

Remembering the Reformation

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, November 1, 2020

As Quentin mentioned, we had an interesting week this week with all the COVID things. We thought we had everything figured out on Tuesday, and then Wednesday, we realized we didn't and we had to make changes. But it actually fits very well with our sermon this morning, because we have an unusual type of message today so it really falls in line with how the week went. So if you would, take your Bibles and open them with me to the book of Ephesians. Please open with me to the book of Ephesians and while you're turning there, I just want to say, today we're doing something that we haven't done before as a church, and that is we're going to study some church history. As you know, we like to go through the Bible verse by verse as a church. That's what we do every week. But this morning, we're going to look at an event that happened 500 years ago in history, known as the Protestant Reformation. Today is a special day in many churches across the world, because it's known as Reformation Sunday. It's a day that's set aside to celebrate the Reformation because on October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg. He took a stand against the church of his time. Technically, the Reformation actually began before that. It started before Luther showed up. But this was kind of the spark that set it off, it was kind of the light that lit the torch, lit the blaze.

So we're going to celebrate that today. We want to honor that and remember that, because as I told you last time, our church comes from a specific place in history. We come from a specific place in time. This didn't just fall from the sky, we didn't just rise from the ashes. We are actually carrying a baton that's been passed down to us and by the grace of God, we want to pass it down to others and pass it down to others. That's what we're doing here, as a church. We come from, in many ways, historically, we come from this event, the Protestant Reformation. I'm going to show you some things on the PowerPoint here in a moment. But let me just say a few words about what these terms mean so we're all kind of on the same page. The term "protestant", it means a protester, and this movement started as a protest against abuses in the Catholic Church. It started as an outcry against certain heresies, and we'll talk about that in a moment. The word "reformation", it means just what it says. This was an attempt to reform those abuses. It was an attempt to correct them. In other words, this was not a recreation, but a reformation of the church. The reformers did not see that they were doing something brand new. They were trying to take the church back to the way it was supposed to be in the first place. That was their goal. That was what they were trying to accomplish; take it back to the Scriptures, back to the Word of God.

Now in saying this, you might be wondering, "Well, okay, if that happened in 1517, what happened before that? If that's what took place in the 1500s, well, what was going on in the church that kind of led up to this event?" And so to answer that, it might be good to give you a quick summary of church history and this will be a very quick summary. But when the last apostle died, the church was under attack. It was under persecution from the Roman Empire and it was pretty massive persecution because

all the apostles were martyred except one. If you ever say “Oh, I like to be a New Testament apostle”, I don't think you would. It was a very difficult life and their followers were persecuted as well. It was hard to be a Christian in the first century. The early Christians were crucified, beheaded, burned alive, skinned alive, stoned, impaled, drowned, imprisoned, starved and thrown into the Colosseum with gladiators and wild animals. They would do horrible things to the early Christians. This went on for years. It went on for centuries, until the Roman general, Constantine saw a vision of a cross over the Milvian Bridge in Italy and he saw the words “in this sign, conquer”, written above it in the vision, and he took that to mean that the cross should be painted on the shields of his soldiers. The cross should be painted on their armor, which he did and he won. He won a famous battle on the Milvian Bridge, and he went on to win other battles to the point that eventually this man became emperor of Rome. You've heard of Constantine. You've heard of Constantinople. That's where this comes from. And as a way of saying thank you to the Christians he passed an edict legalizing their religion in 313 AD, he stopped the persecution.

And then he took it one step further and he made Christianity the official religion of the Empire. He made Christianity the official religion of the Roman people, which you think would be a good thing. You think that would be positive, but it had terrible consequences because before, if you were a Christian, you could be stoned for being a Christian, you could be crucified. Now you could get money. Now you could get power because as you went up in the church, you went up in the state because the two became one. So all kinds of corruption crept into the church. It wasn't long before the church became an arm of the state. It was just a political entity, and to add to the history, Constantine moved his capital to the East, to Constantinople. The city of Rome stayed put in the West and so did the church there. Soon the church in Rome was mediating disputes between other churches. Because of its location in the capital, it kind of became a capital church. And it started mediating conflicts between churches, and then it began to lead them. Then it began to give orders to other churches. And before long it took over.

The church in Rome became the highest authority in the land. It even told kings what to do, because again, if you lead the church, you lead the state. There's a famous story of King Henry IV, standing outside the Pope's castle for three days in a blizzard, begging for his forgiveness, begging for his pardon. That's the King of England, because that's the world that this occurred in. That's the world of the Protestant Reformation. The word, “Catholic”, (a lot of these terms, we have to define them because we've forgotten what they mean), but the word, “Catholic” just means universal. It means a worldwide church because there was one universal church, one worldwide church calling the shots, at this time. There was a church in the east, but it was so far away, the Greek Orthodox Church. It was so far away that they really didn't have any contact. You did what Rome said, or they killed you.

Just to fill this out here, this went on during what's known as the Middle Ages. It occurred in a period of time known as the Dark Ages, because in the fifth century, just a few years after Constantine died, the Roman Empire fell to the barbarians. It fell to a group of illiterate uncultured pagans and as a result,

they plunged the world into darkness. People were in the dark on so many levels, at this time. They were in the dark scholastically because they couldn't read. The printing press would not be invented until 1455, so books were hard to come by. They had to be copied by hand. So if you had a book in your hand, it was written out by someone with a pen, imagine that. At this time they would even chain the Bibles to the pulpits, not because the Bible was so valuable, and everybody read it, but because they didn't want anybody to steal it.

They were in the dark economically, because catastrophes like the plagues kept destroying the workforce. One plague known as the black plague wiped out one fourth of the population of Europe in one year. Can you imagine if you're an agricultural society based on farming, and you lose one fourth of your population in one year, what's that going to do?

Worst of all, they were in the dark spiritually. These people were in the dark spiritually because they knew nothing about God, not the true God. And that's why I wanted to show you that video this morning, because that really describes the issue of the Reformation. They were taught what is called "infused righteousness", where righteousness is infused to you like a bone and it gets added to your account so that when you do good deeds, they get added to other good deeds. And when you do other good deeds, they get added, added to other good deeds. You just put them all together. And when you go to judgment day you present them to God. "Let me into heaven with my righteousness."

They were told to do this many ways. For example, they would do this by praying to relics. Some of you have heard of relics. They would visit the skull of John the Baptist or the hair from the Virgin Mary, and they would pray to it. They would travel for days or weeks to visit these different things all over Europe. They would donate money to the church. That was another big one in the Middle Ages, very popular. One priest named Johann Tetzel famously said that "When a coin in the coffer rings, a soul from purgatory springs". That was one way to do this. This is one way to go to heaven, you could buy your way there. Or if a relative died and you were afraid they're in purgatory, you could buy their way out.

And then another one that they would do is they would take the mass. They would take the Roman Catholic version of the Lord's Supper, which is not really the Lord's Supper, when you read documents from this time as a Protestant. I remember the first time I was reading, "Why are they fighting over the Lord's supper?" Well, they're not fighting over the Lord's Supper, they're fighting over the mass. Because the Catholic Version says that the mass, the priest literally changes Jesus, and the bread and the wine into Jesus' body and blood, not figuratively, but literally, because he re-crucifies Him all over again. Some of you if you've been to a Catholic service, you'll see the priest hold his hands up during the mass or with the cup. And the reason he does that is he's bringing Jesus down to recrucify him again, which is blasphemy to us. But they believe that because they were in total darkness, the people couldn't see a thing.

I've heard the Middle Ages referred to as a thousand years without a bath. And it's true, because if you look at paintings from this time, even in the paintings, everything is dark, everything is dirty, everything's hopeless, there's no hope. And the question I want to talk to you about this morning is what happened? How did things change from that to this? How do we go from the dark ages to the 21st century?

When the Reformation first happened in Geneva, the city posted signs up everywhere. They put them on the street corners, they put them on the buildings that said, "post tenebras, lux", and that means "after darkness, light". It's beautiful. They knew what happened, the light had come in. But the question is, well, how did they get there? Where did the hope come from?

So this morning, I want to answer that question by giving you five major principles, and five major players of the Protestant Reformation. I was talking to someone about this a moment ago, and they said, "You're going to do five of them?" I said, "Yes, we'll get all five of them in there. We're going to condense it." But we're doing that because I want you to see what happened, the big picture of this. So five major principles and five major players of the Protestant Reformation. And I can't tell you everything about this event, there's just not enough time. There's too much in here but let's talk about the highlights. And there's plenty of highlights. I think this will be very helpful for us because a lot of the convictions they had, we have, so you're kind of studying your spiritual ancestors in a sense, and you're going to see that as we go through this.

The first one, the first principle of the Reformation is *sola fide*, or faith alone. If you've studied the reformation, some of these terms would be familiar to you. But the first key principle of the Reformation is that salvation is *sola fide*, or it's by faith alone. All these principles are in Latin, by the way, because that was the official language of the church at the time. All the leaders wrote in Latin, they spoke in Latin. That's what they learned in seminary. So if you wanted to be a priest, you learned Latin. So the reformers used that language as well. And the first one is *sola fide*, or faith alone, which means that you don't work for salvation. You don't earn it. It comes through faith.

To go back to the term we just mentioned, the reformers rejected the idea of infused righteousness, they threw that away. They thought that was wrong and they replaced it with another technical term called imputed righteousness. And that's actually very important to remember this. Imputed righteousness means you believe on Christ, and His righteousness is imputed to your account. It's transferred to you. I tried to show this in the video, this one might have gotten cut off, but Jesus took your broken commandments on Himself and He gave you His perfect set of commandments. There's an imputation taking place, the transfer. You don't bring your list to God and get into heaven. If you're gonna get into heaven, you bring Christ's list of righteousness.

If you want to look in Ephesians 2, I just want to show you these things from a couple of passages in the book of Ephesians while we talk about them. We've been going through the book of Ephesians on

Sunday mornings. We've been going through this book, verse by verse, and so maybe some of this will be a little review for you of some of the highlights of what we've talked about because this is very much a reformation book. But in Ephesians, 2:8-9, it says this. And it says,

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, so that no one may boast.

I mean, as you read that I don't think you can get any clearer than that, says it right here, "By grace, you have been saved through faith." That means salvation does not come to you through works, you don't receive it through your good deeds. You get it through faith. When you guys came into the building, you came through the door. That's how you got into the building. If you want to get into heaven, you go through faith, through trusting in the Lord and one man who taught this was Martin Luther.

You can't talk about the Reformation or *sola fide* without talking about him. That's his picture up here. I've pictures of all these reformers for you, so you know who we're talking about. This is a famous portrait of him and his portraits are always interesting, because he looks rather large but a friend of his said he never knew anyone who ate so little and weighed so much, really couldn't figure out why Luther looked like this. He was actually a very temperate guy, in many ways. In other ways, he's a pretty passionate guy. But Luther was born in 1483, to a family of coal miners. He came from the lower classes in Germany. In fact, his dad wanted him to go to law school so he could make up for that. He realized he had a very brilliant son and so he thought, you know, make him a lawyer and make a lot of money and get out of the mines. But in his teenage years, Luther got caught in a lightning storm. He almost got struck by lightning and he prayed to God, "If you get me through this, I'll become a monk." And that's what he did. Be careful what you pray for, right?

But he did, he survived the storm, entered the monastery. And while he was there, he says he almost killed himself trying to be saved. He almost killed himself trying to earn righteousness. He said, "If a monk could have been saved by monkery, it was me. I was a monk of all monks." He fasted, prayed, went days without sleep, all in order to work his way to heaven but he said it just didn't work. He said, "The harder I tried, it actually had the opposite effect, because I thought God hated me. I thought God was my enemy." And this went on until the day he was reading from Romans 1:17, which said that the just shall live by faith. And everything clicked. I mean, everything changed for him in that moment.

It is interesting, because Luther could actually read the Bible. He could read Greek so he could read the Bible. I told you before, there weren't too many translations of the Bible available, and the ones that were available were all in Greek or in Latin. So the ordinary people couldn't read, but Luther could, and as he was studying that passage to preach it, imagine this, he was studying that passage to teach it, he was converted, because he realized that salvation is *sola fide*. It is by faith alone. That was a revolutionary idea at the time. I mean, nobody believed that. So Luther began to teach it, began to

preach it. I wonder what his sermon was like that week, you know, come to find this for the first time in your life, and you sit at the pulpit, explain it. And he started to write. That was another thing Luther did, a lot of these guys did. He's a very prolific author. And we don't have time to talk about all of his writings, but one of the things that he's most famous for are his 95 Theses, the 95 concerns he had with the Roman Catholic Church, which he nailed to the door of the church in Wittenberg, on Halloween, on All Hallows' Eve. That's the reason we celebrate that this time of year. We had Halloween last night. That's the time that he did this. He did that because more people would be coming to church that day. Pretty smart. Put it up on a holiday, everybody's gonna see it. And they also nailed it up there because at the time, you know, they didn't have Facebook or the internet, so if you wanted to have a public debate, you put it on a church door. And you could write it out because nobody could read it, but the priests, so it was really just for the leaders.

I saw a funny picture this week, you know, of Luther nailing the 95 Theses and he's talking to someone beside him. It says "No, I'm not trying to fix your door, I'm trying to fix your theology." It's kind of true. But as he nailed it up to the door, unbeknownst to him, someone tore it down and printed it and started sending it everywhere because the printing press had just been invented in Germany. You see the Lord's providence in this. The printing press was about 60 years old at the time and so someone thought this is really interesting. They took it off the church door, printed it, which got Luther in a lot of trouble. Because as a result of that and other things that he wrote, the church put him on trial for it and they made him stand before a judge and answer the charge of heresy, which was a capital offense. Again, the church and the state are one so you don't "church discipline" people, you just kill them.

So he was on trial for his life and he said these words at the end of the trial. He actually had to ask for another day to say this because it was so intense. But you guys are familiar with these, he says, "Since your majesty and your Lordships desire a simple reply, I will answer without horns and without teeth. Unless I'm convinced by Scripture and plain reason, I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other. My conscience is held captive to the Word of God." He says, "I cannot and I will not recant anything. For to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise, God held me. Amen." You guys ever heard those words before? Some of the most famous words ever spoken for a Protestant. This is what the Reformation was about. And some of the bravest words too because he could have been burnt alive for this, in fact, he would have been burned alive. That's how they dealt with heretics if it were not for the fact that after the trial, a friend of his, kidnapped him, took him away to a castle to save his life.

He spent two years in hiding in this castle, dressed up as a knight named Sir Henry, so he couldn't be recognized. Luther said it was the closest he ever came to being a soldier. He stayed in his room, worked, and when he came out, he was dressed up like a knight. It's kind of an interesting part of the story. While he was there, he translated the Bible into German and for the first time in 1000 years the German people had a Bible in their own language. And it really shook things up. I mean, now the people could read the Bible for themselves. They didn't have to go to a priest or a bishop or a council, they

could just open it up and read it in their own language. From there, Luther went on to marry a former nun named Katie. I highly recommend that. That's a great name for a wife. I had to put that in there. He called her my rib. It was kind of his affectionate term for her, she was his rib. Imagine a former monk and a former nun getting married. I mean, that's such a sweet story. They would have children together and they would see them grow up until he died at the age of 62, which was a very old age back then. The average lifespan of the Middle Ages was 33 years, so Luther lived twice that long. Lived a full life.

But he did all this, he made all these sacrifices, he lived such a life because he believed in salvation by faith alone. You don't earn salvation, you don't achieve it. It's given to you by faith. In his own words, Luther would say that the only contribution we make to our justification is our sin, which Christ so graciously forgives. Luther says Christ paid it all. There's nothing more to pay. He also said in his kind of famous way; he was very quotable guy, he said, "God doesn't need your good deeds, your neighbor does. So give your good deeds to him." He also said, "I taught, I preached and I wrote God's word. Otherwise, I did nothing. The Word did it all." He had complete faith in the Word of God, as did all of these men. Because of his ministry, the nation of Germany would eventually throw out the Catholic Church and set up its own government and it's been that way ever since.

So again, because the church and the state were one the political implications for all this were huge. And so, the government changed as a result of this, which leads to our next major principle, leads to the next principle of the Reformation, and that is *sola scriptura*. The first one is *sola fide* or "faith alone". The next one is *sola scriptura*, or "scripture alone". Salvation is by scripture alone. It comes from the Word of God. Now again, we hear that and we say, "Well, of course it does." But you remember the time. At this time the reformer said you can hear the Word of God outside the Bible. You can hear it outside of Scripture, which was different from what the Catholics said, because the Catholics said, you can't hear it outside of the Pope. They said, you can't hear it outside of bishops and priests and councils, because they have the right to interpret scripture for you. You can't do it yourself. You're just an ordinary layman. The reformer stepped in and said, no, you can read the Bible for yourself.

It's interesting today that when people talk about revivals in third world countries, they often talk about all these miraculous things like raising the dead or healings or things like that. You know what the reformers talked about in the third world country of their day, they'd say, take them back to the Bible. Teach them the Word of God. The apostle Paul doesn't say a lot about this in the book of Ephesians. But he does quote from scripture a couple times to show you that this was his authority. It was the word of God. All the authors did that and one man who taught this in church history was John Calvin. We have a picture of him up here, John Calvin. All the reformers wore hats in their portraits. I'm not sure why they did that but this is an interesting part of history, they didn't smile because they had bad teeth back then. So if you look in pictures; this is this way until the 1800s, early 1900s, but people didn't smile on their photographs, because they had very poor health.

John Calvin was born in France, 20 years after Luther. He came along several decades after the German reformer, and the two knew each other. They were close friends, because Luther was a great help to Calvin in his younger years, and Calvin tried to calm Luther down in his latter years. Luther had quite a temper, and we've got several letters that have come down to us, with Calvin trying to urge Luther to be patient towards others, not be so harsh. He could talk to him like that because they were friends. Just like Luther, John Calvin studied law. In his early years, he was training to be a lawyer until someone gave him a Bible. Someone gave him a copy of Scripture, which he read and he was converted on the spot. Just like Luther he was saved by reading the Bible. He couldn't come to church and hear the gospel preached, but he could read it in print.

As he began teaching that in his law school, it got him expelled. This is a common thing you see in the reformers, but they were not all liked. A lot of them were kind of rebels in their own way because they didn't have a choice. But he taught these things in the law school and it got him kicked out, which eventually took him to the town of Geneva, Switzerland. Some of you know this history, but in Geneva, Switzerland, Calvin was going to stay one night, but another reformer named John Farrell, heard he was in town, and he went to talk to him. And as the story goes, Calvin told him, "I can't stay here because I got to write my books. I can't stay in Geneva because I got to do my studies." And Ferrol said this, he said, "A curse on your studies and a curse on your books, if you don't stay here and help us." which shook John Calvin up so terribly; I don't think he'd been cursed before, that he stayed there the rest of his life. He never left Geneva.

He started to write. He took out his pen and he started to write book after book just like Luther did. He wrote several famous things like the Institutes of the Christian Religion. That was the first systematic theology of the church. It was the first time a Protestant sat down and tried to explain the Bible from beginning to end. That was the Institutes of the Christian Religion, quite an achievement. He also wrote commentaries on almost every book of the Bible. He wrote commentaries on every one except some of the history books in the Old Testament. He didn't make it to those. He started as seminary. This is interesting. The seminary was affectionately called the Martyr's College, because the graduates would go out and die. They would go into the Catholic countries, preach the gospel and be cut down.

He also preached. Since the Bible wasn't translated into French yet, John Calvin would take his Greek and Hebrew Bible with him into the pulpit, translate it on the spot and explain it. I don't know if you guys have ever tried to study Greek and Hebrew, but it's you can't do that. It's very difficult. But that's kind of mind he had. It's pretty remarkable and he would preach Sunday mornings on the New Testament, Sunday afternoons on the New Testament or the Psalms and every morning of the week, every other week, on a book from the Old Testament. That's how often this man preached the Scriptures.

There's even the story of the time Calvin was expelled from Geneva over a political matter. He was kicked out over something small and as the story goes, he was invited back three years later and when he came back three years later into his pulpit, he started in the exact same part of the Bible that he left off, exact same verse because he believed it was his duty as a minister of the gospel to preach every single part of the Bible. Teach it all. He believed in *sola scriptura*.

The Word of God is our authority, not the word of men. The Bible is our authority, not popes, or bishops, or councils. He said this, in his own words, he said, The, the true paths are ought to have two voices, one for gathering the sheep and one for driving away the wolves and the scripture supplies us with the means to do both. In other words, the Scripture tells us how to shepherd our people. You get that from the Word of God. At another time, he said "As far as a Sacred Scripture is concerned, however much men try to gnaw at it, nevertheless, it is crammed full of thoughts that cannot be humanly conceived. Let each of the profits be looked into, there will not be found one who does not exceed human measure." In other words, this is a book that came from God's hand. Man could not have written the Bible.

I believe it was in his 30's, Calvin went on to get married as well and settle down to a home life but his wife died suddenly and his friend said he never got over it. He died of a broken heart. He was a brilliant man. He was a genius, but he was not a robot. He had a heart and when his wife died his heart broke. In fact, you can even see his heart in the way that he died because, we don't know where Calvin was buried because he asked his friends not to put a marker on his gravestone because he didn't want people to make a relic out of him. He didn't want people to remember him. He wanted them to remember the Savior. We remember John Calvin today, but I think he wanted to be forgotten.

Which brings us to another point to talk about this morning, another principle of the Reformation and we are going through these quickly, so we can understand them all from the big picture perspective, but another one is this one, *sola Christus*. We studied *sola fide* or "faith alone". Salvation comes through faith, not works. We've studied *sola scriptura*, or "scripture alone", comes through the Word of God. The third principle of the Reformation that all of these men held, was *sola Christus*, or "Christ alone", because you can't add to what Christ has done. Just like you can't add to Scripture, you can't add to the work of the Cross. And if you want to look in Ephesians 2:12 here's a passage where we see this. But in Ephesians 2:12, just so we can see this in our book that we're in on Sunday mornings, Paul writes this, and he says,

Remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

When we studied this passage, I believe it was over the summer, I told you that it was a very serious thing to come to God in the ancient world. It was a very dangerous thing because the ancients believed, if you did it the wrong way, God would kill you. If you came to God the wrong way, he would put you to death because God is up here and you were down here. God is too high to get to, they believed. And what Paul says here is not any more. Things have changed because you who formerly were far off have been brought near. That means near to God. That's what Christ has done for you. He's brought you near to heaven. Salvation is *sola Christus*. It's found in Christ alone. You don't have to go through bulls and goats and rams and any of that stuff. Only through Christ.

And one man who believed this during the Reformation was, and they all believe this, but one man we could talk about in particular with this doctrine is Ulrich Zwingli. Ulrich Zwingli, he's a lesser known figure today, he's a part of the Reformation we don't often hear about, because he didn't write as much as Luther and Calvin, so you can read a lot of his things in print. And he didn't live as long. He died at a younger age but he was born in Switzerland. He was born in the country where Calvin lived, and he led the Reformation before Calvin got there. So the reason John Calvin could do all the wonderful things he did was because of this man. It's always a good reminder to know that someone always laid the groundwork for us, when we get to our work.

He was originally a Catholic priest. I believe he was the only one who had that distinction, very involved in the Catholic Church, before his conversion, but he was brilliant. He was a musician. He played the lute, the harp and the violin and he also taught himself to read Greek. Again, I don't know anybody in church history, who could teach himself to read Greek, but he did that and then, get this, he memorized all of Paul's letters in Greek. Not in Swiss or in French, which was the language of Geneva at the time. He memorized them in the original Greek. It's pretty crazy. And if that wasn't enough, he also died in battle. So if he wasn't interesting enough, already, he died fighting the Catholic armies. In fact, he didn't carry a weapon into the fight. He wasn't going to kill anybody. He just road out as a representative of the Lord's army and he was cut down. He was bending down to help an injured soldier when he was struck in the head, knocked unconscious and captured by the Catholic armies and right before he died, to mock him, they offered to let him confess to a priest. Now remember, he was a priest and he was converted, and he left that behind. So it was a way to mock him. And he said, No, and they ran him through with a sword. Pretty gory stuff.

But before that time, he was a great reformer because he taught that salvation is found in Christ alone. In fact, he fought with Martin Luther over this doctrine. They exchanged some harsh words. Luther believed in *sola christus*, as well. He believed salvation was found in Christ alone but he interpreted it differently when it came to the mass or when it came to the Lord's Supper. Luther still believed the body and blood of Christ, were somehow in the Lord's Supper. Lutherans today still believe that. He didn't believe that Christ was re-crucified. Luther did not believe that. The elements are literally transformed, and you're taking the body and blood, but he thought the presence was somehow still there. And so Zwingli said, "No, it's not", and they argued over that. In fact, it got so bad that at one of their meetings,

Luther took out a knife, and he carved “This is my body” into the table he was sitting at, it's pretty extreme. You don't want to argue with someone holding a knife, by the way. And Zwingli afterwards held out his hand to reconcile and Luther walked away. It's one of the saddest moments of the Reformation. The two never spoke again after that, but Zwingli did that because he believed that you can't add anything to Christ. Especially in a time like that. He said you've got to completely break from that mentality of works. You can't add anything to the cross.

One of the quotes that we have from him and we don't have many, but we have this one. He said, I have no real use for real and true body in the Lord's Supper, because it's only a symbol, it's only a memorial. When Jesus said “This is my body”, it's figurative language, just like when he said “I am the door”, or “I am the gate”. Even today, you know, we have memorials around Chilliwack and when we come to a memorial of a person, we don't say that's the actual person. We say that reminds me of him. And Zwingli said, that's what we should do with the Lord's Supper and that's the position of our church. As you know, we take the Lord's Supper very seriously here. We're going to take it here in just a moment, but we don't believe Jesus is actually there. We believe Jesus is in heaven, and he's going to stay in heaven until he returns, Amen? So we're not bringing him down. We're just remembering him.

Again, that's a battle that may not be as heavy in some circles today. That was a big battle in the 1500's. It was very serious, and it leads to another principle of the Reformation, we'll go through here, and that is this one, *sola gratia*, or “grace alone”. The fourth principle of the Reformation is that salvation is *sola gratia*, or it's by grace alone. This is one that's kind of been woven into the other ones as well. It's a common one that sort of goes through the whole reformation, but salvation is a gift of grace. It's not a work. It's something that God gives us in His mercy, we don't earn it. This is so important because the people in the Middle Ages didn't think this way. They didn't come to Christianity like this. They thought it was grace plus works. They thought it was something that we contribute to because God does His part and we do ours. He does a little, He gets the ball rolling. The idea was that when you were sprinkled as a baby in the Catholic Church, that started the process of grace, the process of salvation. The reformer stepped in and said, no, salvation is by grace alone. Only by grace, and one man who taught this was John Knox.

This is his picture here. This is John Knox. He looks very peaceful here but I don't want that to mislead anybody because he was a pretty fiery guy. He looks very serene but looks can be deceiving because I'll tell you about him, but he was born in Scotland and 1514. So he was born just a few years before Luther wrote his 95 theses. So again, all these guys' lives kind of intertwined. But all throughout his lifetime John Knox was in and out of trouble. This was a guy that was always itching for a fight. In fact, the first time you see him, he's serving as a bodyguard to the reformer, George Wishart. I don't know what kind of guy you have to be to get the job of a bodyguard, but I imagine pretty tough guy. We don't know much about George Wishart, but we know that he was murdered under John Knox's watch so he was murdered while Knox was supposed to be protecting him. And it had such an impact on John Knox, that shortly afterwards, the next time we see him, he's preaching.

He sees his friend getting murdered and the next thing we know he's preaching the principles of the Reformation, which lands him in jail. He was arrested and put on a French slave ship for two years in chains and when he got out, he fled to Geneva to study under John Calvin. So you see some connection there. He joined Calvin's school of pastors, where he learned Scripture and theology and then he went back to Scotland to preach what he had learned to his people, which was incredibly brave, because that's where he was arrested. He gets arrested in Scotland, goes away and comes back. And while he was there, he was a fireball for the Lord. He was, he was something else. He would pray out loud, "Lord, give me Scotland or I die. Give me Scotland or kill me now." He wrote a pamphlet calling Mary the Queen of Scots the most odious person in the presence of God and a traitor because she would not embrace the Reformation. And in response to that, the Queen said, "I fear the prayers of John Knox more than all the assembled armies of Europe."

As we read in the history books, his preaching incited riots. Imagine a riot breaking out at our church on a Sunday from a sermon? That's what he did. And eye-witnesses said that he beat the pulpit so violently that they trembled and they couldn't take notes. Their hand shook so bad they couldn't write down what he was saying. There's a famous painting of him. I couldn't find it but you might have seen this, of Knox preaching to one of the Scottish nobles, and in it, he's almost leaping out of the pulpit. He was on his tiptoes and his body's almost coming at the guy, a nobleman, like a politician. He could barely contain himself but what he did worked because Scotland changed. The Lord reformed it.

When Knox first arrived in the country, there were only twelve Protestant ministers to speak of. When he died, there were 700. They multiplied faster than you could count. His impact was incredible and it was all over this doctrine, the doctrine of grace alone. John Knox said salvation is not something you deserve. It's not something that's going to be credited to your account by your works. It's given by grace. We don't have too many quotations from him, because he didn't write anything. But this was his beef with the Catholic Church and we have a few statements that he made on this. One, he said this, he said, "I live in Christ, die in Christ, and the flesh need not fear death." In other words, trust in your Savior, trust in the Lord and you don't have to worry about dying. He'll take care of you.

At another time, in 1561, in France, he had a meeting with Queen Mary in which he said this, here's some of his recorded words, he said, "The Word of God is plain in itself, we affirm that the mass, as it is now used is nothing but the invention of man, and therefore is an abomination before God, and no sacrifice that God ever commanded." He wasn't very subtle, was he? In fact, this was so insulting that it made the Queen cry, which you don't want to do. You don't want to make the Queen cry because you could lose your head. And so for the first time in his life, John Knox became nervous and he said this, he said, "Madam, in God's presence I speak. I never delighted in the weeping of any creature. Indeed, I can scarcely endure the tears of my own boys, much less do I rejoice in your majesty's weeping. But seeing it, I've offered to you no occasion to be offended but have spoken the truth. I must sustain your tears, rather than hurt my conscience, or betray my country through silence. We are not saved by the

mass." That's a bold man, amen? Can you imagine saying that to the queen? Imagine talking to the queen, let alone preaching that to her?

Historians say the most astonishing thing about John Knox is that he died of natural causes. Nobody could figure out how that happened. I mean, how could he live that long during this time, and being this bold, but he died at the age of 57. He was one of the greatest lights of the Reformation. On his tombstone it said, "Here lies someone who feared no man." But God.

That leads us to one more point to consider this morning, one more principle of the Reformation. And I'm going to go back through all of these. So if you're taking notes, I'll go back and review them but I just want to get through the last one here and that is this one, *soli deo gloria*, or "glory to God alone". A fifth principle of the Reformation is that salvation is through glory to God alone. This is what it all boils down to at the end of the day. This is what it was all about, for these men. The glory belongs to God alone. The glory for salvation does not belong to us. It belongs to Him. If you look, one more time in the book of Ephesians you see this in chapter five, in the passage that we just looked at last week, but in Ephesians, 5:18, actually, we can look in verse 19, but it says, speaking to one another, when we read in verse 18,

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.

Paul says here, that we are always to be giving thanks for all things in the name of Jesus. Why? Why do we always give thanks in his name? Because he deserves it. Because he's worthy. You don't give thanks to yourself, you don't give thanks to others for your salvation. You give thanks to God alone. You give credit where credit is due. And one man who taught this at this time was William Tyndale. He's another reformer that we don't hear about much today. But this is a portrait of William Tyndale, who had a massive impact on our lives.

William Tyndale was born 10 years after Luther. So he was born at the time of all these men but he was from England and that's significant because he's the only English speaking man that we've looked at so far. We're speaking English this morning. We come from British Columbia, a place that has a rich British history. He was the only man who had that distinction in the list. And that's also important because in his day, England was one of the darkest places in Europe. We like to think of England as a really smart place and very respectable. But at this time, it was the darkest country around. One Bishop surveyed the priests at this time, and there weren't that many priests in the country anyway, but of the ones he surveyed, nine of them did not know how many commandments there were. Not that they couldn't list them, they didn't know there were 10 of them. And a handful could not recite the Lord's

Prayer and 33 of them didn't even know who said the Lord's Prayer. The LORD's Prayer. It's not that hard to figure out. If you looked at the lives of the clergy, it was even worse. They were adulterous, they were drunkards. England was a mess. It was a total disaster. And so the Lord sent William Tyndale in to help.

He studied languages at Oxford. He learned Greek and Hebrew there and as soon as he could, after he graduated, he started translating the Bible into English. If you study the Puritans, they came around a generation later. One thing that's interesting about them is it says they were educated at Oxford and burned at Cambridge. Tyndale had that distinction. He started translating the Bible into English, the language of the people and that was a capital offense. You could be killed for doing that, because the language of the church was Latin and it was the only language they thought the Bible could be written in. So what he was doing was at the cost of his life.

But he was smart about it. He came from a family of wool merchants and wool traders and so what he would do to get the translations out is he would hide them in their carts, and ship them all over the country. He would finish a book of the Bible, he never got through the whole thing because of time's sake, but he would finish the Gospel of Matthew and he would go to his uncle and say, "Here's ten copies of Matthew, can you put them in your wagon." And they would send them all over. So if you wonder how you got the Bible you have, that's one way you got it.

Because of this, he earned the nickname, God's Outlaw, because he would translate in one place and when he heard that the police were coming after him, he would pick up and go somewhere else. And all throughout his life, you see him on the run. He was a Bible translator on the run. One time he heard the authorities were coming and he couldn't get the translation out fast enough so they confiscated them and burned them all. Another time, he was translating, again, this is all by hand, he's translating by hand. He's on a ship, the ship goes down and he loses everything. He lost everything he was working on. But he did it because he said it was his goal to help the average person learn the Bible. He said, "I want to help a plow boy learn more Bible than a priest simply by reading it." And there's a famous picture from this time of a plow boy, one hand on the plow, one hand on his Bible. That was Tyndale's mission.

He also said this, he said, "I never altered one syllable of God's word against my conscience, nor would do it this day if all the earth might be given to me." He said, "I stayed faithful to all of it." There's even words that we have in the English language now, like "atonement". Tyndale made up that word. When he was translating the Bible, he says, "What is atonement?" It's making someone one with God, at-one-ment, atonement. Or have you heard of a scapegoat? He made up that word but he did that because he wanted to get the Bible to people like you and me. He wanted to get it to the English speaking people. And as he did it, he was eventually betrayed by a friend, someone he thought was a friend, and he was arrested and killed. He was tied to a piece of wood and burned at the stake. Before they burned him, out of mercy, they strangled him because he was an educated man. They thought it was showing respect, so

they strangled them. And his last words were these, he said, "Lord, please open the king of England's eyes." And the Lord did.

Within a generation or so the Lord heard Tyndale's prayer, because the King of England left the Catholic Church, and he allowed the Bible to be translated in English. And we've all heard of the translation, it was called the King James Bible. Tyndale had a massive impact on that translation. He had a massive impact on every English translation. Several men came after him to finish the work that he started, he couldn't finish the whole Bible. But it was all because of this passion that he had. He had a passion for the glory of God.

In one of his letters he wrote, "The good works are all things that are done within the laws of God, in which God is glorified, and for which thanks are given to God." And then he wrote this, he said, "As to what can please God, no good work is better than another. You are a kitchen page and you wash your master's dishes, but another is an apostle and he preaches the Word of God. In one sense, there's a world of difference between washing dishes and preaching the Word, but as to what can please God," he said, "There is no difference at all." You see what he's saying? He said, "there is nothing to exclude the simplest layman from reaching the upper reaches of the Christian life." In other words, you can please God no matter what you do. The church at the time said you can't please God unless you're a priest or a bishop. If you want to please God, you know, Martin Luther, what did he do? He went to a monastery because that's the only way you can do it. Tyndale said, no, you can please God no matter what place you have in life; servant, plow boy, maid, anybody can please God. That idea came from William Tyndale.

So those are five key principles, and five key players of the Reformation. Just to review these, the first one is that salvation is *sola fide* or by faith alone. The reformers believe that salvation was by faith alone, not through works, through faith. They also believed it was *sola scriptura*, or by scripture alone. It doesn't come through the word of man. It comes through the Word of God, through Scripture. It is *sola Christus*, in Christ alone. It is *sola gratia*, through faith alone, or grace alone. And it is all for the glory of God, it is *soli deo gloria*. He's the one who's worthy. He's the one who deserves our worship. And so all the credit goes to Him. And I can stop here and say it's quite a list, isn't it? It's quite a list to cover on a Sunday. Because the reformers tried to cover salvation from every angle they could think of. Again, they're starting from scratch, they felt like, they were starting with 1000 years of darkness and so they had to summarize it the best way they could. And this is what they said.

I might add, that they changed the world over this. Men like Martin Luther and John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli and John Knox and William Tyndale changed everything because of the things they stood for. I told you last time, the reason we're not all Catholic right now is because of these men. The reason we have the churches we do, the reason you go around Chilliwack and you see Baptist churches, and Bible churches, and Mennonite churches, and Presbyterian churches, and Reformed churches is because of

these men. None of that existed before them. In fact, they even had a phrase in Latin that described what they were trying to do. They said, *Ecclesia semper reformanda* which means we're always reforming the church. We're always trying to make it better. Always taking it back to the Word of God. Always taking it back to Scripture. The job is never done.

Which leads me to ask the question, briefly this morning is, where do we fit in with all this? Where do we fit in with the Reformation? We're Protestants this morning. We're reformed in this sense. But what do we learn from all of this and what does it teach us? A couple lessons we learn, and this will be real brief, but one lesson is this, some things are worth dying for, amen? Some things are worth dying for. Some things are worth losing everything for. We don't even know what this is like anymore. But each of these men risked their lives for what they believe. You heard me say it over and over and over again but the most amazing thing about some of them is that they made it into their 50s and 60s. They laid it all on the line because some things are more important than life itself. Some things are more important than your personal comfort. We need to remember that because we live such comfortable lives, don't we? You know, we panic right now when we have to stay at home with a fridge full of food and an air conditioner, and a TV. Some people think it's a sacrifice to come to church, it's a sacrifice to show up on Sunday. The reformers didn't see it that way. They thought it was a privilege. It's an honor to get to be at church.

It leads to another lesson that they teach us. And throughout these 500 years of history, if they could reach out and talk to us, I think they would tell us that we don't stand alone. Some things are worth dying for, and also, we don't stand alone. And all these things that we just talked about, they remind us that we're not fighting by ourselves. We're not standing by ourselves. There are men who came before us. There's people who stood for these things long before we got there. We were talking about this in the men's study yesterday and someone pointed out that a lot of folks are ashamed of their history today. We're not ashamed of our history. We have a strong tie to history. God saved them. He saved us. God took them back to Scripture. He's taking us back to it. We stand with them. We stand with other churches around us that hold to these principles. There are brothers and sisters in the faith. And we need to remember them, pray for them.

It leads to one more lesson that we learned in all this and one more thing that reformers teach us and that is this, very simple, the Gospel hasn't changed. We believe the same thing they did 500 years ago. We believe the same thing they did in the 1500s on the gospel, on salvation. The Bible hasn't changed. The truth in Scripture hasn't changed and that should be an encouragement to us, because we live in a world where everything changes, amen? We live in a world right now where everything's so unstable, especially in 2020. I mean, you hear one thing one day about the Coronavirus, and the next day it changes and the next day it changes and the next day it changes. Or you hear one thing about the election, and the next day that changes and the next day that changes. It's like a never ending thing. It's a moving target. It's so confusing. But this is a reminder that some things aren't like that. Some things stay the same, because they're built on the Word of God, and we can stand on them and not be moved.

And so my charge to you this morning, and my question for you is will you do that today? Will you stand on these things that we've been talking about? If you do, the Lord will bless you. And He'll build you on His Word. Let me pray that you would do that today. Let's pray.

Father, we do live in very strange times today. But they are no stranger than they were thousands of years ago, or 500 years ago. Human history is very much the same. Human nature's very much the same. And that's why we rejoice that we have hope in the Gospel. We have hope in all these things we've talked about. We have a Savior, and we have a Savior who has never stopped His work of salvation. You said in the Bible that the gates of Hades will not destroy Your church, Your church will stand firm against it and we rejoice in that. Lord, I pray for my brothers and sisters this morning here at Grace Fellowship, that they would go out this morning encouraged by the work You have done in the past, knowing that the same God that ruled over these men is the same God that rules over us. For those who are lost this morning, would they be drawn to Christ? For those who are visiting or maybe they're just watching online Lord, would You remind them that they can stand on these things? Father, we need peace during these times and we pray that we would receive it through what we have learned. Thank you for men of courage like this. Would you raise men like that today and call them out to the church. We pray in Jesus name, Amen