

“Hills to Die On—Here I Stand”

“Would You Protest?” (Pt. 1)

October 1, 2017

INTRO ...Interesting Moment in Culture to start a series with the word “PROTEST” in it...

What is “Protest”? ... (Def.) = *to express strong disapproval of or disagreement with something; to state or affirm something in strong or formal terms*

- the 500 year anniversary of an historic event called “The Protestant Reformation”—on Oct 31, 1517 a monk named Martin Luther ‘Protested’ what he saw as errors in the beliefs and practices of the Church of his day.
- In honor of this MOMENTOUS Historic Event, that continues to touch Millions of Lives, we will be taking the next several weeks to study the “Ideas/Beliefs” that Framed the Reformation. ...and we will all seek to personally answer the question—“Would You Protest?”

Today—

- (1) Is it Right to Protest?
- (2) Understanding the History of Protesting in the Church

(1) Is it Right to Protest?

- This presumption identifies a unique cultural construct—unique to “Post-Modern Thinking”

“...there is little doubt that the cultural mood in the West has changed significantly since about 1980. ...One obvious tension between postmodernism and traditional Christian belief is the former’s criticism of any outlook that claims to have a unique or privileged insight into reality. The idea of divine revelation is seen as inconsistent with postmodernism’s emphasis on the individual’s right to believe as she pleases ...an endorsement of an individual’s views without any attempt to evaluate them critically.”

Zondervan Handbook of Christian Belief

...So, is it right to Protest?—is it OK to have convictions that disapprove of other's ideas? ...Do you have any "Hills to Die On"—Non-negotiable beliefs that are worth defending and advancing?

(2) The History of Protesting in the Church

Oct 31, 1517 marked a Decisive Moment of Protest ...But "Protesting" had been underway long before Martin Luther...

- ...**Marcion was 'protested' in 144AD** for teaching there was no connection between the O.T. and N.T. or between the God of the Jews and the God of the Christians
- ...**Manichaeism was protested in 242 AD** for denying the humanity of Christ
- ...**Arianism was protested in 325AD** for teaching that Christ is a created being and not God by nature
- ...**Pelagianism was protested in 431AD** for claiming that man can attain salvation by works
- ...**in 867AD the Eastern Orthodox church in Constantinople rejects the Roman Pope's rule** and splits off

Timeline of the Reformation (from 1300's through end of 16th Century)

- **John Wycliffe** - the 'Morningstar of the Reformation' (the priest in Oxford England in the 1300's)
 - Wycliffe translated the Bible into English, believing that God's Word was the final authority for belief and practice, not the church or councils and that the common person could understand what God revealed in His Word.
- **Jan Hus** (born in 1369, in Prague, where he taught at the University of Prague) He was influenced by Wycliffe's teachings—and Raised Concerns & Disagreements!!

"He decried the doctrine of relics, the idea that there are certain benefits given to those who pay a gift to view them. ...he rejected the notion that if someone touched something that was in the possession of a martyr—a wisp of hair, a piece of clothing—special grace was imparted from the martyr in heaven to the worshiper on earth. Hus taught that giving a 'gift' for such a privilege denied the doctrine of grace. ...Then there was the matter of indulgences. If you paid a certain amount of money, you could purchase a document that guaranteed that you would be free from the temporal consequences of sin. ...Like Wycliffe, Hus

argued that the Bible alone was the basis for spiritual authority—not the church, not councils, not traditions—the Bible is sufficient for spiritual guidance, it should be available to everyone. ...He taught that God could forgive sin without the necessity of a priest ...He said that Christians need not obey an order unless it was found in Scripture. He criticized the people for worshiping images, believing in false miracles, and taking spiritual pilgrimages ...he attacked the sale of indulgences." Erwin Lutzer, "Rescuing the Gospel", p. 13

—when he would not recant, he was tied to a stake and burned to death on July 6, 1415.

The word 'hus' in Czech is the word for goose. A priest who watched the execution reported that before Hus died, he said, "You can cook this goose [Hus] but within a century a swan shall arise who will prevail." ...A century later, Martin Luther saw himself as the fulfillment of Hus's prophecy. He said, "Holy Johannes Hus prophesied about me when he wrote from his Bohemian prison that they might now be roasting a goose [Hus], but in a hundred years they will hear a swan sing, which they will not be able to silence. And that is the way it will be, if God wills." And 102 years after Hus was martyred, Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg." Erwin Lutzer, "Rescuing the Gospel", p. 19

- **Martin Luther**—Oct 31, 1517 protested with 95 Theses for Public debate

NOTE: Protest goes back to the N.T.

- **Peter & John before the 1st Century Council in Jerusalem—Acts 4:1-12**
 - **v. 7 ... "they inquired"**—the 1st Inquisition!!
 - **v. 10-12 ... These are Non-negotiable words/beliefs!** These are exclusive words and doctrines!
 - In Our POSTMODERN Time (a time to Attack Absolute Positions)—**Do You Stand By This Statement?—Do You PROTEST?**
- **Stephen - Acts 7** (Acts 6:9—a dispute of ideas; Acts 7:44-53—Stephen protests the continuation of the O.T. Tabernacle!)

- Stephen's preaching flew in the face of 'Traditional Judaism'—
 - 16th Century Europe was NOT the first set of people bound to human traditions that were in some way connected to the Scriptures
- Stephen appeals to 'brothers and fathers' (v.2)—people with whom he shares history and meaningful connection. ...BUT if what he now believes is true—They Must Repent and Believe What Stephen is Saying
 - **Acts 17:22-31 ...Paul 'protesting' and 'clarifying hills to die on' in Athens!**
 - Does Your Understanding of Christianity have Hills to Die On?—**v. 30**... **'all people everywhere'**—are called to repent and look to Christ!
- ***Galatians was a massive protest against ideas in the first century that were polluting the doctrine of Justification—how does one get right with God?***
 - **Gal 1:6-9** ...Paul is Protesting these 'new ideas,' that he says distort & destroy the Gospel!
 - **Gal 2:16**—human contribution does not affect justification... only faith in what Christ did!
 - **Gal 5:2-4**—Your belief/practice has severed you from Grace!!—That's Significant and Worth Protesting!!!

This Modeled Response should/must frame the belief and practice of the church down through the ages!! ...Any contribution of human achievement or merit (through righteous living, dedication, or degree of suffering) invalidates Grace and establishes a grounds for boasting!

"Since your majesty and your lordships desire a simple reply, I will answer without horns and without teeth. Unless I am convicted by scripture and plain reason—I do not accept the authority of popes and councils for they have contradicted each other—my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise, God help me. Amen."

—Martin Luther at the Diet of Worms in 1521

"Would You Protest?"

- Answers if we believe there are any absolutes in the world that God created? ...Are there ideas & truths that are not negotiable? ...Are there convictions and truths from which you Will Not Recant?

"The Reformation was simply a commitment to biblical truth, and as long as there are departures from biblical truth, we have to be involved in the task of reformation." (from "Are We Together?" by R.C. Sproul)

"The Reformers read their own times well. ...they truly understood where the fault lines lay in their own time and place. Some of the same issues prevail today. ...what we should take away from the Reformers in this regard is not simply the list of topics on which they majored, but the importance of understanding our times and learning how to engage our times with the truth of Scripture." D.A. Carson, Excerpt From 9M Fall 2017 ePub

- Answers the question of what you believe the Mission of the Church is about.

What we will do in this 6 Week study:

- Revisit the issues that were protested and debated in the Reformation (with the conviction that the 5 areas of focus were not merely of 16th Century relevance, but are relevant to Christianity through the ages!)
1. "Sola Scriptura" (Scripture Alone)
 2. "Sola Gratia" (Grace Alone)
 3. "Sola Fide" (Faith Alone)
 4. "Solus Christus" (Christ Alone)
 5. "Soli Deo Gloria" (To God Alone Be Glory)