

Here We Stand

The Reformation Begins

INTRODUCTION

- October 31st 2017 will mark the 500th year anniversary of the Protestant Reformation (*referred to PR going forward in notes*).
- What makes the PR the most important movement in the last 500 years is that this movement recovered and restored the gospel of Jesus Christ!

3 objectives...

- To survey “both” the historical and theological terrain that *led to* the rise and spread of the PR. The historical and theological context in which the PR occurred is critical.
- To identify and unpack those truths that are exclusively “Reformed”. Exploring the 5 Sola’s and the doctrines of grace, which have historically been known by the nickname “Calvinism”.
- Our ultimate objective is that these classes result in deeper adoration of God and living to the praise of His glorious grace! The ultimate goal of these classes is not to boast in the PR, but to glorify God for His goodness in using the PR to recover His glorious gospel of grace

LOGISTICS

- Class will begin by 7:05! We will start with a 45 – 50 minute teaching.
- We will close teaching with a song. We will then take a 5 minute break followed by a Q&A time.
- Will make a hard stop at 8:30!
- Notes will be on website.

LATE-MEDIEVAL THEOLOGY

- PR occurred as a result of a certain theological climate! And it was the theological climate of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC).
- The Late-Middle Ages, or the Late-Medieval period, was that time frame in European history in the 14th and 15th centuries.
- These are also known as the “Dark Ages”. The Black Death, resulting from the Bubonic Plague caused the death of what is estimated close to 200 million people.
- The glorious gospel of grace through faith in Jesus Christ had slowly but surely been perverted and greatly distorted in RCC. What had emerged in its place was a man centered salvation of works! A sacramental system!
- When it came to answering the question of *“how can a sinner receive divine grace and be right with God”*; the RCC answered with a sacramental system! God’s grace is administered through 7 sacraments (rites/observances), and...the grace of these sacraments are mediated to the sinner through the Priests.
- The 7 sacraments are these...baptism, holy communion, confirmation, penance, holy matrimony, ordination and extreme unction!
- The sacraments were a “theological” system that were the means by which the Holy Spirit applied the work of Christ to the life of the believer.
- Now, of all the problems this system has, it is the sacrament of penance that really triggers the firestorm of the PR.
- RCC defines penance as a sacrament, consisting in a confession of sin, made with sorrow and with the intention of amendment, followed by the forgiveness of the sin. In other words, it’s a punishment, or penitential discipline imposed by church authority!
- Into this sacrament “indulgences” are introduced. An indulgence is a payment made for partial remission of the temporal punishment that is still due for a sin or sins after absolution. The indulgences were drawn from what is known as the *“Treasury of Merit”*, a storehouse of grace which was accumulated by the meritorious work of Christ and the superabundant merit of the saints.

- Indulgences could also pay for the sins of those in purgatory (*intermediate state where sins are purged*).

“As soon as a coin in the coffer rings a soul from purgatory springs.”

John Tetzel Roman Catholic Friar

THE REFORMATION BEGINS

- In July of 1505 Martin Luther joined the Augustinian Monastery in Erfurt Germany.
- The monastery was a world of rules. A life of rituals. Luther embraced this system of works like no other. He would deprive himself of food and water, stay in the extreme cold underdressed, and sometimes confess sins up to 6 hours at a time on his knees!
- In 1513 he begins teaching the word of God and enters doctoral program. He assumed chair of biblical studies at University of Wittenberg. In 1513 he taught thru Psalms, 1515 Romans, 1516 Galatians. During this time Luther has what has been called his “tower experience!”

“Though I lived as a monk without reproach, I felt that I was a sinner before God with an extremely disturbed conscience. I could not believe that He was placated by my satisfaction. I did not love, yes, I hated the righteous God who punishes sinners, and secretly, if not blasphemously, certainly murmuring greatly, I was angry with God, and said, “As if, indeed, it is not enough that miserable sinners, eternally lost through original sin, are crushed by every kind of calamity by the law of the Decalogue, without having God add pain to pain by the gospel and also by the gospel threatening us with His righteousness and wrath!” Thus I raged with a fierce and troubled conscience. Nevertheless, I beat importunately upon Paul at that place, most ardently desiring to know what St. Paul wanted. At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I gave heed to the context of the words, namely, “In it the righteousness of God is revealed as it is written, ‘He who through faith is righteous shall live.’” There I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning: the righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel, namely, the passive righteousness with which merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written, “He who through faith is righteous shall live.” Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates.”

Martin Luther

- Out of this tower experience that Luther nails his 95 theses to the doors of Castle Church.

- At the heart of this document was a dispute against the abuse of indulgences and denying the power and authority of the pope over purgatory.
- Over the next 3 years Luther engages with different RC theologians and scholars.
- Pope Leo X issues a papal bull, entitled “Exsurge, Domine; *“Rise up O Lord and judge thy cause; a wild boar has invaded thy vineyard!”*”
- In the spring of 1521 Luther is summoned to the Diet of Worms. This was an imperial assembly in which Luther would be brought before the magistrates of both state and church and be commanded to recant/to renounce his works or face dreadful consequences.
- Johann Von Der Eck was the official responsible for interrogating Luther.
- *“Am I alone wise?”*
- Luther famous or infamous statement, *“Unless I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they often err and contradict themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. I cannot do otherwise, here I stand, may God help me. Amen.”*
- Following Worms, Luther spends many months hiding in Wartburg Castle translating the Latin Vulgate into German.
- With the printing press now invented, copies of German bible are being spread all over Germany!
- The Diet of Worms was not the end of Luther and the PR; it was only beginning.
- The debate with indulgences brought to the surface the much deeper and larger issues that we’re really at stake...*the authority of Scripture and the purity of the gospel!*
- In the years to come what ultimately served to distinguish Reformed Theology from Roman Catholic theology, are 5 main truths...5 Sola’s!