

“The Great Transformation”
Sola Gratia

Introduction:

1. So Far - In Our Series On The Reformation:
 - We Have Looked At 2 Of The Great, Transforming Truths:
 - That The Reformers Rediscovered From The Word Of God!
 - We’ve Looked At:
 - Scripture Alone:
 - Or - Sola Scriptura - And How God Used Men Like John Wycliffe To Bring The Scriptures Again To The Common People!
 - We’ve Also Looked At:
 - Faith Alone:
 - Or - Sola Fide - And How God Used Men Like Martin Luther To Rediscover And To Preach The True Gospel Of “Faith Alone” In Jesus Christ For Salvation!
 - Tonight We Are Going To Look At:
 - The Next One Of These Transforming Truths:
 - Grace Alone:
 - Or - Sola Gratia!
 - Even As We Just Sang In The Reformation Hymn:
 - “We Are Saved By Grace Alone – Undeserved, Yet Freely Shown; No Accomplishment On Earth Can Achieve The Second Birth!”
2. We Find This Truth In - Titus 2:11 - “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men!”
 - In Other Words - “We Are Saved By Grace Alone!”
 - Once Again - During The Middle Ages:
 - Both Prior To & During The Reformation:
 - This Truth Was Hidden Under Layers & Layers:
 - Of The Teachings & Traditions:
 - Of Roman Catholicism!
 - Instead Of “Grace Alone” - The Established Church Of That Day:
 - Heaped On Additional Burdens To The Gospel:
 - Because They Believed That They Were The Only Way To Please God:
 - And The Only Way To Keep Believers From Living Lives Full Of Sinful Practices:
 - Thinking - In The Words Of Paul - “Shall We Continue In Sin, That Grace May Abound?” (Romans 6:1)
 - But They Were & Still Are In Error!
 - As Jesus Put It - “Ye Do Err, Not Knowing The Scriptures, Nor The Power Of God!”
 - Their Teachings & Traditions Often Usurped The Authority & Even The Power Of God’s Word!
 - And So They Ignored The Simple Truth Of Scripture Once Again!
3. But Isn’t This Something:
 - That Is Natural To Us All?
 - How Many Other Religions Are There:
 - That Teach That The Only Way To Their God Or Gods:
 - Is To Appease & To Please Them In Order To Earn Their Favor?
 - But This Is Not What The Scriptures Teach!
 - And This Truth Was Rediscovered By Another Reformer:
 - From Switzerland - By The Name Of:
 - Ulrich Zwingli!
 - When God - By Grace Alone - Saved Ulrich Zwingli - He Then Sought To Get Rid Of All Of Those Things That Undermined The Grace Of God In Salvation!
4. (Steven Lawson - Zurich Revolutionary: Ulrich Zwingli - Ligonier)

Ulrich Zwingli was a contemporary of Martin Luther, and was born just two months after Luther came into the world, on January 1, 1484. He was born in a small village in the eastern part of modern-day Switzerland, forty miles from Zurich. His father, Ulrich Sr., had risen from peasant stock to become an upper-middle-class man of means, a successful farmer and shepherd, as well as the chief magistrate for the district. This prosperity allowed him to provide his son with an excellent education. He presided over a home where typical Swiss values were inculcated in young Ulrich: sturdy independence, strong patriotism, zeal for religion, and real interest in scholarship.

n 1498, Zwingli's father sent him to the University of Vienna. There he studied philosophy, astronomy, physics, and ancient classics. In 1502, he enrolled at the University of Basel. In class, he came under the influence of Thomas Wytttenbach, professor of theology, and began to be aware of abuses in the church.

Zwingli was ordained to the priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church and immediately purchased a pastorate at Glarus, his boyhood church. Paying money to a prince for a church position was a common practice prior to the Reformation. His time was spent preaching, teaching, and pastoring. He also devoted himself to much private study, teaching himself Greek and studying the Church Fathers and the ancient classics.

During his service in Glarus, from 1506 to 1516, Zwingli twice served as chaplain to bands of young Swiss mercenaries. Swiss soldiers for hire were in great demand across Europe and were a major source of income for Swiss cantons. Even the pope had Swiss guards around him. But this practice cost the lives of many of the best Swiss young men. As a chaplain, Zwingli witnessed many of them fighting each other, Swiss killing Swiss on foreign soil for foreign rulers. One Battle in the year 1515 took nearly ten thousand Swiss lives. Zwingli came to deplore the evils of this system and began to preach against it.

His final year at Glarus proved to be pivotal. It was at this time that Zwingli came to an evangelical understanding of the Scriptures. Erasmus published his Greek New Testament in that year, and Zwingli devoured it; it is said he memorized Paul's epistles in the original language. This occurred a little more than a year before Luther nailed his Ninety-five Theses to the Wittenberg Castle Church door. Thanks to his study of the Scriptures, with no knowledge of Luther's ideas, Zwingli began to preach the same message Luther would soon proclaim. He wrote: "Before anyone in the area had ever heard of Luther, I began to preach the gospel of Christ in 1516... I started preaching the gospel before I had even heard Luther's name... Luther, whose name I did not know for at least another two years, had definitely not instructed me. I followed holy Scripture alone."

Because of political pressures and his sermons against mercenary fighting, Zwingli was forced to leave Glarus in 1516. He served as a priest at a Benedictine monastery until 1518. As he distinguished himself as a popular preacher, he also began attacking some of the abuses of the church, specifically the sale of indulgences, and his preaching began to take on a stronger evangelical tone. However, Zwingli did not yet see the need for changes in what the church believed. Rather, he felt reform should be primarily institutional and moral. Also, he remained more dependent on the Church Fathers than the Scriptures in his teaching. He was not yet ready for the work of reform.

In December 1518, Zwingli's growing influence secured for him the office of "people's priest" at the Grossmünster (Great Cathedral) at Zurich. This pastorate was a significant position. Zwingli immediately broke from the normal practice of preaching according to the church calendar. Instead, he announced he would preach sequentially through whole books of the Bible. On January 1, 1519, his thirty-fifth birthday, Zwingli began a series of expository sermons through Matthew that were drawn from his exegesis of the Greek text. He continued this consecutive style until he had preached through the entire New Testament. This ambitious project took six years and prepared the ground for the work of reform that was to follow.

In autumn 1519, Zurich suffered an outbreak of the plague. Two thousand of its seven thousand citizens died. Zwingli chose to stay in the city to care for the sick and dying. In the process, he himself contracted the disease and nearly died. His three-month recovery taught him much about trusting God. This personal sacrifice also increased his popularity with the people.

* Zwingli was on vacation in August 1519, when the Black Death broke out in Zurich. Though weak already from exhausting work, he hurried back to his city to minister to victims. Before long he himself caught the disease and seemed likely to perish. But his work not yet done, Zwingli recovered. His famous "plague hymn" recounts his sense of trust and then his joy at regaining health. Stanzas 1-4 were written as the disease first struck, stanzas 5-8 as his health deteriorated. Upon his recovery he finished the final four stanzas: ("Black Death Inspires Zwingli's Plague Hymn" - Christian History Institute)

* Help me, O Lord,
My strength and rock;
Lo, at the door
I hear death's knock.

Uplift shine arm,

Once pierced for me,
That conquered death.
And set me free.

Yet, if thy voice,
In life's midday.
Recalls my soul,
Then I obey.

In faith and hope
Earth I resign.
Secure of heaven.
For I am Thine.

* My pains increase;
Haste to console;
For fear and woe
Seize body and soul.

Death is at hand.
My senses fail.
My tongue is dumb;
Now, Christ, prevail.

Lo! Satan strains
To snatch his prey;
I feel his grasp;
Must I give way?

He harms me not,
I fear no loss,
For here I lie
Beneath thy cross.

* My God! My Lord!
Healed by the hand.
Upon the earth
Once more I stand.

Let sin no more
Rule over me;
My mouth shall sing
Alone to thee.

Though now delayed,
My hour will come.
Involved, perchance.
In deeper gloom.

But, let it come;
With joy I'll rise,
And bear my yoke
Straight to the skies.

As Zwingli preached through the Bible, he expounded the truths he encountered in the text, even if they differed from the historical tradition of the church. This kind of direct preaching was not without challenges. In 1522, some of his parishioners defied the church's rule about eating meat during Lent. Zwingli supported their practice based on the biblical truths of Christian liberty. He saw such restrictions as man-made.

In January 1523, he wrote Sixty-seven Theses, in which he rejected many medieval beliefs, such as forced fasting, clerical celibacy, purgatory, the Mass, and priestly mediation. Further, he began to question the use of images in the church. In June 1524, the city of Zurich, following his lead, ruled that all religious images were to be removed from churches. Also in 1524, Zwingli took yet another step of reform—he married Anna Reinhard, a widow. All of this appears to have happened before Zwingli ever heard of Luther. This was truly an independent work of God.

By 1525, the Reformation movement in Zurich had gained significant traction. On April 14, 1525, the Mass was officially abolished and Protestant worship services were begun in and around Zurich. Zwingli chose to implement only what was taught in Scripture. Anything that had no explicit Scriptural support was rejected. The words of Scripture were read and preached in the language of the people. The entire congregation, not merely the clergy, received both bread and wine in a simple Communion service. The veneration of Mary and saints was forbidden, indulgences were banned, and prayers for the dead were stopped. The break with Rome was complete.

Meanwhile, a controversy began brewing between Zwingli and Luther over the Lord's Supper. Luther held to consubstantiation, the belief that there is a real presence of Christ in the elements. Zwingli adopted the position that the Lord's Supper is mainly a memorial of Christ's death—a symbolic remembrance.

In an attempt to bring unity to the Reformed movement, the Marburg Colloquy was convened in October 1529. The two Reformers appeared face to face, along with other Protestant leaders. They agreed in principle to fourteen of the fifteen items put before them, but no agreement could be reached regarding the Lord's Supper. Luther said that "Zwingli was a 'very good man,' yet of a 'different spirit,' and hence refused to accept his hand of fellowship offered to him with tears."

In one of the strange ironies of history, Zwingli, who earlier had opposed the practice of using mercenaries in war, died on the battlefield in 1531. An escalating conflict between Protestants and Catholics had cantons in arms, and a war soon broke out. The city of Zurich went to battle to defend itself against five invading Catholic cantons from the south. Zwingli accompanied Zurich's army into battle as a field chaplain. Clad in armor and armed with a battle-ax, he was severely wounded on October 11, 1531. When enemy soldiers found him lying wounded, they killed him. The southern forces then subjected his corpse to disgraceful treatment. They quartered him, hacked his remains to pieces, and burned them, then mixed his ashes with dung and scattered them abroad.

Today, prominently displayed at the Water Church in Zurich, is a statue of Zwingli. He is standing with a Bible in one hand and a sword in the other. The statue represents Zwingli in his towering influence over the Swiss Reformation, strong and resolute. Though his Zurich ministry was relatively short, he accomplished much. Through his heroic stand for the truth, Zwingli reformed the church in Zurich and led the way for other Reformers to follow.

5. Ulrich Zwingli Lived & Died For The Truth:

- "Sola Gratia – Grace Alone!"

- A Truth That Is So Clearly Taught In Scripture:

- And A Truth That We So Often Take For Granted!

- But What Is The Grace Of God?

- Well - To Help Us Answer This Question - Let's Return To Titus 2:11 - "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men!"

- And The First Thing We Need To Consider:

- When We Speak Of "Grace Alone" Is:

1. *The Description Of God's Grace!*

- "Grace" Is Quite Simply The Free Favor Of God!

- It Is The Goodness Of God:

- Given To Unworthy & Undeserving Sinners:

- And Is Motivated By Himself & His Own Love & Nothing Else!

- And Without God's Grace:

- There Could Be No Salvation!

- Grace Is God Making His Move Toward Sinners, Knowing That We Could Not & Would Not *Ever* Make A Move Toward Him On Our Own!

- Alexander MacLaren - "Grace Is The Shorthand Word For The Self-Motivated, Ever-Acting, Communicating, Stopping, And Pardoning Mercy Which Has Its Very Home And Throne In The Heart Of God Himself!"

- And It Is This Grace:
 - As Ulrich Zwingli & The Other Reformers Came To Understand:
 - That Is Absolutely Essential For Our Salvation!
 - See This In Other Verses As Well!
- Acts 15:11 - "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved!"
 - Ephesians 2:8-9 - "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: / Not of works, lest any man should boast!"
 - This Even Shows The Relationship Between "Grace Alone" & "Faith Alone!"
 - Even Your Faith Depends On God's Grace!
 - Because - Without God's Grace:
 - We Could Not & We Would Not *Ever* Believe!
 - Even Our Faith Is "The Gift Of God!"
 - But We Also See:

2. *The Direction Of God's Grace!*

- That Is - What Is God's Grace For?
 - Titus 2:11 - The "Grace Of God" - And The "Grace Of God" Alone:
 - "Bringeth Salvation!"
 - The Scriptures Teach That Our Salvation Is Entirely The Grace Of God!
 - He Alone Initiates It!
 - He Alone Invites People To It!
 - And We - As Sinners:
 - Contribute Nothing To Our Salvation:
 - Except The Need For It:
 - Because Of Our Sin!
- If You Are A Christian - You Need To Remember:
 - That God Chose You:
 - By His Grace!
 - Romans 11:5-6 - "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. / And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work!"
 - And A Person Has Nothing To Do:
 - With This Choice!
 - It Is All By God's Grace!
 - John 15:16 - "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit!"
 - If You Are A Christian - You Need To Remember:
 - That God Called You:
 - By His Grace!
 - 2 Timothy 1:9 - God - "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began!"
 - And A Person Has Nothing To Do:
 - With This Calling!
 - It Is All By God's Grace!
 - Paul Understood This & Was Transformed By This Truth!
 - Galatians 1:14-15 - "It pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, / To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen!"
 - If You Are A Christian - You Need To Remember:
 - That God Changed You:
 - By His Grace!
 - Romans 3:24 - "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus!"
 - And A Person Has Nothing To Do:
 - With This Change!
 - It Is All By God's Grace!
 - Instead - You Receive The Grace Of God's Salvation:
 - Through Faith - And Faith Alone:
 - In Jesus Christ!

- When You Realize:
 - That You Contribute Nothing To Your Salvation:
 - Except The Need For It:
 - Then You Are Beginning To Understand Something Of The Grace Of God!
 - But We Also See From Titus 2:11:

3. *The Display Of God's Grace!*

- "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men!"
 - God's Grace "Hath Appeared To All Men!"
 - It Is Not Something Hidden!
 - It Is Something That God Has Put On Full Display:
 - In The Person & Work Of Jesus Christ!
- The Coming Of Jesus:
 - Displays The Grace Of God!
 - John 1:14 - "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth!"
 - We Were Not Worthy:
 - When Jesus Came To Us!
 - But That's Why It's Called Grace!
- The Call Of Jesus:
 - Displays The Grace Of God!
 - Matthew 11:28 - "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!"
 - That's Grace!
 - And We Are Not Worthy:
 - When Jesus Calls To Us:
 - To Give Us Eternal Life!
 - That's Why It's Called Grace!
- The Cross Of Jesus:
 - Displays The Grace Of God!
 - Hebrews 2:9 - "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man!"
 - And We Still Are Not Worthy:
 - Of Jesus "Tasting" Death For Us & "Taking" Our Death:
 - Upon Himself!
 - But That's What Makes It Grace!
- And Jesus Christ:
 - Is The Fullest Display:
 - Of The Grace Of God To Us!
 - And So - Whenever We Hear About His Grace - There Must Be:

4. *A Dependence On God's Grace!*

- Hebrews 13:9 - "For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace!"
 - You Can Never Make Too Much Of God's Grace!
 - Because The Grace Of God:
 - Is The "Food" For Your Own Faith In God!
 - Do You Realize This?
- This Is Why Ray Palmer Once Wrote:
 - "My Faith Looks Up To Thee!"
 - Not - My Faith Looks In To Me!
 - A Reason Why Christians Often Face Spiritual Doubt & Discouragement:
 - Is Because Instead Of Looking *Up* Through Faith, They Are Looking *In* At Their Faith!
- But The Grace of God:
 - Is The Food For Your Faith!
 - What This Means Is That:
 - *The More You Treasure The Grace Of God:*
 - *The More You Will Trust In The God Of Grace!*

- Because Even Your Faith:
 - Is Dependent On God's Grace!
- So - Again - Hebrews 13:9 - "It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace!"
 - You Can Never Make Too Much Of God's Grace!

Conclusion:

1. How Are You Responding To The Grace Of God:
 - In Your Life?
 - Are You Growing In Your Faith & Dependence:
 - On The Lord?
 - Keep Studying The Grace Of God:
 - Because - As It Was For Ulrich Zwingli:
 - It Will Be A Truth That Continues To Transform Your Life!

* Remember - "We Are Saved By Grace Alone – Undeserved, Yet Freely Shown; No Accomplishment On Earth Can Achieve The Second Birth!"

* "Reformation Hymn"

***Grace Baptist Church
Stephen Elmer, Pastor
4245 North 200 West
Greenfield, Indiana 46140
317-326-2362
www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace
www.growatgrace.org
pastor-elmer@hotmail.com***