



St Johns Lent Course 2022

Session 2 Mar 16th 2022

The Medieval Church and the Road to Reformation

Review and Introduction

- Acts of the Apostles
- Numerical and Geographical growth
- The Church Fathers
- The Development of Christian doctrine based on the Canons; the Councils and the Creeds
- The impact of persecution
- Conversion of Constantine

The Road to Reformation begins early and goes through 3 stages!

Stage 1. The Early Ages 100-400AD

- Regionalisation of Bishops
- Magical View of the Sacraments
- Established Religion

2 Reactions

- (a) Montanism- charismatic movement
- (b) Monasticism – as hermits and as communities

Stage 2. The Dark Ages 400-1000 Ad

- The Life and Writings of Augustine Bishop of Hippo "Confessions" and "City of God"
- The Fall of Rome
- The Power of church and state
- The Holy Roman Empire
- The amalgamation of church and state did not go unopposed.
- (a) The Division of the Church into the Western and Eastern Traditions.
(Catholic and Orthodox respectively)
- (b) The evangelisation of the British Isles
- © The emergence of Celtic Christianity in Britain
- (d) The Rise of Islam



Stage 3. The Middle Ages 1000-1500AD

Negative Influences

- Corrupt papacy
- Abuse of power
- Patronage
- The use of force
- Corrupt practices
- Schism

Positive Influences

- The survival of Biblical Christianity (eg Waldensians)
- The influence of godly leadership- Bernard of Clairvaux and Francis of Assisi; Thomas a Kempis etc
- Godly scholarship eg Aquinas
- Personal piety – eg Catherine of Siena and Julian of Norwich
- The age of learning and discovery
- The influence and ministry of John Wycliffe “The Morning star of the Reformation”
- Protest movements in Europe John Hus in Prague
- The work of William Tyndale “The Father of the English Bible” who translated the Bible into common English by 1525 - some 90 % of his words eventually passed into the King James Bible

Discussion Questions

- Look at 1 Cor 11 17-34 This Letter was written c AD52 and already there were problems with the Lord's Supper at Corinth. What were they? What instructions does Paul give?
- Talk as a group about how you feel when you attend and take Holy Communion? Is it just symbolic or is there a deeper reality?.
- What does Heb 4.14-16 tell us about Jesus as our Great High Priest?
- What is a Priest today? This period of history saw the emergence of a priestly "caste" How do we see "priesthood" and "ministry" today.
- The preparation for the Reformation took hundreds of years. reflect as a group on how, in your life time, you have seen God at work through events in your personal lives and in church life bringing renewal.



1 Corinthians 11: 17-34

¹⁷ In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. ¹⁸ In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. ¹⁹ No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval. ²⁰ So then, when you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, ²¹ for when you are eating, some of you go ahead with your own private suppers. As a result, one person remains hungry and another gets drunk. ²² Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God by humiliating those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? Certainly not in this matter!

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' ²⁵ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' ²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

²⁷ So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. ²⁹ For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. ³⁰ That is why many among you are weak and ill, and a number of you have fallen asleep. ³¹ But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment. ³² Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world.

³³ So then, my brothers and sisters, when you gather to eat, you should all eat together. ³⁴ Anyone who is hungry should eat something at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment.

And when I come I will give further instructions.



Hebrews 4: 14-16

¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven,^[a] Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to feel sympathy for our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.