

CALL to PRAYER - pray for the thief who broke into our church building (pray for enemies)

Psalm 19:7-14 - Our Only Rule for Life and Faith

INTRO - Going to continue a topical series that I didn't even know I started a couple of weeks ago. Last two messages seemed to have stirred some intrigue about the Protestant Reformation and the revival that God sent during that time. It was a time (not much different from our own) in which there was great corruption in church and state. And reformers like M. Luther spoke out against this corruption which was contrary to the gospel. There was also a heavy-handed authoritarianism that prevailed. Many people were killed for not holding to the established positions. The catholic mass was mandated, and you could be canceled by being burned at the stake if you didn't comply. These events are the back story to our own country and the quest for religious liberty. There were 5 main principles to which our Protestant forefathers held. Their conviction brought reformation, revival and the arrival of a new people, and a new mindset, to this land. Today I want to consider the first one (main one) - Scripture Alone as our only rule for life and faith. This deals with the all-important issue of authority. What/Who is supreme?

AUTHORITY

- God is a God of order. He has ordained an authority structure to help us govern life
 - Parents our first authority in life 5th commandment - Ex. 20
 - Conscience - this is both developed and deeply embedded in us Rom. 2:15
 - Our first parents ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil
 - Church - there is religious/spiritual authority that is to be honored Heb. 13:17
 - State - God has given government a vital role. They are His ministers/deacons
- These 4 each have their place and serve a vital role. But each have a limited jurisdiction
 - These 4 should reinforce each other but each had its own arena/sphere
 - There is some overlap, but none are to be ultimate. All 4 to be honored
 - Each of the 4 should stay in their own lanes and not play bumper cars
 - There are some things for which church leadership has no authority over.
 - Pastors are not to be dictators for every area of life (cults) (same for all 4)
- Is there an authority that governs and rules over these 4 lesser authorities? YES!
 - We are to obey our parent IN THE LORD Eph. 6:1
 - mom arrested for beating kid for being a bad lookout as she stole
 - Our conscience can be seared/calloused and defiled 1 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:15
 - Doing what is right in our own eyes can get us in a lot of trouble
 - Our conscience and convictions need to be informed by scripture
 - Church & State leaders can be corrupt and abuse power.
 - Ever notice that pastors & politicians can get on a power trip?
 - All lesser authorities are to submit to the higher authority Acts 5:29
 - all of man's words and laws are to be tested by God's words and laws
 - *Rex lex* or *Lex rex*. the king is not law, the law is king - God's law
 - Scripture is the final authority for all matters of life and faith

HISTORY

- The reformers were protesting the abuse of power in church and state.
 - A corrupted authority needed to be corrected by the ultimate authority
- At the time of the Reformation the Bible was held in honor as AN authority
 - The Bible was seen as an important consultant but not the ultimate
 - Tradition, precedent, current leadership all usurped the place of scripture
 - Mark 7:8-9 The battle over the Bible is not new
- Martin Luther at the Diet of Worms (that was a court setting not a culinary delight)
 - On trial for bucking the system and accused of heresy
 - “Unless I am convinced by scripture and sound reason, I defy Popes and councils, for they have often erred and contradicted themselves. My conscience is clear; my heart is captive to the Word of God. Here I stand! God help me. Amen,”
- John Wycliff called out abuses and corruptions in the church – translated bible
 - Died of a sickness but they eventually dug up his bones and burned them
- William Tyndale He wanted the scriptures in the common tongue.
 - He wanted the common plowboy to read it for himself...know more than clergy
 - Burned at the stake for translating the bible into English
 - “Holy Bible Book Divine” (139)
- The battle over the Bible and it being the final/ultimate authority = Reformation/revival
 - The scriptures are the standard for which all other authorities are to be judged
 - Scripture alone is our only rule for life and faith
 - The ultimate *authority of scripture* is to inform/rule over all the lesser authorities

SUPREMACY

- The main principle for reform & revival was the emphasis on the authority of scripture
 - In Josiah's time - the book of the law was found. (2 Kings 22)
 - It informed and changed: state, church, conscience, home
 - Isaiah 33:22 God, and His word, is our Supreme Court, Law and King
- Men fail but God's Word is forever Is. 40:6-8
 - Men are imperfect and oppressive
 - But, the Law of the Lord is perfect restoring the soul
 - men are wish washy, with ever changing standards that are confusing
 - but the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple
 - man's laws are often wrong that brings weeping
 - but the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart
 - man's power tends toward corruption and a sad countenance Prov. 29:2
 - but the commandment of Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes
 - man will intimidate, oppress and pollute for a limited time
 - but the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever
 - man is given to lies/injustice & wickedness is found where justice should reside
 - the judgments of the Lord are true, they are righteous altogether
 - more to be desired than gold....sweeter also than honey