

L.5 - Faith Against All Odds - Sunday: God's Word Alone

1. **Memory Text: Psalm 119:11** – *“Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.”*
2. The Main issue for the Reformers: Who can have access to the Bible?
 - a. If the common man could read the Scriptures for himself, the Reformation would just happen on its own.
 - b. This is why a number of the Reformers were not only preachers, but Bible Translators (AND literacy advocates)
 - c. They valued the Scriptures LITERALLY – in the way David did.
 - How often you could HONESTLY speak these texts:
 - **Psalm 119:103-104** – *How sweet are Your words to my taste, Sweeter than honey to my mouth!* ¹⁰⁴ *Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way.*
 - **Psalm 119:147-148** – *I rise before the dawning of the morning, And cry for help; I hope in Your word.* ¹⁴⁸ My eyes are awake through the night watches, That I may meditate on Your word.
 - **Psalm 119:162** – *I rejoice at Your word As one who finds great treasure.*
 - d. The established church, on the other hand, fought hard to restrict them.
 - Speaking on **behalf of the organized church**, Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote in 1407: “We therefore legislate and ordain that nobody shall from this day forth translate any text of Holy Scripture on his own authority into the English, or any other, language, whether in the form of a book, pamphlet or tract; and that any such book, pamphlet or tract, whether composed recently or in the time of John Wycliffe, or in the future, shall not be read in part or in whole, in public or private.”
3. This week’s lesson is **based on GC ch.7-11**
 - a. Ch.7 – Luther’s Separation From Rome (125.2) [Luther] had taken a solemn vow to study carefully and to preach with fidelity the word of God, not the sayings and doctrines of the popes, all the days of his life. He was no longer the mere monk or professor, but the authorized herald of the Bible. He had been called as a shepherd to feed the flock of God, that were hungering and thirsting for the truth. He firmly declared that Christians should receive no other doctrines than those which rest on the authority of the Sacred Scriptures. These words struck at the very foundation of papal supremacy. They contained the vital principle of the Reformation. (133.1) The word of God, by which Luther tested every doctrine and every claim, was like a two-edged sword, cutting its way to the hearts of the people.
 - b. Ch.8 – Luther Before the Diet (160.2) The Reformer answered: “Since your most serene majesty and your high mightinesses require from me a clear, simple, and precise answer, I will give you one, and it is this: I cannot submit my faith either to the pope or to the councils, because it is clear as the day that they have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless therefore I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture or by the clearest reasoning, unless I am persuaded by means of the passages I have quoted, and unless they thus render my conscience bound by the word of God, I cannot and I will not retract, for it is unsafe for a Christian to speak against his conscience. Here I stand, I can do no other; may God help me. Amen.”—*Ibid.*, b. 7, ch. 8.
 - c. Ch.9 – The Swiss Reformer (173.2) The more [Zwingli] searched the Scriptures, the clearer appeared the contrast between their truths and the heresies of Rome. He submitted himself to the Bible as the word of God, the only sufficient, infallible rule. He saw that it must be its own interpreter. He dared not attempt to explain Scripture to sustain a preconceived theory or doctrine, but held it his duty to learn what is its direct and obvious teaching. He sought to avail himself of every help to obtain a full and correct understanding of its meaning, and he invoked the aid of the Holy Spirit, which would, he declared, reveal it to all who sought it in sincerity and with prayer.
 - d. Ch.10 – Progress of Reform in Germany (194.1) All who could read were eager to study the word of God for themselves. They carried it about with them, and read and reread, and could not be satisfied until they had committed large portions to memory. Seeing the favor with which the New Testament was received, Luther immediately began the translation of the Old, and published it in parts as fast as completed. (195.2) Persons of all ranks were to be seen with the Bible in their hands, defending the doctrines of the Reformation. ... “Luther had

persuaded his followers to put no faith in any other oracle than the Holy Scriptures.”—D'Aubigne, b. 9, ch. 11. Crowds would gather to hear the truth advocated by men of little education, . . . Laborers, soldiers, women, and even children, were better acquainted with the Bible teachings than were the priests and learned doctors.

- e. Ch.11 – Protest of the Princes (204.2) . . . there is need of a return to the great Protestant principle—the Bible, and the Bible only, as the rule of faith and duty. Satan is still working through every means which he can control to destroy religious liberty. The antichristian power which the protesters of Spire rejected is now with renewed vigor seeking to re-establish its lost supremacy. The same unswerving adherence to the word of God manifested at that crisis of the Reformation is the only hope of reform today.
- f. YOU (yourself) need to read these chapters (ALONG with the Bible first).
 - I have given you mere excerpts – but — An excerpted faith is not sufficient.
- g. Become familiar with the history of the English Bible – know how valuable it is
 - Tyndale / Wycliffe / Erasmus / Myles Coverdale / John Rogers / Geneva Bible
 - WHY did THEY stake their lives on THIS?

4. How important is God's Word to YOU?

- a. The Reformation Battle is NOT yet over.
 - Many clear Bible truths are not yet understood, covered over by Church Tradition and Popular Preaching
- b. CHALLENGE: Sunday's lesson said, "The Reformers saturated their minds with Scripture."
 - SATURATE = "charge with something to the point where no more can be absorbed"
 - Individuals – START a reading plan.
 - We can't say we love the Bible if we don't love reading it.
 - **6T 393.2** – *The Bible is God's voice speaking to us, just as surely as though we could hear it with our ears. If we realized this, with what awe would we open God's word, and with what earnestness would we search its precepts! The reading and contemplation of the Scriptures would be regarded as an audience with the Infinite One.*
 - A "verse-a-day" on the phone is NOT enough WHEN you have the whole Bible
 - Pastors - Preach from the Bible in simple, easy-to-understand words
 - Fathers (& Mothers) – read small portions of God's Word to your children every day.
 - **Child Guidance 41.1** – *The Bible should be the child's first textbook. From this book, parents are to give wise instruction. The Word of God is to be made the rule of the life.*
 - Teachers – USE the Bible in Every class (NOT your *only* book, but the *Best* of all Books)
 - This was the desire of the Reformers, too: Luther's "Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation" (1520): "*Above all, in schools of all kinds the chief and most common lesson should be the Scriptures, and for young boys the Gospel; and would to God each town had also a girls' school, in which girls might be taught the Gospel for an hour daily, either in German or Latin!*" (Section 3, Article 25)