

Back in May I had the opportunity to do an overview of church History. I called it a part 1 because I was only able to get to about the 1300 to 1400's. So tonight we are going to finish up that overview of Church History. Last time I did this I gave a few warnings at the start and I am going to do so again.

- Church History has no authority

- Our authority is the word of God not in the word of men even if they lived hundreds of years ago.

- Church history can have some value

- When we can see past the people involved and see God's hand in guiding and purifying His Church, there is value.

- The last warning is I am leaving a ton out.

- My main focus will be on the doctrines that the church has lost and reclaimed throughout the years. There is a constant battle against drift and false teaching. Over the years there have been battles that God has called the church to in order to reclaim truth at key times.

- Our last overview we looked at Acts 15 and the Jerusalem council. The early church had to address what was needed for salvation. Did the gentiles need to become Jewish were there any rituals or things to do to be saved. The conclusion is in verse 11.

[Act 15:11](#)

(11) But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will."

Doctrine of the Trinity

We also looked at the doctrine of the trinity and the need for the early to study and seek in scripture how to handle talking about the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

We finished the last time right on the eve, of the protestant reformation. We looked at John Wycliffe, and his desire to see the Bible translated into English.

John Wycliffe

"You say it is heresy to speak of the Holy Scriptures in English. You call me a heretic because I have translated the Bible into the common tongue of the people."

Throughout tonight we are going to address teachings and practices that may be common place for us today and yet they are things that God had to raise people

up to fight for. Wycliffe is called a heretic for wanting the scripture to be in the common language, and now... We have our pick of really good translations.

So to understand the reformation there are a few World history events to understand.

The first is...

The edict of Milan in 313

Constantine officially recognized Christianity as an approved religion. And eventually this led to Christianity being declared the official religion of Rome.

What happened here cannot be understated. Politics, Government, nations, were now directly tied into the Church. Tonight we are going to see this link slowly fade, but most of the history tonight will not make sense if we don't realize that government and religion were directly tied together.

In the 1400's the Printing press is invented

Before the printing press books were rare, and not easily distributed. Once the printing press came onto the scene it opened the door for ideas and teaching to be spread quickly and farther than ever before.

One corrupt Church

At the beginning of the 1500's there was really only one universal "Catholic" Church. The Pope has religious power and political power. Again, there was no separation. The common person and common pastor had little education, and following tradition became the main way to practice Christianity. One tradition that will become a major issue in the church is that of purgatory.

Purgatory

Purgatory is the teaching that nothing unclean can enter heaven. So although we are saved by Jesus, we are not fully pure. Thus there needs to be a purification process, before we can enter into heaven. The place of this purification is called purgatory. It is not Hell, but it is not pleasant. Your time there depends on how sinful you have been.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches:

All who die in God's grace, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven (1030).

(25) Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison.

(26) Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

Rom 8:1-4

(1) There is therefore now **no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.**

(2) For the law of the Spirit of life has **set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.**

(3) For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, **he condemned sin in the flesh,**

(4) in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Selling of Indulgences

Pope Leo expanded the practice of selling indulgences. An indulgence was buying time off of purgatory. This could be done through service to the church or more commonly by paying money. You could pay for yourself, or even a loved one to shorten the time you or someone else had to be in purgatory. The funds of the indulgences went to beautifying and finishing the basilica of Saint Peter in Rome.

Johann Tetzel was the main person in charge of selling indulgences and he is credited with saying:

"As soon as a coin in the coffer rings / the soul from purgatory springs."

Martin Luther

This was the context of the Church for Martin Luther. He was a monk. Who said "If ever a monk got to heaven by his monkey, it was I."

What he is meaning is that he pursued every ritual and every tradition to feel confident in his salvation. He would write in his journal that after leaving confession he could not make it the whole walk back to his room, before he thought of another sin to go bring up at confession. He had no peace. Luther said:

"I greatly longed to understand Paul's Epistle to the Romans and nothing stood in the way but that one expression, "**the justice of God**," because I took it to mean that justice whereby God is just and deals justly in punishing the unjust. My situation was that, although an impeccable monk, **I stood before God as a sinner troubled in conscience, and I had no confidence that my merit would assuage him.** Therefore I did not love a just and angry God, but rather hated and murmured against him. Yet I clung to the dear Paul and had a great yearning to know what he meant."

The passage he is referring to is Romans 1:16-18

Rom 1:16-18

(16) For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

(17) For in it **the righteousness of God** is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

(18) For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

He saw what the Catholic church taught at the time, and said this is not a life of faith. It is one of sacrifice, guilt, indulgences, fear worry... Luther goes on to describe how his understanding of the passage changed.

"Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that "the just shall live by faith." **Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith.** Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. **The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning, and whereas before the "justice of God" had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gate to heaven...."**

The Holy Spirit taught Luther, that God's righteousness could only be secured through faith. We are saved through the blood of Jesus. He paid it all, we just trust in what He did. I am amazed at how much Luther's conclusion sounds like the Jerusalem council.

Act 15:11

(11) But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will."

Luther posted the 95 Theses or critiques of the Catholic church and God used it to start a wildfire. This was the start of what we call the protestant reformation. We are protestant because we are Protesting the Catholic church and wanted to see it reformed.

This movement came to emphasis 5 key things.

The Five Solas are:

The 5 Solas of the Reformation

- **By Scripture Alone**

The Bible alone is our highest authority.

- **By Faith Alone**

We are saved through faith alone in Jesus Christ.

- **By Grace Alone**

We are saved by the grace of God alone.

- **Through Christ Alone**

Jesus Christ alone is our Lord, Savior, and King.

- **Glory to God alone**

We live for the glory of God alone.

There was a major reclaiming of doctrine. During this time.

Listen to the confidence Luther ended up having in God's grace.

“Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that a man could stake his life on it a thousand times.”

The Catholic church still has some of these teachings that the reformers taught against.

Do not believe in scripture alone

In the Second Vatican Council's document on divine revelation, Dei Verbum:
 “Consequently it is not from sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed. Therefore both sacred Tradition and sacred Scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same devotion and reverence.”

Do not believe in faith alone

Council of Trent Session – 6- Canon 9.

“If anyone says that the sinner is justified by faith alone,[114] meaning that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to obtain the grace of justification, and that it is not in any way necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the action of his own will, let him be anathema.”

Ulrich Zwingli

Served in Zurich Germany

Zwingli starts to preach straight through books of the Bible

In 6 years he taught through the entire New Testament

Verse by verse teaching realize the amount of new things they are seeing and the amount of things they are realizing is not in scripture.

As He preached people began to have questions

The city takes the stance that scripture alone will determine our doctrine

Imagine that today having to go to the city board for a debate on Church doctrine.

Imagine having to go to our government.

Zwingli write 67 articles or conclusion from this verse by verse study. Listen to his conclusions.

I. All who say that the Gospel is invalid without the confirmation of the Church err and slander God.

XIX. That Christ is the only mediator between God and us.

LVII. The true divine Scriptures know nothing about purgatory after this life.

To us these probably seem fairly simple, you can be saved with the church confirming you. We would affirm there is no other mediator between us and God, only Jesus. And we don't see purgatory taught in scripture. At that time this was revolutionary.

Notice it is the Word that changed things. A coming back to truth. This has happened before.

Neh 8:1-17

(1) And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the LORD had commanded Israel.

(2) So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of

(5) And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it all the people stood.

(7) Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, **the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law, while the people remained in their places.**

(8) **They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.**

(13) On the second day the heads of fathers' houses of all the people, with the priests and the Levites, **came together to Ezra the scribe in order to study the words of the Law.**

(14) And they found it written in the Law that the LORD had commanded by Moses that the people of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month,

(17) And all the assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in the booths, for from the days of Jeshua the son of Nun to that day the people of Israel had not done so. And there was very great rejoicing.

They had lost the teaching of the feast of booths. Hearing the word taught lead them to respond and immediately start practicing the truth.

In the reformation there really was a reclaiming of the gospel.

John Calvin

“This is why Paul upholds the teaching of the gospel in such a forceful way ... Seeing such an example and such a picture of man’s great weakness and fickleness, Paul states that the truth of the gospel must supersede anything that we may devise ... **he is showing us that we ought to know the substance of the doctrine which is brought to us in the name of God, so that our faith can be fully grounded upon it.** Then we will not be tossed about with every wind, nor will we wander about aimlessly, changing our opinions a hundred times a day; we will persist in this doctrine until the end. This, in brief, is what we must remember.”

— John Calvin, Sermons on Galatians

Gal 1:6-9

(6) I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—

(7) not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

(8) But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.

(9) As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

Eph 2:8-10

(8) For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,

(9) not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

(10) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.