

What's in a Name? 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16

- Do you know what your name means?
- What's in a name? **Proverbs 22:1**
- Do you know what our Church name means – Brunswick “Reformed”?

In one sense, **all protestant churches could have “reformed” in their name**, because they all have their roots in the 16th cent. Protestant Reformation.

The 16th century was a time in history when the Church truly needed to be “reformed” or “re-established” upon the foundation of the Word of God!

The Word of God had been all but lost! Only a select few could even read Scripture, let alone understand it and proclaim God's truth to the world!

The Church had abandoned its greatest defensive & offensive weapon in its battle against the forces of evil in this world! **Ephesians 6:16-17**

The Church without the Word of God as its sole authority is a Church left defenseless and powerless against sin and the advances of the evil one.

Utter chaos marked this era of time when the Word of God was not held in its proper place of authority – **It came to be known as the Dark ages!**

If we aren't careful, if we aren't intentional with keeping what God has given to us to be His authoritative Word in our lives, than we too might fall prey to an era of utter chaos and darkness as well!

The Reformation was a time when God raised up brave & bold men, willing to give their lives, so that the Word of God would never be lost!

- Can you imagine life w/out the Word of God, w/out knowing the gospel, w/out knowing all that God has done & all that He promises to do?
- Can you imagine a time where reading and sharing the Word of God in your own language was against the law and would cost you your life?
- Can you imagine a world where a man's bones were dug up 40 yrs after his death & burned, simply because he translated the Bible into English?
- Can you imagine a world where a man was tied to a stake, strangled & burned for the crime of printing Bibles in the English language?
- Can you imagine a world where 5 men & 2 women were burned alive b/c **they taught their children the “Lord's Prayer” in their own tongue?**

There were thousands who lost their lives so that you & I could hold God's Word in our own hands, read it in our own tongue, & apply it to our own lives!

To have the word “reformed” in our name is to make a statement about our identity! **“We are a church that stands upon the solid foundation of God's Word!”**

Now isn't that something, not only worth retaining, but worth celebrating as a name that is truly **“to be chosen rather than great riches.” Proverbs 22:1**

What was true of this Protestant Reformation era, was also true in the city of Thessalonica, during the time that Paul planted a church there.

1 Thess. 2:13 – “And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.”

Paul had his fears, that because his time with the Thessalonian Christians was brief & due to the persecution they both faced, that they might reject the God inspired message that he came proclaiming to them in Christ.

But the Word of God was embraced, affirmed, & transformative in their lives!

Paul was overjoyed at the news, & He compared the Thessalonian Christians to the Church in Judea who also suffered much but held on to the Word of truth!

The sad reality is that God's Word will never be received without opposition

- If the prophets who spoke on behalf of God were rejected
- If Jesus who is the Word of God incarnate was put to death
- If Paul and the other apostles who God had called to be the instruments of proclaiming God's Word faced great and ongoing opposition
- If the reformers were declared heretics & had to hide away to survive
- If so many who walked with Jesus in the flesh still rejected His message

How could the Thessalonian Christians expect anything less, & how could we expect anything less today? **We are on enemy soil, but on the winning side!**

Holding Scripture to be the very Word of God, w/out error, w/out compromise & as being completely authoritative in our lives will not be popular, & **there will be a cost**, but when it's all said and done what side of history will we be on?

We all must make a choice as to what we will do with what God has given us in His Word! “To live in light of Christ's coming” is to live with God's Word as our sole authority in all areas of faith and life!

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