

**Intro:**

Continuing on in our series on great reformers. For those of you who haven't been with us, I will give a quick summary of the Reformation.

500 Years ago – time of Humanist movement where people were not satisfied any longer to just listen to what previous scholars had said about something. They wanted to go back to the original sources themselves. So in all areas, but esp. in Christianity, where scholars such as Luther, Calvin and Zwingli read the Greek New Testament for themselves and concluded that the Catholic Church of the time was not following what God had said in his word. As a result of their conclusions, these scholars became “reformers” – people who tried to reform the churches theology and practice – to bring it back into line with the Bible.

Sideline – when I am talking about the Catholic Church, I am not talking about the Catholic Church today, but the church that existed 500 years ago.

The Catholic Church of 500 years ago had a lot of political as well as spiritual influence, and so when Luther, Calvin and Zwingli started preaching against some of the practices of the church, they got in a lot of trouble.

Imagine that going to church was a -ve experience

- Felt you had to go or you weren't saved
  - Didn't understand what the priest ~~was~~ was saying - speaking in another language
  - Felt that the church was just out for your money & if you didn't give, you might not be saved
- This is what a lot of people would have experienced at church 500 years ago.
- Going to talk about this today

**The Man - ZWINGLI, ULRICH (1484–1531)**, Swiss Reformer. Born at Wildhaus on 1 Jan. 1484, Zwingli, received his education at Basel, Berne and Vienna. Ordained in 1506, he became rector of Glarus, where he was a diligent pastor, effective preacher, affectionate colleague, and industrious student.

At Einsiedeln Zwingli ministered to the many pilgrims to the famous shrine of Mary. He enjoyed the resources of the Abbey library and had leisure to immerse himself in Erasmus' Greek New Testament (1516). The study of the original text gave him new insights into the gospel which were to affect all his future life, thought and work.

A vacancy at Zurich in 1519 opened the door to his reforming activity. Appointed people's priest in spite of opposition from the bishop, he used the Great Minster pulpit for a systematic exposition of the NT, and later the OT. This preaching alerted both preacher and people to the wide gap between Scripture and contemporary belief and practice. A plague in 1520, which claimed Zwingli's brother and almost cost him his own life, added depth to his ministry. Quickly gathering adherents, he initiated the radical programme of reform which rapidly changed the ecclesiastical life of the city, and neighbouring cities such as Schaffhausen, Basel and Berne.

Zwingli's ministry centered on careful and faithful teaching of the Bible. He started in Matthew, preaching chapter by chapter and verse by verse. He then went on to other books of the Bible but would always preach through the whole book. He also would debate Catholic scholars and talk through various issues with the council that governed Geneva. So it was through discussion and constant referral back to the truth of the Bible that Zwingli was able to reform the city and church of Geneva and also the surrounding cities. They became Protestant cities rather than Catholic cities.

Things went well for Zwingli and Zurich for a few years. But after 1525 Zwingli unfortunately found himself not only at odds with Roman Catholic adversaries but also embroiled with other reformers who didn't share his views. Controversies diverted resources and weakened the force of reform. The Protestant cities ended up fighting against the Catholic cities and Zwingli was killed in the fighting in 1531.

However, his reform programme was later taken up by reformers such as Calvin, and the Protestant reformation continued throughout the region.

## The Problem

Some of you might have heard some of this from Stuart if you were here 2 weeks ago.

Biggest problem of Catholic Church of 500 years ago was that they had misunderstood the way people have their sins forgiven and are brought back into a right relationship with God.

Basically they thought that you were saved by the things you did, not by believing in Jesus' death on the cross. You were supposed to follow the 10 commandments and live a godly life, but the main things you had to do revolved around their version of the sacraments. Let me explain.

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The Catholic Church taught that all people were born sinful and needed to have their sins forgiven or washed away. They could do that through undergoing the sacraments of the Church – Baptism, Confirmation, Mass (Lord's Supper), Confession/Penance, Marriage, First Orders (becoming a Priest) and Final Unction (Last Rites). These were all ways of receiving God's grace or merit, which washed away your sins and made you pure in God's sight. But then of course you would sin again and need more of God's grace/merit. There was an unlimited supply of God's grace or merit in heaven and the Pope/Priest etc. was the one who could get it for you. *Through the Sacraments*

So in their understanding God's grace isn't God's attitude to you where he forgives you even though you don't deserve it, but rather a spiritual substance that is given to people by a priest and is used to cleanse someone's sins etc.

By the time of Luther and Zwingli, the church had become very corrupt, focussed on money and political power, and using the teaching of the church to oppress the people. Because of course the only way to receive God's grace or merit was through the church and its representatives. So ~~the church had total control over people from the cradle to the grave, and if you wanted to enter heaven, you had no choice other than to do what the church said.~~

That was the biggest problem of the day that the reformers were fighting against.

We are going to focus on just one of the so called sacraments today, The Mass, or Lord's Supper. Zwingli is most remembered for his teaching about the Lord's Supper. In thinking through what the reformers, and esp. Zwingli said about the Lord's Supper, we will see how they fought against the false teaching of the Catholic Church and brought people back to a biblical view of salvation.

Catholic Church view of Lord's Supper:

47 x This view of the Lord's Supper says that Christ is truly there in the bread and wine, so that a person who eats the bread truly and physically eats Jesus body, and likewise truly drinks his blood in the wine. The church taught that while the properties of the bread and wine stayed the same, the nature, or essence or substance changed into the true body and blood of Christ. This change was called transubstantiation and was universally condemned by the reformers even in their own differences of views of the Lord's Supper. In the Lord's Supper, the bread and wine were transformed into the body and blood of Jesus and then Jesus was re-sacrificed. Each time it was done it was like Jesus was dying for our sins again.

Show how church service would have worked – stand behind a screen, speak in Latin, raise host (bread) over screen so people can see it.

It seems funny to us but it was deadly serious to them. If the bread and the wine really did become the body and the blood of Jesus, then you can see how people would think that by eating the bread and drinking the wine they were receiving lots of this spiritual substance – God's merit or grace. And if Jesus is really being sacrificed again then you can see how people thought that by partaking in the Lord's Supper their sins would be forgiven.

host  $\Delta$ 'd into physical body + blood of Jesus.

Transubstantiation.

Eat bread = eat Jesus' body

Drink wine = drink Jesus' blood

After host  $\Delta$ 'd into X physical body + blood, then Christ re-sacrificed

Like Jesus dying for our sins again.

## The Solution

The reformer's found lots of problems with the Catholic view of the Lord's Supper when they read their bibles. Let me focus on just two:

1. Re-sacrificing Christ – denies his once for all sacrifice is enough

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1 Pet 3: 18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.

All our past, present and future sins are paid for by Christ's death on the cross. There is no need for him to die again.

2. Lord's Supper isn't a good work that helped you into a right relationship with God.

And this is the second problem that the reformers had with the Catholic view of the Lord's Supper. The church taught that in order to receive God's grace or merit you had to participate in the Lord's Supper. But Zwingli said:

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***"Through Christ alone we are given salvation, blessedness, grace, pardon, and all that makes us in any way worthy in the sight of a righteous God."***

It's not by partaking in ceremonies or doing good works that we receive God's grace. No God's grace comes to all who trust in Christ's death and resurrection on their behalf.

**Romans 3: 21** But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. **22** This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, **23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **24** and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. **25** God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood.

faith

Salvation comes through believing in what Jesus has done for you, not by doing things or partaking in ceremonies.

Reformers showed that Church's theology and practice were wrong. To reform it they did away with the Mass and wrote their own service of the Lord's Supper which did follow what the Bible said.

So if the Lord's Supper is not re-sacrificing Christ, if ~~the bread and wine are not transformed into the literal body and blood of Jesus~~, if we don't need to partake in the Lord's Supper to be saved, then just what is going on when we celebrate the Lord's Supper and why do we do it?

Look at Luke 22, which Scott read for us. Key word is in v19 – remembrance. *Slide*

Zwingli taught that as we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we are remembering what Jesus did for us on the cross. We are not physically eating and drinking Jesus, but remembering his sacrifice on the cross for us. *Bread & wine represent Jesus' body & blood*

Zwingli was careful to point out that this is a spiritual thing that we are doing – Jesus is there with us as we remember his death for us, just like he is when we read God's word and hear it explained. But there is nothing magical about the ceremony itself. *& certainly nothing happens to the bread or the wine*

## Summary

Problem – wrong view of salvation and esp. of Lord's Supper

Solution – go back to the Bible and understand what God has said and follow it.

## What it means for us today

- Thankful that God raised men like Zwingli to reform the church
- Follow their lead – go back to the Bible and check what we are doing
- Esp. when it comes to salvation – not by ceremonies, not by Lord's Supper, but by believing in Jesus' death on the cross for us, once for all, a sufficient sacrifice.