

# What Is the Reformation? Why Is It Important for YOU?

Saturday, 10/26 at 4:00 | Sunday, 10/27 at 9:00

Reformation Day (Observed) – 2019

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: Have you ever sat on your metal-framed glasses? If so, *they became deformed, so you may have reformed them into their proper shape!*

We could say that God's saving truth has a *proper* form; however, in the centuries leading up to AD 600, *God's saving truth became deformed!* As deformed glasses will not enable a person to see, *so God's deformed truth will not set a person free from the condemnation of his sins!*

This sermon includes ♦some church history, ♦the spiritual condition of non-believers, ♦a glimpse of Dr. Luther, and ♦salvation essentials.

## 1. **Some Church History:**

- a. Think back to AD 600: There was only ONE Christian church body, *so there was only one Christian denomination in the whole world; we might call it the Holy Christian Church.* However, that church body was powerless to save – *because she had rejected God's saving truth, which sets people free from their sins.*
- b. The 1054 split: In AD 1054, the Holy Christian Church split in two – *thus forming the first two Christian denominations.* In the west, *headquartered in Rome,*

they called themselves “Catholic” – meaning, *the true church*. In the east, *headquartered in Constantinople (which is in modern-day Turkey and now called Istanbul)*, they called themselves “Orthodox” – meaning, *the true teachings*. They both chose great church body names, *but NEITHER name was true!* Since BOTH had a *deformed version of God’s saving truth*, the Roman Catholics *were NOT the true church*, while the Eastern Orthodox *did NOT have the true teachings*. Both of those sad realities remain true even today : (

## 2. **The Spiritual Condition of Non-Believers:**

- a. Wounded or dead: The Catholic Church teaches that people are *severely wounded*, while the Orthodox Church teaches that people are *derailed*; therefore, they teach SOME ability: ♦The wounded can recover and ♦the derailed can be put back on the tracks. Those things sound good; HOWEVER, are they true? Paul reminded the Ephesians that, prior to God making them alive in Christ, *they were dead in their trespasses and sins (2:1)*. Did you catch the HUGE difference? When people THINK they have ability, *they trust in themselves*; however, when people know they are dead, then, by God’s grace, *they trust in Jesus!*
- b. Some key words of Law from Romans 3: <sup>20</sup> **For by works of the law no human being will be justified in [God’s] sight...** // NO ONE by *whatever he does* can make himself acceptable to God. Why? Because <sup>23</sup> **...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...** // Furthermore, our good CANNOT cancel out our sin, *so all non-believers are spiritually helpless, even dead!!*

### 3. **A Glimpse of Dr. Luther:**

- a. Growing up: In 1483 Martin was born into a Roman Catholic family; he was active in church and excelled in his studies. As he grew up, Martin's father prospered – *permitting Martin to attend excellent schools!*
- b. Change of course: As Martin drew near to graduating with a law degree... *he became seized with God's wrath toward sinners*. Therefore, at 22 years old, *attempting to win God's favor*, he dropped out of law school, gave away his possessions, and became an Augustinian monk.
- c. Monk to professor: At 24 years old, Martin became a priest; then he *continued* to study, *began* to teach, and *received* his doctorate in theology at the age of 28.
- d. God showed him the saving truth: At the age of 31, *when Dr. Luther was studying the Bible in preparation for his teaching*, God showed him that we obtain what we need for eternal life – *NOT by what we do, BUT by God's work in Christ which we receive through faith!*

### 4. **Salvation Essentials:**

- a. Some key words of Gospel from today's readings:
  - i. **John 8**: <sup>32</sup> **and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.** [What is the truth? **We** are totally helpless; **God** has done everything in Christ to save us!] ... <sup>36</sup> **So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.** // Free from what? *From the condemnation of our sins, which we fully deserve!*
  - ii. **Romans 3**: <sup>21</sup> **...the righteousness of God** [the very thing we desperately need] **has been manifested**

[revealed] **apart from the law** [so it's not from our keeping of the law] ...<sup>23</sup> ...all...<sup>24</sup> ...are justified by his **grace** [undeserved love] as a gift, through the **redemption** [God's action to buy us back] that is in **Christ Jesus...**<sup>25</sup> ...[God] had passed over former sins.<sup>26</sup> ...to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just [without sin] and the justifier [the remover of sins] of the one who has faith in Jesus....<sup>28</sup> ...we hold that one is justified [made right in God's sight] **by faith apart from works of the law.** // When God works through His Word to show us our helplessness, He also shows us Jesus and enables us to receive the benefits of His work!

- b. By grace through faith in Jesus for eternal life:
- i. **By grace:** *By God's undeserved love!*
  - ii. **Through faith:** *Through God-given trust!*
  - iii. **In Jesus:** *In who He is and in what He has done!*
  - iv. **For eternal life:** *For the immediate forgiveness of sins and the eventual entrance into heaven!*

**This Week's Challenge:** When it comes to eternal life, admit you are helpless; then give thanks to God for His undeserved love and His gift of eternal life through Jesus!

**Let Us Pray:** Dear Father, TY for ✦Your love for us, ✦Your Word of Truth, ✦Jesus' finished work, ✦bold reformers like Dr. Luther, and ✦the Spirit's work to show us our helplessness, give us faith to trust in Jesus for eternal life, and keep us in Your holy family!

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