

Pastor Brian's
Mid Week Message
October 27, 2021

“REFORMATION”

“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

The Christian Church is founded on Rock of Christ, and His teaching alone. It grew exponentially in the 1st century as the apostles carried this pure Gospel message of Jesus, forgiveness of sin and eternal salvation throughout the Roman empire and eastward into Asia. The Canon of New Testament Scripture was closed, came to its completion, by the end of the 1st century. The message of salvation is clearly summed up in the Apostle Paul's letter to the Church in Rome, chapter 3. *“By works of the law no human being will be justified in his [God's] sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”* (verses 20-24) This will be the foundational text for the sermon this Sunday as we look back and celebrate the Reformation, most notably that which was brought about by Martin Luther and his associates in the 16th century, along with the reformers who carried on the work after Luther's death. Over the course of more than a thousand years the western Church, the Holy Roman Catholic Church, added its own laws and requirements to the doctrine of salvation. The decrees and edicts of the pope were elevated in authority to be equal with that of Christ resulting in quite a number of heresies and abuses to be added to the Christian faith and practice of many. The Church's doctrine of salvation became that of God's grace in Christ, in his sacrifice on the cross for the atonement for all sin, along with works of the law that the Church required the individual believer to do, therefore participating in his or her salvation. What this essentially does is cheapens the sacrifice that our Savior made, saying that it's not enough, and turns in Christianity into idolatry...the worship of a different, false Christ. Jesus very clearly states, *“I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”* (John 14:6) We cannot, and we must not try to, add anything to the sacrificial death of Jesus of our forgiveness and salvation or we risk missing out on the eternal gifts of God freely offered to us in Christ alone, by God's grace alone, received by faith alone, revealed in Scripture alone, and to the glory of God alone! In essence the Reformation was a renewal of the Church, taking it back to its original apostolic roots. The manmade and instituted laws of the Church were rejected with the sole authority for all that we believe, teach, and confess being the Word of God, the Bible. To me, I see it as a parallel to our renewal as individuals. God created us in perfection, to enjoy a perfect fellowship with Him. Sin and sinfulness were later added to the relationship and destroyed the perfection and fellowship. We became hopelessly separated from God, and powerless to do anything about it. What mankind desperately needed was personal reformation, and no human being born in the natural way would be able to do that, since we are all conceived and born in sin. God sent His Son, the Reformer Jesus Christ, to do for us what we could not do for ourselves, bring about reformation, restoration, and renewal by being born of the Holy Spirit and a humble virgin, living a perfect sinless life, taking on the guilt and punishment of all sinners...everyone who has ever or will ever live...and dying under that weight of all that sin to destroy its power over us. Christ's glorious resurrection proves that the sacrifice is sufficient for our salvation and returns us to a right relationship with God. Our sins, ALL OF THEM, are now covered by the righteousness of Christ. In the resurrection of Jesus we are made right with God as a gift of divine grace, and are renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit that bring faith into our hearts as we hear the good news of the Gospel. Nothing that we do merits this gift of salvation. It's all accomplished through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. What a great peace that this truth gives to us. There is nothing that we need to add to the sacrifice of Jesus, there is nothing that we could possibly add to it, so we have the full “blessed assurance” that our salvation is complete, and we know exactly where we will be from the moment we close our eyes on this life in the world. We will forever be in the face to face presence of God in His heavenly Kingdom.