

Nov 12, 2023 - Reformation Sunday (even though it was a few weeks ago!)

Setting: 1500 AD in Central Europe.

Pretty much all Christians in Europe were Roman Catholic and had been since the 4th century or so. Local Priest: responsible for baptism, marriage, confessions, giving last "rights." Provided all of the charity: giving to the poor, ran orphanages, and educated children when available.

Bible was in Latin (not the native tongue).

The church owned over $\frac{1}{3}$ of the land in Europe.

Pope claimed authority over all the kings of Europe. Church and state were fused together.

Martin Luther who studied law. became a monk. Joined Augustinian monastery. Eventually sent to Wittenberg where he continued to study and even teach.

Read Romans; **"the just shall live by faith."**

Righteousness: prayer, or fasting, or vigils, or giving to the poor, or any action that a person can take.

Latin - Sola Fide - Faith alone.

Friar Johann Tetzel in Wittenberg selling indulgences for the church

An indulgence: A donation to the church that came with a promise from the Pope to reduce a sinner's time in purgatory, or securing their forgiveness.

Luther wrote 95 Theses (written in Latin) against the act of indulgences and posted them on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany, on October 31st, 1517, the day before all saint's day..

The Castle Church - public bulletin board for the academic community. October 31, 1517, the day before All Saints Day, was chosen because the Castle Church - Indulgences were granted to the faithful for viewing the many relics that were put on display on All Saints Day.

The invention of the Printing Press, which was becoming more widely used. Writings and printings were able to be distributed to the people.

by the **grace** of God alone or (**Latin - Sola Gratia**).

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God," - Ephesians 2:8-9

And against the need for priests as our mediator:

"For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus," - 1 Timothy 2:5

The ultimate sacrifice was already offered:

"But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, - Hebrews 10:12

"Priesthood of all believers."

"you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

- 1 Peter 2:5

14 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:14-16

From Scripture alone. - Latin - Sola Scriptura.

Luther - 1521 - vs the Holy Roman Empire to defend his statements: Before King Charles V at the Diet of Worms.

*Luther's response is often quoted: "I cannot choose but **adhere to the Word of God**, which has possession of my conscience; nor can I possibly, nor will I even make any recantation, since it is neither safe nor honest to act contrary to conscience! **Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise, so help me God! Amen.**"*

translating the Bible into the language of the people: German.

Printing Press allowed it to be vastly distributed.

Balthasar Hubmaier, a catholic monk that also learned to study the Scriptures. He, influenced by Luther's writings. His beliefs:

Bible as the Ultimate Authority: sole authority of the Bible in matters of faith and practice.

Freedom of the Will: He asserted that individuals have free will and the ability to choose to follow Christ.

Believer's Baptism: Hubmaier contended that baptism should be administered only to believing adults who have consciously chosen to follow Christ.

Rejection of Infant Baptism: He rejected the practice of infant baptism, considering it unscriptural.

Congregational Church Government: Hubmaier advocated for the autonomy of local congregations and the separation of church and state.

Eucharist as a Symbol: He viewed the Lord's Supper (Eucharist) as a symbolic memorial rather than a sacrament (something that counted toward righteousness).

Christian Love: Hubmaier emphasized the importance of Christian love and nonviolence.

“Anabaptists” or “the re-baptizers” because they were getting baptized as adults (rather than counting their baby baptisms). They chose to be baptized as a response to their faith in Jesus, rather than the belief of someone else.

Justification by works:

What was being taught in most of the catholic churches was the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas: you had to be righteous to be declared righteous (a process through works)

Modern Way: You just have to do your best. (God declares it, if you did your best)

Luther became haunted by the idea: He would never really know for sure if he **had done his best**.

“He who through faith is righteous shall live” or as we know it: “the righteous shall live by faith.”

HEIDELBERG DISPUTATION (1518)

In 1518, the Heidelberg Disputation, a sort of debate, Luther really brought out what he later understood to be the meaning of faith and righteousness.

A Thesis of 28 Points.

Thesis #28:

God’s love is not responsive to that which is already lovely

But is creative, making an unlovely object into that which is an object of love.

Thesis 25:

“He is not righteous who does much, but he who, without work, believes much in Christ.”

For the righteousness of God is not acquired by means of acts frequently repeated, as Aristotle taught, but it is imparted by faith, for “He who through faith is righteous shall live” (Rom. 1:17), and “Man believes with his heart and so is justified” (Rom. 10:10). Therefore I wish to have the words “without work” understood in the following manner: Not that the righteous person does nothing, but that his works do not make him righteous, rather that his righteousness creates works. For grace and faith are infused without our works. After they have been imparted the works follow. Thus Rom. 3:20 states, “No human being will be justified in His sight by works of the law,” and, “For we hold that man is justified by faith apart from works of law” (Rom. 3:28). In other words, works contribute nothing to justification.

Post Tenebras Lux - After darkness, light. It was a rallying cry of the Reformers. It referred to the darkness of the truth found in the Bible that was hidden from the people for many years. .

Titus 3:4-5

4 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, **5** he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

Can I challenge you today to share the Word of Truth (a Bible) with someone today?

Or better still, would you be willing to sit down with someone and read the Bible together with them? We call that discipleship. It is what Jesus told us to do:

19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

May we be students of the truth from God’s Word,

May we be proclaimers of God’s Word as we speak to others and in how we live

May we be protectors of the Word, standing for truth when reality doesn’t line up with what we see.

And May we be bearers of the Word, willing to suffer and endure the consequences of following our Lord Jesus.