

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Gospels that Damn—Roman Catholicism, Pt 2

Selected Scriptures

Keywords: Roman Catholic Church, false gospel, Catholicism, Gospel, Sin

PowerPoint Presentation included: Alternate Gospels that Damn--Roman Catholicism pt 2.pptx

SermonAudio Blurb: In this brief series we consider key religions that claim to give a true way of salvation and forgiveness of sin, but actually are false gospels and false hopes. When considering a false gospel one must put at the very top of the list the Roman Catholic Church. A massive religion, it is built upon a false understanding of sin which leads to a false understanding of the solution to that sin and a false command in response to their solution. In this first of two sermons we focus on the problem of mankind, which is sin. And we see how the Roman Catholic Church gives an utterly hopeless, Christ-less answer to that problem.

I. Introduction.

- A. We created a small series on why we need to be saved. Why one must be a Christian.
 - 1. The goal was to help you understand how to share your Christian faith with greater confidence.
 - 2. To be able to stay focused on the core issues.
 - 3. Four simple points: problem, solution, commands and blessings.
- B. Picture those four points as a master sheet through which you can ask questions to another person to get to the heart of the gospel.
 - 1.
 - 2. So we went down the rabbit hole of how the Roman Catholic Church views sin last week. The goal was to show you the complexity of it all.
 - a. For the faithful Catholic, sin is a very, very important subject unless you have a priest who downplays it.
 - b. You have to distinguish between material sins and formal sins especially with regard to mortal sins vs venial sins. Your soul hangs on knowing the difference and whether you committed one.
 - c. But in it all is never the sense that sin is something from which you are freed.

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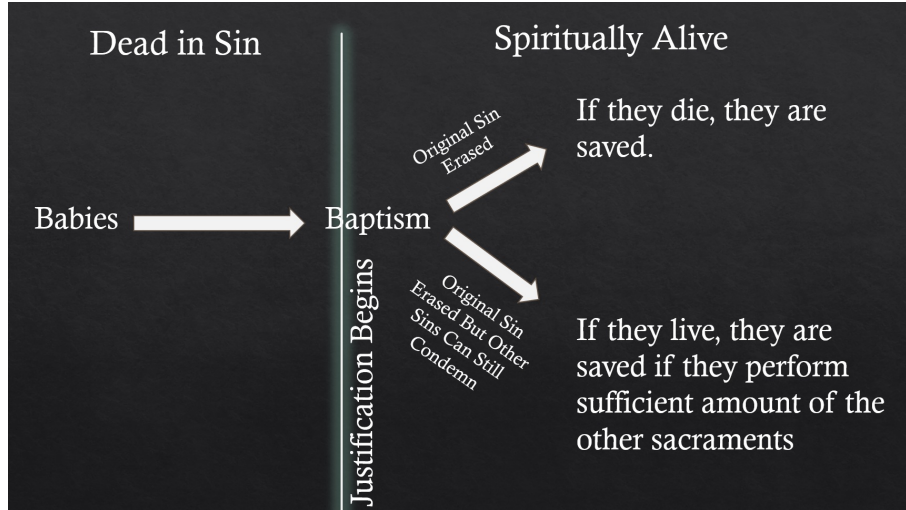
3. But the most pressing problem in the whole thing is how Jesus Christ takes a back seat in reality to dealing with sin. Yes He is present, but only on the periphery. The Virgin Mary is front and center. The priestly works are front and center. The performance of the various sacraments done by the penitent are front and center. But not Jesus, which the bible says we are to fix our eyes upon as the author and finisher of our faith.
- C. Today we will look at the idea of justification, which is one of the many blessings promised to those who repent and believe the gospel of Jesus Christ. Both groups teach on it.
 1. Most Protestants don't have a sound grasp of this doctrine of justification today.
 2. There are many different aspects/facets to the idea of salvation from sin. But justification is the preeminent one. Get this wrong and you get salvation wrong.
- D. So, going back to sin, mortal sin is very powerful in the life of a Catholic, though when you ask them about it you will find it downplayed. Ask an average Catholic if they think they have committed a mortal sin in the last year and see what answer you get.

II. Roman Catholic Church and Justification.

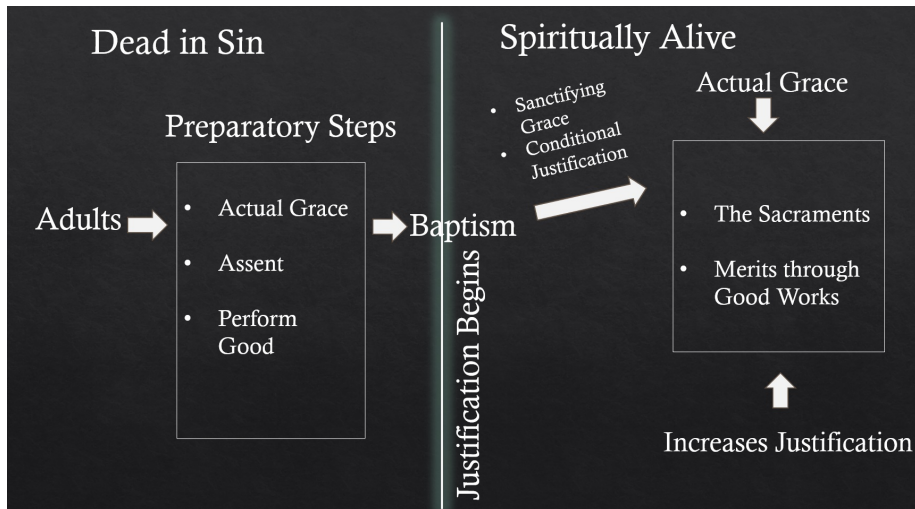
- A. The Church began to use the Latin Vulgate, which was a translation of the bible from the Greek and Hebrew, and this is when the idea of justification developed and began to go into error. The leaders left behind the languages of the bible and leaned on the translation.
 1. The term for justify in Latin meant to "make righteous." And so the idea began to develop and become enlarged that what the sinner needed to do is become increasingly more holy, or just, until they are ultimately justified by God.
 2. This is quite different than what the Greek term (*dikaiaō*) meant. That Greek term speaks of being **declared** righteous rather than to **make** righteous.
- B. The Roman Catholic Church method of justification.
 1. It is accomplished through a sacerdotal and sacramental system.

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2. The first step of justification is to be baptised and normally is done with infants.



3. What about an adult? For the responsible person, such as an adult, the process is a bit different:



- a. There are preparatory steps you must first make and this can take a year or several years.
 - (1) **Actual grace**

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(2) **Assent**

(3) **Good works**

(4) The Catechism says in section 1249 that this person is part of the household of Christ. But that is not the same as being saved and certainly not justified.

- b. Note that baptism seals the person with an indelible mark that shows that he belongs to Christ. Nothing can erase that mark, which sounds good but it does not mean the person will be saved, it is merely the beginning of that process.

(1272) Incorporated into Christ by Baptism, the person baptized is configured to Christ. Baptism seals the Christian with the indelible spiritual mark (character) of his belonging to Christ. No sin can erase this mark, **even if sin [mortal] prevents Baptism from bearing the fruits of salvation.** Given once for all, Baptism cannot be repeated.

- c. Now this introduces the next key term alongside justification. It is the word “infused.” The Roman Catholic Church says that through the act of baptism the person is infused with sanctifying grace that places actual righteousness within the person.

(1) Starting with baptism you then begin to increase the quantity of this grace through the other sacraments. One it reaches the level God demands, which is absolute, you are then saved.

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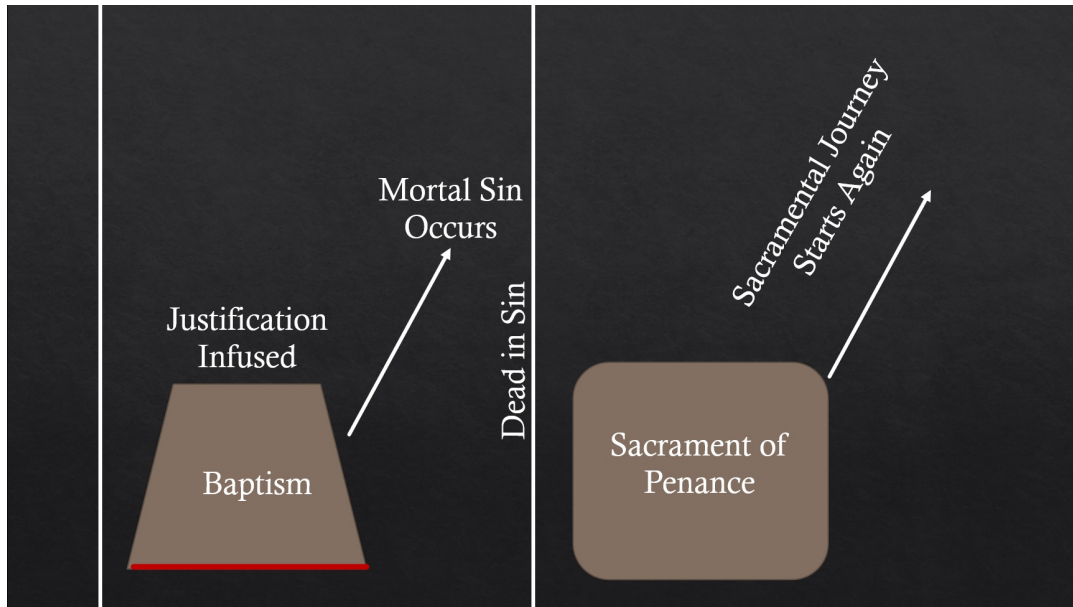
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- (2) This is quite different than the biblical idea of grace, which is not a substance, but as an action and attitude of God toward sinners.

“And **you were dead** in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. **But God**, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **For by grace you have been saved through faith**; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.” (Ephesians 2:1-9)

- d. It is key for us to understand the relationship of grace and sin in the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.
-
4. What does one do if he committed a mortal sin? How can a person become justified again? The next step in becoming justified is called penance.
 - a. The next step is not really a step; rather, it is a progression, like a journey. It is a restoration.

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- b. The Roman Catholic Church calls penance the “second plank of justification” as you can see from the Catechism: “1446 Christ instituted the sacrament of Penance for all sinful members of his Church: above all for those who, since Baptism, have fallen into grave sin, and have thus lost their baptismal grace and wounded ecclesial communion. It is to them that the sacrament of Penance offers a new possibility to convert and to recover the grace of justification. The Fathers of the Church present this sacrament as ‘the second plank [of salvation] after the shipwreck which is the loss of grace.’”
- c. Three elements to penance to make it of value.

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5. This is where it becomes very important to grasp justification.
 - a. Do not say that a Catholic is justified by works and we believe it is by faith.

 - b. That is not where the stumbling point is. It is in the little word “alone.”

6. This now requires us to understand what the Roman Catholic Church teaches on merit.
 - a. “By merit . . . in general is understood that property of a good work which entitles the doer to receive a reward . . . from him in whose service the work is done. . . . In the theological sense, a supernatural merit can only be a salutary act. . . , to which God in consequence of his infallible promise owes a supernatural reward, consisting ultimately in eternal life, which is the beatific vision in heaven.” (<https://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/merit>)
 - b. Two key aspects of merit are taught by the Roman Catholic Church: Condign and Congruous.
 - (1) Condign merit simply means that the thing done is so worthy of merit that it demands the promised reward. In fact, to not reward it would be unjust. It is the right of the person to receive that reward. To say it a bit differently, a person under the influence of actual grace performs an act that is beyond normal acts that any unbeliever could do, God has guaranteed a reward for it. **However**, humans cannot do works of condign merit. In other words, though this is a theoretical reality it does not ever occur between God and man, so God is never in our debt to do something, such as save us or grant us eternal life. So it is false to say that the Roman Catholic Church teaches that we do good works and God has to reward it with eternal life.
 - (2) Congruent merit:

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- (a) “Congruent merit occurs with respect to God when a person under the influence of actual grace does an action which pleases God but which he has not promised to reward. Some times God chooses to reward the act, sometimes not. For example, if we obey Jesus' instruction to supernaturally love our enemies and pray for them; however, God has not promised that he will answer our prayers concerning them, and although he is pleased with the prayers we are offering out of supernatural love for them, he may not give them the blessing we are asking for them.”
(<https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/righteousness-and-merit-1139>)
 - (b) SO, when you do the penance of satisfaction that work does not meet the standards of condign merit; rather it is congruent merit.
7. In all of this we have not discussed the idea of faith or belief yet and it is important that we do so.
- a. Remember that the battle regarding justification, being made righteous or declared righteous, all focuses upon the word, “alone.”
 - b. Are we justified by grace alone? Are we justified through faith alone? Or to say it another way, are we justified by Jesus Christ alone?
 - c. This is the driving issue that created what is called the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century. As all of this unfolded the Roman Catholic Church convened a formal council, now known as the Council of Trent, to address the charges against the Church that they taught a false gospel.
 - d. Front and center to this was the discussion of justification and where faith played into it. It is worthwhile to remember that the Roman Catholic Church can never annul formal councils like Trent. What is taught and affirmed must always be taught and believed. To reject what the Council of Trent taught is to be a disobedient and unfaithful Catholic and that is a mortal sin.
 - e. At the council several issues were discussed but justification was a major point and the Roman Catholic Church formally laid out what

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they believed and taught about justification. Then they spent time with issues related to condemning various positions that are in opposition to the official Catholic teaching.

- (1) The actual way this was done was by saying, “If anyone believes such and such let him be anathema.”
- (2) [slide 14] This comes from Galatians 1:8-9, “*But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed.*”
- (3) To be anathema is to be under the eternal curse of God.

f. With that in mind, understand that the Roman Catholic Church in the Council of Trent teaches that faith is a necessary condition for justification.

- (1) So the Roman Catholic Church teaches three aspects or elements about faith in relationship to justification:
 - (a) “*Initium*”— It is the starting place of justification. Or it is the way in which justification begins its process.
 - (b) “*Fundamentum*” — Faith is also the foundation upon which justification is established or built.
 - (c) “*Rodex*”— And finally faith is at the core or root of justification.
- (2) So it is obvious that they have faith as a very, very critical component to being justified.

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- g. But by this time you should realize that with the Roman Catholic Church nothing is quite straight-forward. The devil, so to speak, is in the details and those details are the terms used.
 - (1) Just like sin. Sin is sin, but sin can be materially sin yet not formally sin. Just like a mortal sin can be so materially, but formally it is a venial sin.
 - (2) So with faith. Faith is a necessary condition. But that is not the same as saying that faith is the sufficient condition. What is meant by this is that if you meet that condition, then the expected result will happen. You have a candy machine that requires one quarter to give you a gumball. You put the quarter in and you have sufficiently met the condition required and you get the ball.
- h. So now we apply this to the Roman Catholic Church and justification.
 - (1) You can have faith. Faith in Jesus Christ and yet it is not sufficient for justification. It is necessary but not sufficient.
 - (2) In fact, you can be justified as a Catholic because you believe what the Church teaches. So you are literally in the state of faith, but still can commit a mortal sin and even though you are still believing what you think is the gospel, you are actually now outside of grace and no longer justified. Your faith is not and was not sufficient.
- i. All of this leads us to having to understand what causes justification. And again this gets very complex and convoluted.

III. Conclusion.

- A. It is here that we must stop because of time.
- B. Whether you are a Roman Catholic or you are a Protestant of some sort, salvation is not something you may possess.
 - 1. Many a Catholic is busy filling up their soul with what they think is justifying grace. They do it through the many activities taught them by the Roman Catholic Church.
 - a. They believe in Jesus and in His death and resurrection.
 - b. They believe in justification.

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- c. They have faith.
- d. But they are not saved.
- 2. And many a Protestant is in the same boat.
 - a. The packaging is different but it ends up being the same in substance.
 - b. They believe the facts of the gospel. Jesus' death and resurrection.
 - c. They are busy doing good things. And when you press them their statement of their hope of salvation sounds something like this:
 - (1) I love Jesus.
 - (2) I go to church and I read the bible and I try to obey.
 - (3) I have said a certain prayer and was told that if I said that prayer and meant it, I would be saved.
 - (4) I was baptized as an infant. Or I was baptized as an adult.
 - d. And when you press either one of them hard enough you find that their faith is not in Christ alone. It is in Christ plus some other things. And that, beloved is not salvation.
- C. And so even today I know that there is every possibility that here today are those whose faith rests in Jesus Christ plus . . .
 - 1. Jesus Christ plus a certain theological system.
 - 2. Jesus Christ plus certain things you don't do anymore.
 - 3. Jesus Christ plus a level of giving.
- D. To you, I can only say what Peter said, "There is no other name given by God than Jesus Christ by which you can be saved." or as the Apostle Paul said it, "believe in Jesus Christ and you will be saved."
 - 1. If you are unsure what that means then come to one of the elders and we will talk with you more fully.
 - 2. But do not shove these words aside and think you will get there given enough time.

Benediction

May our gracious Father in heaven cause us to be found in Christ, clothed on in His righteousness which comes through faith from the hand of God. May we know Christ and

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the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings as we become conformed to His death. Amen.

Roman Catholicism

What Is Salvation?

The Dividing Line---Justification

◆ Latin Vulgate--- Justify  Make Righteous

◆ Actual Term --- Justify  Declare Righteous

Dead in Sin

Spiritually Alive

Babies



Baptism

Original Sin
Erased



If they die, they are saved.

Original Sin
Erased But Other
Sins Can Still
Condemn



If they live, they are saved if they perform sufficient amount of the other sacraments

Justification Begins

Dead in Sin

Preparatory Steps

Adults →

- Actual Grace
- Assent
- Perform Good

→ Baptism

Justification Begins

Spiritually Alive

- Sanctifying Grace
- Conditional Justification



Actual Grace



- The Sacraments
- Merits through Good Works



Increases Justification

(1272 CCC) Incorporated into Christ by Baptism, the person baptized is configured to Christ. Baptism seals the Christian with the indelible spiritual mark (character) of his belonging to Christ. No sin can erase this mark, even if sin [mortal] prevents Baptism from bearing the fruits of salvation. Given once for all, Baptism cannot be repeated.

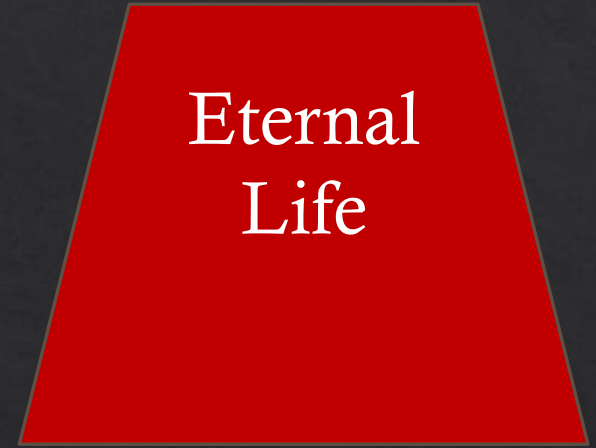
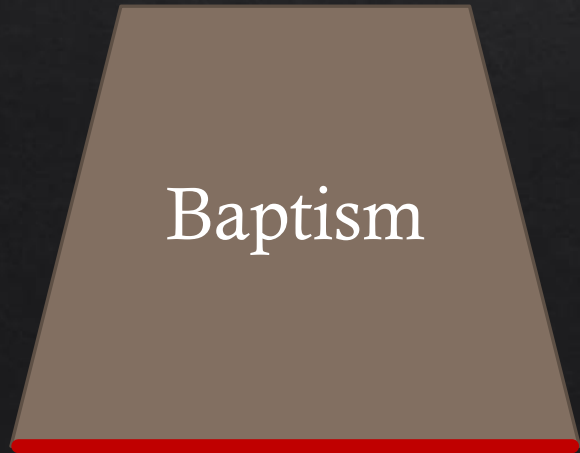
Justification
Infused

Baptism

Lifetime of
Sacramental Practice

Eternal
Life

Final Justification
Once All
Imperfection Is
Removed



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But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (**by grace you have been saved**), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **For by grace you have been saved through faith;** and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.” (Ephesians 2:1-9)

Dead in Sin

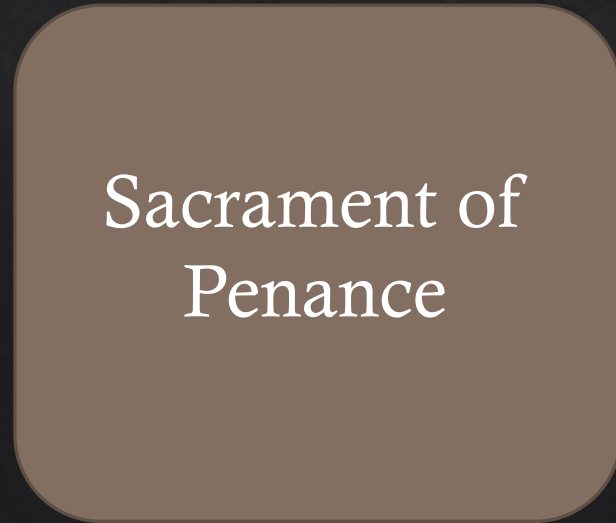


Justification
Infused

Mortal Sin
Occurs



Dead in Sin



*Sacramental Journey
Starts Again*



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The Question of Merit

“By merit . . . in general is understood that property of a good work which entitles the doer to receive a reward . . . from him in whose service the work is done. . . . In the theological sense, a supernatural merit can only be a salutary act. . . , to which God in consequence of his infallible promise owes a supernatural reward, consisting ultimately in eternal life, which is the beatific vision in heaven.”

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Two Types of Merit

Ethics and theology clearly distinguish two kinds of merit: (1) condign merit or merit in the strict sense of the word (*meritum adaequatum sive de condigno*), and (2) congruous or quasi-merit (*meritum inadaequatum sive de congruo*). Condign merit supposes an equality between service and return; it is measured by commutative justice (*justitia commutativa*), and thus gives a real claim to a reward. Congruous merit, owing to its inadequacy and the lack of intrinsic proportion between the service and the recompense, claims a reward only on the ground of equity.

(<https://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/merit>)

Congruent Merit

“Congruent merit occurs with respect to God when a person under the influence of actual grace does an action which pleases God but which he has not promised to reward. Some times God chooses to reward the act, sometimes not. For example, if we obey Jesus' instruction to supernaturally love our enemies and pray for them; however, God has not promised that he will answer our prayers concerning them, and although he is pleased with the prayers we are offering out of supernatural love for them, he may not give them the blessing we are asking for them.”

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Let Him Be Anathema. . . .

Galatians 1:8-9, “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed [anathema].”

Three Aspects about Faith

- ◇ “*Initium*” — It is the starting place of justification. Or it is the way in which justification begins its process.
- ◇ “*Fundamentum*” — Faith is also the foundation upon which justification is established or built.
- ◇ “*Rodex*” — Faith is at the core or root of justification.

Faith as The Sufficient Condition

If you meet a specific condition, then the expected result will happen. In this sense then, if the condition of faith is met, then salvation, or justification shall happen.