

Conversation Starters

- Have you ever had an experience at a Catholic church?
- What was it like?

Discuss

Protestants and Catholics share the same Christian roots and history. They were divided during the Reformation due to a conflict over the authority of Scripture in relation to the role of the Pope, and the idea of salvation by faith through grace alone versus performance and deeds attached to it.

"But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You know they are true, for you know you can trust those who taught you. You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God's way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do." ([2 Timothy 3:14-17, NLT](#))

"Since we've compiled this long and sorry record as sinners... and proved that we are utterly incapable of living the glorious lives God wills for us, God did it for us. Out of sheer generosity he put us in right standing with himself. A pure gift. He got us out of the mess we're in and restored us to where he always wanted us to be. And he did it by means of Jesus Christ. God sacrificed Jesus on the altar of the world to clear that world of sin. Having faith in him sets us in the clear.... God does not respond to what we do; we respond to what God does." ([Romans 3:23-28, Msg](#))

- What are the concerns of holding tradition as authority?
- What are the dangers of relying on anything or anyone other than Scripture for truth?
- What do we learn from Scripture about salvation?

Despite the differences, there is (and should be) much mutual respect and appreciation between both Protestants and Catholics. Regardless of the differences, both are still Christian. There is much to learn from each other. We should all treat the sacraments of the church with high regard, including communion, marriage and confession. We should all serve the poor, homeless and forgotten. We should all rest in the grace of a personal relationship with Christ.

- Where can you grow from where Catholics are often strong?
- Where can you grow from where Protestants are often strong?
- Do you have any shifts in attitude towards Catholics or Protestants that are needed?

Deciding between Protestant and Catholic is not about whose right and wrong, but a choice does need to be made about where to commit. It's important to make a place your church home, a place where you can get involved and give and serve and invest. Above all, it's important to commit to a place where you are growing in your relationship with Christ.

- Where are you finding Christ in your life?
- Have you committed to a local church?
- In what ways can you show your commitment to a church?

Next Steps

Christians should never allow anyone, much less themselves, to divide people. There are [core beliefs](#) to the Christian faith that should be a source of peace, to promote unity in the Christian community. Do you have conflicts over the core Christian beliefs? Pray about how you're handling those differences, and how you can promote unity – even if it means agreeing to disagree, agreeably.

If you want to get involved at Meck, a great place to start is with [Starting Line](#), where you'll learn about our mission and some options for you to get started on your journey here.

Further Reflection

Read [2 Timothy 3:14-17](#); [Romans 3:23-28](#).

Pray

God, you are generous and faithful. Thank you for Jesus and the promise of eternity and hope through Him. Forgive us for any attitudes or actions that lead to division, particularly in your church. Help us to be increasingly loving toward others and to protect the unity of your church.