

**Introduction:**

- On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther age 33 posted his famous 95 Theses on the door of the Wittenberg Castle Church. Launching what became known as the Great Reformation.
- The Great Reformation that changed the world was caused by one thing: a rediscovery of the Gospel!
  - That is how the reformation began. First Martin Luther 'got it.' Then a bunch of others 'got it.' And the reformation was underway! But this is how reformation has always happened. God reveals Himself. People believe and their lives are changed for the better and it spreads!
- Some history:
  - Luther lived in a time when the Catholic church:
    - Was selling 'indulgences' a way to reduce the amount of punishment one had to endure in purgatory. It was really being used to build a big cathedral.
    - Under the Pope, one could totally get out of purgatory. Luther said, basically, that if the Pope had that kind of power, why didn't he free all people.
    - Was very, very corrupt.
    - He actually went to Rome (to be enlightened) and watched the people climb the 28 stone steps to get into the church. His response to what he encountered in Rome. "I went smelling like onions, and came back smelling like garlic." Frustrated he returned to Germany.
  - Luther was reading Romans 1:17 *"This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life."* (Romans 1:17, NLT) ...*or by faith alone!* Luther experienced a transformed heart!
- A transformed heart leads to a reformed life.
- A heart transformation leads to a societal reformation.
- This is what the new birth does! It ushers in a change fueled by love! The love of God!

**I. Explain Reformation?**

- A. We find the word reformation used in Heb. 9:6-10. It describes the radical change that took place between the OT covenant and the NT covenant. *"It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience—concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of **reformation**."* (Hebrews 9:9-10, NKJV)
- B. Defined:
1. Greek root, *orthós*. This word first means "upright," "standing." Moving in a straight line, right, correct. Acts 14:10 Paul tells the cripple to stand up straight. Heb 12:13 says to make a straight path for your feet...
  2. Greek, *dióρθōsis*. This word, which originally means "straightening," is variously used for "correction," "arrangement," "setting up" states, and "settlement" The OT covenant was a shadow of the true/New Order of Kingdom to be brought by Jesus.
  3. Greek, *epanóρθōsis*. This word means "restoration," "reestablishment," "correction," "reformation." *"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects (epanorthosis) us when we*

*are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.*" (2 Timothy 3:16, NLT) Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). TDNT (p. 727). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.

4. *krairou diorthosis* - to establish a new order.

C. A reformation is not a new way of doing church. It is a fresh understanding/fresh revelation of God that transforms the human heart that leads to reformation in the way of living and interacting both with God and man. When we are transformed by the revelation of God in our hearts it leads to authentic changes that affect our personal lives, community and global expression of the church. That is reformation. IE. This is what happened to Martin Luther. He encountered God in Romans 1:17 put his faith in God and was transformed! This resulted in the 95 Theses.

1. Reformation is a moving away from external expression based on religious activity to an internal change of heart that results in greater Kingdom clarity/expression in our lives.
2. IE. Ortho in English is a prefix denoting straight, normal, in proper order. Othodontist- straightens/aligns/corrects teeth. Orthopedic mattress or pillows, have to do with alignment of skeleton. Ortho in the medical field has to do with our bones, or skeletal structure.
3. A true reformation thus becomes an internal overhaul of our understanding, mentalities, attitudes which make up our interxnal structures. These internal structures, having been changed, result in different outward expression. They take us deeper into the Kingdom realities that God has ordained for us.
4. The nature of reform is thus a deep internal change of the heart that moves outward through every other system! What do you mean?
  - a) Ie. transformed heart should lead to transformed marriage.
  - b) Ie. transformed heart changes our choices, changes our actions.
  - c) To have an external activity or expression without an internal restructuring is worthless.
5. IE. The sermon on the mount was reformational. It did not call for a change of behavior to be seen on the outside. That would be religious operation. The Sermon on the Mount called for change of heart/restructuring of the heart that results in a totally different expression - that is relationship.
  - a) "You have heard don't commit adultery, I say....don't lust.
  - b) "You have heard don't murder...I say ...don't hate. Jesus was not after behavior he was after internal change based on faith in God!

## II. Faith is the Fire For Reformation

A. It was Jesus message to Nicodemus that we saw last week. *"And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life."* (John 3:14-15, NLT)

1. There was no access to the healing without faith.
  2. There was no new birth without faith.
- B. Saul or Tarsus represented the old religious system. He was passionate about it. But if you are passionate about the wrong thing...it is still the wrong thing.
1. Acts 9:1 Saul is uttering threats and eager to kill the Lords followers.
  2. Verse 3, he encounters God. He becomes a believer! His faith in Christ is activated!
  3. Verse 20, immediately he began preaching, Jesus is the Son of God!!! A radical heart transformation resulted in a radical life reformation.
    - a) The expression of his outward activity was drastically changed when his heart came into alignment with Kingdom expression!
    - b) That is reformation! Alignment of the transformed heart, with the Kingdom of God equalled the alignment of expression of the Kingdom of God within and without of Paul.
  4. Faith was the access to this internal change. If you will not believe then you will not receive.
    - a) *""What do you mean, 'If I can'?" Jesus asked. "Anything is possible if a person believes.""* (Mark 9:23, NLT)
    - b) *"Then he touched their eyes and said, "Because of your faith, it will happen.""* (Matthew 9:29, NLT)
    - c) Martin Luther read, *"This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life.""* (Romans 1:17, NLT)
      - (1) He believed! It was what he had been looking for all the time.
      - (2) When the people read what he had written they too believed! When you have lived in bondage to religion and you find the way of life... It is amazing *"the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light. And for those who lived in the land where death casts its shadow, a light has shined."* (Matthew 4:16, NLT)
- C. The Gospel makes visible God's righteousness! And it makes visible God's righteousness that comes by faith alone! Nothing else! The Gospel manifested the 'saving action' of God!
1. Man is separated from God because of sin.
  2. He needed a Savior. So God sent His one and only Son.
  3. Christ died upon a cross taking our sin, punishment upon himself.
  4. He rose on the third day victorious over sin, that put Him on the cross! Victorious over death that put Him in the grave! Victorious over hell that was sin eternal punishment!!
  5. All who believe this and receive by faith are saved! This is what Jesus preached, Paul believed, Martin Luther believed, and what you must believe today!

6. IF you will believe, you will be saved! Paul in Romans 1:7, speaks in a rhetorical way so as to say, "that faith, and nothing but faith can make us righteous!"
- (1) Luther's personal spiritual struggle ended with his realization that God's righteousness meant not "the righteousness by which he is righteous in himself but the righteousness by which we are made righteous by God." Moo, D. J. (1996). NICNT Romans (p. 71). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- (2) No wonder he was radically changed!
- (a) Here are Wesley's words: *"In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, London, where someone was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart of a person through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."*
- (b) Thus began another great awakening! A radical heart transformation led to societal reformation. It has been said of Wesley that he saved England!

**Conclusion:**

- Have you experienced a radical heart transformation by faith?
- Did that heart transformation lead to a reformation of the way you live?
- You can have Paul's experience. You can have Martin Luther's experience. You can have your own experience today!