

Remember

This morning I am choosing to begin with some questions that will set the stage for us to consider the Protestant Reformation and where we are today as the global church, as the American church and Canyon Bible’s resolve to be a remnant church. First question – who can tell me why America has a holiday or day of observance and remembrance called Memorial Day? We are recognizing those who died to secure our freedom from England that gave birth to the United States of America. We remember those who have fought in the battles since our nation’s birth to protect our country and the freedom of others around the world. Second question – How many Americans have died in various wars and battles beginning with the American Revolution? Does anyone have an idea or guess of the number of casualties? Look at the slides on the screen.

Conflict	Time Span	Total Approx. American Casualties	
American Revolutionary War	1775–1783	(58,000)	~25,000
Northwest Indian War	1785–1795		~1,056
Quasi-War	1798–1800	(30,000)	514
War of 1812	1812–1815	(40,000)	~20,000
1st Seminole War	1817–1818		36
Black Hawk War	1832		305
2nd Seminole War	1835–1842		1,535
Mexican–American War	1846–1848		13,283
3rd Seminole War	1855–1858		26
American Civil War	1861–1865		~625,000
Indian Wars	1865–1898		919
Great Sioux War	1875–1877		314
Spanish–American War	1898		2,446
Philippine–American War	1898–1913		4,196
Boxer Rebellion	1900–1901		131
Mexican Revolution	1914–1919		~35
Haiti Occupation	1915–1934		148
World War 1	1917–1918	(16 Million)	116,516
North Russia Campaign	1918–1920		424

American Expeditionary Force Siberia	1918–1920		328
Nicaragua Occupation	1927–1933		48
World War 2	1941–1945	(58 million)	405,399
Korean War	1950–1953	(2.7 million)	36,516
Vietnam War	1955–1975	(4.7 million)	58,209
El Salvador Civil War	1980–1992		37
Beirut	1982–1984		266
Grenada	1983		19
Panama	1989		40
Persian Gulf War	1990–1991	(20,000)	258
Operation Provide Comfort	1991–1996		19
Somalia Intervention	1992–1995		43
Bosnia	1995–2004		12
NATO Air Campaign Yugoslavia	1999		20
Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan)	2001–2014		2,356
Operation Iraqi Freedom (Iraq)	2003–2012	(150,000)	4,489
Time Span – 242 years			
Total		All Casualties	Amer. Casualties (1.5%)
		(82,732,650)	1,319,943

What these numbers show is America historically has had a military with the resolve, armament and training to perform well in war. We have suffered only 1.5% of all the casualties of the wars and conflicts beginning with the American Revolution. Another important number for you to know is over 42 million Americans have served our country and stood up against tyranny since 1775 when the British occupied Boston. Citizens have heeded the call to defend and give their lives if needed to protect America and freedom. For Americans freedom from tyranny began 242 years ago and continues today.

How does this relate to the Protestant Reformation that began 500 years ago in 1517 and lasted 131 years ending with the Thirty Year War? First, some background on what happened. The term Reformation comes from Latin word “*reformatio*”, literally meaning to restore or renew and refers to the Protestant Reformation. The first goal of the Reformation was to bring the church and at that time it was the Roman Catholic Church back to the Word of God, to the teachings of the Bible and

end traditions that had no foundation in the Bible. The second goal was to allow the people to have access to the Bible and lessen the control over the Word of God by the Catholic Church. The word “Protestant” comes from Latin “*protestant*” or protesting. So we have those protesting the abuses of the Catholic Church and desiring to reform and restore the Bible as the center of the Christian Faith – this epic struggle then became known as the Protestant Reformation.

There were a number of efforts to reform the Catholic Church prior to Martin Luther. However the timing was ripe with Luther posting his 95 Theses on the Wittenberg church door. The Reformation was the protesting to bring the Roman Catholic Church back to the Scriptures of God and then the breaking from the Roman Catholic Church initiated by Martin Luther and continued by others including John Calvin. Many brave men known as Protestant Reformers of the 16th century turned Europe from being dominated by the power of the Catholic Church and made possible for Protestant churches to be established. For more history of some of they key people, political control, armed conflicts and wars of the Reformation go on-line and see the first sermon on the reformation given on August 20th.

The Reformation is considered to have started with the publication of the Ninety-five Theses by the priest Martin Luther and when on October 31, 1517 he nailed them to the door of the old church in Wittenberg, Germany. The Reformation lasted 131 years until the end of the Thirty Years’ War and with the Peace of Westphalia signed in 1648. The peace treaties brought to an end wars between Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Dutch Netherlands, Demark and France, and between the Catholic and Protestant armed forces. Millions died during the battles and wars initiated by political leaders of Europe and the Catholic Church against those seeking to return to the Bible as the source of spiritual life.

It is estimated that between 30 and 45 million people died during the 131 years of the wars and battles of the Protestant Reformation. Of those who died 15 to 20 million were those who fought the tyranny of the Catholic Church so that people would be able to have the Bible in their hands and know for themselves what God wanted them to learn and live. As we compare the importance of Memorial Day in America honoring 1.3 million dead and 42 million who served should not the anniversary of the Reformation where millions fought with 30 to 45 million dying as a result of this protest to church control and 15 to 20 million died for our religious freedom bring us to a point of considering the cost? Should not the anniversary of the Reformation be a solemn day of remembrance? October 31st should be a day of reflection and thanksgiving in recognition of the sacrifice made that you and I may have a copy of the Bible and the freedom to study and live it.

In America this important remembrance has been replaced with Halloween that celebrates the ghoulish, the dead and evil. Halloween has its roots in old European tradition of the Celtic people who would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off ghosts. Halloween marked the transition from long days of light to days that were darker and associated with winter and death. Celts believed that this night was the time when the boundary of life and death blurred and it was believed ghosts of the dead were able to return to earth harassed the living and inflicted destruction. Satan always imitates ways to take people's focus and worship off of God. My challenge to you is to consider Tuesday the 31st as an evening to study the history of the Reformation. Spending time as families talking of the things of God and reading Scripture and time in prayer.

Reform

As Edmund Burke said, **“Those who don't know history are doomed to repeat it.”** Canyon Bible Church, along with thousands of other churches in the Protestant

tradition is celebrating the 500-year anniversary of the Reformation. We celebrate the work of the Protestant reformers of the 1500's who realized that the Catholic Church had strayed from the true Gospel of Christ and had begun abusing its power to control and exploit those it was called to serve and protect.

The need for reform continues. The battle for the purity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ continues. The world is under the influence of the "prince of the air" and therefore does not want the gospel of good news to be heard, embraced and lived. It is estimated since the time that our Lord Jesus Christ established his church 80 million Christians have suffered death or have been martyred for their faith. Many would argue that the world has progressed and become more civil in the last 2 thousand years. However, in the 20th century that ended just 17 years ago the number of Christians who were martyred number approximately 26 million or 1/3 of the total of all martyred in the last 200 years. Currently, according to BBC World News there are about 100,000 Christians killed each year in the first 16 years of the 21st century. Most of those killed for being Christian are the result of the wars and armed conflicts in Africa at about 90,000 and the majority of the remaining 10,000 are scattered throughout the world with the largest concentration in the countries dominated by Islam. The attack on Christianity has not stopped as people have become more enlightened and educated but has accelerated.

Paul made clear that the battle for Christians is not a military one, but a conflict between good and evil. Paul wrote, "For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds." (2 Corinthians 10:3-4) As those who study the Bible we know it is the Word of God that has power and will bring down the strongholds of this world. While the world wages war with human power, arms, money, sex and drugs we are to wage war with the eternal truth of the Bible and living them out in our daily lives. True Christians walk the walk and do

not just talk the talk. So the question has always been the same - are we willing to submit to the Holy Spirit and be joyful slaves of Christ proclaiming God's truth in the way we live and to all the people the Lord places in our lives? Can you tell people what Christ means in your life in 5 minutes and if needed in 1 minute? Christ tells us we are to know the Word of God, so we study and meditate on the Bible. Paul wrote to Timothy, a pastor and preacher, but his advice is good for believers, "...preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching." (2 Timothy 4:2) Preach means to proclaim and proclaiming the Word is not just for preachers. The Word is for believers to mold their lives and the Word is for unbelievers to hear truth and we are to preach the Word in patience.

If we spend time studying and meditating on the Word of God it takes away the worry we have of being persecuted and for witnessing because of the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "...when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say. ²⁰ For it is not you who speak, but *it is* the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you."

(Matthew 10:19-20) Luther lived this as well as millions of others. Are we; are you ready to live this? Speaking the truth of Christ into people's lives is a great sign of love. Don't let the fear of rejection or not knowing the right thing to say keep you from the privilege of sharing the gospel. Where would we be today if people had not been willing to be obedient to God's Word and confront an abusive church and call for the return to the Bible? Another truism of Edmund Burke was, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." By the time of the 16th century the Catholic Church had progressed to a man made religion run by men desiring power at the expense of both God's Word and the people they were said to serve. Today the call for holding fast to the Word of God is still needed. There are many churches who for a variety of reasons have begun to compromise

the Word of God and by doing so no longer teach and live the Word of God – this is disobedience and heresy and both are sin that leads to false security and damnation. What are we – what are you and I to do? Have the resolve called for in the Scriptures.

Resolve

Luther and the others reformers followed Paul. Today we are to continue the reformation remembering it means to renew and restore the Word of God in our lives. Turn in your Bible to Ephesians chapter 6 where we read Paul's instructions for Christian daily living. Reading from chapter 6 beginning in verse 10, **“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.”** Our strength is 3 fold, just as the triune God is 3 in 1, just as a cord of 3 cannot easily be broken – our strength comes from the Holy Spirit, Study of God's Word and prayer. Continuing Paul's instruction, ¹¹ **“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.”** Luther said, **“If the devil were wise enough and would stand by in silence and let the gospel be preached, he would suffer less harm. For when there is no battle for the gospel it rusts and it finds no cause and no occasion to show its vigor and power. Therefore, nothing better can befall the gospel than that the world should fight it with force and cunning.”** Verse 12, **“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”** Without God the devil would be an enemy beyond us. Praise God the devil does not have spiritual wisdom for he does not have the Holy Spirit as God has given to his children. Luther said, **“For where God built a church, there the Devil would also build a chapel. ... The forces of good and evil are working within and around me, I must choose, and in a free will universe I do have a choice.”** Paul says because of the forces of evil in the world, ¹³ **“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done**

all, to stand firm.” Luther recognized as Christians we are born again by the Spirit to do battle. He said, “I was born to fight devils and factions. It is my business to remove obstacles, to cut down thorns, to fill up quagmires and to open and make straight paths. If I must have some failing let me rather speak the truth with too great sincerity than once to act the hypocrite and conceal the truth.”

Luther was echoing Paul’s instruction given him by God the Holy Spirit saying,¹⁴ “Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness...” Luther understood the battle before him was empowered by Christ saying, “This is the mystery of the riches of divine grace for sinners; for by a wonderful exchange our sins are now not ours but Christ's, and Christ's righteousness is not Christ's but ours.” Luther entered into battle and understood God has called believers into battle with a purpose, “This life therefore is not righteousness, but growth in righteousness, not health, but healing, not being but becoming, not rest but exercise. We are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it, the process is not yet finished, but it is going on, this is not the end, but it is the road. All does not yet gleam in glory, but all is being purified.”

Paul then says something interesting; our battle with evil is to be with the gospel of peace, through faith, he writes,¹⁵ “And, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.”¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

Both Paul and Luther recognized power is found in the Word of God. Luther said, “I put the Scriptures above all the sayings of the fathers, angels, men and devils. Here I take my stand. ...The best way to get rid of the Devil, if you cannot kill it *is* with the words of Holy Scripture...”

We ready for battle by seeking God's will, not our will, but God's. Paul instructs we are to be ¹⁸“praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.” Luther said, “Christians fight best on their knees. Whatever good may be done is done and brought about by prayer.”

The purpose of prayer is to change our heart and mind to the will of God and thus preparing us to live in boldness and love of the gospel of Christ. Paul continues, “To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, ¹⁹and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.” (Ephesians 6:10-20) Paul spoke boldly the gospel; Luther and the other reformers spoke boldly the gospel. Luther said, “To preach or proclaim Christ is to feed the soul, to justify it, to set it free, and to save it, if it believes the preaching. ... Even like as St. Paul was converted, just so are all others converted; for we all resist God, but the Holy Ghost draws the will of mankind, when he pleases, through preaching, *the proclaiming of the gospel.*”

Here we are – we are to continue reforming and restoring the gospel of Christ to a broken world. My beloved, are we prepared and ready, are you equipped for battle and you ready to enter into the great cosmic war of good vs. evil? God wins the war, but there are battles to be fought for the glory of Christ until our King returns. Prepare for battle and may our battle cry be the “Eternal truth found only in the Bible will set you free!” May our lives be marked by the 5 Solas of the Reformation: **Sola Scriptura** – The Scripture Alone is the Standard, **Soli Deo Gloria** – For the Glory of God Alone, **Solo Christo** – By Christ's Work Alone, **Sola Gratia** – Salvation by Grace Alone, **Sola Fide** – Justification by Faith Alone.

Amen!!