

# What Protestants and Catholics Can Learn from Each Other

“What Catholics Can Learn from Protestants”

Mark 7:1-13 – May 25, 2025

WHAT PROTESTANTS AND CATHOLICS CAN LEARN FROM EACH OTHER		
<i>Civil Conversations About Beliefs and Traditions</i>		
Date	Message Title	Bible Text
May 18	What Protestants Can Learn from Catholics	1 Thess 5:16-21
May 25	What Catholics Can Learn from Protestants	Mark 7:1-13
June 1	What About Mother Mary and the Saints?	Luke 1-2
June 8	What About Communion, Mass, and the Eucharist?	1 Corinthians 10-11
June 15	What About Purgatory, the Rosary, and Confession?	Hebrews 10:1-17
June 22	What About Celibacy and Sexual Abuse? [PG-13 sermon]	1 Corinthians 7

## Review: What Protestants Can Learn From Catholics

1. The depth and importance of tradition.
2. A high view of the sacraments – Communion, confession, anointing the sick, marriage, singlemindedness.
3. Catholic leaders: Henri Nouwen, St John of the Cross, Mother Teresa.

## What Catholics Can Learn From Protestants

The #1 and most important thing Catholics can learn from Protestants is the **primary authority of Scripture** above all other authorities.

## The Catholic Teaching on Authority

- First Vatican Council (1870): “Peter, the Prince and Chief of the Apostles, the pillar of faith and foundation of the Catholic Church, received the keys of the kingdom from our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of mankind, and lives, presides, and judges, to this day and always, in his successors the Bishops of the Holy See of Rome which was founded by him and consecrated by his blood. Whence, whoever succeeds to Peter in this See, does by the institution of Christ himself obtain the primacy of Peter over the whole Church. The Roman Pontiff possesses the primacy over the whole world, and that Roman Pontiff is the successor of Blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and is true Vicar of Christ, and Head of the whole Church, and Father and Teacher of all Christians; and that full power was given to him in Blessed Peter to feed, rule, and govern the Universal Church by Jesus Christ our Lord.”
- Second Vatican Council: “The Lord made Peter alone the rock-foundation and the holder of the keys of the Church (cf. Matt. 16:18,19) and constituted him shepherd of his whole flock (cf. John 21:15ff.).”
- Second Vatican Council: “The Roman Pontif enjoys this infallibility in virtue of his office, when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful, he

proclaims in an absolute decision a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals. For that reason his definitions are said to be irreformable by their very nature and not by reason of the assent of the Church, in as much as they were made with the assistance of the Holy Spirit promised to him in the person of the blessed Peter himself; and as a consequence they are in no way in need of the approval of others, and do not admit of appeal to any other tribunal. For in such a case the Roman Pontiff does not utter a pronouncement as a private person, but rather does he expound and defend the teaching of the Catholic faith as the supreme teacher of the universal Church, in whom the Church’s charism of infallibility is present in a singular way.”

- Catholic Catechism: “Individual bishops do not enjoy the prerogative of infallibility. Nevertheless, when, in the course of their authentic teaching on faith or morals, they agree on one position to be held as definitive, they are proclaiming infallibly the teaching of Christ. This happens when, though scattered throughout the world, they observe the bond of fellowship tying them to each other and to Peter’s successor. This occurs more obviously when, united in an ecumenical council, they are the teachers and judges of faith and morals for the universal Church, and an obedient adherence must be given to their definitions of faith.”
- Catholic Catechism: “Sacred Scripture is written principally in the Church’s heart rather than in documents and records, for the Church carries in her Tradition the living memorial of God’s Word.”

## Where Catholics Got This Idea

- **Matthew 16:13-18**
- John 21:15-17

## Some Thoughts on Matthew 16:13-18

1. The key issue here is Jesus’ **identity** as Messiah, Son of God, not Peter’s (or anyone’s) **leadership**.
2. The “rock” upon which Christ will build His church appears to be a person’s **confession** of Jesus as Messiah and Son of God, not Peter: “You are Petros (masculine, Peter) and upon this *petra* (feminine, rock) I will build My church.”
3. Ephesians 2:20 affirms that the church is “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets (not Peter) with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone.”
4. Colossians 1:17-18 makes it clear that **Christ alone** is the head of the church.
5. The use of “keys” in Matt. 16:19 appears to be talking about the ability to let people into heaven by sharing the gospel message with them.
6. If there is any doubt whether Jesus was talking to just Peter in Matthew 16:19, there is absolutely no doubt that He was talking to all of the disciples (and to you and me) in Matthew 18:18.
7. If Peter was supreme, why did the disciples continue to debate among themselves who would be considered the greatest in Luke 22:24-30? And why didn’t Jesus correct them by pointing to Peter as their supreme leader?
8. No where in Scripture is Peter called “**Pope**.”

9. Paul affirmed in 2 Corinthians 12:11 that he was not inferior to any of the other apostles.
10. 1 Corinthians 12:28 does not list pope in the authority structure, rather it says, "first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers...."
11. Acts 8:14 says that the apostles "sent Peter and John" to the Samaritans. Peter would have done the sending if he were supreme.
12. Peter plays no supreme role in the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15. Actually, **James** appears to have the lead role (Acts 15:13-35).
13. Galatians 2:11-14 makes it clear that Peter was not infallible in that Paul rebuked Peter for his hypocrisy with Gentile Christians.
14. Example of fallibility of the Pope: How the Pope handled **Galileo**.

### Some Thoughts on John 21:15-17

1. This passage seems to be primarily an account of Jesus restoring Peter after Peter's three denials. So, Jesus does the "Do you love Me?" question and the "Feed My sheep" command 3 times.
2. Other Bible passages give the same command to shepherd the sheep to other people besides Peter (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

### The Main Point: **Scripture alone** is God's Word as the supreme and infallible authority for the Church and the individual believer.

- **2 Peter 1:20-21** – *Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*
- **2 Timothy 3:15-17** – *From infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*
- **John 17:17** – *Sanctify them by the truth; Your Word is truth.*
- **John 10:35** – *Scripture cannot be broken.*
- **Acts 17:11** – *Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.*
- **Colossians 2:8** – *See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.*
- Other Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Galatians 2:11-12; Matthew 5:18; Matthew 22:23-32
- **Mark 7:1-13**
- Martin Luther: "I am bound to the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. I cannot do otherwise. Here I stand. God help me. Amen."

### Application: What Are You Looking to as the Authority for Your Life?

1. **What do you look to as authority in order to make decisions?**
  - ❑ Decision to put God first, family second, and work third (Matthew 6:33; Ephesians 5:25-33)
  - ❑ Decision to forgive the person who hurt me (Ephesians 4:25-32; Romans 12:17-21; Matthew 5:21-26,38-48)
  - ❑ Decision to minister to the poor and the least (Matthew 25:31-46)
  - ❑ Decision to share my faith (Acts 1:8)
  - ❑ Decision to save my sexuality for marriage and to not live together outside wedlock (Exodus 20:14; 1 Corinth 6:18; 7:2; 10:8; 1 Thess 4:3)
  - ❑ Decision to stay married (Matt 5:31-32; 19:1-12; Rom 7:2-3; 1 Corinth 7:12-16)
  - ❑ Decision to not get an abortion (Exodus 20:13; Psalm 139:13-18; Jeremiah 1:5)
  - ❑ Decision to speak and treat other people with kindness, encouragement, and love (Ephesians 4:29; James 1:19-21; 3:1-12; Matthew 18:15-17; Proverbs 12:18; 15:1,23,30; 16:28; 18:8; 26:20)
  - ❑ Decision to discipline my children (Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 3:11-12; 19:18; 22:6; 23:13-14; 29:15,17)
  - ❑ Decision how to handle my money: give, save, budget (1 Corinth 16:2; 2 Corinth 9:6-11; Matt 6:19-21; Prov 3:9-10; 6:1-11; 11:15; 13:11; 14:21,31; 15:16-17; 16:8,16; 17:1; 21:20; 22:9; 23:4-5; 28:6,8,11,22,27; Malachi 3:7-10)
  - ❑ Decision to not look at pornography (Matthew 5:27-30)
  - ❑ Have I been making myself "the Pope"?
2. **What do you look to when things get hard?**
  - ❑ Alcohol or substances
  - ❑ Chocolate or food
  - ❑ Movies, social media, or escapes
  - ❑ Work or hobbies
  - ❑ A person
  - ❑ God and His Word (Proverbs 3:5-6; Matthew 6:33)

### The Most Important Implication of This: How You Are Saved and Go to Heaven

- The "Jesus' gift plus **something**" plan of salvation
- The "Jesus' gift plus **nothing**" plan of salvation (Romans 3:28; 4:4-5; Galatians 2:16; 3:11; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5)
- **Titus 3:5** – *He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.*
- **Ephesians 2:8-9** – *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.*
- Pray: "Jesus, I repent of my sin and receive You as my Savior and Lord."
- Next baptism: June 22 [WhatIsGrace.org/Baptisms](http://WhatIsGrace.org/Baptisms)