

2020-2021 Bible Study

#18

2/2/21

Question

- **Matthew 28:18-20** *“And Jesus and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.’”*
- What would you tell (teach) to an atheist and/or a Protestant that would entice them to look into the Faith?

What Did the Apostles (and Paul) Preach?

- **The *Kerygma*** – To proclaim the initial and essential proclamation of the gospel message
- **The Apostles Creed** – 12 articles attributed to the Apostles
- **The *Didache*** – The teaching of the 12 Apostles
- **Eucharistic celebration**
- **Baptismal liturgies**
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The Kerygma (The Teachings of the Apostles)

- The promises of God made in the Old Testament have now been fulfilled with the coming of Jesus, the Messiah
- **Jesus was anointed by God** at His baptism as **Messiah**
- Jesus began His ministry in Galilee after His baptism
- He conducted a beneficent ministry (doing good and performing mighty works by the power of God)
- The **Messiah was crucified** according to the purpose of God
- He **was raised from the dead** and appeared to His disciples
- Jesus was exalted by God and given the name “Lord”
- He gave the Holy Spirit to form the new community of God
- He **will come again for judgment** and the restoration of all things
- All who hear the message **should repent and be baptized**

Apostles Creed

- Then 12 articles of the **Apostles Creed** outline the fundamentals doctrines of Christianity
- It is a faithful summary of the Apostles' faith
- It is considered the oldest Roman catechism
- A tradition from the Middle Ages holds that on Pentecost, while under the influence of the Holy Spirit, each Apostle composed a separate article
- This creed is used in prayers like the Rosary and was expanded into the Nicene Creed

The 12 Articles of the Apostles Creed

- I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
- I believe in Jesus Christ, **his only Son, our Lord.**
- He was conceived by the **power of the Holy Spirit** and born of the Virgin Mary.
- He suffered under Pontius Pilate, **was crucified, died, and was buried.**
- He **descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again.**
- He **ascended into Heaven**, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

The 12 Articles of the Apostle's Creed (Cont)

- He **will come again to judge** the living and the dead.
- I believe in the Holy Spirit,
- The holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,
- The forgiveness of sins,
- The **resurrection of the body**,
- And the **life everlasting**. Amen

The Teachings of Apostolic Fathers

- What are the qualities that distinguish an **Apostolic Father**?
 - Those who came right after the Apostles and who were directly acquainted with them
 - They were **instructed by the Apostles**
 - Their writings coincide with the end of the writings of the NT between 80-100 A.D.
- Who were the Apostolic Fathers?
 - **St. Clement** – Peter and Paul
 - **St. Ignatius of Antioch** - John
 - **St. Polycarp** – John
- Other document attributed to the Apostolic Fathers
 - The *Didache*

The Didache – The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles

- A brief early Christian treatise dated from the mid to late 1st century
- The Greek manuscript was rediscovered in 1873
- It is the oldest surviving written catechism containing 3 main sections:
 - Christian ethics
 - Rituals (Baptism and Eucharist)

Church organization (considered the first example of the Church Orders)

The Didache – The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles (Cont)

- Although anonymous, it is considered part of the category of second-generation Christian writings known as the **Apostolic Fathers**
- It is a pastoral manual which reveals more about how Jewish-Christians saw themselves and how they adapted their Judaism for gentiles
- The contents can be divided into 4 parts:
 - Two Ways, **the Way of Life** and the **Way of Death**
 - A ritual dealing with **Baptism**, fasting, and **Communion**
 - The ministry and how to deal with traveling prophets
 - A brief apocalypse
 - * *The Hidden Manna* p. 18-19

CATECHISM *of the* CATHOLIC CHURCH

SECOND EDITION

*revised in accordance with the official Latin text
promulgated by Pope John Paul II*

contains glossary and analytical index



LIBRERIA EDITRICE VATICANA

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

- Part One: The Profession of Faith
- Part Two: The Celebration of the Christian Mystery
- Part Three: Life in Christ
- Part Four: Christian Prayer

The
Faith
Explained



LEO TRESE

Review of our Last Class

- Last week, we concluded our study of Paul's Letter to the Galatians by looking at Galatians 3-6
- He wrote this from *Ephesus* in the middle of his 3rd Missionary Journey (53-58 AD)
- Paul universally preached a gospel of repentance and baptism
- Father pointed out that since he had visited the *Galatian* churches four times, his letter only highlighted the information he had previously given them in person (His letter to the Romans will give many more details of his theology)

Review of our Last Class (Cont)

- Here, Paul was relating to the fact that Judaism started with Abraham who had faith well before the arrival of the Law of Moses
- Paul severely warned the *Galatians* that they were playing with fire by dabbling in Judaism, and forgoing the graces of repentance via baptism
- He reminded them of the yoke of slavery associated with the Law versus the law of “love” given by Jesus
- He was especially critical of their acceptance of circumcision

1st Corinthians

1st Corinthians

- The last time we looked at **Acts 18**, we found Paul in *Ephesus*, where he wrote his letter to the *Galatians*
- Shortly thereafter, he was visited by a group of *Corinthian Christians* (led by a woman named *Chloe*), who delivered a letter discussing some problems from their church
- We remember that Paul founded the Church in *Corinth* on his second missionary journey, (49 AD – 52 AD) after which he stayed with them for over 18 months
- At this point, Paul had not returned to *Corinth*, so *Chloe*, and her folks, came to him in *Ephesus*

1st Corinthians (Cont)

- It would appear that members of the *Corinthian* church were not sure that Paul would return to *Corinth*, and had a serious issue that needed his attention
- Father pointed out the major difference between the Churches in *Galatia* with the Church in *Corinth* included:
 - Paul had established and visited the Churches in *Galatia* on each of his three journeys throughout that territory,
 - Having only been in *Corinth* once (on his second journey - 49 AD -52 AD), he established that church at that time
- As we delve into Paul's Letter to the *Corinthians* (responding to this crisis), we will hear echoes from *Chloe's* letter presenting the following problems within the church:
 - Even though, in Paul's absence, the *Corinthian* Church seemed to be doing ok, certain heresies were beginning to develop

1st Corinthians (Cont)

- First, since the *Corinthian* church was not founded on Judaism, there was no danger from the Judaizers' heresy
- Their biggest problem came from living in a very Gentile Greek city (*Corinth*)
- This manifested itself in what came to be known as "Christian dualism," which stemmed from the Gentile culture in which they lived
- Even though there were many different Gentile religions, all of them contained the same story line

1st Corinthians (Cont)

- These Gentiles believed that there were “good gods” (spirit gods), who made their followers into “spirit children”
- In fact, all people were believed to have originally been “spirit children”
- There were also “bad gods” who made the material world (including the earth), and they created “bodies” to trap people and weigh them down to the earth
- Therefore, a person’s body was his prison cell and the earth was their prison
- “Salvation, for the Gentile, was their spirit being released from their bodies and the earth so that they could float up to the clouds where they could be reunited with their “spirit parents”

1st Corinthians (Cont)

- When the Christians began preaching the gospel about the “resurrection” of Jesus, and that God made the heavens and the earth good, the Gentiles had serious reservations
- Sometimes, they not only had difficulties with the concept of the resurrection, they even doubted the idea of the incarnation
- They could not imagine that anyone would want to return to their bodies after death!
- Father said that the *Corinthian* heresies revolved around these problems

1st Corinthians (Cont)

- Father pointed out that today many seem to still have these concepts concerning death (modern *Gnostic* dualism)
 - They believe that at death, the soul leaves the body and floats up to the clouds where it plays a harp for eternity!
- Salvation, for a Christian, should mean that if one dies before the second coming of Christ, and if they are baptized into Christ and have received his body and blood (in the Eucharist), you will be raised (body and soul) on the last day
- Thus, if a person dies with the promise of Christ (who cannot lie), he will be raised from the dead
- When Jesus comes back, death will be no more
- We will now turn to **1st Corinthians 1**

1st Corinthians 1

1st Corinthians 1

- **1st Corinthians 1:1-4** *“Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus,...I give thanks to God always for you because of the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus”*
 - Once again, Paul begins with his thanksgiving section (this was absent from his letter to the *Galatians* and *2nd Corinthians*) because he was upset
 - He begins by addressing the fact that there were division within the church community in *Corinth*
 - They were not only slipping back into dualism, but they seemed to have been helped along by some of the church leadership who were claiming authority from Jerusalem

1st Corinthians 1 (Cont)

- Some stated that they had been baptized by *Cephas (Peter)*
- Father said this might have been a faction from Jerusalem
- In any case, these were “false apostles” and “false teachers” who were teaching the folks in *Corinth* that it was ok to slip back into some of the practices of the Gentile pagan world to include:
 - Cult prostitution!
 - Eating meat offered to idols
- They argued that these practices were ok because it did not matter what one did with his body (flesh) since it was already evil and irrelevant
- Some even tried to mistreat and even destroy their bodies to prove that they were irrelevant

1st Corinthians 1 (Cont)

- **1st Corinthians 1:10-16** *“I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,...I baptized no one else”*
 - Father pointed out how this was a great example of the historical accuracy of these letters
 - If someone was going to make up a text like this, he would not stop in mid-thought to ascertain who he might have baptized
 - Paul wrote in pen and ink so there were no opportunities of making corrections

1st Corinthians 1 (Cont)

- **1st Corinthians 1:17** *For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ being emptied of its power”*
 - Father asked, if Christ did not send Paul to baptize people, why did Paul baptize *Stephanas*?
 - He explained that this was a *Semitic* way of speaking and it meant that his primary task was to preach the gospel, and he was not sent primarily to baptize (as all the apostles were sent to baptize all nations)
 - They were, however, supposed to preach the gospel first, otherwise there would be no one to baptize (the gospel was what brought people to repent and then to baptism)

1st Corinthians 1 (Cont)

- Paul was showing us the order of operations
- His primary job among the *Corinthians* was to preach the gospel and not to baptize them
- It would appear that there were two groups ruling over the *Corinthian* church
 - Paul and his companions (who were the first to preach the gospel while founding the church)
 - Now, there was a second group who were maintaining the church and doing baptisms
 - Unfortunately, this second group was misleading the people through their teachings on dualism

1st Corinthians 1 (Cont)

- **1st Corinthians 1:18-21** *“For the wood of the cross is folly to those who are perishing,...it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe”*
 - The cross is the power of God
 - Paul was saying that we will learn salvation through the cross
 - This would be folly to the Gentiles
 - Father pointed out that this is a bit difficult to understand because Paul was a trained rhetorician and all of a sudden, he was using some fancy rhetoric

1st Corinthians 1 (Cont)

- To follow Paul here, we must understand what was meant by the “wisdom and power of God” by those who did not believe in Paul’s teaching
- Paul was saying to them that the cross, Jesus’ death, and resurrection would save them (and us)
- This was the language of a “rhetorician”

1st Corinthians 1 (Cont)

- **1st Corinthians 1:22-25** *“For the Jews demand signs and the Greeks seek wisdom,...but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God”*
 - For the Jews, the fact that the Messiah died, meant that he could not have been the Messiah
 - It was folly for the Gentiles to say that Jesus (the Messiah) was raised from the dead
 - But, Paul said for those who were called, Christ was not a stumbling block or folly because He was the “power and wisdom of God!”
 - This was the gospel that he preached which was wiser than men

1st Corinthians 1 (Cont)

- The weakness of God, which was Christ crucified and risen from the dead, was stronger than anything men had to offer
- Father said that Paul's reasoning was amazing as he was trained in Greek rhetoric and philosophy during his years in *Tarsus*
- He asked, why was Paul speaking like this, since he had not been speaking this way before?
- We will follow this further in the next chapter

1st Corinthians 2

1st Corinthians 2

- **1st Corinthians 2:1-5** *“When I came to you, brethren, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom...that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God”*
 - Paul told the *Corinthians* that when he first came to *Corinth* (2nd Missionary journey), he was not using lofty philosophical Greek words or rhetoric when speaking to them (But, at this point that was what he was doing)
 - He told them that he did that earlier because he did not want their faith in the gospel to rest on human “wisdom” and “rhetoric”
 - Rather, he wanted it to rest in the “spirit of God”

1st Corinthians 2 (Cont)

- Even though Paul was an expert in Greek philosophy and rhetoric, he used simple language to speak about Jesus crucified and raised from the dead so that the faith of the Corinthians would not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the “power of God”
- He did this to ensure that someone more versed in Greek philosophy (than he) might come after him and preach a corrupt gospel using fancier words
- He also knew that no one could come and speak with the power of God, unless he was a true apostle

1st Corinthians 2 (Cont)

- Father pointed out that 1st and 2nd Corinthians were full of Greek rhetoric and philosophy to counter the false teachers' statements that Paul (who was a fool) did not know what he was talking about
- At that time, to imply that someone did not know philosophy or rhetoric meant that he was not educated
- It is interesting that the city of *Tarsus* (like *Corinth*) was famous for its schools of rhetoric and philosophy
- This meant that Paul was a major threat to these false teachers when he demonstrates his expertise in these fields of education

1st Corinthians 2 (Cont)

- Father pointed to the passage in **1st Corinthians 1:18-31** as an excellent example of this language
- Unfortunately, most people simply skim over it, because they are not able to follow what he was doing
- We must understand the definitions of the terms Paul was using to truly follow what he was saying about the problem in that church
- Paul came and founded the church in *Corinth*, *Apollo* came later and watered the seeds left by Paul, and now someone was trying to destroy this church with their rhetoric
- Paul will present his warning about this in the next chapter

1st Corinthians 3

1st Corinthians 3

- **1st Corinthians 3:16-17** *“Do you not know that you are God’s temple,... God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and that temple you are”*
 - Here, Paul gave a stern warning to the *Corinthian* church to be very careful concerning what they were doing, especially in reference to their leaders

1st Corinthians 4

1st Corinthians 4

- **1st Corinthians 4:8-9** *“Already you are filled! Already you have become rich!...because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men”*
 - Father pointed out that the *Corinthians* were very proud of their education (think back to Paul’s experience in Athens)(**Acts 17**)
 - Every *Corinthian* thought that he was smart because of their schools of philosophy and rhetoric
 - People would often say: “you are a *Corinthian*, then you must really know your stuff”
 - Further, the *Corinthian* church was the richest of all of Paul’s churches

1st Corinthians 4 (Cont)

- Financially, they were doing well when compared to some of Paul's other churches (where there was persecution, suffering and poverty)
- In many churches, the Apostles were treated like trash
- But, in the *Corinthian* church that Paul founded, he was now being looked down on by the current leadership

1st Corinthians 4 (Cont)

- **1st Corinthians 4:10-16** *“We are fools for Christ’s sake, but you are wise in Christ...be imitators of me”*
 - Paul was calling the members of the *Corinthian* church to imitate him and not their current leadership
 - He reminded them that they may have teachers and guides speaking to them, but they must not forget that Paul founded that church and they must obey exactly what he had taught them
 - He called them to imitate him and his teaching rather than what the false teachers were saying
 - He reminded them that if these false teachers present anything contrary to what he taught them, they must ignore it

1st Corinthians 4 (Cont)

- **1st Corinthians 4:18-21** *“Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you....Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in the spirit of gentleness”*
 - Paul was telling them that he was on the way to see them, and therefore, he was calling on them to make a choice
 - At that time, Paul was still in *Ephesus* and he knew it would take a while before he could go the *Corinth*
 - He wanted to jump on a boat and visit them, but that was not possible, so he had to go by land which would take much longer
 - This caused him to have to write his second letter to them before he arrived
 - (Father skipped over 1st Corinthians 5)