



Volume 7 Issue 11

West Suffolk Epistle West Suffolk Baptist Church



November 2020

Thoughtfully Reformed - Redemptively Relevant

What Is Reformation Day?

A single event on a single day changed the world. It was October 31, 1517. Brother Martin, a monk and a scholar, had struggled for years with his church, the church in Rome. He had been greatly disturbed by an unprecedented indulgence sale. The story has all the makings of a Hollywood blockbuster. Let's meet the cast.

First, there is the young bishop—too young by church laws—Albert of Mainz. Not only was he bishop over two bishoprics, he desired an additional archbishopric over Mainz. This, too, was against church laws. So Albert appealed to the pope in Rome, Leo X. From the De Medici family, Leo X greedily allowed his tastes to exceed his financial resources. Enter the artists and sculptors, Raphael and Michelangelo.

When Albert of Mainz appealed for a papal dispensation, Leo X was ready to deal. Albert, with the papal blessing, would sell indulgences for past, present, and future sins. All of this sickened the monk Martin Luther. Can we buy our way into heaven? Luther had to speak out.

But why October 31? November 1 held a special place in the church calendar as All Saints' Day. On November 1, 1517, a massive exhibit of newly acquired relics would be on display at Wittenberg, Luther's home city. Pilgrims would come from all over, genuflect before the relics, and take hundreds, if not thousands, of years off time in purgatory. Luther's soul grew even more vexed. None of this seemed right.

Martin Luther, a scholar, took quill in hand, dipped it in his inkwell and penned his Ninety-Five Theses on October 31, 1517. These were intended to spark a debate, to stir some soul-searching among his fellow brothers in the church. The Ninety-Five Theses sparked far more than a debate. The Ninety-Five Theses also revealed the church was far beyond rehabilitation. It needed a reformation. The church—and the world—would never be the same.

One of Luther's Ninety-Five Theses simply declares, *"The Church's true treasure is the gospel of Jesus Christ."* That alone is the meaning of Reformation Day. The church had lost sight of the gospel because it had long ago papered over the pages of God's Word with layer upon layer of tradition. Mere tradition often brings about systems of works, of earning your way back to God. It was true of the Pharisees, and it was true of medieval Roman Catholicism. Didn't Christ Himself say, *"My yoke is easy and My burden is light"?* Reformation Day celebrates the joyful beauty of the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ.

What is Reformation Day? It is the day the light of the gospel broke forth out of darkness. It was the day that began the Protestant Reformation. It was a day that led to Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox, and many other Reformers helping the church find its way back to God's Word as the only supreme authority for faith and life and leading the church back to the glorious doctrines of justification by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. It kindled the fires of missionary endeavors, it led to hymn writing and congregational singing, and it led to the centrality of the sermon and preaching for the people of God. It is the celebration of a theological, ecclesiastical, and cultural transformation.

So we celebrate Reformation Day. This day reminds us to be thankful for our past and to the monk turned Reformer. What's more, this day reminds us of our duty, our obligation, to keep the light of the gospel at the center of all we do. ~ *Dr. Stephen J. Nichols - President of Reformation Bible College*



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Martin Luther's Definition of Faith

Faith is not what some people think it is. Their human dream is a delusion. Because they observe that faith is not followed by good works or a better life, they fall into error, even though they speak and hear much about faith. "Faith is not enough," they say, "You must do good works, you must be pious to be saved." They think that, when you hear the gospel, you start working, creating by your own strength a thankful heart which says, "I believe." That is what they think true faith is. But, because this is a human idea, a dream, the heart never learns anything from it, so it does nothing and reform doesn't come from this 'faith,' either.

Instead, faith is God's work in us, that changes us and gives new birth from God. (John 1:13). It kills the Old Adam and makes us completely different people. It changes our hearts, our spirits, our thoughts and all our powers. It brings the Holy Spirit with it. Yes, it is a living, creative, active and powerful thing, this faith. Faith cannot help doing good works constantly. It doesn't stop to ask if good works ought to be done, but before anyone asks, it already has done them and continues to do them without ceasing. Anyone who does not do good works in this manner is an unbeliever. He stumbles around and looks for faith and good works, even though he does not know what faith or good works are. Yet he gossips and chatters about faith and good works with many words.

Faith is a living, bold trust in God's grace, so certain of God's favor that it would risk death a thousand times trusting in it. Such confidence and knowledge of God's grace makes you happy, joyful and bold in your relationship to God and all creatures. The Holy Spirit makes this happen through faith. Because of it, you freely, willingly and joyfully do good to everyone, serve everyone, suffer all kinds of things, love and praise the God who has shown you such grace. Thus, it is just as impossible to separate faith and works as it is to separate heat and light from fire! Therefore, watch out for your own false ideas and guard against good-for-nothing gossips, who think they're smart enough to define faith and works, but really are the greatest of fools. Ask God to work faith in you, or you will remain forever without faith, no matter what you wish, say or can do. ~ *Martin Luther*

Exposing the Permissive Will of God

The distinction between the sovereign will of God and the permissive will of God is fraught with peril and tends to generate untold confusion.

In ordinary language, the term permission suggests some sort of positive sanction. To say that God "allows" or "permits" evil does not mean that He sanctions it in the sense that He approves of it. It is easy to discern that God never permits sin in the sense that He sanctions it in His creatures.

What is usually meant by divine permission is that God simply lets it happen. That is, He does not directly intervene to prevent its happening. Here is where grave dangers lurk. Some theologies view this drama as if God were impotent to do anything about human sin.

This view makes man sovereign, not God. God is reduced to the role of spectator or cheerleader, by which God's exercise in providence is that of a helpless Father who, having done all He can do, must now sit back and simply hope for the best. He permits what He cannot help but permit because He has no sovereign power over it. This ghastly view is not merely a defective view of theism; it is unvarnished atheism. ~ *Dr. R.C. Sproul, Sr.*



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Christian Duty in a Pagan Culture

In an increasingly secular and ungodly culture, many Christians wonder about their role and duty. Should we lobby for rights that have traditionally belonged to us? Should we make every effort to implement a Christian agenda? Should we completely reform the government? The Bible speaks clearly about our duty, and it's all about governing our character.

Over a quarter of a century ago the late apologist and Christian thinker Francis Schaeffer asked the question, "*How should we then live?*" in his landmark book of the same title. The relevance of that question has not changed. If anything, it has only become more urgent for believers at the dawn of a new century and millennium.

Society has taken a nose dive into greater and greater evil, debauchery, violence, and corruption, and outside the church, the landscape seems filled with "*modern barbarians.*" The temptation is strong for believers to jump into the cultural fray as self-righteous social/political reformers and condescending moralizers. All the while those self-styled Christian activists forget or ignore their true mission in the world and completely miss the answer to Schaeffer's question—an answer that God's Word spells out quite clearly.

As noble as a desire to reform society may be, and as stirring as the emotions sometimes are when involved in the "*rightness*" of a political cause, those activities are not to be the Christian's chief priorities. God does not call the church to influence the culture by promoting legislation and court rulings that advance a Scripture point of view. Nor does He condone any type of radical activism that would avoid tax obligations, disobey or seek removal of government officials we don't agree with, or spend an inordinate amount of time campaigning for a so-called Christian slate of candidates.

The church will really change society for the better only when individual believers make their chief concern their own spiritual maturity, which means living in a way that honors God's commands and glorifies His name. Such a concern inherently includes a firm grasp on Scripture and an understanding that its primary mandate to us is to know Christ and proclaim His gospel. A godly attitude coupled with godly living makes the saving message of the gospel credible to the unsaved. If we claim to be saved but still convey proud, unloving attitudes toward the lost, our preaching and teaching—no matter how doctrinally orthodox or politically savvy and persuasive—will be ignored or rejected.

The New Testament is very clear about how we ought to embrace and live out our primary mission in a pagan society. One such example is in Titus 3:

Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, to malign no one, to be uncontentious, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.
(Titus 3:1-2)

Notice that Paul simply followed the Lord's model and did not expend time and energy admonishing believers on how to reform pagan culture's idolatrous, immoral, and corrupt practices. The apostle also did not call for believers to exercise civil disobedience to protest the Roman Empire's unjust laws or cruel punishments. Instead, his appeal was for Christians to proclaim the gospel and live lives that would give clear evidence of its transforming power.



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Christian Duty in a Pagan Culture *Continued from Page 3*

Believe it or not, Christians have obligations to a pagan society. When you live as God wants you to in an unbelieving culture, the Holy Spirit uses your life to draw the sinner by softening his attitude toward God (cf. 1 Peter 2:12).

Submission and Obedience

The first two duties—submission to government and obedience to all human authority—I've combined under one heading because they are so closely related. They are just one more reminder that Christians have certain requirements of attitude and conduct in relation to their secular leaders. Those reminders reiterate the idea that believers are not exempt from following civil laws and directives, unless such orders contradict the Word and will of God (see Acts 4:18-20; 5:40-42). That twofold prompting also gives us the scriptural premise from which all our other public actions ought to flow.

Readiness for Good Works

Our third major duty toward society is to have a readiness *"for every good deed."* Here the apostle Paul is not referring to some minimal, reluctant adherence to doing what we already know is right, but to a sincere willingness and heart preparation to do good works to everyone, as we have the opportunity. No matter how antagonistic the people around us may be, we are to be kind servants to them when their lives intersect with ours. *"So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith"* (Galatians 6:10).

God wants us to be recognized for what we might call *"consistent and aggressive goodness"*—good deeds done out of love for the Lord and love for other people.

Respectful in Speech

Next, we have the scriptural duty of not maligning anyone, not even those unbelievers who are most antagonistic toward biblical standards. Titus 3:2 begins with Paul's command *"to malign no one,"* and refers to cursing, slandering, and treating with contempt. In fact the Greek term rendered *"malign"* is the one from which we derive the English word blasphemy. We can never use such speech with a righteous motive.

It is sad that many believers today speak scornfully of politicians and other public figures. When they do that, they actually manifest a basic disregard of their responsibility toward authority and hinder God's redemptive plan. In another of Paul's pastoral letters, he urges us to pray for everyone's salvation, even for that of those who occupy official positions of authority (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

Peaceful and Gentle

Paul goes on in verse 2 to mention two more Christian duties. *First*, he reminds us that we must be friendly and peaceful toward the lost, not belligerent and quarrelsome. In the ungodly, postmodern world we live in, it's easy to condemn those who contribute to the culture's demise and write them off as corrupt sinners who will never change.



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Christian Duty in a Pagan Culture *Continued from Page 4*

If God's love for the world was so broad and intense that His Son died for a multitude of sinners (John 3:16), how can we who have received that redeeming grace be harsh and unloving toward those who have not yet received it? Until God is pleased to save an individual, he or she is going to behave like an unbeliever, and it is wrong for us, meanwhile, to treat them contemptuously for acting according to their nature.

Secondly, Paul reminds us that we must be "gentle," a word in the Greek that means being fair, moderate, and forbearing toward others. Some have translated this term "sweet reasonableness," a definition denoting an attitude that does not hold grudges but gives others the benefit of the doubt.

Consideration for Others

The final duty in the apostle Paul's list of reminders to believers is that they should be "*showing every consideration for all men*" (1 Timothy 2:2). The word rendered "*consideration*" always has a New Testament meaning of genuine concern for others.

Scripture clearly describes Jesus as the One supremely characterized by humility, or consideration for everyone—the same trait that should identify His followers. Jesus used the word to depict Himself when He told His followers, "*Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls*" (Matthew 11:29, emphasis added).

All our dealings with unbelievers should display that kind of attitude, as the apostle Peter also wrote: "*Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence*" (1 Peter 3:15). Sincere, heartfelt consideration to all men is foundational for our Christian walk in a pagan society.

Our duty as we relate to an increasingly secular and ungodly culture is not to lobby for certain rights, the implementation of a Christian agenda, or the reformation of the government. Rather, God would have us continually to remember Paul's instructions to Titus and live them out as we seek to demonstrate His power and grace that can regenerate sinners. Changing people's hearts one individual at a time is the only way to bring meaningful, lasting change to our communities, our nation, and even the whole world. ~ *Dr. John MacArthur*

The Courage to be Reformed

When we come to grasp Reformed theology, it's not only our understanding of salvation that changes, but our understanding of everything. It's for this reason that when people wrestle through the rudimentary doctrines of Reformed theology and come to comprehend them, they often feel like they have been converted a second time. In fact, as many have admitted to me, the reality is that some have been converted for the very first time. It was through their examination of Reformed theology that they came face-to-face with the stark reality of their radical corruption and deadness in sin, God's unconditional election of His own and condemnation of others, Christ's actual accomplishment of redemption for His people, the Holy Spirit's effectual grace, the reason they persevere by God's preserving grace, and God's covenantal way of working in all of history for His glory.



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The Courage to be Reformed *Continued from Page 5*

When people realize that ultimately, they didn't choose God, but He chose them, they naturally come to a point of humble admission of the amazing grace of God toward them. It's only then, when we recognize what wretches we really are, that we can truly sing "*Amazing Grace*." And that is precisely what Reformed theology does: it transforms us from the inside out and leads us to sing—it leads us to worship our sovereign and triune, gracious, and loving God in all of life, not just on Sundays but every day and in all of life. Reformed theology isn't just a badge we wear when being Reformed is popular and cool, it's a theology that we live and breathe, confess, and defend even when it's under attack.

The Protestant Reformers of the sixteenth century, along with their fifteenth-century forerunners and their seventeenth-century descendants, did not teach and defend their doctrine because it was cool or popular, but because it was biblical, and they put their lives on the line for it. They were not only willing to die for the theology of Scripture, they were willing to live for it, to suffer for it, and to be considered fools for it. Make no mistake: the Reformers were bold and courageous not on account of their self-confidence and self-reliance but on account of the fact that they had been humbled by the gospel. They were courageous because they had been indwelt by the Holy Spirit and equipped to proclaim the light of truth in a dark age of lies. The truth they preached was not new; it was ancient. It was the doctrine of the martyrs, the fathers, the Apostles, and the patriarchs—it was the doctrine of God set forth in sacred Scripture.

The Reformers didn't make up their theology; rather, their theology made them who they were. The theology of Scripture made them Reformers. For they did not set out to be Reformers, *per se*—they set out to be faithful to God and faithful to Scripture. Neither the *solas* of the Reformation nor the doctrines of grace (the five points of Calvinism) were invented by the Reformers, nor were they by any means the sum total of Reformation doctrine. Rather, they became underlying doctrinal premises that served to help the church of subsequent eras confess and defend what she believes. Even today there are many who think they embrace Reformed theology, but their Reformed theology only runs as deep as the *solas* of the Reformation and the doctrines of grace. What's more, there are many who say they adhere to Reformed theology but do so without anyone knowing they are Reformed. Such "*closet Calvinists*" neither confess any of the historic Reformed confessions of the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries nor employ any distinctly Reformed theological language.

However, if we truly adhere to Reformed theology according to the historic Reformed confessions, we cannot help but be identified as Reformed. In truth, it's impossible to remain a "*closet Calvinist*," and it's impossible to remain Reformed without anyone knowing it—it will inevitably come out. To be historically Reformed, one must adhere to a Reformed confession, and not only adhere to it but confess it, proclaim it, and defend it. Reformed theology is fundamentally a confessional theology.

Reformed theology is also an all-encompassing theology. It changes not only what we know, it changes how we know what we know. It not only changes our understanding of God, it changes our understanding of ourselves. Indeed, it not only changes our view of salvation, it changes how we worship, how we evangelize, how we raise our children, how we treat the church, how we pray, how we study Scripture—it changes how we live, move, and have our being. Reformed theology is not a theology that we can hide, and it is not a theology to which we can merely pay lip service. For that has been the habit of heretics and theological progressives throughout history. They claim to adhere to their Reformed confessions, but they never actually confess them.



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The Courage to be Reformed *Continued from Page 6*

They claim to be Reformed only when they are on the defensive—when their progressive (albeit popular) theology is called into question, and, if they are pastors, only when their jobs are on the line. While theological liberals might be in churches and denominations that identify as “*Reformed*,” they are ashamed of such an identity and have come to believe that being known as “*Reformed*” is a stumbling block to some and an offense to others. Moreover, according to the historic, ordinary marks of the church—the pure preaching of the Word of God, prayer according to the Word of God, the right use of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, and the consistent practice of church discipline—such “*Reformed*” churches are often not even true churches. Today, there are many laypeople and pastors who are in traditionally Reformed and Protestant churches and denominations who, along with their churches and denominations, left their Reformed moorings and rejected their confessions years ago.

Contrary to this trend, what we most need are men in the pulpit who have the courage to be Reformed—men who aren’t ashamed of the faith once delivered to the saints but who are ready to contend for it, not with lip service but with all their life and all their might. We need men in the pulpit who are bold and unwavering in their proclamation of the truth and who are at the same time gracious and compassionate. We need men who will preach the unvarnished truth of Reformed theology in season and out of season, not with a finger pointing in the face but with an arm around the shoulder. We need men who love the Reformed confessions precisely because they love the Lord our God and His unchanging, inspired, and authoritative Word. It’s only when we have men in the pulpit who have the courage to be Reformed that we will have people in the pew who grasp Reformed theology and its effects in all of life, so that we might love God more with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and love our neighbor as ourselves. That is the theology that reformed the church in the sixteenth century, and that is the only theology that will bring reformation and revival in the twenty-first century. For in our day of radical progressive theological liberalism, the most radical thing we can be is orthodox according to our Reformed confessions, yet not with arrogance but with courage and compassion for the church and for the lost, all for the glory of God, and His glory alone. ~ *Dr. Burk Parsons*

Justification by Faith Alone

Celebrations in 2017 of the five-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation will return again and again to the subject of justification by faith alone, one of the Reformation’s most critical rediscoveries. That subject is so important that in one sense we cannot study it enough. On the other hand, part of me wonders why we seem to have so much trouble understanding and holding on to a doctrine so vital. Is the doctrine so complicated that we cannot remember it? Is the Bible’s teaching so obscure that we cannot penetrate it?

In fact, the Bible is crystal clear and the doctrine is relatively simple. So why did so many in the church miss it before—and after—the Reformation? Why do some Protestant biblical scholars suggest that the Bible is not clear or that Martin Luther and John Calvin were wrong about what Paul teaches? Why do some Protestant theologians compromise and/or confuse the doctrine? Why do some Protestant church leaders see no serious differences between their views on justification and those of the Roman Catholic Church? Of course, books have been written to answer these questions, but on one level the answer is easy: failure to embrace the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith is a spiritual problem—a very serious spiritual failing.



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Justification by Faith Alone

Continued from Page 7

It is a failure to grasp fully the Bible's teaching on God, Christ, sin, grace, faith, and peace with God. The spiritual problem for those who reject the biblical doctrine of justification recovered by the Reformation is that they cannot give all glory to God. They must make a contribution, however small, to their own justification. They are not content with Christ alone and His grace alone.

Martin Luther came to understand justification only after a spiritual crisis in his life. John Calvin came to understand it after his conversion. For both of them, study of the Bible showed them the character of the work of Christ and the role of faith in receiving His mercy and the peace of conscience that the Christian can enjoy.

For Lutherans, the doctrine is given eloquent expression in the Augsburg Confession (1530), Article IV:

It is also taught among us that we cannot obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God by our own merits, works, or satisfactions, but that we receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith, when we believe that Christ suffered for us and that for his sake our sin is forgiven and righteousness and eternal life are given to us. For God will regard and reckon this faith as righteousness, as Paul says in Romans 3:21–26 and 4:5.

John Calvin wrote clearly and passionately as a young man of twenty-five about this doctrine in the first chapter of his 1536 Institutes of the Christian Religion:

Christ's righteousness, which alone can bear the sight of God because it alone is perfect, must appear in court on our behalf, and stand surety for us in judgment. Received from God, this righteousness is brought to us and imputed to us, just as if it were ours. (I.32)

Calvin greatly expanded his Institutes in 1541 and devoted a whole chapter to justification. There he wrote that justification:

is the principal article of the Christian religion, so that each one may take greater pains and care to know it. For if we do not know what God's will toward us is, we have no foundation on which to establish our salvation or build us up in piety and fear of God. (I.6)

We see here how Calvin stressed both the objective and the subjective sides of justification. Objectively, we are actually made right with God by the work of Christ, which the sinner receives by faith alone. Subjectively, when we understand justification, we experience peace with God and growing confidence in living for God. Surely, this doctrine is absolutely central to Christian faith and life.

The Reformers found this doctrine of justification in many places in the Bible, but recognized that Paul presented it with particular clarity in his letter to the Romans. While Romans contains profound and occasionally difficult matters, the main line of Paul's message is clear and straightforward. We can see its simplicity by highlighting the main elements of his teaching:



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Justification by Faith Alone *Continued from Page 8*

None is righteous, no, not one. (3:10)

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (3:23)

By works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight. (3:20)

The righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law ... the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. (3:21–22)

[We are] justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. (3:24–25)

What then becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. (3:27)

Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work, but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness. (4:4–5)

That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his [Abraham's] offspring. (4:16)

No distrust made him [Abraham] waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. (4:20–21)

Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (5:1–2)

God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (5:8)

If many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift of grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. (5:15)

Paul's doctrine of justification shows clearly (1) that all humans are sinners, helpless to save themselves; (2) that only the perfect work of Jesus saves sinners; (3) that only faith—not works at all—receives the saving effect of Jesus' work; (4) that God in Christ receives all the glory for justification; (5) that this justification brings peace to the heart and mind of the believer.

In the midst of our celebrations of the Reformation, let us not lose the crucial and simple center: *"In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself. ... For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God"* (2 Corinthians 5:19–21). This message is the gospel that the whole world needs. It is also the message that every church and every Christian heart needs. Let us celebrate and teach it clearly and faithfully this year and every year. ~ **Dr. W. Robert Godfrey - Chairman of Ligonier Ministries**



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Thoughtfully Reformed - Redemptively Relevant

If you have a November birthday or anniversary that is not posted here or is listed in error, please e-mail Walt (gwlcfl0415@gmail.com).

Birthdays and Anniversaries Corner November 2020

*Brenda A. (1)
Conley L. (1)
Diana K. (3)
April F. (5)
Abigail W. (7)
LeAnn M. (10)*

*Audrey D. (11)
Luke P. (15)
Malcolm H. (19)
Walt L. (20)
Althea Marie F. (21)
Jesse W. (29)*

*Gene and Brenda A. (22)
Marlin and Sadie H. (22)*

“You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life. I do not receive glory from men; but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves. I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him” (John 5:39–43).

Merely knowing the facts of Scripture, without hiding them in your heart and acting on them, will not bring the blessings of salvation. That was the problem of Jewish unbelievers. Jesus understood their searching of the Scriptures in a desperate and futile attempt to find the key to eternal life. But ironically, they failed to grasp that it is those very Scriptures “that testify about” Jesus.

The Bible cannot be properly understood apart from the Holy Spirit’s illumination or a transformed mind. The Jews’ zeal for the Scripture was commendable, but because they were unwilling to come to Jesus—the sole source of eternal life—their knowledge did not result in salvation. Clinging in their stubborn unbelief to a superficial system of self-righteousness by works, they became ignorant of “God’s righteousness and [sought] to establish their own” (Romans 10:3). But self-righteousness cannot save anyone, since “all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment” (Isaiah 64:6).



***West Suffolk Baptist Church
Leadership***

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