

**2 Chronicles 34: 15, 21; “The Discovery of the Scripture”; Session # 2 in the Series –
“To Be Reformed”, Presented by Pastor Paul Rendall
on July 20th, 2014.**

Last week we began looking at what it means to be Reformed. I said to you that being Reformed is 1st of all -

A. A church which believes in the Authority of the Scripture – “The phrase sola scriptura is from the Latin: sola having the idea of “alone,” “ground,” “base,” and the word scriptura meaning “writings”—referring to the Scriptures.” “Sola scriptura means that Scripture alone is authoritative for the faith and practice of the Christian. The Bible is complete, authoritative, and true. “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.” (2 Timothy 3:16).

B. A church which believes in Receiving the Scripture as the very word of God.

1st Thessalonians 2: 13 – “For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.”

Notice in relation to this verse that the Word of God was something which the Thessalonians received and welcomed. They received it as God’s word to them. God’s word was speaking to them. They were not speaking to it, picking and choosing what they would believe, but receiving it because the authority of God Himself was in the very words that they were hearing. Even so, ought you and I to receive and welcome the word of God, and to recognize God’s loving, yet authoritative voice, speaking to us in the written word of God.

The principle of the Reformation is called – “Sola Scriptura”, or – Only the Scripture can define my faith and practice, and only the Scripture can define the way that we as Christians and we as a church should worship and serve God. The importance of the truth of God, objectively defined by Biblical truth, and set forth in the Bible, can scarcely be imagined when we realize that God cannot be glorified, and man cannot be saved from his sins and know eternal life without it. If a person is going to live a true Christian life, he should realize that Christianity is not a religion that was made up by a man, but that Christians claim to have received the only true written revelation of God to men. This is the Word concerning Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God which was given in the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible. Without the Bible, the truth about God and the truth about salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, could not be defined or understood. Every person who is a true Christian accepts this and receives the Bible as the Word of God. It is infallible, inerrant and sufficient for all matters related to our faith and practice. (1)

It was because the Roman Catholic church had added doctrines and practices to the pure and sound doctrine of the Scripture that the Reformation took place in the 16th century, beginning with Martin Luther. The Reformation, was first of all, the history of individual men coming to know the Lord and to discover for themselves the meaning of the Scriptures.

Let me read you a small section of Merle D’Aubigne’s History of the Reformation (Book 2, Chapter 2):

“Luther had now reached his eighteenth year. He had tasted the sweets of literature; he burnt with a desire of knowledge; he sighed for a university education, and wished to repair to one of those fountains of learning where he could slake his thirst for letters. His father required him to study the law. Full of hope in the talents of his son, he wished that he should cultivate them and make them generally known. He already pictured him discharging the most honorable functions among his fellow-citizens, gaining the favor of princes, and shining on the theater of the world. It was determined that the young man should go to Erfurth. Luther arrived at this university in 1501.”

“The young student passed in the university library all the time he could snatch from his academical pursuits. Books were as yet rare, and it was a great privilege for him to profit by the treasures brought together in this vast collection. One day — he had then been two years at Erfurth, and was twenty years old — he opens many books in the library one after another, to learn their writers’ names. One volume that he comes to attracts his attention. He has never until this hour seen its like. He reads the title — it is a Bible! a rare book, unknown in those times. His interest is greatly excited: he is filled with astonishment at finding other matters than those fragments of the gospels and epistles that the Church has selected to be read to the people during public worship every Sunday throughout the year. Until this day he had imagined that they composed the whole Word of God. And now he sees so many pages, so many chapters, so many books of which he had had no idea! His heart beats, as he holds the divinely inspired volume in his hand. With eagerness and with indescribable emotion he turns over these leaves from God. The first page on which he fixes his attention narrates the story of Hannah and of the young Samuel. He reads — and his soul can hardly contain the joy it feels. This child, whom his parents lend to the Lord as long as he liveth; the song of Hannah, in which she declares that Jehovah “raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes;” this child who grew up in the temple in the presence of the Lord; those sacrificers, the sons of Eli, who are wicked men, who live in debauchery, and “make the Lord’s people to transgress;” — all this history, all this revelation that he has just discovered, excites feelings till then unknown. He returns home with a full heart. “Oh! that God would give me such a book for myself,” thought he. Luther was as yet ignorant both of Greek and Hebrew. It is scarcely probable that he had studied these languages during the first two or three years of his residence at the university. The Bible that had filled him with such transports was in Latin. He soon returned to the library to pore over his treasure. He read it again and again, and then, in his astonishment and joy, he returned to read it once more. The first glimmerings of a new truth were then beginning to dawn upon his mind. Thus had God led him to the discovery of his Word — of that book of which he was one day to give his fellow countrymen that admirable translation in which Germany has for three centuries perused the oracles of God. Perhaps for the first time his precious volume has now been taken down from the place it occupied in the library of Erfurth. This book, deposited upon the unknown shelves of a gloomy hall, is about to become the book of life to a whole nation. In that Bible the Reformation lay hid.”

The writings and traditions of the early church fathers and the edicts of popes became the basis of a Christianity which obscured the true gospel (2) and many sound doctrines clearly set forth in the Scripture.(3) It was the Reformers such as Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, and John Calvin who began the reformation by returning to a careful examination and proclamation of Scripture.(4) Because of their preaching, many people, in many countries in Europe, seeing that the Roman Catholic Church would not be reformed, left it, and founded what were called Protestant churches, protesting against salvation by sacraments, the sale of indulgences, and the worship of Mary and the saints. The papal authority, to determine sound doctrine and practice, was called into question in the minds of many people.(5) The true authority of the living risen

Christ, speaking to His church through the preaching of the Scriptures, was re-established in many places. Reformed Baptists believe in the authority of the Scriptures.(6) Those who are Reformed Baptists believe in holding together to a confession of faith as a church; a confession which they believe accurately represents the truth of the Scriptures. (7)

1) 2 Timothy 3: 16 2) Deuteronomy 4: 2 3) Proverbs 30: 5,6 4)

5) Matthew 23: 9 6) 2 Timothy 4: 1,2 Acts 20: 26-32 (7) 1st Timothy 1: 3 and 4

1st Timothy 3: 14 – 4: 5

C. How does Reformation begin in a church? How does it begin to be Reformed?

An Old Testament Example is given to us, to aid our understanding.

2 Chronicles 34: 1-7 – There was within Josiah the desire to do what was right, placed in him by God Himself. (Only God can bring Revival) This great desire in Josiah was communicated to others in authority around him. God then gave the leaders in church and state, wisdom according to the power vested in them, to begin to move against false worship, to have it come to an end.

2 Chronicles 34: 8-13 – They began to repair and reform the true worship of God by dealing faithfully with money and building projects.

2 Chronicles 34: 14 -28 - In the midst of this, God allowed Hilkiah the priest to discover the book of the Law in the house of God. Shaphan the Scribe takes the book to the king, and it is read to him. The king tears his clothes, and sends these men to inquire of the prophetess, whether there is any hope of reforming Judah and thus avoiding the great judgments which God was bringing upon Judah and Jerusalem because they were so sinful. The key to true Reformation is a tender humble heart, like Josiah's.

2 Chronicles 34: 29-33 – Josiah has the Book of the Law, called here, the Book of the Covenant, read to all the people great and small, and he himself made a covenant before the Lord, to follow the Lord, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and all his soul.