

Who Says? Scripture Alone
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Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." Matthew 28:18

"Who says?" was a common legal query heard in my home of 4 siblings growing up. I rightfully appealed to authority when my sister told me I needed to clean up my room. I certainly wasn't going to take her word for it.

That was the question asked of Martin Luther by Johannes Eck in 1519 in order to destroy Luther's (and the historic church's) contention that sinners are saved completely by grace through faith in Christ. Who says? Did Luther just make this up? Luther contended rightfully that it's all over scriptures. Eck promoted the then-accepted idea that the Pope and councils are the right interpreter of Scriptures and therefore have equal weight.

Martin Luther and company agree with the Church fathers and the apostles and Jesus. The ultimate source of authority is Jesus. He is the head of the church. He speaks through holy Scriptures. If there is a disagreement between a pastor and Paul's letter to the Romans, you go with Paul's letter. This is just common sense - let alone the faithful way to determine what is taught in Christ's Church. Christ's words!

While the reformation fought over whether to listen to the Pope's words or Jesus', don't divorce yourself from this conflict too quickly. Whose words have authority in your life? Often, we like to be the head of our own little churches. Maybe we literally pick and choose what we like from God's words and invent our own religion. Or maybe we say we believe everything God says, but we don't look like it!

Satan often tempts us to replace God with ourselves as the head of our church. You will be like God, he told Eve. It seems good for sure - Hey I can do and have whatever I want. I'll be free! However, when we replace Jesus' words with our own, we create a religion and a world where there is less forgiveness and more judging - just like when Rome did the same. Outside of Jesus' words, all other religions including your own strange contortions don't have God on a cross dying for sinners. Instead of a cross they have ladder for you to climb and an altar that never stops demanding sacrifices.

We also need to be reminded that Jesus is head of our church too! God's clear words of right and wrong are greater than the world, your feelings, your passions. God's clear words of forgiveness and mercy written in the blood of His Son are greater than your lack of love, guilt, or shame.

Who says? Jesus who died and rose for you and gives you forgiveness and eternal life for free!