

Lord's Day 11 – Q29-30

We are continuing to take a look at the Apostles Creed

Last week we took a look at the first phrase:

- I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth;
 - 1 - God the Creator
 - 2 - God's providential care over all

This week we are taking a look at the second phrase:

- and in Jesus Christ, His only Son Our Lord

But we are going to take a look at question 30 before we answer question 29

- By doing this – we will see why it is so important to realize and understand that Jesus is the Savior ALONE
- Because question 30 describes the Roman Catholic practice of praying to the saints
- Is this a Biblical practice?
- Is it a sin to pray to someone but God alone?
- Can the dead saints help you?

30, Q. Do those who look for their salvation and security in the saints, in themselves, or elsewhere really believe in the only savior Jesus?

A No. Although they boast of being his, by their deeds they deny the only savior and deliverer, Jesus. Either Jesus is not a perfect savior, or those who in true faith accept this savior have in him all they need for their salvation.

- What is the nature of prayer?
 - What are we actually doing when we pray?
- Is it ok to pray to believers who have died?
- Do believers who have died hear our prayers?
 - Can they intercede before the Father on our behalf?
- Is praying to a dead idolatry because we are looking to them for help and support and not the Lord alone?

According to Rome - Understanding the Doctrine of Praying to the Saints

- Paul says we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses
 - The saints are not gone
 - The saints are still interacting with people and with what happens on earth today
 - Saints have intercessory power
 - (Prayer with vs prayer to)
 - Will you pray for me?
 - Living and dead saints
 - You **do not** have to pray to the saints

- You **do not** have to pray the Rosary
 - You are **not any less** of a Catholic if you do not
- **Prayer** – lifting up our request to God
- **Prayer to Augustine** – “I am struggling in life I need help”
 - Augustine will be his instrument on the person’s behalf
- Could you see how this could slip into idolatry?
 - Absolutely!
 - Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico – happens all of the time
 - Worship to God – supreme
 - Prayers to Mary – extra veneration
 - Prayer to the saints – veneration
- **Veneration** – showing honor to people
 - Saluting / pledge of allegiance / tomb of the unknown soldier
- **Patron Saint** – a particular aspect is under their care
 - This is a small “t” tradition
- **Process of Canonization**
 - All patron saints must first be canonized
 - Requires two miracles – healings with the intercession of the saints
 - Life and writings are investigated
 - Has to be someone who is dead
 - It is an infallible declaration that the person is in heaven
- A saint’s merit can be borrowed from to keep a person on the path of Justification
 - A saint can pray on my behalf
 - A saint can apply / give their merit to God on our behalf
 - It can be given because it was accrued through good works
 - Presumably God will grant this – but He doesn’t have to
 - A saint can give the grace that would have been his to you
- **Do we see any examples in Scripture of anyone praying to a dead believer for support?**
 - Regardless if the saints are able to see us now or not
 - There is no biblical support or verse that approves of this practice
- **Do we see any examples in Scripture of one saint giving their merit to another in order to keep them in God’s saving grace?**
 - No

You Be the Judge:

The Memorare

The Memorare is a prayer that expresses one’s confidence in the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is attributed to St. Bernard of Clairvaux.

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that any one who fled to thy protection, implored thy help or sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins my Mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful; O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me, Amen.

- Would you classify this prayer as idolatrous?
- Now we see the need to keep Jesus at the center

29. Q. Why is the Son of God called Jesus, that is, Savior?

A. Because he saves us from all our sins, and because salvation is not to be sought or found in anyone else

- **Matthew 1:21** – She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for **he will save his people from their sins.**
- **Hebrews 7:22-24** - ²² This makes **Jesus the guarantor** of a better covenant. ²³ The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, ²⁴ but **he** holds his priesthood permanently, because **he** continues forever.
- **Hebrews 7:25** - Consequently, **he is able to save to the uttermost** those who draw near to God through him, since **he always lives to make intercession for them**
- **Acts 4:12** - And there is salvation in no one else, for there is **no other name** under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.
- **John 15:4** - Abide in **me**, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in **me**
- **1 Tim 2:5** – For there is one God, and there is **one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus**
- **Isaiah 43:11** - I, I am the Lord, and besides me there is **no savior**.
- **1 John 5:11** – And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is **in his Son**
 - Therefore – to pray to anyone other than the one true God would mean we are placing our hope and trust in someone else other than God, and be an act of idolatry
 - **Isaiah 42:8** – *I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols*
 - Why replace Christ with anyone or anything else?

The Nature of Prayer

WLC - Q. 178. What is prayer?

A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, in the name of Christ, by the help of his Spirit; with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

- **Psalm 62:8.** Trust in him at all times, ye people; pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.

- **John 16:23.** And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.
- **Rom. 8:26.** Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words
- **John 14:6** - Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

WLC - Q. 179. Are we to pray unto God only?

A. God only being able to search the hearts, hear the requests, pardon the sins, and fulfil the desires of all; and only to be believed in, and worshipped with religious worship; prayer, which is a special part thereof, is to be made by all to him alone, and to none other

- **Psalm 65:2.** O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.
- **Psalm 145:18.** The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. Ver. 19. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.
- **1 Cor. 1:2.** Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.
- **Psalm 50:15.** And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

Is prayer an act of worship?

- Yes

How much of our worship is deflected from God on to the saint when a person prays to them?

- God will not give His glory to another
- It is one thing to ask a person to pray for you
 - It is quite another thing to pray to a deceased person to pray for you