

# The Preachers of the Reformation – Final Session

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Well, it's such a joy to be with so many friends. This is really almost a foretaste of heaven to be able to gather with brothers and sisters from so many different backgrounds and so many different locations. It is so good to be with Steven Lee. Steven, thank you for your invitation to speak. Whenever Steven Lee sends an email that invites you to speak, it's something of an effectual call and I initially resisted that call but the Lord made me willing in the day of his power.

So I've been in New Zealand and Australia and the Philippines for the last almost month and I just returned two days ago, but there is no place in the world I'd rather be than right here with you and it's so good to be reacquainted with others. Alan Dunlop, thank you so much for coming to be here with us in the United States and I was just with him in Belfast, I guess two months ago, and I wish I could have heard your message. I still remember it from one and a half years ago and it was a powerful message. It's good to be with Todd Freel, Mr. Low Energy himself and his precious wife, Susan, to be here with Phil Johnson and to be reacquainted with so many others of you. I just am so grateful to be here.

As I talked with Steven about this message, he was a great encourager that I would speak actually on the preaching of the Reformation so please do not tell Todd Freel that I'm not doing an expository message which is really my heart and what I would want to do, but I think there is great value for us in this final session to revisit the preaching of the Reformation. And before I get to the preaching of the Reformation, by way of introduction I want to give you an overview of the Reformation itself in its most simplest form, and to trace the storyline of the Reformation is to know the story of four men. If you know the unfolding sequence of events of four men, then you will know the story of the Reformation and how the invisible hand of God sewed together seamlessly the flow and the progression of providence in the sixteenth century and the story of the Reformation really goes from Martin Luther, to William Tyndale, to John Calvin, to John Knox in that order, and as you trace it through those four men, you are following the flow downstream of the Reformation from the German Reformation, to the English Reformation, to the Swiss Reformation, and then finally to the Scottish Reformation, and the heart of the file of that movement is a course of 55 years.

The Reformation did not occur over night. The Reformation was not the result of one man but a body of men. As it unfolded over more than half a century and, of course, it continued to extend beyond that in reality, but that is at the very epicenter of the Reformation itself. And so it begins in Germany. It begins with an Augustinian monk who became professor of Bible at the University of Wittenberg. You know him very well. We just sung his hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God." His name is Martin Luther. And just three weeks ago, I was in Wittenberg, Germany, myself and I stood before the castle church and there stood before the front door where the 95 theses were nailed to the front door, I guess it was a month because I've been gone longer than that, and there to see where Martin Luther on October 31, 1517 fired the shot that was heard around the world as he began to protest against the sale of indulgences that was taking place through Saxony by Tetzel.

It would be two years later that Martin Luther would be converted. He was an unconverted man as he nailed those 95 theses to the front door of the church at Wittenberg, and in 1519 as he was in the tower of that castle church, he was meditating upon Romans 1:17, "The just shall live by faith," and it was in that moment that a shaft of light of illumination came shining into his darkened heart and he saw in a moment what had been previously veiled and hidden from his eyes, that it would simply be by faith, alone in Christ alone that a man would be made right before God. And he saw that what God would provide for him would be an alien righteousness, a foreign righteousness, a righteousness not of his own with which he would be clothed and be presented faultless before God in heaven.

That was 1519. It would be the very next year that Martin Luther would write three works that would be very defining of his theology and of his ministry. He first wrote, "Address to the Christian Nobility," in which he attacked the pope's right to be the sole interpreter of the word of God, and Luther began to call out the pope as the antichrist; that there is the priesthood of the believer; that every believer has direct access before God and every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and is illumined by God to understand the truth of Scripture and the perspicuity of the Scripture, the lucidness and the clarity with which God has written the word of God that the common man, the peasant, the blacksmith, the farmer, can understand the word of God for himself without need for the pope to tell him what the Bible has to say. The second work was "The Babylonian Captivity," which attacked the entire sacramental system, that there would need to be a priest who would function as a mediator between the sinner and the Savior, and Luther attacked this sacerdotal system that there would have to be any man between him and Jesus Christ; that there is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all, the testimony born at the proper time. Then third in 1520, Luther also wrote "Freedom of the Christian Man," which was his defense of sola fide, justification by faith alone.

One year after he was converted, those books that very year began to percolate and spread, as if borne along on angel's wings and they crossed the English Channel and they found their way to a university, Cambridge, and there in a tavern known as the White Horse Inn, there were young men who were students who were gathering together to

study the word of God for themselves and they came under the influence of these writings and they were used by God to lead them to a knowledge of the truth. One of those men was William Tyndale and that leads us to the second man as we go from the German Reformation now directly to the English Reformation, and it was Martin Luther through his writings that struck a nerve with those young men who were meeting in Cambridge and William Tyndale was one of those. Included in that group was also Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley and Thomas Cranmer and some of the greatest leaders of the English Reformation.

William Tyndale as he came to a saving knowledge of Christ under the influence of Luther's writings, had already spent 10 years at Oxford. He was a brilliant scholar and a brilliant linguist and he determined that he needed to withdraw for a moment and be alone with his Bible and to study the word of God and to set down deeper roots into the very Scripture itself. So he withdrew to become a private tutor for a wealthy man's estate, Sir John Walsh, near the Wales border, and it was there as Tyndale came to a deeper understanding of the word of God that he himself began to preach and became something of a biblical preacher because the more he grew in the truth, the more he realized he could not keep it to himself. It was a raging fire within his own bones and he began to preach as doors were opened for him.

Now, the Catholic Church did not like this and he was called on the carpet before the officials there in England, yet prosecution was not passed. He continued his preaching and as Tyndale was serving on the estate and in the manor of Sir John Walsh, there would be priests who would come through and have dinner with the family. As Tyndale was there having dinner with one of the Catholic priests, one of the priests made the audacious statement to Tyndale that we would be better off without the word of God, that all we need is the pope's interpretation. That struck a live nerve within Tyndale and there was a holy response within Tyndale, and Tyndale responded that he would set himself on a course that as a result of his pursuit of translating the Bible into the English language, that a plow boy in the field would know more of the word of God than the pope in Rome.

So Tyndale set himself on a course to do what no one had ever done among the English-speaking people which was to translate the Bible into the English language from the original Hebrew and Greek. At this point, the Roman Catholic Church would not allow a translation of the Bible into the English language. They put up a firewall around the Bible so that the people could not even have access to the Bible. The sermons were in Latin, the Scripture was in Latin, but the people did not know Latin. They would attend church services and have no idea what was even being said because it was in a language they did not understand and William Tyndale came to the sobering realization that the entire nation of England was lost and perishing except for a few little remnants here and there.

He went to London in 1523 to seek permission to translate the Bible into the English language from the Bishop of London. The Bishop of London had worked with Erasmus in compiling the Greek New Testament and Tyndale felt that he would have a ready response from the Bishop. He was stunned when the Bishop declined his permission to translate the Bible into the English language and the reason is the year before, 1522,

Martin Luther had completed his translation of the New Testament into English and it was already sparking an extraordinary response in Germany, so much so that the church was beginning to lose its dominance and its power over the people and he feared the same would happen in England. So he denied Tyndale his request lest he himself face what the church was facing now in Germany.

William Tyndale would not take no for an answer. Many today would have assumed, "Well, this must not be God's will for my life because there is a closed door in front of me." Tyndale was ready to knock the door down and Tyndale in 1524 left the nation of England to go to the European continent to go underground and to become an outlaw against Henry VIII, to become a fugitive, and to begin to translate the Bible into the English language.

After he lands in Germany, he goes first to Wittenberg to meet with Luther. So continue to follow this storyline from Luther to Tyndale. Luther and Calvin never met but Luther and Tyndale did meet and there in Wittenberg Tyndale began to translate the Bible from the Greek language, also with some help in learning from Philip Melancthon, as well as Tyndale began to teach himself the Hebrew language. Very few people in all of Europe even knew Hebrew, much less taught it. In fact, there was not one teacher in all of England who was a teacher of the Hebrew language. Selah, pause and meditate on that. So Tyndale began to learn the Hebrew language. It would be his eighth language to master and he knew each of those eight languages so well that whenever he spoke them, anyone who would have been from that homeland would have assumed that Tyndale was born in their home country.

After being in Wittenberg for less than a year, Tyndale now is ready to publish his New Testament and he is ready to complete what remains. So he goes to the city of Cologne in Germany on the Rhine River. It was the most populated area in Germany. It will be easy for him to blend in and be unnoticed and it will also be easier for him to find a publisher, a printer. If Tyndale is caught, it will be capital punishment and whoever prints this New Testament, it will also mean their life as well.

As the printing process begins in 1525, some of the workers in the printshop go out on the town at night, they become inebriated and they began to talk in the tavern about the project they're working on and the word gets to the authorities and there is a raid on the printshop in the middle of the night. Tyndale somehow is tipped and Tyndale runs to the back room where he has been doing his work, into the printshop and gathers up all of his works and escapes into the night, one step ahead of the hounds. He decides to go down the Rhine River further to the city of Worms where just five years earlier in 1521, Martin Luther stood at the Diet of Worms and gave his great defense of the faith. "My conscience is bound by the word of God. Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me." It was the result of Luther's stand that the city of Worms became sympathetic to the Reformation and Luther's influence was directly felt.

So Tyndale decides to go to that very city where Luther had given his great defense in order to print his New Testament. The year is 1526. He finds a printer and there are

several things that have to be in place. Number one, it has to be a city on a river in order to ship the Bibles out. Second, it has to be near places where he can gain rag content paper. And third, it has to be a city large enough where he can remain anonymous. It was Worms and there for the first time in the history of the English-speaking people, there is a Bible that is translated into English out of the original Greek that is set in movable type. Some 3,000 copies were made and printed. Tyndale hid them into bales of cotton, put them on ships and smuggled them into England on the eastern seacoast as well as into Scotland on the eastern seacoast.

That is 1526. Tyndale will edit that New Testament and make some 3,000 improvements to such an extent it is estimated that 90 percent of the King James version of the Bible is in reality Tyndale's work. It could not be improved upon in 1611 when the King James Bible was translated and it became the foundation for the Geneva Bible as well. Tyndale was a master. He was the father not only of the English Reformation and not only of the English Bible, he was the father of the modern English language. With every verse that Tyndale translated, he was standardizing the English language. There would not even be an English dictionary for over another 150 years. Tyndale's translation became the dictionary for the English language as he included a glossary with definitions of different terms that are found in the Scripture.

His second edition was 1534. There would be a third edition with a few more minor revisions, 1535, and in 1535 after 12 years of being elusive as an outlaw from the crown of England, Tyndale is finally captured. He has translated historical books of the Old Testament and he has translated Jonah because he wanted every preacher in England to preach the book of Jonah, "Forty days and Nineveh will be destroyed. Forty days and England will be destroyed if England does not repent in sackcloth and ashes and humble itself and come to the foot of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Tyndale is captured in 1535. He is imprisoned for 18 months in a castle outside of Brussels. And in 1536, he is strangled by a steel chain, his body is burned, and gunpowder has been put around his body and he is blown into so many pieces there is nothing left to bury. His final prayer was, "O God, open the eyes of the King of England." That prayer was answered. That very year, 1536, is the year John Calvin went to Geneva. One man steps off the scene and God raises the next man up. God always has the next man standing in the shadows, waiting in the wings, ready to be moved into position.

This leads us now to the Swiss Reformation. We move from Luther to Tyndale, a very direct connection. We now move to Calvin, 1536, and John Calvin by the strangest of providences finds himself in a city to which he never intended to travel. He found himself in Geneva because there was a roadblock as he was en route to the city where he was going and was redirected and detoured only for the night to the city of Geneva, and as he checks into the tavern, he is recognized by William Farel, the fiery redheaded evangelist who had turned Geneva into a Reformation town and he recognized Calvin as the young author of the "Institutes of the Christian Religion," that young Calvin had just written one to two years earlier after being a Christian but for a very short period of time. He was a

prodigy and God's gift to the church. As Calvin wrote the "Institutes of the Christian Religion," it was addressed to the King of France, Francis I, simply as an explanation for what true biblical Christianity is in order to put a stop of the persecution of the French Huguenots who are suffering under the regime of the Catholic Church, and William Farel said to John Calvin, "You must stay and be our pastor." Calvin had no desire to ever even be in Geneva, much less be their pastor. He wanted to be what he called "in the shade," meaning out of the spotlight; in the back corner of a library; to be left alone to write his theology and commentaries. Calvin refused. William Farel then put a finger in the face of John Calvin and said, "Then the curse of God be upon your life." And John Calvin melted and John Calvin humbled himself and John Calvin said, "Then by the grace of God I will stay and be your pastor."

John Calvin stayed for two years and was run out of town on a rail. If any of you have ever been run out of your church, you are in outstanding company. John Calvin could only last two years because he fenced off the Lord's Table and said in order to come to the Lord's Table you must be living a life that is consistent with your testimony of faith in Jesus Christ and be walking in a manner worthy of your calling. And the old city families, the old established vanguard so opposed that Frenchman that they prevailed with the city fathers and in 1538 John Calvin was run out of Geneva.

He was only too happy to leave Geneva. He did not want to go there in the first place. He withdrew to Strasburg. There he pastored the French-speaking congregation in Strasburg and he preached through Romans and he preached through 1 Corinthians. He met a widow who became his wife. He was very happy and with Calvin out of Geneva, the Roman Catholic Church made their play on the city fathers and tried to win the city back to Roman Catholicism. The church fathers didn't know up from down, down from up. They didn't know what to say so they appealed to Calvin and Calvin in Strasburg writes one of the greatest defenses of the Reformation on behalf of the church that had fired him, as he wrote a lengthy treatise in response to Sadolet. Soon the city fathers of Geneva came to their senses. They appealed to Calvin to return. Calvin said, "I would rather die a thousand deaths than to return to Geneva," and he meant it. Martin Bucer had become something of a discipler and said, "You must go back." And Calvin's personal logo, like Luther had his rose, Calvin's logo was a palm with a heart inside of the hand and the hand extended upward to God and it represented Calvin's life, that his life would be a living and holy sacrifice to God and that his heart, mind you not his brain, but his heart was being offered up to God and he was willing to go anywhere, anytime and pay any price within the will of God.

Calvin returned in 1541 to Geneva and as he resumed his ministry, he stepped into the pulpit to continue his exposition after a three and one half year absence at exactly the next verse. It was a statement to the citizens of Geneva that this pulpit will preach the word of God and this city will be under the preaching of the word of God. John Calvin then became, in essence, John Calvin, and Calvin for the next 23 years assumed his pastoral ministry from 1541 to 1564 when he died. But in the meantime in the midst of that as he is preaching sequentially through the books in the Bible, as he is training men in his auditorium to be sent as missionaries throughout Europe and as far away as Brazil,

in the very middle in 1553, the Protestant King of England, Edward VI, the teenage king who had assumed the throne of England at age 9, died at age 15, and he is replaced by the Queen of Horror, Mary I, better known as Bloody Mary, and that for good reason as she burned at the stake and put to death almost 300 Protestants, another 100 would die in prison before they could even get to the stake, and there was one of the royal chaplains of Edward VI, the most Protestant of all of the monarchs of England, one of those six royal chaplains was a Scotsman named John Knox who had been employed by Edward VI to tour England like an itinerant evangelist to preach the doctrines of grace, to preach sola fide, to preach the one true saving Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to spread this message as far and wide throughout England as he possibly could, and John Knox saw himself as a trumpet trumpeting the word of God throughout England. But in 1553, his worst nightmare became reality. He no longer had the Protestant king's backing, now the staunchest and the strictest of Catholic queens had assumed the throne and John Knox was in a very difficult conundrum. What would he do? Many Reformers chose to stay and they were burned at the stake. John Knox chose to flee and he fled to the European continent because he saw a bigger picture, because he wanted to go back to his homeland of Scotland and to preach the word of God. So he fled to Europe. He fled to Geneva to seek the counsel of John Calvin.

So we now go from the English Reformation to the Scottish Reformation. Please follow the unfolding story from Luther, to Tyndale, to Calvin, to Knox. From the German Reformation, to the English Reformation, to the Swiss Reformation, now to the Scottish Reformation. The invisible hand of God is sewing the pieces together in a seamless tapestry and God delivers John Knox to Geneva by using the evil of Bloody Mary. What she meant for evil, God meant for good. And there in Geneva John Knox would first be sent to Frankfurt by Calvin to pastor the English-speaking congregation there; included in that congregation would be John Fox who wrote "Fox's Book of Martyrs." John Knox was run out of Frankfurt. You're in very good company if you've been run out of your church, and you can throw in Jonathan Edwards as well.

John Knox comes to Geneva and there he pastors the English-speaking congregation of Marian exiles who have fled England for their lives, and while John Knox is pastoring this church, he is under the direct influence of John Calvin. In fact, John Knox is a part of the Geneva Bible Project of translating the Bible into the English language there and supplying the footnotes in the side margins for the Geneva Bible. John Knox embodies the theology of John Calvin.

As a mercy from the Lord, in 1538, five years after she assumed the throne, Bloody Mary dies and she is followed to the throne by Elizabeth I. John Knox is now free to return to Scotland and as he returns to Scotland, he will bring the Reformation to Scotland. He will be a one-man SWAT team that will be unleashed upon Scotland. He goes first to Leith, which is just a hair's throw away from Edinburgh, and then he goes to the city of the man who prayed, "Before I stepped into this pulpit." He went to Perth, Scotland, and there he preached his first sermon in a setting like this with such force and such power that a riot broke out in Perth. Where are preachers like that today? And it was an iconoclastic riot as they smashed all of the statues of Mary under the powerful preaching of John Knox, and

from there he marched to St. Andrews where an army was positioned to stop him, and John Knox said as long as he is within the will of God, he will be preserved by God. And he marches on and he goes to St. Andrews and the very same thing occurs as he powerfully preaches the word of God. Guess what his text was? Jesus cleansing the temple. And John Knox cleaned house and even many of the priests were converted and the tide was suddenly turning as John Knox hit Scotland like a Category 5 hurricane. He soon became established as the pastor of St. Giles on the Royal Mile in Edinburgh, the national cathedral, and he would be the architect of the Scott's Confession as well as establishing Scotland as a Reformed nation in many ways. He died in 1572. He was a powerhouse of a preacher.

That's just a brief survey of the flow of the Reformation as it goes from Luther, to Tyndale, to Calvin, to Knox. From Germany, to England, to the Swiss Republic, to Scotland. Now, all of this is just my introduction. This is the front porch to the house. No, I will summarize this as succinctly as I can but what marked these men? What marked their preaching? And what kind of preaching must we see again if we are to see a new Reformation in these days? John brought us the great scholar of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in the nineteenth century, gave a series of lectures entitled "Lectures on Church History," that has become a great book. Every preacher here needs to read "Lectures on the History of Preaching." That's the title, "Lectures on the History of Preaching." And when it comes to the preaching of the Reformation, brought us astutely signs of four distinguishing marks. This will be very easy to follow.

Mark 1. It was a revival of preaching. Period. Preaching had become a lost art. There is a reason why they call the Dark Ages the Dark Ages. There was a reason why the pulpit was no longer in the center of the building, why the pulpit had been moved to the side and the altar, not a table but an altar, had been put in the center in which Mass was to be taken, and in the Reformation through Luther and through Tyndale and through Calvin and through Knox, it was a revival of preaching. Preaching was brought back into the church. No longer were there little homilies and little book reviews and little devotional ditties being given from the pulpit. Now men stepped into the pulpit and did what had not been done for ages, they began to preach.

It was a recovery of preaching itself and Martin Luther led the charge. Martyn Lloyd-Jones called him "preeminently a preacher." Whenever you think of the Reformers, you must have this image in your mind that they were first and foremost preachers of the word of God. They were not armchair theologians sitting in an ivory tower disconnected from the populace of the people, just dipping their quill into a bottle of ink and just writing all day. They did do much writing but number one, the Reformers roared like a lion when they stepped into the pulpit as they preached the word of God. It was a revival of preaching.

Martin Luther preached twice on Sunday. He preached multiple times throughout the week. Wherever he traveled, he was expected to preach. Wherever he was, pulpits immediately opened up to him. And when the Black Plague of 1528 hit Saxony Germany, other ministers fled. Luther stayed with his flock risking his own life and preached four



times a week. In the course of that year, he preached 200 sermons. He was a virtual preaching machine. In his lifetime, Luther preached some 4,000 sermons, 2,300 of which have survived to us today. He was such a juggernaut of preaching that he wrote out sermons for other untrained preachers to take his sermons and preach them in their pulpits. Luther was literally preaching in virtually all of the pulpits of Germany through the sermons that he wrote out, called postils, as well as in his own pulpit.

And John Calvin, he was indefatigable in the pulpit. John Calvin preached twice on Sunday. He preached Monday morning, Tuesday morning, Wednesday morning, Thursday morning, Friday morning at 6 AM to a packed house at St. Pierre's Cathedral every other week. That is nine sermons within the course of a week. And on the 400 year anniversary of Calvin's birth, his premier biographer said this of Calvin and I want you to hear this because if Calvin had to give up all of his ministries and could only have just one of those ministries, Calvin would have taken the pulpit and let go of every other ministry because he understood the primacy and the centrality in the purpose of God for the preaching of his word. This is what his biographer said as he stood in Calvin's pulpit on the 400 year anniversary of his birth, quote, "That is the Calvin who seems to me to be the real Calvin, the authentic Calvin, the one who explains all other Calvins. Calvin the preacher of Geneva molded by his words the spirit of the Reformation of the sixteenth century. While he has come to be remembered as a theologian who recovered the doctrinal landmarks that had been buried under the debris of confused centuries, Calvin saw himself first of all as a pastor in the church of Christ and, therefore, as a pastor, one whose chief duty must be to preach the word."

Calvin understood that the primary ordinary means of grace is the preaching of the word of God. God had only one Son and he made him a preacher and he sent him forth to preach, and he sent another preacher to prepare the way of his coming, and in the three years of his public ministry, Jesus trained his disciples to go out and preach the word of God and throughout the Old Testament, God raised up preachers, prophets, to herald the word of God. If we are to have another Reformation in this day, I believe it will come only as there is a new generation of preachers who will step forth to preach the word of God.

We have too little preaching in our churches today. We have canceled Sunday night preaching, we have canceled Wednesday night preaching, we have shrunk Sunday morning preaching into nothing more than a little 20 to 25 minute exercise in looking at some verses. Is it any wonder that the church is so weak today? Is it any wonder why we have lost our power because we have so little preaching in our churches today? And that is also why we have such mediocre preaching in churches today because they preach so little, we preach so little. Most preachers will never begin to reach their potential as a preacher if for no other reason they preach so little. If you were trying to learn how to play the violin, do you think more practice or less practice would help you? If you were trying to make it on the PGA pro golf tour and your children were dependent upon you posting a good number, do you think more practice or less practice would help you make it on the PGA tour?

("More.") Thank you. Thank you. We have one spiritual person here today. God bless you for that. I preach better when you're talking to me.

For those of you who are pastors today, stop listening to the congregation that we have too much preaching, stop listening to the bad advice and counsel that you're getting even from others in spiritual leadership. In times of Reformation, in times of great awakening, in times of revival, there has always been a rise in more preaching for the church and God has enlarged the hearts of the people to receive the word of God. When Martyn Lloyd-Jones first began his preaching ministry, there were people who were trying to get into his ear to tell him, "We don't need so much preaching." Lloyd-Jones had been a physician and a doctor, Lloyd-Jones said to his parishioners, "When I was a physician, I never let the patient write the prescription and neither will I start now."

It was a revival of preaching and for those of you who are preachers, I want to call upon you to examine your own ministry, how much preaching do you actually do. If you need to begin to create venues for you to preach whether it be on a college campus, whether it be in a retirement home, whether it be starting men's Bible studies, whether it be going to other churches, whatever, we need preachers back in the starting lineup of the body of Christ. The preachers have gone astray.

Number one: the Reformation, it was a revival of preaching. Second, it was a revival of biblical preaching. It's not just more preaching that we need. We've got enough hot air in the church as it is. We need more preaching of a certain kind and Martyn Lloyd-Jones said that in days of revival, there is a new kind of preaching that bursts onto the scene and this new kind of preaching is the old kind of preaching which is the preaching of the word of God, and that is what is brought to our attention and he said instead of hearing Aesop's fables and stories about martyrs and accounts of miracles and passages from Aristotle and passages from Seneca, and hearing from what the pope had to say about anything, these men stepped into the pulpit and they were Bible men. They had their finger on chapter and verse. They preached the word of God as it had not been preached in centuries. Erasmus in 1516 had compiled the New Testament Greek text and the Reformers stood on the shoulders of Erasmus and took this Greek text and began to read the word of God in the original language and gave a better interpretation than had been heard for a thousand years. They were in the text.

Martin Luther was such a strong Bible preacher. Fred Musser who is the expert on Luther's preaching said, "Luther's message was to take a given segment of Scripture, find the key thought within it, and make that unmistakably clear the text is to control the sermon." In other words, the preacher has nothing to say apart from the word of God. "When the Bible speaks," Augustine said, "God speaks." And the Reformers were so committed to this that they preached the word of God and not just preached it in any old fashion, they preached it sequentially verse by verse through books in the Bible. They restored to the pulpit the preaching of the word of God within books. You need to understand when God gave us the Bible, he did not give us individual verses, he gave us books. It only makes sense you would preach the Bible like God gave it to us. He didn't give us a topical index. He gave us 66 books and the Reformers took those books and

started with chapter 1, verse 1, and began to preach sequentially through entire books in the Bible until they finished that book and then they moved on to the next book as in Calvin's case, he had two and sometimes three book studies going on at any one point in time. It was the ultimate back-to-the-Bible movement.

Luther as he preached through the Old Testament, listen to the books, the Old Testament books that Luther preached through: Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, 2 Samuel, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah. It sounds like a homeschool convention. Zephaniah, Haggai, Malachi, Habakkuk, Zechariah. In the New Testament, Luther preached verse by verse through Matthew 5 through 7, 11 through 15, 18 through 24, and 27 through 28 in the Gospel of Matthew. The entire Gospel of Mark, Luke 15 through 16, John 1 through 4, 6 through 8, 16 through 20, Acts, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Corinthians, 1 Timothy, 1 John, 1 Peter, Titus, Philemon and Hebrews. Get the picture? Do you want to know the Reformation? Get in the Bible. Open the Bible. Be a mouthpiece for the Bible. Stick to the Bible. Stay in the Bible. Preach sequentially through books in the Bible. You have to address everything that's in that book that way.

And what about John Calvin? Oh, before I give you Calvin, let me just give you a couple of Luther statements. It ought to stir the blood within you. This is what Luther said to the other preachers, "Give me Scripture, Scripture, Scripture. Do you hear me? Scripture." Luther said, "A good preacher invests everything in the word." Luther said, "The pulpit is the throne for the word of God." Luther went so far as to say, "The church has no reason to ever convene and meet without the preaching of the word of God." That would close a lot of our meetings and maybe rightly so. "The highest worship of God," Luther said, "is the preaching of the word." He said we can spare everything except the word. We profit by nothing as much as by the word. That's Martin Luther. He was a preaching machine sequentially through books in the Bible.

What about John Calvin? I love what James Montgomery Boice says about Calvin. "Calvin had no weapon but the Bible. Calvin preached from the Bible every day and under the power of that preaching, the city began to be transformed." So Calvin preached sequentially through books in the Bible. I'm going to read you the books that he preached through and how many sermons he preached for these books simply to make the point. When he was in Strasburg, he preached through the Gospel of John, in Romans, and we do not know how many sermons were involved in that, but in the New Testament, he died preaching a harmony of the Gospels, 65 sermons. The book of Acts, 189 consecutive expositions through the book of Acts, 189. 1 Corinthians, 110 sermons. 2 Corinthians, 66 sermons. Galatians, 43. Ephesians, 48 sermons. And it would be these sermons that John Knox would have read to him on his deathbed as his wife read him into glory Calvin's sermons on Ephesians that he heard with his own ears. 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 46 sermons. 1 Timothy, 55 sermons. 2 Timothy, 31 sermons. Titus, 17 sermons. In the Old Testament which he preached Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday morning at 6 AM. Genesis, 123 sermons. Deuteronomy, 201 consecutive unbroken expositions. Judges, a number we don't have. 1 Samuel, 107. 2 Samuel, 87. 1 Kings, we don't have the number and the reason we don't have the number, there was a paper shortage in the nineteenth

century in Geneva and they sold Calvin's manuscripts to merchants who would turn them over and right out a bill-of-sale to carry out their business. Job, 159 verse by verse expositions. Individual Psalms, we know of at least 72 but we know there were more. Psalm 119, 22 sermons. Isaiah, 353 consecutive expositions. Jeremiah, 91. Lamentations, 25. Ezekiel, 175. Daniel, 47. Hosea, 65. Joel, 17. Amos, 43. Obadiah, 5. Jonah, 6. Micah, and these are some of the best ones. P&R has reprinted these. You ought to read his sermons on Micah and see how he shows the relevance of this ancient prophet to the day in which he lived. Micah, 28 sermons. Nahum, we don't have the number. Zephaniah, 17.

I take the time to read all of this to impress upon you the genius of the preaching of John Calvin was his sequential exposition. He wasn't tap dancing all over the place. He got into a book, he kept his nose in that book and he preached the full counsel of God. Every sin was exposed. Every hard doctrine was taught. Every promise was offered as he preached through that book in the Bible. Calvin said, "The minister's whole task is limited to the ministry of God's word." He said, "When we enter the pulpit, it is not so that we may bring our own dreams and fancies with us. As soon as men depart even in the smallest degree from God's word, they cannot preach anything but falsehood, vanities and postures, errors and deceits." Calvin was the poster child for sola scriptura. He was the embodiment of sola scriptura. And it wasn't just Calvin. We can go through the Reformers: Zwingli was doing it in Zürich and Cranmer is requiring all of the English preachers to get in the Bible and stay in the Bible.

We need more expository preaching, my friend. We need more biblical preaching. We need less of you and more of the Bible. We need less of the culture and more of Christ. We need more of the text. It's like John Murray said years ago to his students at Westminster Seminary, "To the text, young man. To the text." That's where we need to be going, to the text. You and I have nothing to say apart from the word of God and we need to stop being speculative theologians. Calvin refused to be a speculative theologian and tried to address things in which there is not chapter and verse that specifically states this.

So it was a revival of preaching. It was a revival of biblical preaching. Third, it was a revival of controversial preaching. If you preached the Bible, just buckle your chin strap, you're going to be the most controversial man in town. People are going to name their children after you and they're going to name their dogs after you. The Bible is the most controversial book in the world. The Bible drips with grace, it drips with mercy, but there are truths in the Bible that are offensive to the flesh, that are offensive to the carnal mind. And as the Reformers took the word of God, they shook up the continent of Europe. They weren't trying to play all ends into the middle and keep the church together and not shake things up. They stood in the pulpit, they preached the word of God, they let it fly. They did as John Knox said, he called a spade a spade. John Broadus said, quote, "Religious controversy is inevitable, where living faith in definite truth is dwelling side-by-side with error and evils."

Martin Luther was a provocative preacher. He called the pope the antichrist. He called the Catholic Church the Whore of Babylon. He called sin, sin. He preached the exclusivity of salvation in Christ alone. He preached the reality of heaven and hell. He preached the

necessity of the blood atonement. Luther said, "Wycliffe and Huss assailed the immoral conduct of the Papists, but I chiefly resist their doctrine. I affirm roundly and plainly that they preach not the truth. To this I am called." Luther said, "I take the goose by the neck and set the knife to its throat. When I can show that the pope's doctrine is false, then I can show that their manner of life is false." He said, "We must not hold our peace. We must confess the truth and say that the Papacy is accursed, the Emperor is accursed. According to Paul, whatever is without the promise and faith of Abraham is accursed." Luther said, "From the year of our Lord 1518 to the present day, every Monday, Thursday at Rome, I have been by the pope excommunicated and cast into hell and still I live. For every year on Monday, Thursday, all heretics are excommunicated at Rome, among whom I am always put first and chief." Did not Jesus say, "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you"? Luther was a bull in a china shop. Luther was a man's man. Luther was a bold and courageous preacher. Someone has well said the problem with preachers today is no one wants to kill them anymore. They are just Mr. Nice Guy. They're like the Captain of the Love Boat, they just want to make sure everyone is having a great time at church today.

And Calvin, the same can be said of Calvin. They did run him out of town after two years. Calvin was so controversial. He rebuked the Libertines. He rebuked the Anabaptists. He rebuked the Catholics. He rebuked the Unitarians. He took on everything that did not conform to the standard of Scripture. Titus 1:9 says that an elder must be able to teach sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. It is a sharp two-edged sword. It cuts both ways. The word of God is to comfort the afflicted and it afflicts the comfortable. It cuts both ways.

Finally, not only was it a revival of preaching, not only was it a revival of biblical preaching, not only was it a revival of controversial preaching, but Broadus rightly notes it was a revival of preaching the doctrines of grace. Virtually to a man, the Reformers elevated the truths of the sovereignty of God in salvation which has a way of putting 50 other things into right place. When you get the doctrines of grace right, you get 50 other doctrines right. And when you get the doctrines of grace wrong, you're wrong all over the place. The Bible is like a finely woven tapestry and when you pull a thread over here, the tapestry crinkles way over here because it is interwoven and interconnected.

And so it was in the Reformation. The Reformers spoke with one voice concerning the fall and ruin of the entire human race in Adam; they spoke of the bondage of the will in sin; they spoke of the freedom of the will of God in sovereign election; they spoke of the definiteness of the atonement of Jesus Christ; they spoke of the irresistible drawing of the elect by the Spirit; they spoke of the eternal preservation of the elect throughout all eternity future.

Do you remember Luther's book, "The Bondage of the Will"? If you've not read "The Bondage of the Will," you need to call Amazon right now during this sermon. You need to have it overnighted to your hotel room. You need to read "The Bondage of the Will" twice a week for the rest of your life. You need to get "The Bondage of the Will" into your soul. "The Bondage of the Will" was the response of Luther to Erasmus' "The Freedom of the Will." Erasmus was the leading humanist of the day, the Dutch scholar

that he was, and he wrote a scathing attack on Luther's sovereign grace theology. And Luther did not respond for quite some time and everyone thought that Erasmus had won the upper hand, that he had won without Luther even responding, and then Luther in due time came out with "The Bondage of the Will," and in his preface he said, "O Erasmus, the reason I have waited so long is that I was waiting for something better from you and I have waited and I have waited." He said, "With your command of the language, with your scholarship, with your brilliance articulating your theology," Luther said, "it is like serving dung on a silver platter." And Luther then began to systematically strip down every argument that Erasmus put forth, refuting them in full, and then Luther said, "All I need to win the battle is to call forth two Generals who have legions of soldiers at their command. I need no other Generals but these two to win the day. I now call forth General John and General Paul." And Luther unleashes Johannine theology and Pauline theology chapter and verse, chapter and verse, chapter and verse, and dismantles the poor exegesis and attempt at theology by Erasmus. And Luther concludes by saying, "O Erasmus, I'm praying for you, that God will give you a better mind to understand the teaching of the word of God."

These men were not closet sovereign grace men, these men put these truths that are so embedded in the word of God in the very marrow of its truth and they shouted it from the housetops because they understood that it exalts God, it humbles man, it promotes pure worship, it sanctifies the soul, it ignites evangelism, it launches missions. Listen, Calvin sent out so many missionaries from Geneva that there were some it is estimated 1,000 church plants within France, sending out men from his auditorium across the street from St. Pierre's Cathedral, that he was training in the word of God. They had escaped France as Huguenots and now as they sit under the preaching of Calvin they come under such deep conviction they realize, "We cannot just sit on this. We cannot just hoard this truth to ourselves. We have to go back to France." And Calvin's training school across the street became known as Calvin's School of Death because they understood they were going back to their grave, to take the word of God back to France into those places from which they had escaped to find religious freedom. No, they were not men who held back the doctrines of grace, it was the doctrines of grace that were igniting the souls of those who sat under their preaching and emboldened their convictions. Time will not permit me to walk us through quote after quote after quote but suffice to say it was a revival of the preaching of the doctrines of grace. And do you want to know why?

("Why?") Thank you.

Because they preached sequentially through books in the Bible. If you start in chapter 1, verse 1, and say, "I'm going to preach every verse and every phrase in this book," it is completely unavoidable, you will find that these verses are multiplying like rabbits throughout the entire Bible as you preach sequentially through the word of God.

I will give Charles Haddon Spurgeon the last word for this message and for this conference. Spurgeon said, "We want again Luthers, Calvins, Bunyans, Whitefields, men fit to mark eras, whose names breathe terror in our foemen's ears. We have dire need of such men. Whence will they come to us? They are the gifts of Jesus Christ to the Church,

and they will come again in due time. Christ has power to give us back again a golden age of preachers, and when the good old truth is once more preached by men whose lips are touched as with a live coal from off the altar, this shall be the instrument in the hand of the Spirit for bringing about a great and thorough revival of religion in the land again." Spurgeon said, "I do not look for any other means of converting men beyond the simple preaching of the Gospel and the opening of men's ears to hear it. The moment the Church of God shall despise the pulpit, God will despise that church. It has been through the ministry of preaching that the Lord has always been pleased to revive and bless His Churches."

May God give us again Luthers and Calvins and Tyndales and Knoxs that will stand up like a man and put the trumpet to their lips and preach the word of God and the unsearchable riches of Christ and the grace of God that is ours in the blood atonement and the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. May God raise up such men here today.

Let us pray.

*Father in heaven, I pray that we would live to see a new Reformation again in these days, that after darkness there would come light again, that you would shake the very gates of Hades that the light would expose the darkness and that your truth would once more again not only be proclaimed but be received in hearts that you have opened to embrace its truths. O God, do again in this hour what you have done in the past and what only you can do. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*