

INTRO: This week's teaching explored the key convictions about SCRIPTURE and FAITH which were at the heart of the Reformation. Imbedded were two important observations

- Without the recovery of the authority of Scripture, and the availability of the Scriptures, the revival of Jesus' church is difficult to imagine
- Without the recovery of salvation through simple faith, the Gospel was dangerously becoming a law of works, voice of true hope.

This study explores why the Word of God and a salvation-through-faith Gospel bring joy and hope to our lives, and to the lives of others.

BEGIN WITH YOUR EXPERIENCE

In 2014 research, George Barna noted 6 trends related to our views and use of the Bible.

<https://www.barna.com/research/the-state-of-the-bible-6-trends-for-2014/#.UOVhVhOXDc>

1. Bible skepticism is now tied with Bible engagement—we tend to be skeptical about the sacredness of the Bible
2. Despite skepticism, Americans claim to be “pro-Bible”
3. Distraction and busyness continue to squeeze out the Bible
4. The age of screens has come to stay in the Bible market (though most continue to want it in print)
5. Americans come to the Bible when needing comfort or answers (though the # who believe the Bible is important to connecting with God is shrinking from 64% to 56%)
6. People are less likely to link moral decline with a lack of Bible reading.

Where do you find yourself in these “trends”? For example, Do you have more “skeptical” questions about the Bible? When you connect with God personally (God making your day), does the Bible play a key role in this?

LOOK IN THE WORD

In studying the Reformation, Dr. Scott Manetsch of *Trinity Evangelical Divinity School* notes that “For Protestant Reformers such as Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, or Martin Bucer, the study of Holy Scripture offered readers not only a collection of devotional insights, but the very essence of the Christian Gospel. Through the Bible, God himself spoke to his people. Luther commented ‘This book, the holy Scripture, is the Holy Spirit’s book.’”

The recovery and reading of the Scriptures can always be a life-changing event. Life changing for us, and for others around us. Take time to read what happened in 2 Kings 22:1-20, as a young Josiah becomes King in Jerusalem. By God’s grace, he does not following the footsteps of his predecessors. After you read the chapter together, discuss the following questions:

- #1 In your own words, how would state 1 Kings 22:2 (the description of Josiah)?
- #2 Someone “tell the story” – what happened first, then second, then third...etc.
- #3 Why do you think Josiah reacted the way he did in vs. 11? (Jewish significance of tearing clothes? demonstrating what?)
- #4 What was so urgent about this situation?
- #5 How did the Lord respond to Josiah?

Similarly, there was in THE REFORMATION a great passion for the rediscovery of the Scriptures, to hearing what God’s Spirit has to say. **FINAL QUESTION: What would you identify as the 3 most important things God has to say to us through the Scriptures?**

MY LIFE - OUR MISSION

Desiderius Erasmus, the brilliant humanist whose scholarship gave great momentum to THE REFORMATION, had deep convictions about the Bible. He said, “Let everyone read, therefore, but let anyone who wants to profit from this reading read soberly and alertly—not as if he were reading some story of human history with no bearing on his life—but avidly, earnestly, attentively.”

Our effectiveness in “connecting people to life-defining relationships in Christ” is enhanced when we are hearing from God every day. God’s word – not only revered, but read avidly, obediently – can prepare us for “every good work” (2 Timothy 3:17).

TO FINISH – **review what the Word says** about...and then **pray about increasing the role** of these truths in your lives.

- a) THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GOSPEL: 1 Corinthians 15:1-5, and Galatians 1:6-10
- b) THE CLARITY OF THE WORD: Psalm 119:17-24, 105-112, Hebrews 4:11-13, 1 Peter 1:22-2:3