

### **Wow! The Catholic Church Came Back Out of the Closet!**

*“But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be ETERNALLY CONDEMNED!” - Galatians 1:8*

Once again, I want to thank all of the Northbridge Family for your PRAYERS, ENCOURAGEMENT, and FINANCIAL SUPPORT as thirty (30) of us went to Blytheville, Arkansas to help struggling churches and to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost. For those of you who have not heard as of yet, God truly answered our prayers and gave us many victories. Not only did 262 people make decisions for Jesus Christ in Arkansas, but also our brothers and sisters in Christ at New Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, Calvary Baptist Church, and Emmanuel Baptist Church were revived and excited to see how God can move through ordinary people like us when we obey an extraordinary Lord like Jesus and tell others about Him! The entire mission team knows that we could not have been successful without the power of the Holy Spirit (Eph 3:20) or the prayers and support of the entire Northbridge family. We truly believed that our group of thirty had the responsibility to not only proclaim Jesus Christ, but also to represent the love, the faith, and the godly behavior of our entire Northbridge Baptist Church. We were aware that our successes in the “field” of Blytheville were also your successes. At the same time, any embarrassments in Blytheville would become your embarrassments. That is why we were very careful not to make our Lord or you (our church) ashamed of us in any way.

Speaking of being a “church”, I want to change the subject for a moment and make some comments on what does it mean to be a “church”. While the mission team was in Blytheville, I heard that Pope Benedict XVI proclaimed that the only TRUE church was the Catholic Church. According to the front page article of *The Post and Courier*, dated July 11<sup>th</sup>, the Catholic Pope “...REASSERTED the primacy of the Roman Catholic Church, approving a document released Tuesday that says other Christian communities either are DEFECTIVE or NOT TRUE CHURCHES and that CATHOLICISM provides the only true path to SALVATION.” Benedict went on to say that only the Catholic Church “has the fullness of the means of salvation.”

Needless to say, the Pope’s claims have shocked and rattled Protestant Christians and denominations all around the world. In this world of “pluralism” and “relativism”, even many non-Christians are angry at the Pope for making such a bold claim that there is ONLY ONE true church...and the Catholic Church is it. As for me, a former Catholic, I am actually very pleased that Lorenzago Di Cadore (i.e. Benedict XVI) had the courage to actually just “reassert” what the Catholic Church has clearly proclaimed for hundreds of years. Many Protestant Christians have been fooled into thinking that traditional Catholics are “just like us”. Meaning, they believe in the same Jesus we believe in, they worship the same God we believe in, and they share in the same SALVATION we share in. Even some members in this church have written me or personally complained to me that I am TOO HARD on the Catholic faith, because (in their opinion) “they are Christians just like us”!

But, thanks to the current Pope’s public comments, it should now be common knowledge to all that the Catholic Church does not consider us to be “Christians” just like them. In fact, the conservative Catholics don’t even consider us to be actually saved at all. That’s why it would be wise to understand what Benedict XVI meant when he said that “CATHOLICISM provides the only true path to SALVATION”. I am very pleased that the Pope has opened a public debate that may lead many “church members” (both Catholic and Protestant) as well as many “non-church members” to actually hear the clear gospel of Jesus Christ so that many may be saved!

The Pope has let down the gauntlet. He is saying that the only way to be saved is through Catholicism. That means that he is implying that the Protestant (i.e. Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, etc., etc.) understanding of salvation is not accurate or sufficient for the redemption, justification, and/or sanctification of the human soul. THIS IS A SERIOUS CHARGE! If the Catholic Pope is right (i.e. Catholicism is the only way to salvation) then those who think they are saved by simply accepting Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior (without going through Catholicism) ARE STILL LOST! If the Catholic Pope is right, then everyone we witnessed to in Blytheville is still LOST! If the Catholic Pope is right, WE ALL AT NORTHBRIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH ARE STILL LOST!

I am not the smartest person in the world, but I do know what is meant by the Catholic Church leadership’s reassertion that they are the only TRUE church and have the only TRUE path to salvation. They are clearly implying that we ARE NOT a true church and we ARE NOT on the true path to eternal life with God. THIS IS A VERY SERIOUS CLAIM! It is impossible for the gospel message that I preach to be right while at the same time “Catholicism” to be right, because I know for a fact that THEY ARE NOT THE SAME GOSPEL MESSAGES. This should concern you, because Paul made it clear that there was only ONE (1) correct gospel and all those preaching (and believing) a gospel other than the correct one, will be ETERNALLY CONDEMNED (Gal 1:8). Needless to say, if you are going to get anything right in your lifetime, you had better get the salvation of your soul right!

Therefore, over the next several newsletter articles I write, I am going to point out the differences between the

gospel message Paul preached (and so I preach) verses what traditional “Catholicism” teaches a person must do to be saved. Trust me in advance when I say, they are NOT THE SAME! Even the very same words used by both Protestants and Catholics to describe the methods and results of salvation (such as “faith”, “grace”, and “redemption”) are NOT defined the same.

Thus, I am going to use the Pope’s recent claim (that Catholics have the only true path to salvation) as motivation to explain their position using their own words (i.e. from their own Catholic Encyclopedia and past Catholic Church Council summary statements) and then I am going to compare this to what God’s Word says. I believe you will soon find out that I do not put my trust in a “Catholic” gospel nor a “Protestant” gospel when it comes to salvation. Rather, I only teach the BIBLICAL GOSPEL that was first of all entrusted to the apostles (Gal 1:8; 1Cor 15:3-4; Jude 3). This is because I believe Paul when he said “...*the gospel which was preached by me is NOT according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.*” (Gal 1:11-12)

**- Pastor Louis**