



Collusion or Collision
The Cost of Reformation
From Sermon 6.27.21

Read 2 Timothy 1:12-14

Review from Sunday's sermon: Persecution of Christianity did not end following Rome's acceptance. Over the Middle Ages, the Church grew corrupt, works-based, and subject to tradition over Scripture. The powers that be never welcome reformation. Several trailblazers began to surface and question the doctrines and practices of the Church. Most were martyred for even suggesting change. Truth, however, should always override cost. The Reformers weren't seeking rebellion, but purification.

1. It is critically important to identify and define our terms. The enemy, the critics, and the deceivers in the Church use the same terms, but with very different meanings. In each pair below, give our definition and difference and discuss those you've seen misused.

Error: Getting an interpretation of Scripture or doctrine incorrect or incomplete. Yet, willing to learn.
Vs.

Heresy: Rejecting a Scripture or doctrine. Making God relative/evolving. Elevating tradition as equal to or above the authority of Scripture. Claiming God is still speaking and gave someone the new way.

Reform/Reformer: Seeing problems in the Church and calling for a return to Scripture/biblical model
Vs.

Restore/Restorationist: Seeing problems in the Church and claiming a new scripture and model.

Suffering: the common/universal experience of living in a fallen world. Sin, disasters, health, death...
Vs.

Persecution: distinct hardship from the world, devil, culture for adherence to faithful Christianity.

2. What did the Reformers of the 16th Century revolt against? What had the Catholic Church become? The church had, really, become a repackaged version of Old Testament Judaism, only with Jesus on the label. They had reinstated a clergy hierarchy, salvation by works, the elevation of tradition, an uneducated priesthood, a neglect of the Scriptures, and collusion with the State. See also Mark 7:8-9 & Galatians 3:2-3.

2a. What price did most face for suggesting/instituting reformation? Excommunication, confiscation, prison, terrible death.

3. What's the inherent danger of collusion between Church and State? Enslavement of the laity. Any questioning of the Church is viewed as treason by the State. Any pushing back on the State is considered heresy and apostasy by the Church. One threatens your eternity...the other threatens your life.

3a. How are we seeing a comeback of this union today? The State is calling for inclusion and tolerance in the Church. They try to dictate the definition of family, marriage, and education. They now feel they can restrict worship and preaching. Many in the Church are happy to oblige for the greater good. The Church is caving to the culture, which will soon decide what teaching and doctrine are best.

4. Discuss the seemingly contradictory calls in the Bible for the Church to be unified in one place, yet the necessity of division in others. For example: See *Ephesians 4:1-6* & *1 Timothy 6:3-5*. How do we reconcile the two? God certainly wants the Church unified. But, unified under common calling and truth. It's never "unity at all costs". We can disagree on a non-essential matter. But, we are mandated to separate when one party refuses to submit to Scripture.