



Sermon: **What is the Highest Authority? (Acts 17:10-15)**

Date: **November 26, 2017**

So far in our series on the Protestant Reformation, we have been reminded that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. As we continue our study on these core doctrines of the Christian faith, this week we will seek to answer the following question: “What is our highest authority?” In other words, how we do *know* that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone? Why do we believe what we do about Christianity? One of the fundamental problems within the Roman Catholic Church is their stance on authority. The authority of the papacy is seen as equal with that of Scripture. This is how they justify their teachings on things like indulgences and purgatory. Although these concepts are found nowhere in Scripture, they are taught and upheld by the papacy. Thus, Roman Catholics are expected to uphold these teachings in the same way they would uphold the teachings of Scripture. Martin Luther rightly recognized this was wrong. He recognized that Scripture alone ought to be the church’s authority. This is why, at the Diet of Worms, Luther famously said, “Here I stand, here I bid defiance, here I strut about and say, God’s Word for me is above everything.” This must be true of us as well. We must uphold “Sola Scriptura” (Scripture Alone). The Word of God is our highest and final authority.

What you need for this study: Bible, Notebook, Pen

Individual Bible Study

1. Please read 2 Kings 23:1-23, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, and Acts 17:10-15 and ensure that you have listened to the sermon.
 - a) Briefly summarize the Roman Catholic view of authority. What two streams of authority does the Roman Catholic church believe in?
 - b) In the Roman Catholic Church, when a clergyman’s oral tradition and the Scriptures contradict each other, who decides which is more authoritative? Why is this a problem?
 - c) How did the pope consolidate his power and ascend to the powerful position that he was in when Luther nailed the 95 Theses to the wall in 1517?
 - d) What is the context of 2 Kings 23? Why were God’s people in need of reform?
 - e) According to 2 Kings 23, what were the steps involved in God using King Josiah to bring about reformation?
 - f) How do we know that Scripture is without error? How would you use the Bible to demonstrate that it is inerrant?



- g) Are we able to understand Scripture on our own or do we need a member of clergy to explain it to us? How would you use Scripture to defend your answer?
- h) In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, it says that Scripture is *breathed out by God*. What does this mean?
- i) According to 2 Timothy 3:16-17, what is Scripture profitable/sufficient for? What is the result of applying Scripture to our lives in this way (see verse 17)?
- j) Read Acts 17:10-15. Why were the Jews in Berea more noble than those in Thessalonica? As they examined the Scriptures, what was the result (see verse 12)?

Group Discussion Questions

1. How did the Holy Spirit speak to you through the sermon and the Bible study this week?
2. Why must Scripture alone be our final authority? What can happen when we find our authority in something or someone else?
3. Jacob said, "If you want to know God and His will, the Bible is enough." Do you believe this statement is true? How would you defend it? If we believe this statement is true, how should this conviction affect the way we live?
4. How do we know that God's Word is inerrant? Why is this belief absolutely crucial to the integrity of our faith?
5. As a small group, how can we help each other submit to the Word of God as our final authority? How can we minister God's word to each other and help each other apply it in our lives?

Accountability Question

Is there a clear teaching in Scripture that you are not currently submitting to? What do you need to do to come back under the authority of God's word in this area?