

TRUTH WARS: 500 YEARS AND COUNTING!

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Week 2: The Scripture Strikes Back

Introduction:

Q: What would life be like if I couldn't have access to the Word of God?

Sources of Authority in the Roman Church:

1. The _____
2. Church _____
3. The _____

Authority vs. Control:

Authority = voluntary submission based on trust and _____

Control = forced oppression based on pressure and _____

Romans 1:17 – The Verse that Changed Everything...

For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

1 Peter 1:17-21 (ESV)

The Scripture Strikes Back for Martin Luther...

“(Luther’s) fervent yearning to serve, please and love God stemmed from a haunting fear of God’s judgment. To win God’s favor, he committed himself to a rigorous schedule of study, meditation and fasting. But his life of rigid asceticism brought no peace. God was his judge, not his Savior” (Eckman, *Exploring Church History*, p. 50).

“I grasped that the righteousness of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise” (Martin Luther)

The Big Idea:

Whether we realize it or not, choosing who/what will be given ultimate authority over our lives impacts every relationship and decision we make. Is your ultimate trust in a human being? A religious tradition? Your own self? Or is Scripture alone the final court of arbitration by which to test competing truth claims?

SMALL GROUP Q'S

Personal Life:

1. As you begin your small group discussion, take a moment to reflect upon and discuss what life would be like if the Bible hadn't been written. How would the way you see the world be different? List some direct benefits that the Scriptures have had upon civilization in general and upon Christ's Church specifically...

Ponderings:

2. As Evangelical Christians...
 - ...we don't revere a Pope, but what other forms of celebrity-worship might we be guilty of?
 - ...we don't pay money for God's forgiveness, but what are some modern examples of financial manipulation that come from some self-professed Christian leaders?
 - ...the vast majority of us do not suffer from illiteracy, yet many American Christians remain Biblically illiterate. Why is this?
3. Imagine the courage Luther had to stand up against the teachings of the very Church system he was a part of. Can you think of some modern examples of great courage needed in our generation to embrace the teaching of Scripture in the face of persecution or opposition?
4. Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 as a group and discuss the following...
 - Describe one way in which Scripture has *taught* you...
 - Describe one way in which Scripture has *rebuked* you...
 - Describe one way in which Scripture has *corrected* you...
 - Describe one way in which Scripture has *trained* you...

Promptings:

5. As important as the Scriptures are, we do not worship them, but the God revealed in them. Why is this an important distinction to make? Do you make a priority of knowing and applying the Scripture to your life? If not, what step(s) can you take to be more intentional in that journey, not with some legalistic motive, but to experience your life in Christ more fully?