

Doctrine of Sola Gratia

The Story of Ulrich Zwingli

1. In Zurich, Switzerland is Grossmunster, the Great Cathedral, in which the Swiss Reformer, Ulrich (Huldrych) Zwingli (January 1, 1484 – October 11, 1531), ministered.
2. There is an imposing statue of Zwingli on the back side of Grossmunster, the Great Cathedral, and rightly so for he is a Reformer to be honored. He was a local hero of the city of Zurich, and a national hero for the people of Switzerland.
3. A closer look at the statue brings forth two observations.
 - Zwingli has his left hand on a large sword.
 - In his right arm he is caressing a large book, the Bible.
4. Before Zwingli arrived in Zurich, he was in Basel where Erasmus also lived. Erasmus was putting his finishing touch on the Greek text which was given the name, Textus Receptus (received text). His work was first printed in 1516.
5. Erasmus was a Dutch Catholic scholar and humanist who based his work on late manuscripts of the Byzantine text type and included some missing parts back translated from the Latin Vulgate.
6. The Textus Receptus became the basis for several versions of the Bible
 - Luther's German Bible
 - The English New Testament translated by William Tyndale
 - KJV
7. Originally, Erasmus was more concerned about producing a fresh Latin translation of the Vulgate which had been produced by Jerome. "It is only fair that Paul should address the Romans in somewhat better Latin", he quipped.
8. The new Latin translation was printed in 1512. Erasmus included the Greek text to prove the superiority of the Latin version. He wrote, "There remains the New Testament translation by me with the Greek facing, and notes o it by me."
9. He further demonstrated the reason for the inclusion of the Greek text when defending his work:

"But one thing the facts cry out, and it can be clear, as they say, even to a blind man, that often through the translator's clumsiness or inattention, the Greek has been wrongly rendered; often the true and genuine reading has been corrupted by ignorant scribes, which we see happen every day, or altered by scribes who are half-taught and half-asleep."

10. The origin of the term *Textus Receptus* comes from the publisher's preface to the 1633 edition produced by Bonaventure and his nephew Abraham Elzevir who were partners in a printing business at Leiden. The preface reads,

“Textum ergo habes, nunc ab omnibus receptum: in quo nihil immutatum aut corruptum damus,”

translated as,

"so you hold the text, now received by all, in which (is) nothing corrupt."

11. The two words, “text” and “received” were extracted. Over time, this term has been retroactively applied to Erasmus' editions, as his work served as the basis of the others.

12. Erasmus and Zwingli corresponded with one another as the work of Erasmus went to press in 1516.

13. After being graduated from Basel, Zwingli had his first pastoral charge. His responsibilities were very simple. He was to minister to people on a pilgrimage to see the place where Mary had appeared, according to legend.

14. Zwingli was given the task of performing the morning Mass, and selling Indulgences.

15. With time on his hands, Zwingli retired to his second floor apartment where he devoured the Greek text of Erasmus.

16. In 1518, Erasmus was reassigned to preach in Zurich. He began to preach on January 1, 1519.

17. He selected as his text, Matthew 1:1, and continued to preach all the way through the New Testament.

18. The life of Zwingli can be divided into three eras.

- Pre-sausage Supper Period 1519 – 1522
- Sausage Supper Period 1522 – 1523
- Post Sausage Supper Period 1524 – 1530

19. While preaching through the Bible, Zwingli discovered that many teachings of the Catholic Church were supported by Scripture.

20. In 1521, a famous Sausage Supper was held. It was Friday, and it was during Lent. Zwingli helped cook the sausage. He served the sausage, but he did not eat the sausage.

21. Others who were there, such as Conrad Grebel (c. 1498 – 1526), a young priest, did eat. Grebel would soon become a founder of the Ana-Baptist Movement.

22. The printer, Christopher Froschauer, a very prestigious person, was also at the Sausage Supper. The problem was that the church did not allow the eating of meat on Friday.
23. The next Sunday, Zwingli preached a sermon with the title, "On the Choice and Freedom of Foods." What Zwingli was saying was that Lent is not in Scripture.
24. Scripture can be extremely liberating from traditions and rituals that bind the conscience of men.
25. There was something else Zwingli did not find in the Bible and that was a prohibition against priests marrying.
26. As might be expected, Zwingli's preaching alarmed the Catholic Church officials. The town council called two meetings over the next year, 1522, to discuss this assault on tradition. The meetings were creatively called The First Disputation, and, The Second Disputation. Zwingli was called in to defend his position. Roman Catholic officials also appeared at the town council to defend their position.
27. The people of Zurich took a vote, and sided with Zwingli. Zurich became a Reformed city.
28. Radical physical changes were made to the Great Church. An axe was taken to the pipe organ. Iconic stained glass windows were smashed.
29. In 1525, another group in Zurich went even farther than Zwingli and proposed breaking away from the state. This group became known as Ana-baptist. They believed in believer's baptism.
30. One of the leaders of the Radical Reformation was Conrad Grebel. This movement would lead to the founding of the Mennonites, the Amish, and other diverse groups.
31. During this time, Zwingli began to correspond with Luther. Luther began to publish his views on the Lord's Supper.
32. Luther's view was immutably seen to be in conflict with the Catholic dogma of transubstantiation.
33. The idea of transubstantiation is that the elements, the bread and the cup, transform, and become the body of Christ. The magical moment is when the priest says, "Hoc est corpus meum", "this is my body."
34. Luther proposed the doctrine of consubstantiation (with substance) whereby the elements contain the body of Christ. Luther liked to call his view, "the real presence of Christ." When communion is served, Christ is, with the elements, beneath them, above them, below them, beside them, all around them. His presence is real.

35. Zwingli disagreed with both Luther and Rome. The Lord's Supper was a commemorative meal filled with symbolism, but nothing more.
36. Zwingli's view is called the memorial view. The elements are signs and are not to be confused with the actual body and blood of Christ.
37. The leaders of Germany and the leaders of Switzerland wanted to resolve the dispute in order to have a united front against the Catholic Church, and also, to oppose the encroachment of Islam.
38. A meeting, a Colloquy, was called to assemble at Marlbough, Hesse, Germany. The meeting took place on October 1 – 4, 1529 between the Reformers of Germany and Switzerland.
39. At the assembly, Zwingli was presenting his view on the Eucharist when suddenly, Luther kicked over the table, pulled out a dagger he was carrying, and began to carve in the table. Zwingli was distracted. Luther put the table upright and Zwingli saw the words Luther had carved, "Hoc est meus presentai." This is my presence.
40. Luther left Marburg. Zwingli returned to Switzerland. The Reformers remained divided on this issue.
41. John Calvin, who was not present at the Marburg Colloquy, held another view of the Lord's Supper. He embraced the spiritual presence of Christ, instead of Luther's real presence. The idea is that Christ's presence does not come down to us. Rather, we are transported into His presence.
42. Luther wrote to Calvin and said, "I wish you had been there." But it was not to be.
43. In 1530, Zwingli found himself on the battlefield of Kappel. On October 9, 1531, in a surprise move, the Five States declared war on Zurich. Many pastors, including Zwingli, took up a sword to defend his city as a good soldier. The battle lasted less than hour and Zwingli was among the 500 casualties in the Zurich army.
44. Learning of the death of Zwingli, Luther wrote, "It is well that Zwingli, Carlstadt and Pellican lie dead on the battlefield, for otherwise we could not have kept the Landgrave, Strasbourg and others of our neighbors. Oh, what a triumph this is, that they have perished. How well God knows his business." A practical man, Luther saw Zwingli's death in political terms.
45. Erasmus was not kind to Zwingli in death. Erasmus wrote, "We are freed from great fear by the death of the two preachers, Zwingli and Oecolampadius, whose fate has wrought an incredible change in the mind of many. This is the wonderful hand of God on high."
46. Prior to his death, as a pastor and as a leader in the city, Zwingli set up a school with a definite curriculum. It was called, The Pastor's College. Today, it is the University of Zurich.

- Old Testament studies were given in Hebrew by a professor who read the text and lectured in Hebrew.
- Old Testament studies were then given in Greek by a professor who read the Septuagint, and comment on it.
- A theologian would then lecture in Latin on tradition and what other scholars had said on that text.
- Finally, a parish priest would come and preach on that text in German.

47. Zwingli's greatest legacy was Sola Gratia. In a famous painting of Zwingli, he is holding a Bible. The text is opened to Matthew 11.

- *Matthew 11:27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. 28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

48. Zwingli helped removed all the false structures which burdened God's people in favor of God's grace.