

Why Was Europe Ready for a Reformation?

What was the Reformation?

- What does “reform” mean?
- Who needed the reforming?
- Why was this reformation necessary?
- What were the reforms?

Define “Reform”

- Webster’s: “to make changes in (something, typically a social, political, **religious**, or economic institution or practice) in order to improve it.
- Naturally, something needs to be worth improving before you improve. So what was the squeaky wheel?

Who Needed Reforming?

- Our western Christian church has its roots in the Roman Catholic church.
- How did we go from that... to this?
- We **reformed**. The Catholic Church had some serious issues that needed to be addressed, and somewhere along the way we ended up here.

Why Was the Reformation Necessary?

- By the time we hit the 16th century, Roman Catholic Church at the time was experiencing corruption on several levels.
 - Lack of accessibility to God – dependent on the papacy and other saints to intercede on your behalf before God
 - No access to scripture, had to trust the papacy for doctrine
 - Selling of indulgences – buying your way into heaven
- **The Roman Catholic Church had developed a works-based cultural movement of hearsay disguised as the religion of Christ.**

Basic Catholicism: The Papacy

- The papacy is the Catholic clergy system. There exists within Catholicism a hierarchy of clergy.
- Pope → Archbishop → Bishop → Cardinal → Priest → Laymen
- Additional offices: Friar, Deacon
- The priest acted/acts (still today in Catholicism) as an intercessor between God's forgiveness and sinful man.

Basic Catholicism: Mary and the Saints

- The Roman Catholic Church held (and still holds) the ideas of holiness and sainthood very dearly. This led to a misunderstood view (worse now than it was then) of intercession.
- Mary (the mother of Jesus) is a person who the Catholics revered particularly, but new saints are added to the list regularly.

What Were the Reforms?

- Elimination of the papacy – **1st Timothy 2:5**
- Access to scripture – the invention and utilization of the printing press allowed for lay-people to read scripture for themselves, and not have to be spoon-fed by the papacy.
- Salvation by grace, through faith; no buy-ins, no shortcuts, no work of man.
- Roughly 92 other things you'll hear about next week when Justin talks about Martin Luther because Jake said I'm not allowed to mention Martin Luther or any of the other reformers because people are going to talk about them later.

People I'm Allowed to Talk About

- **John Wycliffe**

- A 14th century priest who helped set the stage for the reformation in the coming centuries.
- Spoke out against the lavish lifestyles of the papacy.
- Translated much of the New Testament into Middle English.
- Laid the foundation for the Calvinist understanding of the doctrines of election/predestination.
- Declared a heretic after his death for believing in things we now consider essential doctrine.

People I'm Allowed to Talk About

- **Jan Hus**

- Another 14th century theologian who, alongside Wycliffe, is considered one of the key predecessors of the Reformation.
- Trained as a priest but deviated very far from Catholic theology and is highly comparable to Martin Luther in his criticisms of Catholicism – especially the selling of indulgences.
- Burned at the stake for speaking out against Catholic corruption.

Why Was Europe Ready for the Reformation?

- Because of the work of these two brave men, the corruption of the Roman Catholic Church was made evident to a generation of men roughly 150 years down the road.
- A well-meaning institution that was once the beacon of Christ's life, death, and resurrection had become calloused and cold, abandoning its author and perfecter (Heb. 12:2) for the sake of tradition, political gain, and money.
- The influence of the Holy Spirit led some brave men to stand up for truth and righteousness in the face of an institution that would slander them and even kill some of them for doing so, and God in His mercy decided not to leave us there.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH



You can't defeat me.

JAN HUS



I know, but he can.



MARTIN LUTHER



Caleb W Bass