

Pre-Reformation Realities

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Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] We would be asking Gary Harple to come forward and read scripture now. And we do really appreciate his part in our service each Sunday morning.

He and Carolyn have been driving over here from close to Indiana for about 30, 35 years now. And we've come to appreciate them so much and the job that Gary does in reading scripture for us this morning. But if you will notice in your bulletin, he'll not be reading scripture, but he'll be reading something that relates to the message that is going to follow.

So, Gary. Take a look there in the bulletin, as Marv mentioned.

Pre-Reformation Realities We are approaching the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.

[1 : 08] It was on October the 31st, 1517, that Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses on the church door at Wittenberg, Germany.

Our present intent is to devote three messages to this monumental event. This morning is the first. Next week, we will consider the Reformation Realized, followed by the last message on October the 29th, dealing with Reformation Consequences.

We expect to be enlightening as well as edifying. An honest effort will be made to include Q&A; with each message.

Thank you, Gary. Thank you, Gary. I do not have very much at all firsthand knowledge with Roman Catholicism, except to say that my first wife, Barbara, to whom I was married for almost 50 years, was born and reared in an Italian Roman Catholic family.

[2 : 39] And she briefed me regarding a lot of the things that she experienced. And she came to faith in Christ as her Savior when she was about 12 or 13 years old.

Her mother led her to the Lord. And her mother was led to the Lord by an older sister that would be an aunt of Barbara's.

And this older sister was led to the Lord by a next-door neighbor who lived next to her in Seattle, Washington, in the 1940s.

And that just goes to show you how the gospel spreads. And here it is today. And, of course, Barbara was very instrumental in my coming to faith in Christ because I became a believer on our wedding day.

And many of you know that story, and I won't go into it now. I don't know if you are aware of it or not, but we are all Catholic. Did you know that?

[3 : 46] The word Catholic is simply a synonym for the word universal or general. And that includes all of us.

We are all Catholic. The difference, of course, is that we are not Roman Catholic. And therein lies the distinction because Roman Catholicism is very much different from just Catholicism in general. So, what I want to do this morning in the time allotted to us is give you a very brief, fast-moving overview of the situation that existed primarily in Europe before that monumental time happened in October 31, 1517 at the hands of Martin Luther.

We are going to go all the way back and briefly speak about the period of time in the first century, which would actually consist of the time our Lord arrived on the scene, approximately 30 A.D. to about 100 A.D., period of about 70 years. And it was during that time that is referred to as the Apostolic Age.

[5 : 06] This was the time of the Apostles. And it was with the passing of John, who probably lived longer than any of the other Apostles, and died while he was isolated on the Isle of Patmos.

There he wrote the book of the Revelation. Somewhere, scholars believe, around 95 to 100 A.D. So, with the passing of John, that was the end of the Apostolate.

There were none of the original Apostles that Christ chose that were still living. They are all gone by 100 A.D.

And here is where the great controversy begins. It has to do with the subject that is referred to as Apostolic Succession.

And this is the teaching that is generally espoused by the Roman Catholic Church, that with Christ choosing the Twelve, and the one that he chose as the foremost spokesman of the Twelve was Peter.

[6 : 12] Peter was the one to whom Jesus said unto thee, I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And that was in connection with the confession in Matthew 16. And our Roman Catholic friends today still believe that the Apostle Peter was actually the first pope.

Now, there isn't anything in the Bible that would give us an indication that that is true. In fact, Peter passed off the scene entirely. About halfway through the book of Acts, he is not mentioned again at all.

And it is the Apostle Paul, who is of a different order, that comes on the scene, and that's spelled out in Ephesians chapter 3. And he continues as an apostle, completely distinct from the original Twelve.

Our Roman Catholic friends believe very emphatically that Peter was the first pope, and that when Peter passed on, there was another, and they have a chronological order that satisfies them as to which pope became pope when.

And admittedly, they are somewhat embarrassed when the 1400s arrive, and they have three different popes at the same time, none of which is willing to relinquish his power.

[7 : 37] So they had to struggle through the embarrassment of that for quite a while, having three popes. But so much is riding on this issue. Because if Peter was indeed the first pope, and if there is such a thing as apostolic succession, that is, the chair of Peter is perpetuated each generation by a new pope, who when he dies is replaced by a new pope, who when he dies is replaced, and so on.

Then, of course, they have a real basis for their theology. And we who are referred to as protesters, and this is what the dissenters came to be known as as the first, because they were protesting.

So you see, we have a lot of protesting going on today, don't we? Well, there's nothing new. They had a lot of it way back then, too. And these protesters were called Protestants.

Except today, we place the accent on a little different syllable, and we call them Protestants. But it means the same thing. Those who protest. And, of course, what they were protesting were the excesses that they saw taking place in the church that they dearly loved and had no interest or intention of leaving.

what they wanted to do was reform the church. But here is where the problem became difficult. And as they say, here is where the plot thickens.

[9 : 17] because with each successive pope following the train of apostolic succession, it is the pope, you see, who is referred to as the vicar.

vicar. V-I-C-A-R. The vicar of Christ. What does that mean? Well, the word vicar is related to the word vicarious, which means like a substitute.

substitute. We talk about the vicarious death of Jesus Christ on the cross. And that means it was a death of substitution that Christ died on the cross.

And for the pope to be a vicar of Christ means he is a substitute for Christ. And Roman Catholic theology asserts that it is the pope who is in actuality the same as the person of Jesus Christ here on earth.

While the original Christ is in heaven, Christ's replacement is here on earth and it is the pope. And all loyal Roman Catholics, of course, believe that.

[10 : 31] That is critical to Roman theology. And the reason it is so critical is because they believe that the pope when he speaks ex cathedra, that is, from the chair, when he speaks official church dogma, it is just the same exactly as if Christ himself were saying it.

And as regards the subject of authority, end of argument. That's it. If he is, in fact, the vicar of Christ, the substitute of Christ on earth, then he must, of necessity, also possess the same infallibility that Christ himself has.

That means everything and anything that the pope decrees is absolutely infallible and is without error or contradiction in any way.

it is that upon which they base much of their theology along with two other things. Because whereas we as Bible believers, as Protestants or as Protestants, we adhere to the Bible and the Bible alone, we call it sola scriptura in the Latin, which means the Bible solely or the Bible alone by itself represents our position for faith and practice.

but our Roman Catholic friends have three equal sources of authority. One is the Bible.

[12:09] The other is the pope. Now that doesn't mean that anything and everything the pope says is infallible, but it means when he speaks in the official capacity as the head of the Catholic Church, it is just the same as if Christ is speaking.

Which means, of course, it's infallible. So if the pope issues a bull or an edict, it is the same as if Christ himself has issued it. And then the third basis for their authority is church tradition.

And of course that goes back a long, long ways. And they support their doctrines on all three of those. Some things they find in the scriptures and they take their authority from that.

Some things they get their authority from what the pope says or pronounces. And in some things, it is church tradition that establishes authority as well.

Those, all three are of equal authority and equal validity. So anything, anything that is established as official Catholic doctrine may come from simply tradition or the pope or the bible, any one of the three is sufficient for them to build their doctrine on and claim that as being the basis of it.

[13:31] So as we go back all the way to the apostolic age in 30 AD to about 100 AD, the apostles died off and all, virtually all of these people who had become believers in the Lord Jesus Christ were all Jews.

Do you realize that for the first 8 or 10 years after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, all the believers were Jewish believers?

It wasn't until you get all the way up to Acts chapter 10 when a Roman army officer by the name of Cornelius embraced Judaism as the true faith and became known as a God-fearer.

He became actually the first non-Jewish believer that we know of. And he caused quite a stir. In fact, the Jews, even among the apostles, were not willing and ready to accept a non-Jew as a believer in their Messiah.

After all, Jesus was a Jewish Messiah and he was prophesied by Jewish prophets, what business do these Gentiles, these dogs have, embracing our Messiah.

[14:50] He's our Messiah. He's not your Messiah. And little did they know that while it is true that Jesus Christ came to the nation Israel exclusively, John chapter 1, he also came for the whole world, as in John 3, 16.

And that did not become apparent until later. So what happened with this early band of Jewish believers, they underwent persecution. You can start reading about it in Acts chapter 5.

And who was doing the persecuting? Jews. Jews were persecuting Jews. Gentiles were not involved in this at all. The Roman soldiers who occupied Jerusalem and Judea under the leadership of Pontius Pilate.

They were a bunch of pagans. They were all idolaters. They were into worshipping of many gods. And it was the Jewish people alone who were monotheistic.

And when Gentiles started believing in Christ, that really began to upset things. And what happened was this. As time went on, and persecution Jew upon Jew intensified.

[16:14] By the way, who was the chief persecutor? Yeah, his name was Saul of Tarsus. And he was a Jew.

He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, of the tribe of Benjamin, circumcised the eighth day, and blah, blah, blah. And I've often thought of, I've often thought of Saul of Tarsus kind of like Adolf Eichmann.

Think of that. Probably never thought in terms of Saul of Tarsus being the first Gestapo agent. Huh? Jew upon Jew.

And when it became apparent that the Jewish people as a nation were not going to embrace Yeshua HaMashiach as their Messiah, God began to withdraw his favor and his blessing from the Jewish nation.

And the commentary on that, as I've often told you, is Romans 9, 10, and 11. And God is going to bring in a whole new thing, and it is called the church.

[17:25] And of all people, of all people that he is going to use to head that, is Saul of Tarsus and that Damascus road experience.

Folks, this was an absolute bombshell. And it hit like a bombshell, too. So much so that many of the Jews rejected Paul.

They considered him a turncoat. They considered him a traitor to his own country and his own people by going to these Gentiles. And you know what? He even stood in the way of the Gentiles being circumcised.

He said they didn't have to be circumcised. They didn't have to become Jews in order to become believers in Yeshua. And that too was a bombshell. So there's a time of tremendous conflict and confusion that is going on in this first century.

As we move on into the second century, what's happening is this. There are fewer and fewer Jews who are embracing Jesus as their Messiah.

[18 : 30] and more and more non-Jews. But, they too became subjects of persecution.

From who? From the Romans. Why? Because the Romans had emperors that they were deifying and considering as God, and these Christians would not recognize the Caesars as being divine. They had the audacity to insist that Jesus alone was the one whom they should worship. And they would not bear their pinch of incense to the flame honoring Caesar.

Instead, they would say, Jesus is Lord. And all they had to do to take their neck out of the noose was say, Sisera, I'm Corios, and throw their little bit of incense on the fire and they go away free. And thousands were put into the Colosseum, were devoured by wild animals, were subjected to the gladiators, all kinds of intense persecution.

[19 : 48] There were times when there were literally, this is not hyperbole, there were literally hundreds of Christians crucified and their bodies soaked with tar.

So that they would flame at night and provide light for the night games that the Romans were conducting. That was intense persecution and it went on for about three centuries.

And the motto came to be, it is the blood of the murderers that is the seed of the church. And who knows how many tens of thousands of believers were put to death by the Roman authorities just because they were Christians.

And the vast majority of them were not Jews. The Jews had jumped off much earlier. These were Gentiles. That would not change until 325 when a man came to the throne as emperor of Rome. His name was Constantine in 325. And I do not know and cannot support this. This is just what tradition tells us.

[21 : 05] That Constantine had a dream. He was a man given to military prowess. And as was the habit of Rome, they were used to defending their turf and trying to subject anyone and everyone who opposed them.

and tradition says that Constantine had a dream. And in this dream he saw a cross. And the cross was accompanied with an announcement.

And the announcement was, in this conquer. well, he took it quite seriously.

And as he was preparing to go into battle the next day, he did conquer. And as a result, it was a great victory for the Romans.

And, long story short, out of it came the edict of Constantine in 325 A.D., which effectively adopted Christianity as the official state religion.

[22 : 31] So, whereas previously it was illegal to be a Christian and you were subject to persecution or even death if you did not renounce Jesus, now it became illegal not to be a Christian.

And this was the effective marrying of church and state whereby Christianity became the official state religion of Rome.

And that was 325. And we are told that there were pagan priests who stood in line waiting to be baptized into what was then known as the one Catholic Church.

So, this was the beginning of the merging of church and state together and it has even morphed down to where we are today because there are many states that have an official religion.

If you are aware of all of Great Britain, they have an official state church. It's called the Church of England. And that means that the church is supported by the political payroll, by the taxpayers, by the people.

[23 : 45] And Norway and Sweden and I think Denmark all have an official state church and it is the Lutheran Church. I suspect that that is even still enforced in Germany where Lutheranism actually started.

And this means that the church and the state are married together. and when that happens you have the potential for power that is just incredible and the potential is for the church and those who lead the church to exercise dominance over the government.

Now why would that be? You know, you stop and think about it. Because what is the venue, what is the bailiwick of the political, of the government?

They deal strictly and exclusively with temporal matters. Only things that relate to the present. It's the temporal matters.

But the church deals with issues that are of eternal significance. Now when you compare those, which in reality is really the more important?

[24 : 59] Well, you better believe it. It's the eternal. it's where you're going to live and what you're going to do throughout eternity, as opposed to where you live and what you're going to do for the 70 or 80 or 90 years you live here on this earth, which is but a drop in the bucket compared to eternity.

So what this means is it gave the religious authorities, particularly the pope, who was the supreme head, and today he's referred to as the supreme pontiff, it gave him effective jurisdiction and clout over kings and queens because he held their eternal destiny in his hands.

And that means if you were not in the good graces of the Roman Catholic Church, you could very easily be consigned to hell, no matter if you were a prince, a king, a queen, or whatever because this vicar of Christ was the one who was in the driver's seat.

That provided of course great potential for corruption and that is exactly what happened. Corruption began to set in very early on because, trust me, where there is human nature and money and power, there is corruption.

It is inevitable. The human condition is systemic. We cannot resist the lure of power and authority and the wealth that comes with it.

[26 : 45] Nobody does. And the only ones who escape it are those who respond to a higher calling that is set forth in the word of God that gives us what the true value and true power really are.

And if that is ignored, you've got nothing left but human machinations and that's what we're dealing with. And that's what the Roman Catholic Church had become.

Thoroughly corrupt. Politically, religiously, morally, and every way, it had just morphed into corruption.

But, why should that surprise us? Because that's exactly what happened to the Jewish religious establishment before Jesus ever came on the scene.

Read the Old Testament and you will see that the prophets are continually railing out against the authorities for their corruption and for their idolatry.

[27 : 51] These were the people who were the chosen special people of God and yet they went after other deities and worshipped the gods of the people around them, which was pretty ridiculous.

But that's what they did and that was the corruption. And when Jesus came on the scene, with whom did he have all of the difficulty? It was with the religious establishment. And as you read the Gospels, it becomes very, very clear that these people, the scribes, the Pharisees, the chief priests, etc., were available for buying and selling.

And they were just as corrupt as they could be. And listen, they were not corrupt because they were Jews. They were corrupt because they were humans. The Romans weren't corrupt because they were Romans.

Roman Catholics did not become corrupt because they were Roman Catholics, but because they were people. This is the natural inclination. it's the same thing that has happened to American Protestantism.

We have not escaped this. Let me tell you, and I say this with great sadness, the so-called Protestant Church is one of the most corrupt entities on the globe today as I speak.

[29 : 06] And we at Grace Bible Church, we're not exempt from that corruption. We can become part and parcel of it. And if we ever depart from the dictates and the authority of Scripture, we will be the same as they are, no better.

That's the only thing that keeps us on the straight and narrow, is our respect for the authority of Scripture. And once that's gone, you've had it.

How many times have I told you the issue is authority, always has been, always will be, what you accept as your final authority, whether it is human, or divine, will determine the path that you take and will also determine where you end up.

So, being in charge of man's eternal destiny, as the Pope of Rome was thought to be, that afforded enormous political power for the popes, and when they established their doctrine, etc., they arrived at these sacraments, which if you know anything about Catholicism, and I know there are a number of people right here at Grace that are former Roman Catholics, so you're more familiar with this than I am, but when the sacraments were established, and there are seven official sacraments in the Roman Catholic Church, and they begin with baptism, and that, of course, involves infant baptism, the baptism of babies, and they believe that to be necessary because they believe that when a baby is baptized, that with the holy water, that that removes original sin from the baby, that the baby is born in original sin, and when it is baptized with water, that removes original sin, and if anything happens that the baby dies, then it doesn't have to go to limbo, it can go to heaven, but if the baby isn't baptized, doesn't go to hell, doesn't go to heaven, it goes to limbo, which is the place of all unbaptized departed babies.

Now, of course, we come back and we say, well, where do you get that? Where do you find that in the Bible? We say, well, it isn't in the Bible, but it is one of the decrees of a former Pope, and it is tradition.

[31 : 40] So, they take it to the bank and they accept that as infallible, and that becomes the first of the seven covenants. You see, Roman Catholicism is a sacramental faith.

It is a sacramental religion, and I've got some literature that I'll be sharing with you next week that explains this in more detail than what I'm going to give you. But, if you talk to many Roman Catholics, they're thinking very often, and I'm not saying this in any uncomplimentary way, they're very honest about it, and they simply believe that they too are saved by grace through faith. And they may even use that terminology, which sounds like the same thing that we would say. But the issue really is, how is grace appropriated?

And their response is, grace is administered to the recipient via the sacraments. And if you do not receive the sacraments, you do not have grace.

sacraments, well, where do you get the sacraments? There is one place, and one place only, where the sacraments are available. That's the Roman Catholic Church through the priest.

[33 : 13] Because when the priest consecrates the elements, that is, when the priest prays over the wafer and the cup, he has the powers of transubstantiation, that means that that bread, or that wafer, becomes literally, now I'm not speaking figuratively, I'm speaking literally, that wafer becomes the physical body of Christ.

And the wine that is drunk becomes the literal blood of Christ. Now, you can look at it, you can taste it, and you can say it looks like wine, and it tastes like wine.

But that's just because you don't know any better. It's really the blood of Christ. Where do you get that? And their answer is, we get that from the Bible. In John chapter 6, Jesus himself said, except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

And that they take literally. That we take metaphorically. We believe that what Jesus is saying there is that you must be a partaker of me and my life in order to have spiritual life.

Now, when they administer the wafer, that becomes the body of Christ. So, how is it that you receive Christ in the Roman Catholic Mass?

[34 : 48] You receive Christ via your mouth. you put the wafer in your mouth and it dissolves where you chew it. That is receiving Christ.

And when, and by the way, you do not, the communicants are not administer the wine. The priest is the only one that drinks the wine. And the reason for that is, if the wine is distributed in little cups like we do here at Grace, only we don't use wine, we use grape juice, it would be just like some of you to spill it.

You know? I mean, it happens. And what that would mean, of course, in Roman Catholic theology, is that you have spilled the literal, actual, physical blood of Christ on the carpet or on the floor or whatever.

And of course, it's irretrievable and that would be unthinkable. But we'll let you take the wafer because if you drop it, you can at least pick it up and still eat it. So the priest is the only one who receives the wine.

And we say, where do you get that? And they say, right there in your Bible, John chapter 6, Jesus himself said, except you eat the flesh of the son of man who drink his blood. And by the way, in the context, it goes on to say, and from that time on, many of his disciples said, this is a hard saying.

[36 : 20] Jesus was not talking about cannibalism. He was talking about being a partaker of him.

In the same way when he said, I am the door. He didn't mean, I have a knob and hinges and all the rest. He just meant that he is a way of access.

Like a door is a way from one place to another, he likened himself to a door. So, there is a matter of interpretation. And then, of their sacraments, confession is another, and confirmation, and holy communion we've talked about.

Sometimes that's called the Eucharist, and then marriage is the fifth, holy orders, the ordination of priests is the sixth, and then what is called last rites or extreme unction is the seventh.

And these sacraments have to be received by the communicant in order to be in good standing in the Roman Catholic Church.

[37 : 27] If you do something, like for instance, because the Roman Catholic Church does not allow nor permit divorce, if you are a Roman Catholic and you divorce your mate, you are automatically excommunicated from the Church.

and what that means is you cannot take communion, you cannot receive Christ, you are damned, because there is no salvation apart from the Church.

Grace is needed for your salvation, and the only way you can receive grace is through the sacraments. But if you are not in the Church, the sacraments are not available to you, you are damned.

Now I want to say something that's very, very important. You will find a lot of Roman Catholics who don't believe that and don't agree with that, and they will say, I'm convinced that there are a lot of Protestants who've never been in a Catholic Church who will go to heaven, and you ask them on what basis do they believe that, and usually it's because they'll say something like, because some of them are really nice people, and they say that innocently, but they just really don't know what they're talking about.

Many Catholics find it unacceptable for other Catholics to say, you cannot go to heaven apart from the Catholic Church and what the priest provides.

[39 : 01] They are offended by that. But let me tell you something, that is exactly what the Church teaches. And if you want to know that for sure, talk to a priest.

Don't talk to an uninformed Roman Catholic who is usually misinformed. But any priest worth his salt will tell you, he may not be happy to tell you, but he will tell you that apart from being in the Church, the Roman Catholic Church, there is no salvation because you don't have access to the elements, the sacraments.

And the sacraments is the way you receive grace, and it is the only way you receive grace. And Martin Luther, who was an Augustinian Roman Catholic monk, came to a different conclusion by reading the Bible.

And it was this, the just shall live by faith. Spiritual life is delivered to the individual people on the basis of his or her faith in Jesus Christ, and it has nothing whatever to do with the sacraments. You do not receive Christ by mouth, you receive Christ by faith. That means you believe in your heart, you believe in the core of your being, in the person and work of Jesus Christ as your substitute on that cross, and that's what saves you.

[40 : 35] That's called justification by faith. If you want an excellent commentary on it, read Romans 3, 4, and 5. There it's spelled out as clearly as it can be.

Also Galatians chapter 2. So here is where we part company, and this is what Martin Luther had great difficulty with. But the thing that really, really kicked off the Reformation in a way that we probably just cannot identify with or imagine, had to do with the selling of indulgences.

And I'm going to have to conclude this and wrap it up because I do want at least a few minutes for Q&A.; And the selling of indulgences was engaged in by Johann Tetzel. And Tetzel was an emissary of the Roman Catholic Church, and they were trying desperately to raise money to finish and to build St.

Peter's Basilica. And they were having difficulty doing so, so they decided to sell indulgences. And what that meant was, if you pay money into the coffers of Rome, you will be given, or the one in whose name you give the money for, will be given time off from purgatory.

And the idea is, you see, Roman Catholicism almost always, in almost every case believes that when a Roman Catholic in good standing, the church received the sacraments and everything, when they die, they are not sinless.

[42 : 12] So they have to go to purgatory. Well, now we say, where do you get purgatory? Well, it isn't in the Bible, but it is tradition. And remember, tradition is an equal authority to the Bible.

purgatory, from the word purge, or cleanse, or purify, when you go to purgatory, you suffer pain and punishment for your sins.

And when you have suffered sufficiently and paid for your sins, which only God knows, then you are released from purgatory and you go to heaven.

Now, if you were a real skunk, you're going to spend a lot of time in purgatory before you get out of there. But, if you've got somebody left behind, like a praying mother or father or something like that, and they pay money to the church for indulgences, or they buy candles and light candles in your name, then you get time off in purgatory.

that you otherwise would not get. And, there was a little ditty that Tetzal had developed that went something like this.

[43 : 36] When the gold in the casket clings, a rescued soul from purgatory springs.

people were and that became the mantra. That was a marketing tool. And you know what? It worked. It worked.

Why in the world would people listen and buy into something like that? I'll tell you why. Because they were incredibly superstitious. They were essentially unlearned.

Most of them were illiterate, couldn't read or write. And when you get information from that one who is supposed to be Christ's authority and vicar on this earth, you better do what he says, or your eternal soul is in danger.

And the money that came in helped to fund St. Peter's Basilica that still stands today. And I don't know if you've been there or not, or seen it, but let me tell you something.

[44 : 40] St. Peter's Basilica and the Sistine Chapel and all that is incredible. I mean, the architecture, the beauty is just mind-boggling.

And it was all actually purchased for the most part on the backs of really superstitious and uninformed people. Tetzal said, as soon as the gold in the casket rings, the rescued soul to heaven springs.

Think of that. You've got a dear departed mother who's in purgatory. If you're any kind of a son or daughter at all, aren't you going to spring a few shekels to get her released earlier?

Of course you will. And that was exactly what they were counting on. And that's the selling of indulgences. And that was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back.

Luther says, that's it. And he had been writing against the excesses and the corruption of the church for quite some time. He was already being regarded as a renegade even though he held a teaching position.

[45 : 51] And he posted those 95 theses on the wall at Wittenberg. And as they say then, all hell broke loose. And the Protestant Reformation was underway. But let me just say this in closing, and we'll take an extra couple of minutes if you don't mind.

If anybody is really committed and needs to leave, nobody will think you're angry, feel free to get up and leave. Okay? The idea was that, now I lost my train of thought.

Oh, well. Anyway, let's open it for Q&A.; If you've got any questions or comments, we'll just take a couple. I'll try to provide you more time later on. Anyone? Okay, Joe?

I don't know where you intended to leave it out. It seemed like it was a very important event during this period you're talking about, the Crusades.

Yes. You didn't mention the Crusades. You're right. Well, you're right. I just had to admit that. But the Crusades took place in the 10th, 11th century, and they were undertaken at the instigation of the Pope.

[47 : 01] I think it was Leo X at the time. I'm not sure. But these were Roman Catholics who were militarized and sent by the thousands into the Holy Land with the intent of recapturing the Holy Land from the Muslims.

And the Muslims had taken it over because it was in the 7th century that Muhammad began his quest for Islam.

And after a couple of hundred years of that, and they had just about conquered everything, they had taken over Jerusalem and the Holy City and Israel and everything. And finally, the Roman Catholic Church decided to rise to the threat and they marshaled armies of thousands of crusaders, of warriors, sent them on horseback to the Holy Land.

And there were at least three or four different crusades. And many of them engaged in brutal excesses. Just tragic to think of what was done.

And it was all done in the name of Christ. That's the tragic thing of it. It was just, you know, Christians have the same capacity for being misguided as non-Christians once you get away from your base of authority.

[48 : 30] You're just adrift. You're a sucker. You're open and available to everything and anything. That's why you've got to keep coming back to the authority of Scripture and make sure that that's where you're at.

Yeah, the crusades were brutal, and I don't have time to go into them, but they were not a negative, I mean, not a positive, they were definitely a negative. Maybe one more question real quick over here.

George had a comment or question. And by the way, nobody's angry with Roman Catholics. I feel about Roman Catholics the same way I feel about Muslims and about Jews.

They are not the enemy. They are the captives of the enemy, just like you were before you came to faith in Christ. George? A comment or two.

You won't get too many movie recommendations from me, but our family has watched one that Hollywood did produce called Luther, maybe in the late 90s. And it does an excellent job of historically accounting how the Reformation started.

[49 : 34] So I know our family has watched that several times, and I give it a good recommendation as far as being family safe for the most part with parents involved, of course.

I just want to mention that. And then also what you said about Roman Catholics not being comfortable with the claim. Really what they're not comfortable with perhaps is the claim of exclusivity. And I guess I'd point out that we as Bible believers also make a claim of exclusivity. It's just a different basis. And so we need to be careful not to buy into this cultural, kind of this cultural milieu that we just go along with that there is no exclusivity anymore.

We need to make sure that we have a basis for what we are claiming. I don't know if you wanted to comment on that. Good point. Thank you. That is one of the chief sticking points that people have against Christianity is they say, well, you Christians, you insist that Jesus is the only way.

And my response is, yeah, he is the only way. But that's not our idea. We didn't think that up. That's what God said about his own son.

[50 : 51] So it doesn't come from Christians. It comes from a much higher authority. God gave his son to be the propitiation, the sacrifice for our sins.

There was no one else who was assigned to undertake that role. and there was no one else who did it. That's why Christ and Christ alone is the way to salvation.

He's the only one that paid the price for it. Why should it be any other way? And it isn't. Would you stand, please? Father, we recognize that there are many questions here that remain unanswered and that people are curious about a lot of things.

But we trust that through it all, you will allow us to focus upon the temptation and the corruptibility of humans when confronted with authority figures and how we have a tendency to succumb to illogic and to poor thinking simply because it comes from someone we may respect.

Help us to be Bereans and students of the scriptures so that these people may search the scriptures daily to see if things that their pastor has said is really true.

[52 : 14] Thank you for salvation by grace through faith and that not of ourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

We bless you for that truth and we stand on it in Christ's name. Amen.