



## Reformation: The Outgrowth of Revival, Lesson 9, 3Q 2013

What exactly is reformation?

According to dictionary.com:

**re·form**

noun

1. the improvement or amendment of what is wrong, corrupt, unsatisfactory, etc.
2. an instance of this.
3. the amendment of conduct, belief, etc.

verb (used with object)

4. to change to a better state, form, etc.; improve by alteration, substitution, abolition, etc.
5. to cause (a person) to abandon wrong or evil ways of life or conduct.
6. to put an end to (abuses, disorders, etc.).
7. to abandon evil conduct or error: The drunkard promised to reform.

Are there different types of reformations? (social, political, medical, spiritual) How does social, political, or medical reform happen? Who is responsible for these types of reformations? What is the normal method for these types of reform? (change the laws to change behavior)

How does spiritual reformation happen? Who is responsible for spiritual reformation?

being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:6)

for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. (Philippians 2:13)

Is spiritual reformation the same thing as sanctification? Who is responsible for sanctification?

“Then I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’

“ ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ the Lord replied. ‘Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’ (Acts 26:15-18)



Yet I have written you quite boldly on some points to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. He gave me the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:16)

## SABBATH

---

Memory Text: “For both *He who sanctifies* and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren” (Hebrews 2:11, NKJV).

But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.” (1 Corinthians 1:30-31, NKJV)

It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 1:30-31, NIV)

But God has brought you into union with Christ Jesus, and God has made Christ to be our wisdom. By him we are put right with God; we become God's holy people and are set free. So then, as the scripture says, “Whoever wants to boast must boast of what the Lord has done.” (1 Corinthians 1:30-31, GNB)

The sanctification of the soul by the working of the Holy Spirit is the implanting of Christ's nature in humanity. Gospel religion is Christ in the life—a living, active principle. It is the grace of Christ revealed in character and wrought out in good works. The principles of the gospel cannot be disconnected from any department of practical life. Every line of Christian experience and labor is to be a representation of the life of Christ.

Love is the basis of godliness. Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by *trying* to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within—when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance. {COL 384.2}

If Christ is our sanctification, is there anything we can do to cooperate? (Get with Christ!) And how do we do that?



“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.” (John 17:17-19)

Does this give us any insight into how we cooperate? How does the truth sanctify? How do we become acquainted with the truth? (Scripture, science, experience) Do you think it’s enough if all we do is let someone else study it and present their findings? Why not? How important is it, then, to study for ourselves? If it is so important, are we doing it? If not, why not? What are some of the things you have experienced that get in the way of studying? For myself: Lack of time, busy doing other things,

“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Romans 10:17. The Scriptures are the great agency in the transformation of character. Christ prayed, “Sanctify them through Your truth; Your word is truth.” John 17:17. If studied and obeyed, the word of God works in the heart, subduing every unholy attribute. The Holy Spirit comes to convict of sin, and the faith that springs up in the heart works by love to Christ, conforming us in body, soul, and spirit to His own image. Then God can use us to do His will. The power given us works from within outwardly, leading us to communicate to others the truth that has been communicated to us. {COL 100.1}

So, why are the Scriptures “the great agency in the transformation of character”?

Is it possible to be familiar with the word, and *not* sanctified? How do we know? What evidence do we have for this?

John 5:38-40 But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

So, how did they manage to study the word diligently and still miss the sanctifying truth? Some possible answers: 1) studied to affirm what they already thought, 2) misunderstood God’s character, 3) trusted their own understanding rather than asking God to lead them, 4) they did not study to know God.

Without the Spirit of God a knowledge of His word is of no avail. The theory of truth, unaccompanied by the Holy Spirit, cannot quicken the soul or sanctify the heart. One may be familiar with the commands and promises of the Bible; but unless the Spirit of God sets the



truth home, the character will not be transformed. Without the enlightenment of the Spirit, men will not be able to distinguish truth from error, and they will fall under the masterful temptations of Satan. {Christ's Object Lessons 408.3}

The class represented by the foolish virgins are not hypocrites. They have a regard for the truth, they have advocated the truth, they are attracted to those who believe the truth; but they have not yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit's working. They have not fallen upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, and permitted their old nature to be broken up. This class are represented also by the stony-ground hearers. They receive the word with readiness, but they fail of assimilating its principles. Its influence is not abiding. The Spirit works upon man's heart, according to his desire and consent implanting in him a new nature; **but the class represented by the foolish virgins have been content with a superficial work. They do not know God. They have not studied His character; they have not held communion with Him; therefore they do not know how to trust, how to look and live. Their service to God degenerates into a form.** "Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words but do not put them into practice." Ezekiel 33:31. The apostle Paul points out that this will be the special characteristic of those who live just before Christ's second coming. He says, "In the last days perilous times shall come: for men shall be lovers of their own selves; ... lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." 2 Timothy 3:1-5. {COL 411.1}

So how can we make sure that we avoid the problem the Pharisees and those described in 1 Tim. had? What does it sound like that they missed in their study? What, then, should be the focus or purpose of our study? (Relationship with God...getting to know Him better)

Read the first paragraph in Sabbath's lesson:

Revival is an ongoing process. Daily our Lord invites us into the joy of His presence. Just as Israel was nourished by the manna that fell from heaven, Jesus spreads out a spiritual banquet for us every day. Daily our souls are nourished, our spirits refreshed, and our hearts revived as we kneel quietly before His throne, meditating upon His Word. True spiritual renewal leads to a change in our thought patterns, habits, and lifestyle; it's what we call a "reformation."

Why is revival an ongoing process? How important is it to study daily? How can we make sure that we study correctly? (In other words, how do we make sure we don't end up like the Pharisees, having knowledge of God's word, but not knowing Him?) Some suggestions:



- Ask the Holy Spirit to guide our study, specifically for the purpose of getting to know Jesus
- Have an open mind
- Study through the lens of Jesus' life and natural law
- Make sure all three threads are in harmony (Scripture, science, experience)

Does our method for studying the Bible matter? What are some positive methods for studying? (Inductive Bible study; reading whole books to get the “big picture”; word studies; thematic studies; studying in small groups; application studies-SOAP: Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer)

We cannot obtain wisdom without earnest attention and prayerful study. Some portions of Scripture are indeed too plain to be misunderstood; but there are others whose meaning does not lie on the surface, to be seen at a glance. Scripture must be compared with scripture. There must be careful research and prayerful reflection. And such study will be richly repaid. As the miner discovers veins of precious metal concealed beneath the surface of the earth, so will he who perseveringly searches the word of God as for hid treasure, find truths of the greatest value, which are concealed from the view of the careless seeker. The words of inspiration, pondered in the heart, will be as streams flowing from the fountain of life.

Never should the Bible be studied without prayer. Before opening its pages, we should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and it will be given. When Nathanael came to Jesus, the Saviour exclaimed, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.” [John 1:47.] Nathanael said, “Whence knowest thou me?” Jesus answered, “Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.” And Jesus will see us also in the secret places of prayer, if we will seek him for light, that we may know what is truth. Angels from the world of light will be with those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance.

The Holy Spirit exalts and glorifies the Saviour. It is his office to present Christ, the purity of his righteousness, and the great salvation that we have through him. Jesus says, “He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.” [John 16:14.] The Spirit of truth is the only effectual teacher of divine truth. How must God esteem the human race, since he gave his Son to die for them, and appoints his Spirit to be man's teacher and continual guide. {CE 58-59}

What are some negative methods? (taking things out of context; studying to prove our own points, biases, or ideas; leaving Jesus out of the study; never studying for application)

What should we do with what we learn as we study?

But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop (Luke 8:15). (in other versions of the parable, retain=accept, understand)



He replied, “My mother and brothers are those who hear God’s word and put it into practice (Luke 8:21).

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock (Matt. 7:24-25).

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:18-20).

Here is a beautiful description of the sanctifying work of God’s Word on our hearts:

**The truths of the word of God meet man’s great practical necessity—the conversion of the soul through faith. These grand principles are not to be thought too pure and holy to be brought into the daily life. They are truths which reach to heaven and compass eternity, yet their vital influence is to be woven into human experience. They are to permeate all the great things and all the little things of life.**

**Received into the heart, the leaven of truth will regulate the desires, purify the thoughts, and sweeten the disposition. It quickens the faculties of the mind and the energies of the soul. It enlarges the capacity for feeling, for loving.**

The world regards as a mystery the man who is imbued with this principle. The selfish, money-loving man lives only to secure for himself the riches, honors, and pleasures of this world. He loses the eternal world from his reckoning. But with the follower of Christ these things will not be all-absorbing. For Christ’s sake he will labor and deny self, that he may aid in the great work of saving souls who are without Christ and without hope in the world. Such a man the world cannot understand; for he is keeping in view eternal realities. The love of Christ with its redeeming power has come into the heart. This love masters every other motive, and raises its possessor above the corrupting influence of the world.

The word of God is to have a sanctifying effect on our association with every member of the human family. The leaven of truth will not produce the spirit of rivalry, the love of ambition, the desire to be first. True, heaven-born love is not selfish and changeable. It is not dependent on human praise. The heart of him who receives the grace of God overflows with love for God and for those for whom Christ died. Self is not struggling for recognition. He does not love others because they love and please him, because they appreciate his merits, but



because they are Christ's purchased possession. If his motives, words, or actions are misunderstood or misrepresented, he takes no offense, but pursues the even tenor of his way. He is kind and thoughtful, humble in his opinion of himself, yet full of hope, always trusting in the mercy and love of God.

The apostle exhorts us, "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." 1 Peter 1:15, 16. The grace of Christ is to control the temper and the voice. Its working will be seen in politeness and tender regard shown by brother for brother, in kind, encouraging words. An angel presence is in the home. The life breathes a sweet perfume, which ascends to God as holy incense. Love is manifested in kindness, gentleness, forbearance, and long-suffering.

**The countenance is changed. Christ abiding in the heart shines out in the faces of those who love Him and keep His commandments. Truth is written there. The sweet peace of heaven is revealed. There is expressed a habitual gentleness, a more than human love.**

**The leaven of truth works a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. By it the impure are cleansed, washed in the blood of the Lamb. Through its life-giving power it brings all there is of mind and soul and strength into harmony with the divine life. Man with his human nature becomes a partaker of divinity. Christ is honored in excellence and perfection of character. As these changes are effected, angels break forth in rapturous song, and God and Christ rejoice over souls fashioned after the divine similitude. {COL 100-102.3}**

Don't you want that kind of change? Do you think it's worth the effort of spending time with God in prayerful study of His word? Why do you think it can be so hard for us to do something we *want* to do, that we know is so important, and for which the benefits are a relationship with Jesus and eternal life? (Because we have an enemy who will do all he can to keep us from moving into that relationship with Jesus.)

If reformation is an outgrowth of revival, and revival is the result of a growing relationship with Jesus, then is it likely that the prophets would call for reformation?

## SUNDAY

---

So, let's take a look at Sunday's lesson, titled, "The Prophet's Appeal for Reformation." It starts with this sentence: "God often sent His prophets to lead Israel into revival." Why did God need to do this? Because they had drifted away from Him...the relationship was suffering as a result of their choices.





Let's look at the second paragraph in Sunday's lesson:

Revival and reformation occurred in the Old Testament when there was a renewed heart commitment to obey God's will. When Israel "turned to its own way" and "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judg. 21:25), God withdrew His blessing, and the nation faced disaster and defeat.

Is a "renewed heart commitment to obey God's will" all that is needed for revival and reformation? What happened shortly after the Israelites left Egypt and promised to obey all that God had said?

So let's look at the example the lesson points to...the story in 2 Chronicles 20:1-20. Three neighboring countries band together to make war on Jehoshaphat. When he hears of this, the first thing he does is proclaim a fast. What is the purpose of fasting? Is it reform-oriented, or relationship-oriented?

The second thing Jehoshaphat does is pray. What is the purpose of prayer? Is it reform-oriented, or relationship-oriented?

At the end of his prayer, Jehoshaphat says, "We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you." (vs 12) and all of Judah is there with him before the Lord.

Does all of this sound like a call to reform or a call to relationship? It's all about the relationship!

## MONDAY

---

Let's look at Monday's lesson, titled, "Paul's Appeal for Reformation in Corinth"

First two sentences: In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul expresses great concern regarding their spiritual condition. Many members had drifted from God's ideal.

What is God's ideal that they had drifted away from? Were their actions the problem, or were they the symptom of the problem?

The lesson suggests we look at some verses in 1 Corinthians to see Paul's counsel for the church:





1 Cor. 6: 19-20 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

Does this sound like an appeal for reformation, or a reminder of relationship? How does the reminder that we are designed to be temples for God's presence affect what we do?

1 Cor. 9:24-27 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

What is the prize Paul is talking about here? Eternal life? And what is eternal life? (John 17:3 Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.) So what is it that the runners are fixing their eyes on? Does this sound like an appeal for reformation, or an appeal for relationship?

1 Cor. 13

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.



Does this sound like an appeal for reformation, or an appeal for relationship?

1 Cor. 15: 1-2 Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

What was the gospel he preached to them that he is reminding them of here?

1 Cor. 2:1-2 When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

What is the testimony about God? What do we learn when we focus on Jesus Christ? Does this sound like Paul was preaching a gospel of reformation, or a gospel of relationship?

Let's look at the last few sentences on Monday's lesson:

The Holy Spirit brought the Corinthians spiritual renewal. This revival brought a corresponding reformation. Reformation led to changed habits, changed lives, and changed relationships. The Corinthians still faced spiritual challenges. They had their share of trials, but they made significant advances in their Christian faith. Revival and reformation are not some panacea to solve all of our spiritual problems. They are part of an ongoing faith journey.

Why are revival and reformation “part of an ongoing faith journey?”

## TUESDAY

---

“Revelation's Appeal for Reformation in Ephesus

To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. (Rev. 2:1-5)



What kind of people are being described here? Are these worldly ungodly people? They're a church, with lots of good actions...but what are they missing?

Why would God say He would "remove your lampstand from its place" if they do not repent? Why would you remove a lamp? Only if the light wasn't working, right? What did they use in their lamps to power the light? Oil...which represents what? The Holy Spirit. And what does the Holy Spirit do? He dwells in our hearts, recreating Jesus' character in us. Without the relationship, the light goes out.

Jesus pointed out the power of false teaching to destroy the appreciation and desire for truth. "No man," He said, "having drunk old wine straightway desires new: for he says, The old is better." All the truth that has been given to the world through patriarchs and prophets shone out in new beauty in the words of Christ. But the scribes and Pharisees had no desire for the precious new wine. Until emptied of the old traditions, customs, and practices, they had no place in mind or heart for the teachings of Christ. They clung to the dead forms, and turned away from the living truth and the power of God.

It was this that proved the ruin of the Jews, and it will prove the ruin of many souls in our own day. Thousands are making the same mistake as did the Pharisees whom Christ reproved at Matthew's feast. Rather than give up some cherished idea, or discard some idol of opinion, many refuse the truth which comes down from the Father of light. They trust in self, and depend upon their own wisdom, and do not realize their spiritual poverty. They insist on being saved in some way by which they may perform some important work. When they see that there is no way of weaving self into the work, they reject the salvation provided.

A legal religion can never lead souls to Christ; for it is a loveless, Christless religion. Fasting or prayer that is actuated by a self-justifying spirit is an abomination in the sight of God. The solemn assembly for worship, the round of religious ceremonies, the external humiliation, the imposing sacrifice, proclaim that the doer of these things regards himself as righteous, and as entitled to heaven; but it is all a deception. Our own works can never purchase salvation.

As it was in the days of Christ, so it is now; the Pharisees do not know their spiritual destitution. To them comes the message, "Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel you to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness does not appear." Revelation 3:17, 18. Faith and love are the gold tried in the fire. But with many the gold has become dim, and the rich treasure has been lost. The righteousness of Christ is to them as a robe unworn, a fountain untouched. To them it is said, "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and



repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” Revelation 2:4, 5.

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.” Psalm 51:17. Man must be emptied of self before he can be, in the fullest sense, a believer in Jesus. When self is renounced, then the Lord can make man a new creature. New bottles can contain the new wine. The love of Christ will animate the believer with new life. In him who looks unto the Author and Finisher of our faith the character of Christ will be manifest. {DA 279-280}

Let’s look at the bottom of Tuesday’s lesson:

Ephesus, here, is equated with the New Testament church from approximately A.D. 31 to A.D. 100. These early Christians were zealous for their faith. They labored unceasingly for the advancement of the gospel. The disciples diligently preserved the doctrinal purity of the church. They had no tolerance for heresy and were fierce defenders of truth.

As time went on, however, the members began to lose their “first love.” They substituted duty for devotion. Doing Jesus’ work became more important than their relationship with Him. Gradually and almost imperceptibly, their experience with Jesus began slipping away. They were laboring hard to defend the faith, but something vital was missing in their own spiritual experience. Love for Jesus and for one another was desperately lacking.

How do you think they “lost their first love?” If a married couple ceases talking, does that affect the relationship? If they stop spending time together, continuing to learn and appreciate each other, does that affect the relationship? What if just one does this? Does the relationship still suffer?

Let’s look at the questions at the bottom of Tuesday’s lesson:

What was it like when you first came to know Jesus? How can you still maintain that “first love”? Why is it so important that you do? What things threaten to turn you away from that love?

## WEDNESDAY

---

The lesson suggests that we naturally think about Martin Luther when we think about reformation... What kind of person was Martin Luther? What was the first message that turned his life around?

When it appeared to Luther that all was lost, God raised up a friend and helper for him. The pious Staupitz opened the word of God to Luther’s mind and bade him look away from



himself, cease the contemplation of infinite punishment for the violation of God's law, and look to Jesus, his sin-pardoning Saviour. "Instead of torturing yourself on account of your sins, throw yourself into the Redeemer's arms. Trust in Him, in the righteousness of His life, in the atonement of His death.... Listen to the Son of God. He became man to give you the assurance of divine favor." "Love Him who first loved you."—Ibid., b. 2, ch. 4. Thus spoke this messenger of mercy. His words made a deep impression upon Luther's mind. After many a struggle with long-cherished errors, he was enabled to grasp the truth, and peace came to his troubled soul. {GC 123.3}

Interesting, isn't it, that the first thing to give him hope was someone telling him to look away from himself & look to Jesus? After this, he devoted himself even more to studying the Bible, and after much urging also to preach. Then he visited Rome, and it was there, after seeing the material wealth but spiritual poverty of the church leaders that he heard the phrase, "the just shall live by faith" while climbing Pilate's staircase. He eventually stood to oppose the sale of indulgences, which the church had set up in order to raise money to build St. Peter's Church in Rome.

Luther, though still a papist of the strictest sort, was filled with horror at the blasphemous assumptions of the indulgence mongers. Many of his own congregation had purchased certificates of pardon, and they soon began to come to their pastor, confessing their various sins, and expecting absolution, not because they were penitent and wished to reform, but on the ground of the indulgence. Luther refused them absolution, and warned them that unless they should repent and reform their lives, they must perish in their sins. In great perplexity they repaired to Tetzl with the complaint that their confessor had refused his certificates; and some boldly demanded that their money be returned to them. The friar was filled with rage. He uttered the most terrible curses, caused fires to be lighted in the public squares, and declared that he "had received an order from the pope to burn all heretics who presumed to oppose his most holy indulgences."—D'Aubigne, b. 3, ch. 4.

Luther now entered boldly upon his work as a champion of the truth. His voice was heard from the pulpit in earnest, solemn warning. He set before the people the offensive character of sin, and taught them that it is impossible for man, by his own works, to lessen its guilt or evade its punishment. Nothing but repentance toward God and faith in Christ can save the sinner. The grace of Christ cannot be purchased; it is a free gift. He counseled the people not to buy indulgences, but to look in faith to a crucified Redeemer. He related his own painful experience in vainly seeking by humiliation and penance to secure salvation, and assured his hearers that it was by looking away from himself and believing in Christ that he found peace and joy. {GC 129}



How did Luther know the teaching of the indulgence sellers was wrong? Because he had studied and learned of Christ for himself. What were his opponents like? What was it that turned them away from hearing Luther's message?

Many dignitaries, of both church and state, were convicted of the truthfulness of his theses; but they soon saw that the acceptance of these truths would involve great changes. To enlighten and reform the people would be virtually to undermine the authority of Rome, to stop thousands of streams now flowing into her treasury, and thus greatly to curtail the extravagance and luxury of the papal leaders. Furthermore, to teach the people to think and act as responsible beings, looking to Christ alone for salvation, would overthrow the pontiff's throne and eventually destroy their own authority. For this reason they refused the knowledge tendered them of God and arrayed themselves against Christ and the truth by their opposition to the man whom He had sent to enlighten them. {GC 131}

What motivated his opponents? Self! And what motivated Luther? Love for God, love for truth, and love for the people. What were some of the results of Luther's stand for truth?

Luther's teachings attracted the attention of thoughtful minds throughout all Germany. From his sermons and writings issued beams of light which awakened and illuminated thousands. A living faith was taking the place of the dead formalism in which the church had so long been held. The people were daily losing confidence in the superstitions of Romanism. The barriers of prejudice were giving way. 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. Everywhere there was awakening a desire for spiritual progress. Everywhere was such a hungering and thirsting after righteousness as had not been known for ages. The eyes of the people, so long directed to human rites and earthly mediators, were now turning in penitence and faith to Christ and Him crucified. {GC 133}

Despite all the opposition and persecution Luther faced, he still stood. What was it that kept him so strong?

"O almighty and everlasting God," he pleaded, "how terrible is this world! Behold, it openeth its mouth to swallow me up, and I have so little trust in Thee.... If it is only in the strength of this world that I must put my trust, all is over.... My last hour is come, my condemnation has been pronounced.... O God, do Thou help me against all the wisdom of the world. Do this, ... Thou alone; ... for this is not my work, but Thine. I have nothing to do here, nothing to contend for with these great ones of the world.... But the cause is Thine, ... and it is a righteous and eternal cause. O Lord, help me! Faithful and unchangeable God, in no man do I place my



trust.... All that is of man is uncertain; all that cometh of man fails.... Thou hast chosen me for this work.... Stand at my side, for the sake of Thy well-beloved Jesus Christ, who is my defense, my shield, and my strong tower.”—Ibid., b. 7, ch. 8.

An all-wise Providence had permitted Luther to realize his peril, that he might not trust to his own strength and rush presumptuously into danger. Yet it was not the fear of personal suffering, a dread of torture or death, which seemed immediately impending, that overwhelmed him with its terror. He had come to the crisis, and he felt his insufficiency to meet it. Through his weakness the cause of truth might suffer loss. Not for his own safety, but for the triumph of the gospel did he wrestle with God. Like Israel’s, in that night struggle beside the lonely stream, was the anguish and conflict of his soul. Like Israel, he prevailed with God. In his utter helplessness his faith fastened upon Christ, the mighty Deliverer. He was strengthened with the assurance that he would not appear alone before the council. Peace returned to his soul, and he rejoiced that he was permitted to uplift the word of God before the rulers of the nations.

With his mind stayed upon God, Luther prepared for the struggle before him. He thought upon the plan of his answer, examined passages in his own writings, and drew from the Holy Scriptures suitable proofs to sustain his positions. Then, laying his left hand on the Sacred Volume, which was open before him, he lifted his right hand to heaven and vowed “to remain faithful to the gospel, and freely to confess his faith, even should he seal his testimony with his blood.”—Ibid., b. 7, ch. 8. {GC 156-157}

He kept his mind stayed on God...he continued to study for himself...he was open to having others show him his errors if they showed him from Scripture how he was wrong.

Luther ended up excommunicated by the pope, and in danger for his life. I read this interesting quote regarding the presenting of truth:

Opposition is the lot of all whom God employs to present truths specially applicable to their time. There was a present truth in the days of Luther,—a truth at that time of special importance; there is a present truth for the church today. He who does all things according to the counsel of His will has been pleased to place men under various circumstances and to enjoin upon them duties peculiar to the times in which they live and the conditions under which they are placed. If they would prize the light given them, broader views of truth would be opened before them. But truth is no more desired by the majority today than it was by the papists who opposed Luther. There is the same disposition to accept the theories and traditions of men instead of the word of God as in former ages. Those who present the truth for this time should not expect to be received with greater favor than were earlier reformers. The great controversy between truth and error, between Christ and Satan, is to increase in intensity to the close of this world’s history.





Said Jesus to His disciples: “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also.” John 15:19, 20. And on the other hand our Lord declared plainly: “Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.” Luke 6:26. The spirit of the world is no more in harmony with the spirit of Christ today than in earlier times, and those who preach the word of God in its purity will be received with no greater favor now than then. The forms of opposition to the truth may change, the enmity may be less open because it is more subtle; but the same antagonism still exists and will be manifested to the end of time. {GC 143-144}

Do you think you could stand in the face of opposition? Would you be prepared? Do you have the relationship with Christ, that, with eyes fixed on Him, would give you what you need to face trouble and persecution?

## THURSDAY

---

First paragraph on Thursday’s lesson:

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a reform movement.

Is being a “reform movement” a good thing? Should our church be a reform movement, or a revival movement? Which do you think would be more powerful?

Continuing that paragraph: It was raised up by God to restore biblical truths lost sight of many centuries ago. Although the Holy Spirit worked powerfully through the Reformers, there were vital truths that they did not fully understand. God still had more truth to reveal to His people.

Does God still have more truth to reveal to His people? How long will there be more truth to reveal? Will there ever be a time when we “know it all”? Read the next two paragraphs:

God is not interested in our understanding truth merely to fill our minds with more religious knowledge. Biblical truths are windows into His very heart. They reveal something about His character. The more clearly that we understand the truths of His Word, the more completely we will understand the depth of His love. False doctrine distorts His character. Truth unmasks the



devil's lies and reveals who he really is (take, for instance, eternal torment in hell as a prime example of what lurks in Satan's heart).

From the inception of the great controversy in heaven, Satan has attempted to malign the character of God. He has lied about God's intentions toward His creatures. But, in the life that He lived, in the truths that He taught, and in the death that He died, Jesus revealed what His heavenly Father was really like.

Read God's end-time message of revival and reformation (Rev. 14:6-7, 12).

Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.” Rev 14:6-7

This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus. Rev. 14:12

What do these verses teach us about the character of God? What is the eternal gospel? How do we give God glory? What are His commands? What does it mean to remain faithful to Jesus? How does this impact the revival of His people?

What happens when a revival begins? I read a very interesting quote:

When churches are revived, it is because some individual seeks earnestly for the blessing of God. He hungers and thirsts after God, and asks in faith, and receives accordingly. He goes to work in earnest, feeling his great dependence upon the Lord, and souls are aroused to seek for a like blessing, and a season of refreshing falls on the hearts of men. The extensive work will not be neglected. The larger plans will be laid at the right time; but personal, individual effort and interest for your friends and neighbors, will accomplish much more than can be estimated. It is for the want of this kind of labor that souls for whom Christ died are perishing. {Christian Service 121}

So according to this quote, how many people does it take to start a revival? Just one! So the bottom-line question would be...who will be that one?



## FRIDAY

---

Further Study: “A revival and a reformation must take place under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from spiritual death. Reformation signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend.”-Ellen G. White, *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Feb. 25, 1902.

“Whatever may be their profession, it is only those who are world servers at heart that act from policy rather than principle in religious things. We should choose the right because it is right, and leave consequences with God. To men of principle, faith, and daring, the world is indebted for its great reforms. By such men the work of reform for this time must be carried forward.”-Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 460.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- In the call for revival and reformation, what must come first, revival or reformation, and why?
- Why are revival and reformation things of the heart more than anything else? Why must they start individually, with each of us making a conscious choice to renew our walk with the Lord, to draw closer to Him, ~~and to seek more earnestly than ever to do His will?~~ What is the danger of waiting for the person next to you in the pew to do this, or waiting for the pastor to initiate this? Why must you, yourself, now, make the choice to surrender even more fully to the Lord so that He will work in you?
- Nothing could kill the call to revival and reformation more than a harsh and judgmental spirit toward those who don't seem to live up to the standards that we think they should. How can we learn to avoid that dangerous pitfall while at the same time standing for the truths that have been entrusted to us?