

Church History - the Need for Reformation

by David Guzik

David Guzik's sermon discusses the historical context and necessity of the Reformation in light of the Great Schism and the Inquisition's impact on the church and society.

Duration: 38:36

Scripture: Matthew 23:4, Matthew 28:19, Acts 4:12

Topics: "Church Reformation", "Christian History"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the need for the Reformation in the Christian kingdom of Scenic Valley. They highlight the Great Schism, a period from 1378 to 1417 when there were multiple Popes simultaneously, causing division and corruption within the church. The financial motives behind this division are also mentioned, with Christians forbidding interest charges but relying on Jews for banking services. The sermon emphasizes the persecution of those who questioned church doctrines, such as the belief in the actual presence of Jesus in the sacraments, leading to the confiscation of their belongings as a means to enforce conformity.

Transcript

We're going to talk about what is now the fourth section of church history. Now we're going to talk, and we'll spend several weeks talking about the Reformation. And today what we're going to focus on, and I don't know how much material we have, we may end a little bit early, but we're going to be talking about the need for the Reformation.

Why there needed to be a Reformation. First of all, there was a tremendous difficulty or competition, or whatever you want to call it, between the popes and the kings and one another. We talked about this before, but we'll talk about it in terms today of something called the Great Schism.

What's a schism? It's a divide. It's a division. You could say the Great Division, the Great Divide.

The Great Schism lasted from 1378 to 1417. And basically the problem was that during this period there were essentially two or sometimes three popes at the same time. This is kind of how it started.

One of the popes, and his name was, I think it was Clement the, if I have it down here correctly, it was Clement VII, moved the pope's headquarters from Rome, Italy, to a place called Avignon. Avignon, which is in France. He moved the headquarters of the papacy from Rome, Italy, to Avignon, France.

Why? Why would he do that? Because of King Philip, King Philip of France, who was this guy's biggest backer. And you need to understand something. At this time, Italy was not one nation.

It was a hodgepodge of different principalities and, you know, small little kingdoms and this and that, always at war with each other. And so Rome would get kicked around and attacked like a political football between people all the time. It was just always a mess.

And so to escape this and to find refuge and protection, the pope moved headquarters from Rome, Italy, to Avignon, France. He does this mainly because he's allied with King Philip of France, right? Now, does King Philip of France have enemies among other kings? Sure. Who would you expect? The English, the Germans.

By the way, I said there was no unified Italy, just a hodgepodge of a bunch of different minor kings and princes and principalities and all these different things. Germany was the same way. There was no unified Germany.

You know, you talked about the German Empire, but it was not a single confederation. So you've got all these German princes and the King of England and all these different people. You see, basically, different political factions, backed by kings of different nations, recognize different popes.

So, if you're the King of England, and the pope is cozying up to your enemy, King Philip. This is your enemy. And he is so cozy with King Philip that he moves papal headquarters from Rome to Avignon, France.

King Philip's backyard. Do you like that? No. You hate it.

Now, why do the kings even care what the pope does? Do you think rulers today care all that much what the pope does? In one sense, they do. The pope today had a huge amount to do with the fall of communism in Europe. But that's nothing compared to what the popes had power back then.

And one of the reasons why popes had a lot of power was because in any given country, like England, for example, the church owned something like one-third of the land. One-third of the land is ruled by the pope. You don't like this if you're the King of England.

Because, number one, that means one-third of the land is not paying tax revenue to you. It also means that one-third of your nation's wealth and influence and power and prestige is totally out of your control. So this is a heavy thing.

You're the King of England. You do not like it that the pope is that cozy with the King of France. So what do you do? So if you're the King of England, you don't want some French pope over you.

I mean, he's an Italian guy, but he's in the pocket of the French king. So what do you do? Yeah, let's make our own pope. Let them have their pope in Avignon.

We'll make another pope in Rome. Now, let's say you're the pope in Avignon. What do you do when you hear they've set up another pope in Rome? You excommunicate the dude, right? You can't have two popes, can you? You can't have two heirs to Peter's throne.

So what do you do? This guy excommunicates this guy. Well, what does this guy do? You're not going to excommunicate me, mister. I'm excommunicating you.

And so this guy excommunicates this guy. And so you get all these countries backing these guys. The Avignon pope was backed by France, Naples, Sicily, Spain, Scotland.

Who's backing the Roman guy? Well, you've got England, the German princes. Again, there's no one Germany, but we'll just say the German princes. Hungary, Scandinavians.

See? It's split along these lines. It's just a huge mess. Now, people look upon this and they're grieved, aren't they? I mean, this is... Let's remember how important the pope was, right? The pope has the power to send you to heaven or hell.

The pope has the power to free somebody from purgatory. That's how they're thinking, right? It's a serious, serious deal to have two competing popes, each one excommunicating each other. So what do you do? People got so sick of it that they called a council.

Council of Constance. They said, you know what? We're going to call a council of all the bishops, of all the leaders of the church, and we're going to sit down and settle this issue. Now, before you can settle an issue like that, you have to have the authority to settle the issue, right? Does a council have the authority to say to one pope, you're not the pope, and to say to another pope, you are the pope.

Well, the council of Constance, when the first thing it did, was it asserted its authority. Now, as we've talked about before, there's a rich history of councils in the history of the church, right? You got the council of Nicaea. We talked about that a couple weeks ago.

You got the council of Chalcedon. You got all these other councils. I mean, when critical issues in the church really needed to be decided, they would call what they would term an ecumenical council.

Let's get together the churches, let's get together the leaders of the church, let's get them together, and they're going to come together in a council and decide this, right? Now, which has greater authority, a council or the pope? That's where the debate was, wasn't it? The councils said, you know what, the councils are higher than the pope. You think the pope's like that? The pope said, forget it. No council's telling us what to do.

But this was such a mess that they eventually got it submitted to the council, and what they did was the council of Constance deposed this guy, deposed this guy, and put in another guy named Martin V, and started a new papacy which was based in Rome. That's what they did, and they worked it all out. Now, the other thing that they tried to do was they tried to establish regular meetings of councils.

And again, the idea would be that, you know, you get together and meet regularly, and we'll help keep things in line. I mean, they looked at what a mess that the popes had made of things, and they said, we can't allow the power to reside in the popes. We have to put the power back in the councils.

But you know what? The rulings of the council of Constance were just pretty much ignored by the popes. This guy came in, established by a council. That's what, they deposed the other guys and put this guy in power, and when he comes in power, he goes, council? What council? I'm the pope.

I don't need a council. Get your council out of here. Now, this whole business of the great schism showed several things.

First of all, it showed what the great schism showed. It showed, number one, the political nature of the papacy. Right? This was a political office.

When you've got popes being backed by different kings, and that's what's going to determine who's on top and who's ruling what, you've got a mess on your hands. It also showed, and I could just say, the mess of the papacy. When you've got one pope condemning another and excommunicating another and fighting back and forth, I mean, it's just a mess.

It's just a whole mess. But the third thing that it showed was it showed the authority of the papacy. If there was ever a time when the councils of the church would have become stronger than the popes, this would have been the time.

But basically, the popes said, Thank you, council, for settling this issue for us. We don't have two popes. We don't have three popes.

By the way, I didn't ever explain how the third pope came in. Because when the council first suggested the third pope, the other two excommunicated him. And he excommunicated the other two.

So for a while there were three popes. But once the whole thing was sorted out, they basically said, Thank you, councils, for fixing this. But now we're back in charge.

And what they did when they were in charge, well, it wasn't very pretty. So let's talk about the second thing that kind of illustrates the need for the Reformation. And that is the Inquisition.

Now, the traditions of the Inquisition go pretty deep. In the year 1184, Pope Lucius III was concerned about heresy in the church. And so what he did was he required all bishops to inquire about the faith of his people.

He basically sent a directive out to the bishops. And let's say in those days there would have been a bishop over Simi Valley. So all the believers in Simi Valley would have been under the bishop.

They would have been required to swear allegiance to the correct doctrines and to see if there was any heresy going on. Maybe we should talk about this a little bit. How did you become a Christian during this time? Basically, you were born into a Christian land.

Let's take an example of Sweden. The king of Sweden is a Christian. If you live in his kingdom, you're a Christian too, right? Because it's a Christian kingdom.

So when you are born, where is your birth recorded and registered? At the church. And you're baptized and made a member of the church of Sweden. I mean, in Sweden they would call it Statskyrkan.

State church. You become a member of the state church when you're born and when you're baptized. Just right now, in the year 2000, Sweden is going to abolish the official government sponsorship of the state church.

When my wife Ingellil was born in Sweden, there's a picture of her being held. She's just a few days old, still in the hospital. Her being held by her father in a baptismal garment.

And there's about seven or eight fathers there. It's at the hospital, and they're going to be baptized into the church of Sweden. In those days, to be born in Sweden meant you would be baptized and become a

member of the church of Sweden.

So that's how you become a Christian. Now, were there exceptions to this? Yes. Here's the exceptions.

You might be a Jew, or you might be a Muslim. Now, of course, in Sweden you wouldn't have any Muslims. That's too far north.

But perhaps, say, in Spain, in Italy, there might be a Muslim family. Now, that Muslim family, they would obviously expect, OK, they're here as guests of this Christian nation. We're not going to impose our beliefs on them.

We wish they would become Christians, but they're not Christians, they're Muslims. Same things with the Jews. They would say, well, those are the Jews.

They're not really part of our Christian nation. They're here just kind of as guests. Because this is a Christian nation.

And so we don't expect their babies to be baptized and become members of the state church. The idea was of this Christian state, the Christian kingdom. And to belong to that state, to belong to that kingdom, meant you were a Christian.

So, in this kind of setting, the pope says, hey, you know, the bishop should inquire into the beliefs of the people. They were hoped that if a man was found guilty of heresy, that he'd be dealt with, maybe excommunicated, maybe he'd abandon his heresy and come back to the church. Now, later on, at the Fourth Lateran Council, they progressed a little more.

At the Fourth Lateran Council, Pope Innocent III provided for the punishing of heretics by confiscation. Let's put it to you this way. I'll give a hypothetical case, and I hope I'm not overstating it too much.

Here we have the Christian kingdom of Siena Valley. You're born into this. The person who's the king of this land decrees that you're born into here.

And so you have Antoine here, who's a nice guy and all. But you know what? Antoine is suspected of being a heretic. He's not coming to church every Sunday and receiving the sacraments.

Matter of fact, he's not so sure about those sacraments. He's not so sure that the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ resides in the bread and the wine. And maybe he's talked to Cathy about that, and said, you know, I really got some questions about that.

Well, you know, Cathy tells the priest, and the priest tells this, and they have a little interview with Antoine. Well, you know the first thing they're going to do? Based on the Fourth Lateran Council, the first thing to do is, we'll just take everything Antoine has. He has, you know, he's been defined as a heretic.

He needs to get the message, right? He needs to know he's wrong. What better way to help somebody know that they're wrong by going in their house and just taking all their stuff? Take all their stuff. Well, no, you're not very sorry.

You know why you're not very sorry? Because this develops later. Who gets a piece of the pie? You do. Because you were helpful, right? You were helpful in helping the authorities to find Antoine.

So you get, you know, a finder's fee of 20% or 25% of his stuff. Who has to enforce this? Does the church enforce this? No, the church doesn't want to get messy in all this. So the church commands the police to enforce it.

So the priest makes a call to the police and says, listen, you know, go out and take this guy, the heretic. Go and take all his stuff, give 25% to Cathy, and, you know, put the rest in the heretics fund for the investigation of future heretics. All right, fine.

And the police guys go, gosh, you know, we like Antoine. We don't want to do it. So you know what they say then? And this is what the Fourth Lateran Council established.

They said the pope or the bishop or whoever has the authority to say to the police, you don't do this, I'm going to excommunicate you. So the police had to do it or they would be excommunicated. Now, later on, take the year 1229.

It gets even more systematic. Pope Gregory IX, he was even more concerned about the rise of heresy. This was a time when some movements were raising up that were a threat to the church.

So one of the things they did is, first of all, they forbade the scriptures to the laity. This was basically the God of Bible, go to jail law. You were a Christian, you were a lay person, you were not ordained, you couldn't have a Bible.

Not you couldn't read the Bible, you couldn't have a Bible. Having a Bible could get you into trouble. You could go and have an ordained guy read it for you or stuff like that.

But they didn't want these unordained people with the Bible all by themselves. Who knows what they might come up with. Then the second thing they did was they put the Dominican friars.

Now, a Dominican friar, a friar is a leader among monks. They put Dominican friars in charge of ferreting out heresy. Now, what was significant about this, who did the Dominican friars answer to? They are a monastic order directly under the direction of the pope.

These guys were basically the popes, if you want to say bodyguards in this sense. Then you go to the year 1252, this was another big step, Pope Innocent IV, he authorized the use of torture to get information from heretics or confession from heretics. Now, why would they do that? Somebody step inside the mind of a person in 1252 and explain to me why the church would authorize the torture of heretics.

The mentality was, what's worse? If I were to be a murderer and take your life. Now, back then they didn't think much of trying to torture somebody to get a confession for the crime of murder. That's a serious crime.

Now, what's worse? Murder or heresy? They would say, hands down, heresy is worse. It's not even close, they would say. Because murder may end a person's life right now in this world.

Heresy can send a soul to hell eternally. And so we can't mess around with heretics. If it's okay for us to use torture in warfare, if it's okay for us to use torture in a criminal investigation, how much more in heresy? This is something where it really matters.

And so we're going to authorize the church to do this. But the church would not execute people. No.

The church pretty much never executed heretics, ever. What did they do? They called up the police and said, you come and execute this guy, he's a heretic. And if they said, we don't want to do it, then, oh, well then you're excommunicated.

The way they thought of it, now first of all, let's understand this. The heretics that were punished, they were not Jews. They were not Muslims.

These were Christians. This was like, look, you're a believer who's in sin. We want to help you out of it.

Having trouble confessing your sin? You know, we'll help you. And that was the idea. They said, hey, listen, we'd never do this to an unbeliever.

But since you're a Christian, you are under the authority of the Pope. And he has the power, he has the right to do this. So you see how this thinking, how this mentality went on.

Now, things really kicked into high gear. And what we really call the Inquisition took place beginning 1478. In 1478, you have King Ferdinand and Isabella.

And where were they from? Spain. Now, what's really interesting about this is that, what else are Ferdinand and Isabella famous for? They funded Columbus's journey to America. You know, this whole period, say from 1475 to 1525, what a time that would have been to be alive.

I tell you, that period of time saw the most tremendous changes. I mean, just three things. Well, let's say four.

You could say the Inquisition. That was something very significant historically. Then you have the popularization of printing.

Printing was invented before this time. But it was in this period of time where it got good. Where it got, you know, I mean, suddenly books were available during this time.

Then you have the Reformation that took period within this 50 years. Or started, at least you could say. Then you have the discovery of the New World.

It's mind-boggling. I mean, can you imagine what it was like to discover a new world? You can't even imagine what a change that would make in the way everybody thinks. To find out that there's a whole other undiscovered part of the world that you knew nothing about.

Nothing. And it's a fantastic place. And can you just imagine how that would affect the mindset of everybody? Here's the other thing that it affected.

As far as Ferdinand and Isabella are concerned, it affected money. Spain milked the New World for gold and silver like nobody's business. That's the first thing they did.

They made a beeline to the places where there were gold and silver. Okay, so anyway. Ferdinand and Isabella asked the Pope for the authority to establish the Inquisition in Spain.

Now, Spain was a unique situation. Because in Spain you had Ferdinand and Isabella who were very committed to the Church. Very committed Roman Catholic.

Then you also had in Spain a substantial population of Jews and a substantial population of Muslims. Because it wasn't a long time before this that Spain was a Muslim country. So you had a big population of Muslims, a big population of Jews in Spain.

During this time there were a lot of, let's call them half-hearted conversions. From Jews and Muslims to Christianity. You know, a lot of times it would work like this.

Hey, this is a Christian country. If you want to do business with me, Mr. Jewish friend, you better become a Christian. Look, man, I can't lose this contract.

Okay, fine, I'm a Christian. Alright, I'll go down and get baptized, then sign the contract, okay? Fine. Did the Jewish guy change his thinking at all? No! He didn't even care! You know, and so there were a lot of that kind of half-hearted conversions.

From Jews and Muslims to Christianity. This was the problem. Even a half-hearted conversion puts you under authority of the Church.

Under the authority of the Inquisition. Now, in 1492, Ferdinand and Isabella expelled the Jews and Muslims from Spain. You're a Jew, you're a Muslim, you've been a guest here of this Christian nation.

You're no longer a guest here. So what happens then? Well, first of all, a lot of Jews and Muslims flee, right? But then don't you have a lot more half-hearted conversions? You can give up your business, sell it for pennies on the dollar, right? And move your family to Lord knows where, or do all that. Or you can say, let's get baptized.

What's a little water? So you've got even more half-hearted conversions. But officially, at least, the Jews and the Muslims are out of Spain. What do they do when these half-hearted converts start just living their lives? And not attending church? Or not believing in certain doctrines? Then the Inquisition goes on big way.

Tomas de Torquemada was the head of the Inquisition in Spain. And this was the guy responsible for, you know? Once they expelled the Jews and the Muslims from Spain, then it got easy. Because if you were left behind, you claimed to be a Christian, right? So all they had to do was find somebody praying in Hebrew.

You can't do that. Brother, let us help you. Well, first we'll take everything you own.

Then we'll torture you. Then we'll do this. You know, it just points to the terrible, terrible corruption and problem that the church had.

There was a huge financial motive in all this. Because all the stuff that was confiscated, all the stuff that was left behind, it went to the benefit of somebody. The crown, the inquisitors themselves, or the informants, whatever.

Christians felt that they were forbidden from charging interest. But they knew that loans needed to be made and banking services had to be done. So you know what they did? They told the Jews to do the banking.

Okay, you Jews, you guys handle the banking. You guys handle all that. Okay, fine, we'll handle the banking.

Well, you know what? They became good at it. They worked hard. They did a good job.

So when the Jews became successful, and you know, you come to a Jewish guy, he makes you a loan. And then when you default on the loan and he comes and takes your collateral, well then what do you say? You say, oh, those stinking Jews, they're ripping me off. But the Christians made the Jews get into the banking business.

And then they resented them for being successful at it. The persecution of the church against the Jewish people is one of the greatest shames upon Christianity that you can ever, ever imagine. And it just almost goes beyond description how horrible and how shameful it was.

And how Christians treated Jews is just an absolute disgrace. And this was among the times when it was the worst of it. You know the yellow star that Jews would wear? It started back here.

In the Middle Ages, Jews were forced to wear a yellow star to identify themselves. The yellow star of David to identify themselves as Jews. The whole thing of the ghetto where the Jews were forced to live in a certain area of town and couldn't co-interact, that was something Christians were forced upon in the Middle Ages.

This was a horrible, horrible, horrible thing. And in some ways you can understand the thinking behind it. But the thinking behind it was very corrupt.

Very corrupt. Finally, let me just talk a little bit about what I would call the imperial pathos. Popes reigned as emperors.

Pope Pius II issued a papal decree that forbade any kind of an appeal to a pope's decision. And said that the pope's decrees were final. Said that the pope was the representative of Christ.

And that the pope had the power to bind on earth in both heaven and earth. I should say, had the power to bind and loosen both heaven and earth. The decree also declared that anybody who appealed a papal decision was cursed to hell and could not be helped except by the pope himself.

And that was only if the guy was on his deathbed. Let me give you an interesting case of a guy named Pope Pius II. And we're talking in the period before the Reformation.

He was born in the year 1405. He was born one of 18 children to a family that was poor, but of noble rank. You know, I mean, they had good bloodlines, so to speak, but they didn't have a lot of money.

He was educated and he began working as an assistant to various bishops and cardinals. He was an expert worker of political power within the church. He would ingratiate himself through the church bureaucracy by just siding whoever was in power.

I mean, that's how you get ahead, right? You look at who is going to succeed and you go behind them. So when they succeed, you succeed. So you've got to know when to abandon this guy and when to put your support behind this guy.

You know, and if you're good at putting your finger in the wind and seeing which way the wind's going to blow, you can be very successful doing that. Through all this, he was eventually appointed as a bishop and then he was a cardinal. And finally, when he was 53 years old, he was selected among the cardinals as a pope.

And here's the bad part about it. This guy was notorious for his sexual immorality. He fathered at least two.

Now, again, this is in a day when any priest, any priest was supposed to be celibate. He fathered at least two children. He was known to have many mistresses.

He liked to brag about his ability to seduce women. And when people said, listen, dude, you're out of control. This is no way for a person to live.

This is no way for a priest to live. You know what he said? He said, well, listen, I'm not wiser than Solomon. And he had 300 wives and 700 concubines.

And I'm not more holy than David. And David sinned like this. So, hey, you blaming me because I'm not wiser than Solomon or more holy than David? He even published dirty stories that taught men how to abuse women.

Also inherent in this time was the most horrible kind of nepotism. You know what nepotism is? It's the promotion of relatives without regard to their abilities or anything. He appointed a nephew as a cardinal.

This is the office right under the pope, right? You've got cardinal and then pope. He appointed a nephew as a cardinal when the guy was only 23 years old. Later on, he appointed another family friend to the same office when he was only 17.

The guy was so flighty. He once excommunicated a man because he didn't remove his hat in the pope's presence. In 1458, Pius attempted to call another crusade.

But he had trouble raising the money among the kings of Europe. So the Germans opposed his attempt to raise money by establishing a crusade tax. That's what the pope wanted to do, make a crusade tax.

And when they issued their opposition, they pointed out this notorious sinful life that the guy had lived. He said, forget it. You know, I'm coming back and he answered back hard and strong.

Finally, you know how the guy died? He died in 1464, personally leading a crusading army against the Turks. This was a pope. Pius II wasn't much of a spiritual leader, but he was a very cultured man.

He was a good writer. He wrote recognized works of poetry and history and fiction and speeches. You know what his last words were? Last words.

And I think he meant this in all the wrong way. His last words on his deathbed were, pray for me for I am a sinner. I don't think that those are the words of a guy who was really repentant and realized he was a sinner.

I think it was a guy who just realized, I'm just a sinner and I haven't gotten right with God. From 1450 to 1517, there were 10 popes. 67 years, 10 popes.

That's a lot. That's a pretty good turnover. Most of them were extremely corrupt men.

Far more interested in wealth and political power than in anything spiritual. These were men who were supposed to be celibate priests, but they had illegitimate children all over the place. So what would they do for their illegitimate children? They would give them an office in the church.

A council tried to curb this practice by saying that you had to be 30 years old to be appointed a cardinal. Again, this is the highest office in the church, underneath the pope. You've got to be 30 to be a cardinal, right? That doesn't seem unreasonable.

The popes just laughed at it. And teenagers were routinely appointed as cardinals. And they even have some cases of 8-year-olds and 7-year-olds being appointed as cardinals.

And you ask yourself, why? Why would they appoint an 8-year-old or a 7-year-old as a cardinal? Why? The church was set up like a huge, multi-level marketing scheme. You've got the little parish priest right here. He takes an offering every week.

So what does he do with the money from the offering? Well, he gets to keep some of it, let's say half. What does he do with the other half? He sends it upstairs to the bishop. So you've got this bishop who's over all these places.

So the bishop gets the money from all these places every week. What does he do with the money? Well, he keeps half. He kicks half upstairs.

Then you've got all these bishops in an area, and they're ruled over by a cardinal. What does the cardinal do? He gets his money. He has to forward some of it to the pope.

But most of it he gets to keep for himself. It's set up like a huge, multi-level marketing scheme. To be a bishop or a cardinal meant a huge income.

Now, if that's the case, what happened with the offices of bishop and cardinal? They were routinely bought and sold. Matter of fact, there was almost like a fixed price on it. You know what the fixed price would be for the office of this bishop? It would be whatever it would bring in in one year.

They even had a name for it, the annate. It comes from the Latin for annual. The annate was the price you paid for the... And, I mean, it was just accepted.

It was just custom. And, you know, you could make payments. You could take out loans.

You could do this or that. But, I mean, that's how much... Okay, who would you buy it from? Now, this is the question. Who do you buy... You want to buy this office right here.

Who do you buy it from? Who has the authority to give it to you? Well, the pope or sometimes the king. And this is why they debated back and forth. Because whoever you buy it from gets the money.

A huge corrupt system. Now, oftentimes, the money had to be paid on the annate up front to the pope. So he would have to borrow the money from somebody else.

That would put him in debt. So he would turn the screws on all the parish priests to send him more so he could keep up the payment on his debt. By the time of the reformation, the first thing that the pope would do every morning is call his financial advisor in and find out what church offices they would sell that day.

That's what it was all about. Buying and selling church offices because they were lucrative. Now, the bishop here or even the parish priest.

He's making money just from his office, right? He doesn't want to do the work. He wants to study painting or this or that, right? He's a cultured man this time of the renaissance. So what does he do? He takes his money that he gets from that and he hires some poor schlep to get in there and just do the work.

And that's how it would work. It was a huge multi-level marketing scheme. Let me conclude with this.

The three popes who did any kind of ruling, any kind of... I mean, there were a few others who went in there and just ruled for a year or something. These are the names of the three most significant popes before the time of the reformation. And you tell me what's interesting about their names.

Alexander VI, Julius II, and Leo X. What's interesting about these names? Are these the names of biblical people? Now, when you become a pope, you don't take your real name. You take on a name. You choose a name.

These are not these guys' given names. These are the names they chose as popes. Did they choose names from the Bible? They chose names from Roman emperors or great emperors of the past.

Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Leo, the famous emperors, name that. This shows you the mentality and why there needed to be a reformation so, so fast. Next week, we're going to get together and we're going to talk about the pre-reformers.

Lord, we thank you for this time. And Lord, even when it was dark during these times, you had your shining lights, Lord. You had those people.

We'll talk about some of those people next week, Lord. We just pray that you help us to be shining lights in whatever place you put us. We pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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