

Protestant Reformation

What Was the 'Secret' of the Reformation?

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Part 8 [final] of a series. [Read part 7.](#)

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What was the "secret" that brought the Reformation about? As Martyn Lloyd-Jones pointed out, the "secret" of the Reformation was not the Reformers, but their God. Do you want a renewal of the Reformation in our time? Here is the only Source.

Continuing his address, *Remembering the Reformation*,¹ Martyn Lloyd-Jones called upon his audience to recognize the one thing that is necessary above all else, to have a renewal of the Reformation in our day:

What was the secret of it all? It was not the men, as I have been trying to show you, great as they were. It was God! God in His sovereignty raising up His men. And God knows what He is doing. Look at the gifts He gave John Knox as a natural man; look at the mind He gave to Calvin and the training He gave him as a lawyer to prepare him for his great work; look at Martin Luther, that volcano of a man; God preparing His men in the different nations and countries. Of course, even before He produced them, He had been preparing the way for them. Let us never forget John Wyclif and John Hus; let us never forget the Waldensians and all the martyrs of these terrible Middle Ages! God was preparing the way; He sent His men at the right moment, and the mighty events followed.

Righteousness Alone Exalts a Nation

Shall I try to draw certain lessons for ourselves? The conclusion of all this is that righteousness, and righteousness alone, exalts a nation, and there is no righteousness without a preceding godliness. The times are cruel; the world is in a desperate plight; there is an appalling moral breakdown before our eyes. Marriage is breaking down, home life disappearing, little children not knowing home and loving parents. It is a tragedy! Can nothing be done? Is there no hope?

To me the main message of the Protestant Reformation of [five] hundred years ago is to point us to the one and only hope. Things were bad in Scotland when God called John Knox and sent him out as a burning flame and the others with him. Our position is not hopeless, for God remains, and with God nothing shall be impossible! The conditions could not have been worse than they were immediately before the Reformation; yet in spite of that the change came. Why? Because God was there and God sent it.

Where is the Lord God of Elijah?

So the only question we need ask is the old question of Elisha face to face with his problem: 'Where is the Lord God of Elijah?' And I want to ask that question this evening: Where is the God of John Knox? Our meeting will have been in vain if we do not ask that question. If we stop with John Knox it is not enough; the question is, Where is the God of John Knox, He who can give us the power, the authority, the might, the courage, and everything we need, where is He? How can we find Him?

I suggest to you that the answer is to be found again in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in chapter 4 this time, in verses 14 to 16. They seem to me not inappropriate as I end this evening. How can we find this God? Here is the answer: 'Let us hold fast the confession.'...You will never find the God of John

Knox without that. 'Seeing then that we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast the confession'. What is the confession? It is the confession about 'Jesus the Son of God', our great high priest...We must have it because without it, who dares go into the presence of God?

As it is put there in Hebrews 4:16: 'Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace.' What is the 'therefore'? The knowledge that we possess, that we have got this great high priest that has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, and that He is 'touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin'.

Where is the God of Elijah? How can we find Him? How can we receive the power that we need? We must go back to the confession, go back to the faith, go back to the Word, believe its truths, and in the light of it go with boldness; confidence, assurance, to the throne of grace; to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Jesus Christ the Same Yesterday, Today, Forever

We are living in an appalling time of need, sin and evil rampant; the whole world is quaking and shaking. Is the end upon us? The times are alarming - 'time of need'. The one thing necessary is to find this God, and there seated at His right hand, the One who has been in this world and knows all about it, has seen its shame, its sin, its vileness, its rottenness face to face; friend of publicans and sinners, a Man who knew the hatred and the animosity of the Pharisees, scribes and Sadducees, the doctors of the law, and Pontius Pilate.

The whole world was against Him, and yet He triumphed through it all; He is there, and He is our representative and high priest. Believe in Him, hold fast to

the confession. Let us go in His name with boldness unto the throne of grace, and as certainly as we do so we shall obtain the mercy that we need for our sinfulness and unfaithfulness, and we shall be given the grace to help us in our time of need, in our day and generation.

The God of John Knox is still there, and still the same, and thank God, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and for ever. Oh, that we might know the God of John Knox!

References:

1. Quotations in this article are from D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, "Remembering the Reformation" in *Knowing the Times: Addresses Delivered on Various Occasions, 1942-1977* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth. 1989).

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