of God,

Do you know why he sat down? Because the work was done.

13 waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. 14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

One sacrifice done for all time. You know, part of the reason why Catholics never have assurance of salvation, no true and final assurance of salvation, two reasons: one, if they believe what their Church says, they are not saved and so they wouldn't have any assurance on that ground; but secondly even just looking at the whole system that they say that this sacrifice is being continued and the endless repetition of the Mass, there is no finished work, it's never final. As John MacArthur has said, "Which Mass are you trusting in to take away your sins? Which sacrifice is it? Was it Calvary? Was it the one when you were eight? Was it the one when you were 15?" There is mass confusion even if they can't articulate it in their own minds as to why that is the case. When you don't have a finished sacrifice, you don't have a finished salvation and therefore you don't have a final assurance. And you see, and here is part of the utter wickedness of the whole system: when you say that this sacrifice must continually be made and you must come and partake of it if you would continue to be saved, what you're doing is rather than calling people to Christ and letting them rest in him, they are saying you have to come through the Catholic Church because it is there that you find the true body and the true blood of Christ; and it forces people into bondage to them because if they want their souls saved, they have to go through that sacrifice, that false sacrifice that the Catholic Church says they have exclusive control over. It's wicked. It's bondage. It's demonic.

So what have we said here tonight? We have explained the Catholic view of the Lord's Supper, John 6, the Last Supper narrative passages in the Gospels. We have examined it. It can't possibly be true because the disciples wouldn't have drunk literal blood if they thought that's what they were doing. Secondly, as we said, Jesus gave the Holy Spirit to be his presence, not the Mass. And thirdly, Christ was only offered once for sin. Now finally, point number 3 and this is very very brief. Sometimes, you know, you just kind of need to cleanse your palate and remember what the truth is and here we are just going to gently remind ourselves of the sweetness of what the biblical truth is about Communion and about the Lord's Supper. Scripture tells us, Scripture explains Scripture and tells us exactly what Jesus was doing.

Look at 1 Corinthians 11, and we look at this passage every time we celebrate Communion here at Truth Community Church, or quote from it anyway. Point 3 here tonight: remembering the biblical view of the Last Supper. The biblical view is that the bread and the cup are symbols by which we remember the sacrificial death of Christ for sinners like us on the cross. 1 Corinthians 11:23,

23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 25 In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

"In remembrance of Me." It's a memorial, not a sacrifice and notice, by the way, if you adopt a hyper-literal approach like the Catholics do, when Jesus said, "This cup is the new covenant in my new blood," to follow their line of interpretation, the literal cup was literally the new covenant. Do you know what? We'd better go and find it. The reason we don't have to go and find it is because he is speaking in metaphors, speaking in symbols that are evident and obvious.

Now beloved, we'll say more about this next week. I want to close with this from Loraine Boettner, whose work on Roman Catholicism is a classic. Mr. Boettner says this and I quote, "In all the pagan religions of the world, it would be hard to find an invention more false and ridiculous than that of the Mass. To assert that an egg is an elephant or that black is white would be no more absurd or childish than to assert that the bread and wine which retain the properties of bread and wine are actually and totally the body and blood, the deity in humanity of Christ." God help us, God help us to lovingly graciously be instruments to bring

the truth to those who are in such darkness and believe such demonic doctrines. And God help us to be faithful to the cross of Christ by which sinners were atoned, by which a perfect atonement was made once, at one point in time, sufficient for all of your sins.

Let's pray together.

Our God and Father, we have spoken candidly, we have spoken directly, not to mock anyone but just to make the issues clear. Help us as we move forward. As so many here will interact with Catholics in the future, I pray, Father, that the clarity of understanding that comes from your word would animate their discussions and that you would bless them with extraordinary power from your indwelling Holy Spirit to speak the truth and to be instruments of the Gospel to those who so desperately need to hear it in this dark system of religion that is such a blasphemy against the true Christ. And Father, we pray that as this message goes out in days to come, Father, that you would just help it find the audience that you have intended for it. Lord, we speak in this corner of the world and we pray that you would take this wherever you will, knowing that 500 years ago you took these exact same kinds of truths from the exact same Scriptures that we look at today and you changed the world, Father, because these things are true. And Father, help us to live like it's true and to ever give our life and heart and our deepest affection and loyalty and obedience to this great word of God which reveals the great Gospel of the great Lord Jesus Christ who brings a great salvation to miserable sinners like us. O God, bless your word now and bless us as we go. In