

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

The BIGGEST Misconceptions Protestants Have About the Catholic Faith with Jimmy Akin

(June 4, 2024)

FRANK:

Ladies and gentlemen, when I first came to Southern Evangelical Seminary in 1993, my wife began to work with Dr. Norman Geisler in sort of a secretarial way. And she was helping word process a book called 'Roman Catholics and Evangelicals: Agreements and Differences' by Norman Geisler and Ralph McKenzie. And she wound up getting her name in a Geisler book before I did. So, that book came out in 1995. It is still out there. It's nearly 500 pages. It is over 500 pages. And although it has Catholic endorsers on it, including my guest today, James Akin, it's written from a Protestant perspective.

And what I thought I'd like to do today is bring Jimmy Akin on, who did endorse the book many years ago when he had first become a Catholic back in 1992. And you may know that I just had Jimmy on last week for his debate, his fantastic debate with Bart Ehrman on the historical reliability of the gospels. But today we want to talk about what Protestants may misunderstand about Roman Catholicism.

Now, I'm not a Roman Catholic, although I came out of Roman Catholicism. Jimmy was a Protestant and became a Roman Catholic. In fact, Jimmy, this is odd that we're even doing this show. If anybody should be a Catholic apologist, it should be me, a guy from New Jersey who went to Catholic high school. And you should be the Protestant apologist because you grew up in Texas, and yet you're a Catholic apologist. How did you become a Catholic? Let's just start there.

JIMMY:

Well, so I was raised nominally Protestant. And then when I was 20 years old, I had a profound conversion to Christ, and I wanted to become a Protestant seminary professor and possibly pastor. And so, I was on a ministerial track. But I realized that, you know, what church is within, because here in my hometown in Fayetteville, Arkansas, I was born in Texas, but I grew up here in Fayetteville. We have dozens and dozens of churches. But I realized after my conversion to

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Christ, where I became an active Christian, that what church is within convenient driving distance or has a service at a time I like, or has a pastor who I think is a good preacher or has music I like or a youth group I like. None of those are good tests for what's theologically true. And what I cared about was what's theologically true.

And I didn't want to reflexively fall into a theology just because it was convenient. So, I made a point of studying the theology of all different branches of Christendom. So, even though I was fellowshipping at a local church, it happened to be a conservative Presbyterian one. I would read the theology. I would read books by Lutherans explaining their views, and Methodists, and Church of Christ, and Pentecostals, and Eastern Orthodox, and Catholics and everybody, because I wanted to know what's true. And you need to listen to people to hear their side of the story, not just listen to what other people tell you is true about them. And one day I was --

And I'd read through the Bible, or all of it, so I thought, because I didn't recognize the deuterocanonical books at the time. And as I did that, I found certain verses that were just sounded Catholic to me. You know, like, whoever sins you forgive, they are forgiven. Whoever sins you retain, they are retained. That at least sounds like confession. You know, baptism now saves you, 1 Peter 3:21. Well, that sounds like baptism saves you. And so, I found these verses, and I thought, well, I'm a new Christian. I don't know a lot yet.

So, I'm just going to put these on the shelf for now, and I'll revisit them when I know more. Well, one day I was reading a book that had an extended quotation from Matthew 16, which has the, you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church passage. And I had always argued, Peter is not the rock. There are other ways to look at this. The rock was, in my view, the confession that Jesus is the Messiah. And as I was reading it, I noticed there are structural features in this text that are so obvious, they're even there in English, and they require that Peter be the rock.

And so, I said I had to change my view, and I can talk about those if you want. But I had to change my view and say, okay, Peter's in charge of the church once Jesus goes back to heaven. And that's a description of the office of the Pope. Now, whether there were any later popes is a separate question. This could be a one and done. But I had to conclude Peter is in charge of the church once Jesus goes back to heaven. The Catholics are right. There is a first pope. And

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therefore, if they're right about that, they could be right about other things. And I need to review all of the different categories of systematic theology with an open mind to whether the Catholic position might be correct.

Well, one of the things I did was I took those verses back off the shelf and looked at them again and said, yeah, I think they mean exactly what they say. This is my body. Baptism does save you. Whoever's sins, you forgive, they are forgiven. Whoever's sins you retained, they are retained. That's confession. And there were others. And so, over the course of this year, I was in grad school at the time. I worked my way through systematic theology with an open mind, and I became convinced that the Catholic understanding of these matters was true. So, I needed to become Catholic.

FRANK:

Okay, good. Now, Protestants are going to have different interpretations of those passages, and some of those are unpacked in the book, 'Roman Catholics and Evangelicals.' But I want our audience to have both sides of this issue, Jimmy. So, if there was a book out there, or maybe your website, that could explain the Catholic position well, where should our listeners go? And then we'll get into some of these issues in more detail.

JIMMY:

Yeah, well, okay, so catholic.com, which is the website of Catholic Answers where I work, it's got material on all of these. My own personal website, JimmyAkin.com, has material on a lot of these that sometimes goes into more depth. I also wrote a book called 'A Daily Defense,' which has 306, actually, 366.

It's a day by day book, but it has responses to 366 challenges to the faith, and not just the Catholic faith. It also has defenses that will be useful for Protestants in defending against challenges from, for example, atheists. But it also, because there are hundreds of defenses, and objection that someone has to the Catholic faith, it's likely to be in there.

FRANK:

All right, good. So, JimmyAkin.com. Check that out ladies and gentlemen. As I say, this program, I just want to learn what Jimmy thinks that Protestants don't understand about the Catholic

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Church. So, it's not a debate. We're just having a discussion. Jimmy, the book that was laid out that many years ago, you actually had a hand in endorsing and writing. Yeah, writing again.

JIMMY:

I provided feedback on the drafts.

FRANK:

Yeah. 'Roman Catholics and Evangelicals, Agreements and Differences.' So, this book points out that here are some areas of doctrinal agreement. Revelation, God, human beings, Christ, salvation, the church, ethics, and last things, ladies and gentlemen. Those are areas of doctrinal agreement between Roman Catholics and evangelicals. Now, here are some areas of doctrinal differences.

The Apocrypha, Scripture, infallibility, justification, sacramentalism, ecclesiology, Mariology, and purgatory. And there's chapters on each one of these. Now, obviously, we're just doing a 40 minute podcast here. We can't dive into all of this. But let me ask you, out of these issues I just brought up here, Jimmy just mentioned, which one do you want to talk about and which one, do you think Protestants might misunderstand the Catholic position on?

JIMMY:

The one that I think is most urgent in conversations of this nature is justification, because there is a colossal misunderstanding on that.

FRANK:

All right, so first of all, in my view, it seems that there's a difference between justification and sanctification. And maybe that might be part of the confusion but describe it from your point of view. From the Catholic point of view, what is justification?

JIMMY:

Okay, so the term justification means to be made right with God or to be made righteous. And since the time of the Protestant Reformation, one of the key slogans in Protestantism is that we're justified by faith alone. And Protestants tend to conceive of justification as an event that happens at the beginning of the Christian life. And there is an event that happens at the

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beginning of the Christian life that Catholics agree. Yep, that's justification. There are other dimensions to it. Like, you know, God makes you behaviorally righteous afterwards through what Protestants call sanctification.

But if we're talking about that initial justification where you're made right with God, you know, what is involved in that? Well, a common narrative that you hear in the Protestant community, and even some Catholics will say this, is that Protestants believe we're justified by faith alone, and Catholics believe we're justified by faith and works. That is a mistaken narrative. That is flatly false. And fortunately, we are blessed to be living in an age where that's been clarified. And so, according to--

I'll just give you a brief sketch of what Catholic teaching actually is on this. The first thing is the Catholic church does not condemn the formula faith alone. In fact, that formula is occasionally used by doctors of the church, like St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas. And so, when the Council of Trent met in response to the Protestant Reformation, they did not condemn the formula of faith alone. What they condemned was one understanding of the formula.

So, what they said was, if anyone says that man is justified by faith alone so that he understands it this way, then they rejected it. But they didn't reject the formula itself because it had a history in Catholic thought. So, what did they reject? Well, it has to do with the nature of faith. Faith is used, the term faith is used in several different senses, both in theology and in the Bible.

FRANK:

Jimmy, before you go there, let's just get clarification for our listeners. When you say Council of Trent, a lot of people don't know what that means. It's a 1545 council. Just give an overview of that briefly, then go back to.

JIMMY:

Sure. So, the Church periodically holds major councils of bishops to decide various issues. These are called ecumenical councils. The first one was the Council of Nicaea in 325 that responded to the heresy of Arianism, which was basically Jehovah's Witnesses of Jesus is like a big angel, but he's not really God. And so, the Council of Nicaea defined, no, Jesus really is God.

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Well, when there have been big controversies in the church, the church will frequently hold a council to let the bishops discuss the matter and formulate a response.

And so, after Protestantism arose, the Church held a council and looked at the issues the reformers were raising. And on many of them, it said, yeah, they got a point. We need to reform this. And they also, though, said, you know, some of the ideas that are being proposed in different Protestant communities because there were different communities even then. It's not like all Protestants were monolithic.

There were Lutherans, and Zwinglians, and Anabaptists, and Calvinists, and so forth. You know, various ideas that were being proposed, though, were not deemed as being compatible with the Catholic understanding of the Christian faith. And so, they would reject the problematic ones. But they tried to be very careful in what they did, and this is an example of that. They didn't condemn faith alone. They condemned one understanding of the formula.

FRANK:

What is that understanding they condemned?

JIMMY:

Well, it's basically that we're saved by intellectual assent alone. That's one of the meanings of the term faith in Scripture. In James chapter two, James says, you believe in God. Well, great. Even the demons believe, but still shudder at the prospects of God's wrath. So, the only kind of faith that they have is intellectual faith.

They know the truth of Christian doctrine, but they don't trust God. They don't love God, and so consequently, they're not saved. Well, guess what? Almost all Protestants agree with that. The only people who don't are easy believers or free grace theology people, and even a lot of them would say, you need more than just an intellectual awareness of these truths.

FRANK:

Yeah, that's the distinction we've brought up many times on this show, ladies and gentlemen. There's a difference between belief that and belief in. Belief that, is as Jimmy's saying, just

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intellectual ascent. Sure, I know God exists. Sure, I know Jesus is the Savior, but you're not trusting in Him if you just stay with belief that. You have to go from belief that to belief in.

Much like if you're going to ask somebody to marry you, you're going from belief that to belief in. You don't just believe that the person would be a great spouse. You trust in them when you ask them to be your spouse. And so, we would agree that that kind of just belief that is not enough, as James says. Go ahead. Please continue, Jimmy.

JIMMY:

So, actually, the Council of Trent does not condemn justification by faith alone. It condemns justification by intellectual belief alone. And we can actually agree on that. Can Catholics use the formula of faith alone? Well, it's not our custom, because it's actually not the language of Scripture. You know, faith alone is used, the phrase faith alone is used only one time in Scripture, and that's in James 2, where it's rejected.

So, this is not the language of the Bible. But, you know, we don't need to quarrel about words. Is there a sense in which the formula of faith alone can be acceptable from a Catholic point of view? The answer is yes. In fact, Pope Benedict a few years ago gave a speech in which he said, Luther's formula of faith alone is true as long as you don't put it in opposition to love. Because what Paul says in Galatians 5 is that what counts in Christ is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, but faith working through love.

So, if you have faith that works through love, you are justified. You are in a state of justification. And if that's what you mean by faith, then you are saved or justified by faith alone. And there are a lot of Protestants who have agreed with that. John Calvin agreed with that. He, in his view, faith needed to include not only intellectual belief, but also trust in God and love for God. And he said, if you try to separate out love for God, it's not worth calling faith anymore. It's not real faith, in his view.

And so, Calvin agreed. You're justified. The technical name in theology for this kind of faith is formed faith, meaning it's faith informed by love. And if you have faith informed by love, you are justified. Calvin agreed with that. And in 1999, the Lutheran World Federation signed a joint declaration with the Catholic Church on the doctrine of justification, where they say, we've

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cleared away. You know, we have some differences in how we express ourselves, but we're agreed on the core of justification, and we don't need to be condemning each other for it anymore.

And then in 2006, the World Methodist Council joined that same decision. In 2016, I want to say the Anglican Consultative Council approved it also. And in 2017, the World Council of Reformed Churches joined the declaration. So, you have Lutherans, Methodists, Anglicans, Reformed, all agreeing that once you clear away the terminological disputes, we're actually agreed in substance here, and we don't need to portray each other as, oh, you guys are preaching a false gospel. As long as we understand these things correctly, we're actually in agreement on the substance.

FRANK:

Jimmy, does Vatican II, and maybe you can explain what Vatican II is for people briefly. Does Vatican II talk about separated believers? Or maybe that's not the right term, separated brethren? Okay, so these are people who are not Catholics, but they're still saved according to the Catholic Church. But I've heard some people say that that even says that some atheists can be saved. Is that true?

JIMMY:

Well, atheists are not separated brethren because they're not brothers in Christ. So, the term separated brethren is meant to reflect-- So, historically, Christians would call each other heretics if they had a big disagreement on something. And heresy was regarded as, oh, if you're a heretic, that's you're a big time sinner, your salvation's in jeopardy. But it was recognized that after all these centuries, I mean, most Protestants, I mean, they're validly baptized.

They genuinely believe in Jesus. They are, they're brothers in Christ. They disagree with some things that historically would have been called heresies, but they're not responsible for that because they grew up this way. You can't charge someone with, oh, you're in bad faith before God just because you believe what your parents and your church taught you. So, they're not at fault, even though they disagree with some Catholic things.

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And so, it was decided, well, then it's not appropriate to call them heretics because they're not committing the sin of heresy. They are in good conscience before God, and so they are in a state of separation. They're not in full communion with the Catholic Church, but they are still brothers in Christ. And so, Protestants are referred to as separated brethren. What about atheists?

Well, the Catholic church holds that God only holds you accountable for what you know or are responsible for knowing. And if you don't know Jesus, let's say. Let's say you were raised a Hindu. You know, you've maybe heard of Christianity, but you've never really had evidence that it's true. Well, God won't hold you accountable for not embracing something that you haven't been given compelling evidence for.

So, if you otherwise cooperate with whatever degree of light and grace God has put in your life, then He won't hold you responsible for what you don't know. And thus, it's possible for people in other religions to be saved as long as they're not deliberately resisting what they know to be God's truth. This was something that came up after the age of exploration. Because originally in the early church, Christians were a tiny minority in this sea of pagans. And it was recognized that, like, well, okay, they're not all the same.

Some of them, like the Greek philosophers, they reasoned their way to the existence of God. They realized, okay, there should be this one powerful God who made everything. And they reasoned Plato and Aristotle did that. And so, that's good. And even though they don't know about Jesus, they are trying to live according to reason, what reason would tell them. And in Greek, reason is logos.

And so, even though they don't know the human name of the Logos, they don't know Jesus, they do know he's, they do know they are trying to live according to the Logos, according to Jesus, without knowing who He is. And so, early Christians among the Church Fathers would frequently say, it's possible for non-Christians who are trying to live according to God's will, according to reason. It's possible for them to be saved even though they don't know the name of Jesus, the same way Jews prior to the time of Christ could be saved. Even though they didn't know the name of Jesus, they were still trying to live according to God's law.

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FRANK:

Yeah, it's certainly philosophically possible, and it's certainly possible from an Old Testament perspective, because, as you say, that's how they were saved. The question is, is that what the New Testament teaches? And that's where we run into, I think, some rough roads.

JIMMY:

Well, so let me address that point. But first, I just want to tie it back into the age of exploration.

FRANK:

Yeah, go ahead.

JIMMY:

Because what happened was then Europe became Christianized. And so, everybody, everybody knew was either a Christian or they should have known a lot about Christianity, like European Jews or Muslims that Christians were fighting against and stuff like that. And it was just assumed that everybody who was not a Christian was at fault.

And so, that was kind of the view in the Middle Ages. And they talked about, well, like, what if someone was raised on a remote island and never heard about the Gospel? What would happen for that person? And they'd speculate, well, maybe God would send an angel to preach the Gospel to them if someone was genuinely ignorant.

FRANK:

He's been doing that in the Muslim world, certainly. You hear a lot about that.

JIMMY:

Yeah, he has. But then the new world was discovered and suddenly it became obvious there are millions of people who have never heard the Gospel through no fault of their own, and they haven't all gotten angel visits. And this forced Christian theologians to rethink, okay, these people appear to be innocently ignorant. Is it possible God will give them His grace in some invisible way?

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And so, that percolated in theology for a few centuries and the Catholic church has arrived at a position of God will hold you accountable for what you know or should know to be true. But if you're innocently ignorant and otherwise cooperate with His grace, then you can be saved even if you're ignorant of some Christian truths.

FRANK:

So, would they say that an atheist, who, according to Romans 1, can't legitimately be ignorant of the presence of a creator, that an atheist could somehow be saved according to the Catholic Church?

JIMMY:

I don't think that the text allows us to say every single atheist, without exception, should know that there is a creator. What Paul does in Romans 1 is he says it's possible to know about God from creation, and therefore, in a general way, mankind has no excuse. But that doesn't mean that every individual has no excuse. Because, I mean, imagine a ten year old little girl who's been raised by atheist parents, so all she's ever been told is there is no God.

And they've even given her arguments because they run an atheist YouTube channel and she's heard all these arguments against God's existence. It's really hard to say that ten year old little girl has no excuse just because it's hypothetically possible to use St. Thomas Aquinas' arguments to prove the existence of God. So, I do think that there are negative indicators in Romans 1, but I don't think it allows us to establish an absolute stance that every single atheist, without exception, is at fault.

FRANK:

So, you're saying there could be exceptions. You think it's a general principle, but not a universal.

JIMMY:

Yeah, and they are exceptions. This is not the norm. Being an atheist is not how God wants you to get to heaven. So, if there are atheists who are saved and get to heaven, it will be through Jesus Christ. And they will be people who are exceptions, who are just innocently unaware of the fact that God wanted them to do this.

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FRANK:

Let me go back to justification per se, Jimmy, because I want people to -- Well, let me put it this way. Why do you think Protestants think that Catholics, and let's be honest, many people in the pews of the Catholic church think the way to heaven is through works? Why is that?

JIMMY:

Well, Paul makes a big point out of good works in his letters. You know, he says in Ephesians 2 that we're created in Christ for good works.

FRANK:

Right. But right before that, that you're saved by grace through faith.

JIMMY:

I'm heading there. So, good works are a fruit of being in a state of salvation or a state of justification. And the Council of Trent that responded to the Protestant Reformation agrees with that. Good works are not something you do to get into a state of justification. In fact, Trent even says that nothing that precedes justification, whether faith or works, merits the grace of justification. You cannot merit getting into a state of justification that is pure grace from God.

What happens then is God pours his love into your heart and enables you to do acts of love or good works, but they flow from justification. They don't get you into justification.

Unfortunately, our two communities, and this is on both sides, had a lot of historic animosity towards each other. And, I mean, in fact, you know, 300, 400 years ago, we were killing each other, and there were the wars of religion in Europe, and so people were not favorably disposed to carefully thinking through what is the other side actually saying. Instead, it was like us versus them. We need to defend our side.

And so, it led to a lot of tribal chest thumping on both sides and a lot of preaching on both sides that was not at all careful about what is the other side actually saying? And so, you had Protestants who would exaggerate differences with Catholics that really weren't there, and you would have Catholics who would exaggerate differences with Protestants that really weren't there. It's only been, as the centuries have progressed and the passions have cooled, that in the

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20th century, we started talking to each other again and realizing, oh, if you translate our language into your language, we're actually in agreement here.

But there's still a lot of the old preaching traditions, particularly in the Protestant community, because Catholics tend not to bash Protestants these days the way Protestants often bash Catholics. Particularly in the Protestant preaching community, you still have a kind of residue of preaching traditions that were inspired by the time of the reformation, where there's this big need to justify separation from Rome.

And that led to a kind of ongoing dissing of the Catholic Church in many Protestant churches. Not all, fortunately, but it is still something that's out there, and people will hear it, and they'll hear it on Protestant radio and things like that, too.

FRANK:

What do you think? You mentioned that the Roman Catholic Church, after Luther at the Council of Trent, admitted Luther got some things right. They needed to be reformed. What were some of those things that Luther got right, do you think?

JIMMY:

Well, one of them was on indulgences. Indulgences-- Now, they're not-- I've got to clarify what they mean, because a lot of people hear the idea that indulgences are being able to pay to get forgiveness for a sin you haven't even committed yet. That is flatly wrong. Or you pay money in order to get forgiven for a sin you've already committed. That is flatly wrong. Indulgences presuppose that you are already forgiven.

If you're not already forgiven for a sin, if you haven't repented of it and been forgiven, you are not eligible for an indulgence. And indulgences actually were not sold. What people would do is they would do various activities that were meant to be spiritually beneficial, like, go on a pilgrimage, you know, go visit a church, read the Bible, or donate money to a charitable cause. You know, like, that's how St. Peter's Basilica was built in Rome. People donated money to this cause.

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And as a thank you gift, and I'm sure as a nonprofit ministry person, you know all about sending out thank you gifts when someone supports your work. Well, as a thank you gift for this pious act of supporting this church building fund, they would give people an indulgence, which is meant to be a kind of spiritual help in overcoming the negative consequences of when we sin.

You know, it's kind of like if you're a parent and your kid has misbehaved, you may say, you're grounded, and I'm really mad with you, and then the kid repents and says, I'm so sorry I did that. That was stupid of me. It's like, okay, you're forgiven, but you're still grounded for a week because you need to learn your lesson. And this reflects, like, what we read in the book of Hebrews, where God, the author of Hebrews, talks about how God disciplines us like sons.

Well, let's suppose your son has been grounded for a week, but then he really takes it to heart, and he completes his homework early, and he cleans up his room, and he entertains his little sister. After all that effort, he's clearly trying to grow after what he did wrong. You might say, okay, time served. You're not grounded for a full week. That's basically what indulgences are.

So, in any event, there were people who were involved in indulgences who just like in the televangelist world, there are some televangelists, especially in the 80s and 90s, that were, that even though they're running a nonprofit that's supposed to be a ministry, they're raking it in and they're getting rich, and they're putting all their effort into fundraising and not so much with the ministry.

Well, that happened in the indulgence trade, too. It was a lot like televangelism. It's meant to be a ministry to help people spiritually. But there were people who abused it. And so, even though they're not actually sold, these are thank you gifts for a donation, in some cases, the church decided they've gotten the reputation as being sold, and that's going to harm people spiritually. So, we're going to cancel any indulgence that is tied to money.

Today, you cannot get an indulgence for a donation. You cannot buy an indulgence. You can still get an indulgence for saying prayers, and reading the Bible, and making a pilgrimage, and things like that, but nothing involving money. So, that would be an example of a major criticism that was raised by the reformers. That church said, you know, that's right. This has become a

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problem. We need to end this practice because it's become too spiritually confusing for people, and it's being exploited.

FRANK:

Now, I, as you know, as I said, brought up Catholic. I went to Catholic high school. And this is just anecdotal, it's not data. It's just my perspective. And I wonder if this is one reason why it seems that many Roman Catholics don't know much about grace. I never heard the word grace from a homily. I never, in hundreds of sermons ever heard, Jesus died for your sins, and by trusting in Him, you're justified, until the last mass I went to, and that was my father's funeral.

JIMMY:

Mm hmm. I'm glad you heard it there.

FRANK:

Yeah. The priest came out and said, I talked to Frank the other day, and he's accepted Christ as his Lord and Savior, so he's in heaven now. And I'm just wondering, just from again, it's just my perspective. Why don't we hear more about grace? Why don't we hear more about what Christ has done in the homily?

JIMMY:

Well, I think that there are...

FRANK:

Sermon, that is, ladies and gentlemen, for you Protestants. You know, usually 10 minutes, 15 minutes maybe, in a Roman Catholic service. Why don't we hear more about that?

JIMMY:

Well, I think you do hear about it. And you hear, actually, I have a concern that you don't hear enough about the flip side of the Gospel, that you need to obey God's law. You know, you need to live out your Christian faith. There's an underemphasis on sin these days. And there's quite a bit of talk about grace and God helping us through Jesus and all that stuff. And that's good. That's all true, and that's what's ultimately important. But there's an imbalance in a lot of places, and this is true in Protestant mega churches, too.

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You know, there's often a feel good message that's criticized it, not adequately reflecting stuff. Now I'm going to have to speculate for a minute, because I don't know about your personal history. I wasn't there. But what I have noticed is a lot of people who are growing up hear more than they realize. They're exposed to more Christian teaching than they realize. And so, they, and you hear testimonies from people after they've had a conversion.

They'll say, you know, I grew up and I didn't know Jesus, and I didn't know about God's grace, and I didn't understand the crucifixion. I didn't understand all this stuff that I understand now. And it's great that they understand it now. But what happens is, if the person grew up Protestant and now they become a consciously active Protestant, is they blame themselves, and they say it's because I was a rebellious youth and I just wasn't listening.

But if the person grew up Catholic and now they become a Protestant, they're not taught to take responsibility for that as I was a reckless youth who wasn't paying attention. They're taught to blame the Catholic Church and say, I never heard any of this stuff in the Catholic Church. But in fact, if you look at what is actually said in the mass, every single mass you attend as a Catholic, you get down on your knees and say, Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

And we're talking to Jesus. Similarly, we, every single mass we say the creed, the Nicene creed, where we say that for us men and for the sake of our salvation, he came down from heaven and was became by the Holy Spirit, was incarnated the Virgin Mary, and died for us on a cross and so forth. The Church is so concerned that you get this message.

It puts it in your mouth at every single mass you attend. Now, there's a question of, do you pay attention to what's coming out of your mouth, or are you ignoring what's coming out of your mouth? But it really wants you to get this message, so much so that it's put it into the very words of the mass that the ordinary people say every time they go.

FRANK:

Yeah, I see that. And I can see that's the case in many instances. Me personally, I've been to several Catholic masses since I became a Protestant because my mom is Catholic. And again, I never hear grace. I'm always hearing-- In fact, and again, this is just anecdotal, Jimmy. I went to

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church with my mom on Christmas, of all things, and the priest is talking about Plato. I mean, I'm like, if there's ever a time to get people to realize why Jesus came, the pews are full, it's Christmas, it's Easter. Give them why Jesus came. Talk about that. And I was just so frustrated. I'm going, come on.

JIMMY:

And there are priests who do that. Now, not all priests are the same. Some of them are terrible preachers. In fact, just like roast preacher is a favorite Sunday dinner dish in Protestant households, roast priest is a favorite Sunday dinner dish at Catholic houses. Because not all of them are good preachers. Not all of them have the right focus.

FRANK:

No, that's certainly true. I appreciate, I mean, I love Bishop Robert Barron. You know, he's every Protestant's favorite Catholic podcast. Probably because he's so clear on so many teachings. It's just my experience. I was just so frustrated that I said I'm not hearing the Gospel.

JIMMY:

And I grok that.

FRANK:

Yeah. And I would love-- Look, to be honest, I would love the Roman Catholic Church to be the true Church. I have nothing against, I would love it to be. I just don't see it. Now, there's more study. I can always change my mind.

JIMMY:

I'm happy to help if I can.

FRANK:

Oh, yeah. Absolutely. And I appreciate you coming on and talking about this, because I think we do need to have more dialogue and maybe we can do this again, Jimmy, and cover some more issues. I'm happy to know that if we get our terminology right, at least we agree on what I think is the most important thing, and that is justification in terms of theology. And of course, there are other important things. Jesus is God and all that. We get that.

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JIMMY:

Let me give you a tease for a future episode if you want to follow up on it.

FRANK:

Yeah, sure.

JIMMY:

You know something else we agree about? Purgatory. We call it by different names, but we agree on the substance.

FRANK:

New Jersey and purgatory. What? [Laughter] What is it, Jimmy?

JIMMY:

Protestants don't have a name for it, but they recognize it because they recognize that we are not perfectly behaviorally righteous when we die. At least most people aren't. But we will be perfectly behaviorally righteous in heaven. And therefore, as C.S. Lewis and others have pointed out, something must happen between death and heaven to make us perfectly behaviorally righteous.

You can see that, for example, some people in the Protestant community will say, well, we get to see Jesus, and then we become like him in the twinkling of an eye. You know who also said that? Pope Benedict XVI.

FRANK:

Thomas Aquinas. [Laughter]

JIMMY:

That's his explanation for purgatory. So, we both agree there is a transition. It's the final stage of sanctification.

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FRANK:

Interesting.

JIMMY:

And so, we actually agree when you clear away the-- Now, there are different theories, but the theories are optional. What we agree on is the substance. God makes us perfectly righteous through the grace of Christ that He earned on the cross for us. And that happens. If we're not perfectly righteous when we die, He'll make us perfectly righteous and then allow us into heaven so we can enjoy it in that state.

FRANK:

Ladies and gentlemen, to go further, check out Jimmy's website, JimmyAkin.com. His YouTube channel as well. He's got several great articles up there you'll probably agree with, even if you're a Protestant, most of it because a lot of it's just Christian apologetics. But then he also has articles that deal with the differences between Roman Catholics and Protestants. And if you want a book treatment of this, 'Roman Catholics and Evangelicals: Agreements and Differences.' Norman Geisler, my mentor, and Ralph Mackenzie.

By the way, Dr. Geisler was brought up Catholic too, in Michigan. And so, check all that out. Also want to mention that next week I'll be just outside of Atlanta at Midway Church. Details on our website and then at Calvary Chapel, Chino Hills on the 12th of June and the 16th of June. And also want to mention the trip to Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

If you go to our website, CrossExamined.org, Click on events. You'll see it there. And we might have a couple of more seats in CIA CrossExamined Instructor Academy. Check all that out as well. Jimmy, are you on the speaking tour much? Other than doing debates, do you get out there very much?

JIMMY:

I give talks largely in the central part of the country.

FRANK:

Okay, so you can find Jimmy at JimmyAkin.com. Is your schedule up there?

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JIMMY:

No, but people can contact me through Catholic Answers. We have a speaker's bureau, and I'm part of that.

FRANK:

If you just want to see you speak, how do they know where you're going to be? Is it there?

JIMMY:

Well, it's not yet there. It will be there. I've started speaking again now that I moved back home to Arkansas.

FRANK:

All right.

JIMMY:

And so, we have some things that are currently in process.

FRANK:

Do you have any other debates coming up, by the way?

JIMMY:

Well, I just got invited to a debate on, I think it's on purgatory on the Gospel Truth podcast. And I have, I'm working on some additional debates. I may be debating on our aliens demons, and I periodically--

FRANK:

What's your position on that, just briefly?

JIMMY:

Well, some of them might be, but I don't think we have-- You need evidence in order to propose demonic involvement. And I don't think we have evidence that all UFO encounters or all appearance appearances of aliens are demons.

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FRANK:

Okay. All right, good, good. And tell people also about your other podcast. You did it on the previous show, but not this show.

JIMMY:

So, my most famous podcast that I'm on is called Jimmy Akin's Mysterious World. And we look at mysteries every week. They could be natural, supernatural, paranormal mysteries. So, we cover historical mysteries, assassinations, biblical mysteries, religious mysteries, psychics, Bigfoot, UFO's, everything. And we look at everything from the twin perspectives of faith and reason. We say, what would reason tell us about this mystery? And what would the Christian faith tell us about this mystery?

And unlike other shows, we're not just about generating wonder and imagine, what if? We're actually about solving the mysteries to the extent they can be solved. So, you can watch that at my YouTube channel, [YouTube.com/JimmyAkin](https://www.youtube.com/JimmyAkin). It's in all the standard podcast directories, Apple, Spotify, Stitcher, all those things. And you can also go to its website, which is [Mysterious.fm](https://mysterious.fm). And we've got, we're a top 20 documentary podcast on Apple Podcasts in the US. We have more than 100,000 listeners a week.

FRANK:

Nice. Again, the podcast is called

JIMMY:

Jimmy Akin's Mysterious World.

FRANK:

Jimmy Akin's Mysterious World. All right, ladies and gentlemen, check that out. That sounds like a lot of fun. And thanks for being with us. And Lord willing, ladies and gentlemen, we will see you here next week. God bless.

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