Compass Life Adult Sunday School

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**“Sadoleto vs. Calvin”**

**I. History and background.**

In 1539, Cardinal Jacopo Sadoleto, bishop of Carpentras and a Jesuit priest, wrote a letter to the people of Geneva to urge them to return to the Catholic faith. At that time, John Calvin had been exiled from Geneva, and was then a minister at Strasbourg. The city council of Geneva consulted Calvin regarding Sadoleto’s letter, and Calvin agreed to give a reply. Calvin’s reply strongly defended the viewpoint of the Reformed movement. Both Sadoleto and Calvin were highly educated, and their letters are very valuable for understanding the theological debate at the times of Reformation. This debate was very academic, and apparently did not arouse a public discussion. However, it is undoubtedly an invaluable one because the discussion touched the very essence of the Reformation movement. It touched on various doctrines, but ultimately, the key difference is about the ultimate authority, whether it is the Word of God, or the rich ecclesiastical tradition of the Church. John Calvin was born in France in 1509, he was a theologian/ecclesiastical statesman and Martin Luther's successor as the preeminent Protestant theologian. Calvin made a powerful impact on the fundamental doctrines of Protestantism. Calvin's religious teachings emphasized the sovereignty of the scriptures and divine predestination—a doctrine holding that God chooses those who will enter Heaven based His omnipotence and grace. Jacopo Sadoleto was born at Modena in 1477. In Rome, he obtained the patronage of Cardinal Carafa and adopted the ecclesiastical career. Pope Leo X chose him as his secretary and in 1517 made him Bishop of Carpentras. A faithful servant of the papacy in many negotiations under successive popes, especially as a peacemaker, his major aim was to win back the Protestants by peaceful persuasion and by putting Catholic doctrine in a conciliatory form. Sadoleto was a diligent bishop, was appointed cardinal in 1536 and was a key player in preparing for the Council of Trent.

**Sadoleto’s Arguments John Calvin’s Response**

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**The Christian Faith is Founded on the Word of God**

* Christ, the living Word, is revealed in the written Word
* The Holy Spirit sovereignly illumines, confirms, and applies the Word
* All teachings and ideas are judged by the Word

**The Reformed Faith is Rooted in the *Historic* Christian Faith**

* Scripture – *ad fontes* – the “faith once delivered”
* Confirmed and faithfully summarized in early creeds and councils\*
* Affirmed by Early Church Fathers\*

\* as these agree with Scripture

**Justification by Faith Alone (That does not Remain Alone)**

* Justification is *fully secured* by Christ’s work on the cross
* Justification is *received* by grace alone, through faith alone (apart from any action on our part)
* The same faith that receives Christ’s completed work, *unites* us to Christ
  + Christ is both our *justification*, and *sanctification*
  + Union with Christ always results in a transformed life: *fruit*
  + That *fruit* is never the *condition* of God’s acceptance
  + The *absence* of fruit suggests the absence of true faith

**The Priesthood of All Believers**

* All directly trust in Christ (no other mediator or “implied faith”)
* Connection to Christ connects to the Church (not vice versa)
* The Word is given to every person!

**January 5, 2020 – The Greatest Story Ever Told – Part I**