

## TFPC Bulletin – October 25, 2020

### What is the Protestant Reformation?

The Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century was a revival of Biblical truth that led to a reaction against the darkness and oppression of the Roman Catholic church. It brought about reforms in every area of society, but the greatest was spiritual freedom for the individual. The light of God's Word revealed that "the just shall live by faith," and not by works. Salvation was in Jesus Christ alone, through faith and by God's grace alone.

In the early 1500's, many Roman Catholics began to question the teaching that their church forced upon them by leaders such as Pope Leo X. During this time, a monk named Martin Luther began exposing the selling of indulgences (paying for forgiveness of sins) and other wrongdoings of his church. He nailed a document to the church door in Wittenberg containing 95 reasons (theses) showing the Papal error of indulgences. Through this simple act, God began a monumental revival which has become known as the Protestant Reformation.



### The Heart of the Reformation

One of the greatest legacies of the Protestant Reformation was the production and distribution of Bibles in the languages of the common people, even though the church of Rome had outlawed private possession of the Bible in 1229. With the production of Erasmus' Greek text of the New Testament in 1516, Luther was able to translate the Scriptures into German and in 1526 William Tyndale published his New Testament in English. In his book "The Freedom of the Christian Man", Luther wrote, "One thing and one thing alone is necessary for life, justification, and Christian liberty: and that is the most holy Word of God, the Gospel of Christ."

The Bible was declared by Reformers to have final authority in all matters of faith and life. No longer was the king or common man forced to surrender his conscience to Councils and decrees outside of the written Word of God. The Bible was the sole authority. Perhaps we should ask ourselves again, what place does the Bible hold in our lives?

### Imperfect

As with any event in history involving man, the Reformation had flaws, as did Martin Luther. Yet in light of his background, Luther had amazing Biblical clarity. The depth of his insight, along with other Reformers like Melancthon, Calvin, and Zwingli, is directly related to the Bible, divinely impressed on their lives.

### Modern Counterfeits

Throughout post-reformation history, many have tried to undo the Protestant Reformation by either denying its value, redefining its purpose, or using it as a tool to advance reunification with the church of Rome. Organizations like the World Council of Churches, *Refo500*, and misguided evangelicals, have attempted to find "common ground" to establish fellowship and union with Roman Catholicism.

The fact is that light cannot be joined with darkness, neither truth with error. There can be no Biblical fellowship with apostasy. As Christians, we must not only thank God for the great legacy of Biblical freedom that the Reformation brought but cherish and defend it. May we be able to say with Luther, "Here I stand I can do no other, so help me God."