

The Testimony of Jesus

Part 6

Lord, it is precious for the fellowship You have brought us into, and the fellowship You have brought us into is with Your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. We are thankful that as we remember the price that it cost You to bring us into that fellowship we continue in a Spirit of worship and adoration. And Lord, as we remembered You as that bread of life at the table, as we come now we continue to look upon You as that bread of life that You would feed us through Your Word as we consider Your great faithfulness throughout history. And as we always say, we are not here to just learn facts, but we are here to learn lessons and allow Your Holy Spirit to speak to our hearts and speak into our lives that we could be the people of God that You are desiring that we be in this day and time. In Thy name we pray. Amen.

We are thankful that we can continue sharing on this matter of the testimony of Jesus throughout history, and we have two theme verses that we always start with.

Matthew 16:17-18: "And Jesus answered and said to him, Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it."

The two key things in these verses are what the Lord had shown to Peter about Him being the Christ which came by revelation. It was not Peter's doing; it came by revelation, and we need to continue throughout our days to be praying for that Spirit of wisdom and revelation for more and more of what is upon His heart and what is upon these days.

Secondly, this is one of the precious and magnificent promises that we have: "... that I will build My church and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it." If we look at the outward with our natural eyes, it looks like this verse is impossible, but we are thankful that we can look up through our spiritual eyes, and we can see God doing a great work, and He is bringing about the culmination of all this in these last days. And so we want to be those who are cooperating with Him and also with what is upon the Lord's heart. He entrusted to the church the testimony of Jesus, and as we look at Revelation 1:17-18, which is the Lord speaking and testifying of Himself, He is saying, "This is who I am."

"When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He laid His right hand on me, saying, 'Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.'"

In those brief verses we have this wonderful summation of the testimony of Jesus: "I am the first and the last." He is the all-inclusive One. He is everything to us, and He is desiring that to be expressed in our lives. He said, "I am the living One." He is life, and He is looking for that life to be expressed. We see His character and nature, and He is desiring that that character and nature would be formed in us. He says, "I was dead and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades."

He is that all-victorious One. He has won the great victory, and He is really summing up everything in these last days. This testimony of Jesus speaks of who He is, His character and nature, what He has done and what He is doing. On Wednesday night I mentioned the testimony of Jesus, and in a very simple way to me the testimony of Jesus is His life expressed through His people. That is really what it comes down to. We are talking about being a testimony unto Him; it is His life being expressed through us. That is why they were first called Christians at Antioch because the life of Christ was expressed through them. And that is what the Lord is jealous for, and we see throughout history how this is what the Lord has been seeking in all of His people throughout history, and we are thankful for faithful ones.

Review

From the point of review we know that the church was in God's heart from eternity past. The church had a wonderful and glorious birth on the day of Pentecost. It was a very healthy beginning, and it was a glorious time. The testimony of Jesus was entrusted to the church. She was not only to hold it and shine it through His people, but also they were to disseminate that testimony of Jesus throughout the whole earth. Tragically, through the dissipation, corruption and persecution there became a distinction between Christendom and the testimony of Jesus. But praise God, in His faithfulness He maintained that silver thread. Even through the darkest of times there were overcomers. Even through the darkest of the ages where hourly it appeared there was nothing of God's work going on upon this earth, there were faithful ones hidden away from man but precious in the sight of the Lord. And we know that many of them had to give their lives for that testimony.

The Greatest Impact—Availability of the Word of God

Last time we saw leading up to the Reformation the morning star of the Reformation and the ones that were involved in setting the scene for the Reformation. One of the things that had the greatest impact upon the Reformation was the availability of the Word of God. It is hard to really emphasize how the printing press impacted the Word of God going forth in many languages that it had been translated into. People were able to read the Word of God on their own, and as Luther, Zwingli or Calvin and others would start giving sermons, they were now printed and made available to everyone. If you had not heard it, the printing press would make it possible that these messages were going out to all of these places, and the Word was being spread. Even for people who were illiterate, there were ones who could read these sermons to them.

To put it in a modern context, the printing press had the impact upon believers then that seeing messages now on YouTube has upon us. Now as soon as something is shared, that YouTube message goes everywhere. In a similar way because of the printing press, the Word of God was able to spread in a way that had never happened before. So we are thankful for that.

Major Reformers

We are thankful for these ones who were available and translated the Word of God. As we look at the Reformation there were four major reformers. There was Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and Knox, and they are the ones we will be focusing on today. To keep a few things in perspective, none of them started out to begin a Protestant movement. All of them started out to reform

from within the Catholic Church. All of them had grown up in the Catholic Church, and most of them were priests within that church. The Lord touched their hearts, and they were trying to be faithful. They were desiring to bring the Catholic Church at that point back in line with the Word of God, but that was greatly resisted by the powers to be. These were just ordinary men. They are famous now; we know all their names, but they were just ordinary men whose hearts had been touched by the Lord, and they were faithful to what had been entrusted to them. I was reading a quote and it really touched my heart. It says, "History does not send out an invitation ahead of time." You do not set out to do something to make history. You live your life and in hindsight that is a historical event. History does not send out an invitation ahead of time. These men were not desiring to be famous men. They were simply desiring to be faithful with what the Lord had entrusted to them. We will see also their humanity throughout all of this.

Sola Scriptura—Sola Gratia—Sola Fide

It is Only Scripture, Only by Grace, Only by Faith

If you want to sum up the Reformation, there were three basic teachings that were recovered in this. They were Sola Scriptura, Sola Gratia, and Sola Fide. Only Scripture, it is only grace, it is only faith. This is the impact of the Reformation. The only Scripture, the Word of God is the authority, not the pope, nothing else. Only by grace, that is how we enter in. It is not our works; we do not do things to please God. And it is only by faith. It is the gift of God; it is responding to that gift. They are so familiar to us, but in that day and time generally people had never heard of these before. We are thankful that these ones were faithful to recover these precious truths and were able to get it disseminated and encourage many.

Martin Luther

We will start with Martin Luther who is probably the most famous one. The turning point in his life initially was in 1502 AD. He was studying law at that time, and he was on his way home, and he got caught in a horrendous thunderstorm, and there are various stories about what happened during the thunderstorm. But he was terrified during this storm, and he prayed to St. Anna, who was his patron saint at the time: "If you save me from this, I will become a monk." That was the greatest thing you could do if you wanted to really please God. But he was so desperate and said that even though he had no desire at that time to be a monk, for his own self-preservation he said he would become a monk.

Do we ever make vows to God? Get me out of this situation, and I will do this. Then He gets us out of them, and most of the time we forget what we said. But Luther remembered that, and he went into the Augustinian order. Within that order there was a lot of fasting and self-denial to obtain salvation. When Luther did something, he was a hundred percent committed to it, and he was so dedicated that he put all the other monks to shame. He was confessing every moment of his sins. He was fasting, barely eating, and he was denying himself of anything luxurious, even the basic things of life. Finally, he became ordained, and he celebrated his mass.

He was living in Germany at the time and he decided to go to Rome. This is a man who had been denying himself and fasting. Even so he wanted to go to Rome. When he got there, he was utterly repulsed by what he saw. He saw all of the extravagances, he saw how indulging the

priests were—the corruption, immorality, the priests with their mistresses and concubines. And all of these things impacted his life in a way that he wanted to be that reformer in the church.

One of the things that you do to really prove your dedication to the Lord is in Rome at the Vatican. There are steps that are called the Scala Sancta. They were holy steps, and you walk up them on your knees, actually crawling upon your knees to show how devoted you are. So he gets on his knees and starts up. On each step there is a ritual that you go through, and he is doing everything he is supposed to do. All of a sudden he hears these words: “The just shall live by faith.” When he hears those words, it registers within his heart. He stood up, walked back down the steps, which was blasphemous, and he went back to Germany. That was the beginning of his thoughts to reform the Catholic Church.

When he got back, he was in one city and they transferred him to Wittenberg. Actually, his mentor saw what had happened, and his mentor really loved the Lord also, so to help Luther he got him away from some of the center areas, and he sent him to Wittenberg. He started preaching, but he did not preach the normal Catholic rituals. He was preaching from the Word of God. His eyes had been opened, and he was preaching and really being expository on the Word of God. Of course, that would get you in trouble back in those days.

One of the practices that went on in that time was the sale of indulgences which were used to raise money. The pope wanted to expand, modernize, make the Vatican more beautiful, and he was sending all their various emissaries around to sell this one particular indulgence. The one that came near to the Wittenberg area was a man by the name Tetzel.

An indulgence is when you pay for something, then your sins will be forgiven depending upon how much you pay. Your sins can be forgiven on this earth or it can make your time in Purgatory a little shorter. When the people died, they did not go straight to heaven; they went to Purgatory. Their good behavior on earth determined how much time they spent in Purgatory paying for all their sins. So these indulgences were being abused, and when Tetzel came to the area and Luther saw the abuse of these indulgences, he started speaking out against them.

Probably everybody has seen pictures of Luther nailing his ninety-five theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg. In reality, most people say, “He did not nail them to the door; it was not a protest.” It was like a community bulletin board or a modern-day blog. If you had something that you wanted to discuss or you wanted to debate and discuss it, you would post these things on this bulletin board. There would be all sorts of things there, but it was kind of the city center. You can see from the introduction to his ninety-five theses that he was not trying to start an argument; he was looking for a debate. He wanted to legitimately talk about this, so you can see the spirit in which he wrote these things. He said, “Out of love for the truth and from a desire to elucidate it, the Reverend Father Martin Luther, Master of Arts and Sacred Theology, and ordinary lecturer therein at Wittenberg, intends to defend the following statements and to dispute on them in that place.”

So he was asking for ones to debate him. He was not challenging nor was he arguing at this point. He simply wanted to bring these things to light and measure them against the Scripture. Well, what he intended to occur never occurred because it brought about such a reaction that

ones immediately started opposing him that he would even question these type of things. A lot of the stories around Luther and nailing the things to the door and his great reaction to it has been greatly exaggerated, and that was not his intent.

These are just a couple of examples of what he wanted to discuss and debate. # 27: "They preach folly who say that when money in the coffer rings, a soul from purgatory springs." You would give your money to the priests, and as soon as it went into the coffer and hit the bottom and rings, your soul from Purgatory springs.

32: "Those who suppose because of their letter of indulgence they are sure of salvation will be eternally damned with their teachers."

36: "Every Christian who truly repents has full forgiveness of punishment and guilt, even without letters of indulgence."

Again, this is revolutionary for people to hear this. It is kind of like Tom this morning as he talked about how revolutionary it was for those ones to hear the words of Jesus saying, "I am the living bread coming down from heaven." This is the same impact upon these ones.

He concludes in # 95: "Let Christians set their trust on entering heaven thru faith in Jesus Christ rather than the false sense of security of a letter."

Our faith in Him is the security that we have. So as Luther brought these things to light, and because of the printing press, they were published and sent everywhere, and these became great points of debate. Later on, he finally ended up debating John Eck far beyond issues related to the indulgences. But in this he was denying the authority of the pope, and this got him into more and more trouble. Up to this point Luther thought he was being a good Catholic, and he was trying to fix and reform everything. But after the condemning of the authority of the pope and questioning him, he condemned his teachings and they gave him an opportunity at the Diet of Worms to recant. He refused and was condemned. Then he was kidnapped by a friend of his, Frederick III who was the prince of that area. He was a Protestant so he kidnapped Luther and protected him at Wartburg, and that is where Luther translated the New Testament. Luther had this opportunity when they called him to the Diet of Worms to recant, and he refused. And we have this famous statement during that Diet of Worms.

One time I shared this in Brazil, and I sent my overheads down to get translated ahead of time. So you can imagine what the Diet of Worms got translated into down there in Portuguese. They called and wanted to know if this was right. Fortunately, somebody knew a little bit about history, and they corrected it. But the first draft had it as a diet of worms. You do not want to try that diet.

Luther was standing there being condemned, and they told him to recant everything that he had been teaching. He said, "Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures and by clear reason I am bound by the Scriptures that I have quoted. My conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand. I can do no other so help me God." Amen.

You can see here a little bit of the character of Luther. There is an absoluteness in him. He felt called of God to stand for the truth, to be that vessel for His use, and whatever it cost him, he was going to continue standing. He was standing in front of ones who had the authority over him of life and death. Fortunately, he had a friend who put him away in a castle and protected him. However, he was condemned at that point in time and excommunicated from the Catholic Church.

One of the things that impacted Luther the most was his marriage to Katherine Von Bora, and they had six children. If you ever have opportunity to look at Luther's family life, it is a wonderful testimony. One of the things that the family would do every evening when he was home was the family altar. Luther also loved to sing hymns, and he would gather all the children around, and they would sing hymns and some of the Psalms together trying to encourage them in the Lord. Katherine had a great impact upon him because in his total commitment that Luther had to the Lord, he burned himself out. Often he would get sick, and when you get sick you get depressed, and you do not see things going on. He fought a lot of sickness and depression, but a lot of it was because he was so sold out for the Lord. Ones like that are really convicting to us because we protect ourselves so much at times. But Luther was not protecting himself; he literally loved not his life unto death. And it was during this time of sickness and depression that he wrote the hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God, a bulwark never failing." Praise God for that hymn! You can see the condition he was in when he wrote it. It was a statement of declaration of faith. "Regardless of what I am feeling or going through, a mighty fortress is my God."

During this time there were reformers beginning in other areas, and they got together in Marburg to have a Colloquy with Zwingli and about ten others. There were fifteen points, and they agreed on fourteen of them. The one point they disagreed on was the Lord's supper. Luther still believed close to the way the Catholics believed on transubstantiation. I am not going to get into all the technicalities, but it was not full transubstantiation, just a version of it. Zwingli and the others thought that the Lord's table was more of a testimony of what the Lord has done for us. They did all agree on infant baptism at this point. So this brought about a division between Luther and Zwingli. Finally, he was able to finish the entire Bible in German, and then ended up dying in 1546.

Thus we see him as utterly committed. One of the things you see in him is his humanity. Today, we would call Luther a very vulgar person. I do not know if you have ever read any of his writings or a biography of him or looked at some of the unedited commentary on Galatians. Some of the comments that he makes about people are pretty vulgar and could be classified as profane at times, but he was so on fire for the Lord. These were human beings—great sinners with a great God. Man wants to elevate them, but they are just great sinners with a great God, just like each one of us. We are all great sinners, but we have a great God. Praise God for that! So when we hear things about their humanity and their failures and shortcomings, we need to be merciful because that is who we are too.

Ulrich Zwingli

In Switzerland there was an individual called Ulrich Zwingli, and again he was a Catholic. The turning point in his life was in 1515. He traveled with Swiss mercenaries as a chaplain to the battle

in Italy. Now one of the greatest ways at this point in time that Switzerland made a lot of money was selling mercenaries. They had a huge army and they would sell their mercenaries to whoever was the highest bidder, and they would go out. So one time since Zwingli was a priest he went with these mercenaries as the chaplain to a battle in Italy, and 6,000 young men from Switzerland were killed in the battle. It opened his eyes and when he came back, he started preaching against this whole system. "You are selling the blood of our sons for gold." That got him in trouble with everybody because they were all for selling these mercenaries, but thank the Lord he was kept.

He came to know the Lord through Erasmus' New Testament. We do not know exactly when he was saved, but he immersed himself in that Greek New Testament. He became a pastor in Zurich, and he started expository teaching again, preaching the Word of God and allowing it to go forth. The plague struck Zurich and many were sick, but he ministered to those who were dying, and he got sick himself. By the mercy of God he recovered, and that in itself was a miracle because very few people recovered from the plague.

Because of the popularity and the impact that Zwingli was having upon Zurich at that time, the city council was supporting him. They had seen the corruption that was within the Catholic Church, and they saw the lives of the Protestants and the impact it was having on individuals, and they began to support it. More and more reforms began, but some people thought they were moving too slow such as the Anabaptists who thought they were moving too slow. Others thought they were moving too fast. Whenever you go through any kind of change there are always ones who think you are going too slow and ones who think you are going too fast. Coming out of Covid some think we are going too fast, some going too slow, but we want to find His way in it.

Tragically, we see that Zwingli was a man of action. He joined the Protestant army as a soldier and not as a chaplain anymore. He joined as a soldier to go and fight against the Catholics outside of Zurich. He was killed in that battle, and when the Catholics found his body, they mutilated it. Nobody is quite sure why he joined the battle, but he got a little impatient with the way things were going, and he wanted to step it up and go and get things moving a little faster. However, it did not work out for him personally, but thankfully the Lord was able to keep the work going. We are thankful for him. Here are a couple of quotes from Zwingli, and you can see some of this fighting character and nature within him.

"I beseech Christ for this one thing only, that He will enable me to endure all things courageously, and that he break me as a potter's vessel." Praise God!

He summed up the Christian life: "The Christian life, then, is a battle, so sharp and full of danger that effort can nowhere be relaxed without loss."

That is an intense personality! That is one who was captured and burned out for the Lord. I think it is actually a pretty good quote for us in this day and time that we are living in because the intensity of the battle is growing more and more, and we love to take opportunities to relax. I think it is a word that we need to consider. We do not want to be those who are in a relaxed mode and lose anything by getting caught off guard, but we want to be sold out for Him. Praise God for that!

John Calvin

Also in Switzerland we have John Calvin. Calvin's name is a lightning rod. There are very few people who are neutral on Calvin. Some people call him the greatest saint that ever lived, and some call him the tool of the devil. Some people just utterly hate him for the impact that he had. He was studying in France and then he fled to Switzerland and set up his base in Geneva. Now Geneva is really a key city because it is right on the border between Switzerland and France, so he was having an influence in Switzerland, but also he was beginning to influence within France. When France was under the Catholic domain and utterly corrupt, Calvin was there. As he was fleeing, he had a sudden conversion, and nobody, even his wife, does not know when he was converted. When he talks about being converted, he would always refer to John chapter 18. He said that was the Scripture that warmed his heart, but no one is sure when it occurred.

He was in Switzerland and had no plans to go to Geneva, but as he was traveling he passed through Geneva and decided to spend one night there, and then go on to another city. There was another man named William Farel who was staying in Geneva, and he had started a work there, drawing ones to come to the Lord. When he heard that Calvin was coming, he wanted to persuade him to stay there with them. Now Calvin liked the ivory tower type of Christianity. He liked sitting back and just writing things; he was not a hands-on person at this time. But Farel was described as a fiery redhead, which is a beautiful description of him. So he persuaded Calvin to stay in Geneva and work with him. And to show you how fiery Farel was, this was his challenge. Farel went up to him and said, "I declare to you on the part of God, that if you refuse to labor here along with us in the Lord's work, His curse will be upon you; since, under pretense of your studies, it is yourself that you are seeking, rather than Him." That was a pretty strong rebuke, but Calvin's testimony was: "I did not hear the voice of Farel but of God."

As I said, Calvin loved his studies, he loved his writings. Thus, at times we can become so focused upon aspects of the Christian life that we like, we can miss out on other things. We can get focused on our ministry. We can get focused on our studies. Ones can get focused on end times, or prophecies, or whatever. Some fools can get focused on church history and miss out on everything else God is doing.

We see this rebuke, and I appreciate it because this is quite a sobering thing. Are you doing it for yourself or for Him? That is a huge lesson for us in life as we are pressing on. We can be doing good things for the Lord, but are we doing them for ourselves or for Him? Are we trying to build a name for ourselves? What is our motivation in what we are doing?

Praise God, Calvin was so teachable he said, "I did not hear the voice of Farel but God." It would be very easy for a person just to rebuke Farel and say, "You cannot speak like that." But no, it shows us something of Calvin's character as he responded to him.

As he was in Geneva for a time, he first published "The Institutes of Christian Religion" and this is really a systematic theology of the Reformation. He pulled it together in a concise way. Luther had a lot of teachings, but Calvin pulled a lot of it together.

There was another brother named Melanchthon who helped pull these thoughts together of what was going on, which is in The Institutes of Christian Religion. There are three volumes, and

everybody loves the first two, but the third volume is when Calvin got into predestination. The Calvinism that is around today is not the Calvinism that he shared; there was a lot more balance in it. The impact of Calvinism today is still felt, but it is far from the original teachings that he taught. So when people talk about Calvinism, you have to make sure what they are speaking of. The original is far different from what is taught today.

Because of some of his severe teaching he was banished from Geneva. He got married, and in 1542 AD he returned to Geneva. He had this desire to make Geneva the kingdom of God, and through his preaching and his writings he began to impact the schools, and the city council began supporting him. He wanted to improve the morality, and he tried improving by changing laws. As we know morality cannot be changed in the long term by new laws; it is a change of heart.

Geneva was governed now based on Christian principles and the Scripture. It was a nice city if you were a believer, but if you were not you would get treated very badly. There was not a lot of love and graciousness being shown to unbelievers. They were not winning them over in kindness. One of the blemishes on Calvin's record concerned a heretic named Servetus. He had been kicked out of the Catholic Church for denying the Trinity and original sin. There is no question that he was a heretic, but he was condemned to death within the city of Geneva. Calvin approved of his death and went along with it. But he did try to get him killed mercifully. He wanted them to have his head chopped off which would be quicker as opposed to being burned at the stake, but they denied that request. So this is really held against Calvin, and it is a blemish. However, this is where you see their humanity which means they made mistakes.

One of the things that touched me about Calvin was when he died, he wanted to be buried in a common, unmarked grave. To this day no one knows where Calvin's grave is. He had seen others who had monuments built to them when they died, and he said that he did not want a monument built to him. He wanted everything to go to Christ. So he said, "Just bury me an unmarked grave, and do not tell anybody where it is." To me that speaks of his character.

Here are a couple of Calvin's quotes, and I appreciated this one. He said, "Faith is like an empty, open hand stretched out toward God, with nothing to offer and everything to receive."

Calvin loved music as did Luther, and most of the reformers were trying to reform the music. I appreciated this quote because the music in that day and time consisted of a lot of the Gregorian chants, and the focus was more on the music than the words. A lot of them could not understand the words because they were in Latin. There was some beautiful music composed during that time, but the focus was more on the beauty of the music than the actual song itself. In this quote of Calvin's he said, "We must beware lest our ears be more intent on the music than our minds on the spiritual meaning of the words." The hymns had beautiful words, and that is what we need to focus on. We can get caught up in the feeling of the music, but are we really focusing on the words? Because of this Calvin set many of the psalms to music. He wrote a psalter, and actually some groups still only sing from the psalter today, and they sing the psalms that were put to music by Calvin.

John Knox

The last brother we have is John Knox who was in Scotland, the greatest country on earth. I am a thoroughbred; both sides of my family are pure Scott. One of Knox's characteristics was described as being very stubborn, and most Scotts are pretty stubborn. Scotland at this point in time liked to ally themselves with France because it was Catholic. England was of the Church of England because Henry VIII had separated from the Roman Catholic Church for his own personal reasons, nothing spiritual. He set up his own Church of England of which he was the head. Scotland would ally with France for strength, and there were constant battles and bickering going on.

When Knox was about fourteen years old, he really did not know Patrick Hamilton who was the first Protestant martyr. He had studied the Word, and he knew the Word. He began sharing it among different ones, and because of that he was killed by the Roman Catholic Church. Everybody knew how righteous this man Hamilton was, and they could not understand why they would put him to death because he had been so righteous and good. People started questioning and wondering why, and they began looking into it. And the more they looked into it, the more they got drawn to the Word of God. They were seeing the reality of how the Word of God was impacting his life in contrast with the things that they saw within the Roman Catholic system.

Knox, at this point, was still in the Catholic Church. He graduated from St. Andrews and became a priest. But praise God, shortly after that he got converted and became a bodyguard for a preacher named George Wishart. Because of the danger of Catholicism many people would have bodyguards. There is a famous painting of Wishart with Knox standing beside him with a two-edged sword. Remember those old swords that were huge. These were different times than today. Eventually, Wishart was martyred. He knew the Catholic troops were coming for him, and he knew he was outnumbered. He actually sent away all of his bodyguards because he did not want them killed. After he sent those who were with him away, he gave himself up, and he was eventually tried and martyred.

After that Knox was captured and served on a French ship. He was a French galley slave for nineteen months. This impacted his health dramatically because he was maltreated and malnourished, but after nineteen months he was able to get out. He moved to England and because of preaching there he had to flee Queen Mary. In Scotland and England you can get all the Marys confused. There was a Queen Mary there who was outwardly Protestant but not supportive. He was too much against her, and he had to flee. He settled in Geneva and was influenced by Calvin. Because of Calvin and his encouragement, he returned to Scotland, and really began a whole-hearted Reformation. It influenced the Scottish Parliament so much that they adopted Protestantism and began supporting it.

A couple years later a Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots, returned from France, and Knox continued preaching. She was so much against him, but they actually met and discussed things five times. She would offer him all kind of things if he would quit preaching against her, but he never would budge. He stood toe to toe with her. If you read some of the things that Knox said, you will find that he basically thought Mary, Queen of Scots should be beheaded and end the

whole thing. That was his opinion on how to handle her. Of course, that is not your normal gospel message, but we get a feel for who these guys were.

He was buried outside of St. Andrews where he had gone to school. Today if you go to see where he is buried it is covered up in a parking lot. It is actually parking space number 24. There is a little circle there that says, "John Knox is buried under here." Some people in Scotland liked him, some did not like him.

These are a couple of his quotes. His prayer was: "Lord, give me Scotland else I die!" There is an absoluteness there. "Scotland or I die."

I appreciate this other one, and this is an encouragement to us. "A man with God is always in the majority." People like to say, "Believers are the minority these days." "A man with God is in the majority." Praise God for that!

Mary Queen of Scots told this: "I fear the prayers of John Knox more than all the assembled armies of Europe." There was a reality there in him that she feared. "I fear his prayers more than all the assembled armies in Europe."

Now these were the main four reformers, but they are not the only ones. There were plenty of others. Most of them were at that Marburg Colloquy also. They are lesser known in name but not in value, and probably some of these are unknown to us, but they were precious servants of the Lord who did great works for Him. One brother said, "You do not always have to be number one. You could say these four major ones were number one; these others were the secondary ones. But no, we are all in this together; it is the body of Christ.

There was Philipp Melanchthon who was with Luther helping him, and he systemized all of Luther's teachings and theology and was actually called the theologian of the Reformation. He did a great work.

Johann Oecolampadius led the Reformation in Basel, and he was closely associated with Zwingli. You can see throughout Switzerland all these various ones were being used.

William Farel is the one we spoke of earlier who really challenged Calvin. He was saved through Lefevre in Paris and then was expelled to France. We will see both Farel and Beza a lot more when we get to the Huguenots because they were the ones who really influenced a lot of the Huguenot movement in France.

Bullinger succeeded Zwingli in Zurich and actually stabilized things, and Beza succeeded Calvin in Geneva.

We see these ones whose names we do not normally hear, but when you consider that throughout Scriptures there are unnamed ones and throughout history there are unnamed ones. This is why we are not in it for a name; we are in it to be faithful to Him.

After the Reformation we find that the Anglican Church was mainly in England and some parts of Ireland. The Reformed Church was throughout the Switzerland area, parts of France, and in the Netherlands where Calvinism was still very strong. There was the Eastern Orthodox which

originally broke off from the Catholic Church. The Lutheran Church was mainly through Germany up into Northern Europe. And the Roman Catholic Church was widely spread.

As we think of the impact of the Reformation, these dear ones began a great work, but in hindsight they did not go far enough. They started but stopped. To me it is a lesson that we can enter into something that is good but there is still much more to enter into of Christ. Many of us used to meet in denominational churches, but is it the end for us just to meet here like this? There is much more of His life that He wants to express. We can become comfortable. Look at what we have; we do not have this, we do not have that, we have this, we have that. Is His life being expressed through us? This is what we are jealous for, and we need to keep pressing on and not settle down.

Through this time they recovered the authority of the Word of God, justification by faith, and the preciousness of believers having direct access to God through Jesus Christ and not an intermediary.

Some of the shortcomings were that they saw the priesthood of all believers but they did not practice it. They did not think the people were ready for it; they did not think they could handle it. They were doubting the Headship of Christ, and it never fully impacted these initial reformers. They continued to believe and practice infant baptism. They formalized and structured worship plans on Sunday. Most of these ones were used to a Catholic plan; now Calvin had his plan, Zwingli had his plan. This was the way of a Sunday service. There was not any fluidity, there was no being led of the Spirit. It was a structured formalized plan that was practiced. They allied with Protestant kings and princes; therefore they became state and national churches.

At the end of Luther's life he actually repented. He said, "I looked to the princes to protect me, and now it has become national." He saw the error of that. Any time the people of God look to the government too much to protect them they are in trouble. And I believe in the days we are living in we can be challenged with that. Who are we looking to for protection? Are we looking to the Supreme Court to protect us? Or are we looking to congress or the President? It is not that we do not pray for those and care about them, but who are we looking to protect us? It is the Lord; it is allowing His Headship to hold us and keep us in the midst of that.

Eventually, because of these things, the persecuted becomes the persecutor. We will see more of that the next time when we consider some of the ones who wanted to continue pressing on. From now on in church history as we see things recovered there is an ebb and flow. There is a little more recovered; there is a little more and a little more. There are ones who keep pressing on. At the point in time you feel like you have it all. We have justification by faith, and we are settled in. We are happy in the Lord, and we are free. However, there were still things like sanctification, priesthood of all believers, all of this that the Lord was jealous for. As I get a little older in life I do not want to settle down. Each of these guys burned themselves out. We see ones in the Scriptures who burned out for Christ, and I want to be one of those who are burned out. I know I have not lived that type of life so far; I am thankful for the grace and the blood of the Lamb that cleanses me, and I have a desire that in the future I can be burned out for Him. May that be all of our desire.

Let's pray:

Lord, we are thankful how You found so many different ones, just ordinary vessels that You could express Your great life through. And Lord, we are sitting here today just as ordinary vessels. We are ordinary vessels, but each one of us has a treasure within us, and we are desiring that treasure would come forth in a fuller and greater measure, that we could be those who are not distracted by the things of this world, who are not distracted even by our service to You, but really maintaining and keeping that one thing that is necessary before us, allowing you to hold our hearts that we could be continually pressing on to be the people of God that You are desiring. Lord, we are thankful that You have shown us this matter of the testimony of Jesus, and Lord, we desire that that testimony would be lived out in our lives individually and together for Your glory and honor. In Thy name we pray. Amen.