**INTRODUCTION TO THE REFORMERS**

The “4 horsemen”: Germany, M. Luther, England, W. Tyndale, Switzerland, J.Calvin. Scottland, John Knox. Reformation = series of events and men who are interrelated like a domino effect.

Schaff quote – “The Reformation of the 16th century is next to the introduction of Christianity the greatest event in history”. [This it is therefore of primary importance historically.] “The reformation marks the end of the middle ages. It marks the beginning of modern times [intersection of the medieval period and the modern times], starting from religion it gave directly or indirectly a mighty impulse to every forward movement.” Impact on western civilization and establishment of the U.S.

Historical context is critical for the reformation. 1000 years of spiritual darkness:

1. The Bible was allegorized.
2. Tradition was elevated:
3. Papal authority:
4. Religious superstitions were told regularly in pulpit rather than Scripture.
5. The worship service was in Latin & only priests understood it.
6. The pulpit was moved over the side.

1. Mass was in the center = blood & body of Christ. So called grace was missing.
2. Scarcity of Bibles.
3. The inferiority of the Latin Vulgate. Corrupt text. Not precise. It too was in Latin.
4. The gospel was corrupted. Self-righteousness while grace was forgotten.

God invades the darkness through series of events & then onto the scene arrives Martin Luther.

**MARTIN LUTHER**

Described as an “ocean” given the immensity of the work he accomplished as is true with the other reformers who do the work of 30 to 40 men. Used by God to turn parts of the Church back to the Word thru force of his convictions; turned tide of human history. Large doors swing on small hinges. History pivots on certain individuals whom God uses in a great way.

**A CATHOLIC SON**: (1483-1506) - All reformers were born in a Catholic home.

**BRILLIANT STUDENT**: (1498-1505) Began at 14 years of age which was common back then. Bachelor’s degree. Master’s degree. Obvious he was brilliant and like o/reformers they gave their brilliant minds to work on Word. We must love God with all of our minds. It will be our depth of understanding, and our application that will determine our impact on the world for Christ.

Returning from home to law school, lightning bolt flashed in front of him and his whole life flashed before him. Cried out “help me saint Anna, and I will become a monk.” Commits his life. Terrified of dying & standing before God in judgment while knowing he has no basis for entering into heaven.

**AUGUSTINIAN MONK** (1505-1507) At age of 21, 1505, he entered one of the most rigorous and austere Augustinian monasteries. Wanted toughest challenge to earn his way to heaven.

Confessed: “When I was a monk, I wearied myself greatly for almost fifteen years with the daily sacrifice, tortured myself with fastings, vigils, prayers, and other very rigorous works. I earnestly thought to acquire righteousness by my works.”

He stated: “I tortured myself with prayer, fasting, vigils and freezing; the frost alone might have killed me….What else did I seek by doing this but God, who was supposed to note my strict observance of the monastic order and my austere life? I constantly walked in a dream and lived in real idolatry, for I did not believe in Christ: I regarded Him only as a severe and terrible Judge portrayed as seated on a rainbow.”

**ORDAINED PRIEST** (1505-1510) Wore out the others in the monastery because when he would come in to confess his sin he would be there for up to 3 hours. So, they sent him to Rome to calm him down. Had opposite effect. He saw the immorality and fornications of the priests. Superstitions. Saw the worst of the Roman Catholic system. Relics people would come to see and put in money to help them with righteousness with removal of the guilt.

Only priests could take Lord’s supper. At his 1st Mass as a priest, he was awestruck at the thought of transubstantiation, the Catholic teaching that the bread and wine become the very body and blood of Christ when they are blessed by a priest. Luther almost fainted with fear. He testified: “I was utterly stupefied and terror-stricken. I thought to myself, ‘Who am I that I should lift up mine eyes or raise my hands to the divine majesty? For I am dust and ashes and full of sin, and I am speaking to the living, eternal and true God. I was utterly stupefied and terror-stricken. I thought to myself, ‘Who am I that I should lift up mine eyes or raise my hands to the divine majesty? For I am dust and ashes and full of sin, and I am speaking to the living, eternal and true God.’”

Goes to main church in Rome. Very steps Christ ascended when stood trial before Pilot. If crawl up these holy 28stairs, kiss steps, & repeat Lord’s prayer, & get to the top, you will get more deposits into your spiritual account. When gets to top & sees all the people crawling up, came to conclusion that all this was of naught. He stated, “At Rome I wished to liberate my grandfather from purgatory, and went up the staircase of Pilate, praying a *pater noster* on each step; for I was convinced that he who prayed thus could redeem his soul. But when I came to the top step, the thought kept coming to me, “Who knows whether this is true?” Returns despondent back to Germany.

**UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR** (1511-1546) Transferred to the University of Wittenberg. There for 34 yrs. Dr in theology. Teaches Ps, Rom, Heb w/no saving rel w/God. Filled pulpit at college church.

During this intensified travail, Johann Tetzel (1469-1524) came to Germany, selling indulgences to pad Church of Rome. Tetzel was a superb salesman and knew how to arouse public interest. He started by entering town in a solemn procession with the papal coat of arms and the bull of indulgence borne aloft on a gold-embroidered velvet cushion. A cross was set up in the marketplace, & Tetzel gave sermons on hell, purgatory, & heaven. He especially appealed to the consciences of his audience when he pointed out how they could aid their deceased parents in purgatory. Attempting to bilk common people of their money, Tetzel announced: “Do not you hear the voice of your wailing dead parents and others who say, “Have mercy upon me, have mercy upon me, because we are in severe punishment and pain. From this you could redeem us with a small alms and yet you do not want to do so. Open your ears as the father says to the son and the mother to the daughter….We created you, fed you, cared for you and left you our temporal goods. Why are you so cruel and harsh that you do not want to save us, though it only takes so little? You let us lie in flames so that only slowly do we come to the promised glory.” Tetzel’s most famous line: “As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs.**”**

In response, October 31, 1517, Luther posted 95 Theses to the church door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. A call for public debate over these issues of concern in church. Some of them read as follows:

**#1**. Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, when He said repent, willed that the whole life of believers should be repentance**. #2**. This word [repentance] cannot be understood to mean sacramental penance, i.e., confession and satisfaction, which is administered by the priests. **#21**. Therefore those preachers of indulgences are in error, who say that by the pope’s indulgences a man is freed from every penalty, and saved. **#27**. They preach man who say that so soon as the penny jingles into the money-box, the soul flies out [of purgatory]. **#32**. They will be condemned eternally, together with their teachers, who believe themselves sure of their salvation because they have letters of pardon. **#36**. Every truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission of penalty and guilt, even without letters of pardon. **#62**. The true treasure of the Church is the Most Holy Gospel of the glory and the grace of God.

**REGENERATED BELIEVER [1519]**

* In tower of castle church, meditating on **Rom 1:17**. He had been reading the Bible upside down, and once he understood that the righteousness of God is the righteousness which God gives and is received only through faith alone in that moment the entire Bible came alive and the entire Bible now he understood. He described this righteousness as a foreign righteousness, an alien righteousness, it has come down from another planet, from God to us.
* Luther was dramatically converted and as such he began to preach two kinds of righteousness. Man’s self righteousness and God’s alien righteousness that is given as a gift and received by faith. Christ’s righteousness becomes our righteousness, rather He Himself becomes ours.
* As he began to preach this, Luther began to shake things up. So much so that Rome began to catch word of this. It was killing the sale of indulgences for one thing.

**CLASS DISCUSSION:**