

**Subject: *Why We Need Church History***

**Scripture: *Psalms 105:1-7***

It has been said, "History is His story."

Oliver Cromwell: "What are all histories but God manifesting Himself?"

William Plumer: "Blessed is he who sees God in history and in nature, as well as in revelation."

Psalms 105 and 106 are a pair. They stand shoulder to shoulder and are closely related. Psalm 105 tells how God treated Israel and Psalm 106 tells how Israel treated God. (See Lawson, 160-161).

Psalms 105 and 106 are a pair. They stand shoulder to shoulder and are closely related. Psalm 105 tells how God treated Israel and Psalm 106 tells how Israel treated God. Psalm 105 shows God's faithfulness to Israel; Ps. 106 shows their unfaithfulness to God. Psalm 105 speaks of God's grace; Psalm 106 tells about Israel's disgrace. In these two psalms we have the theme of the whole Bible summarized: God's salvation and man's sin, the story of divine faithfulness and human unfaithfulness. These psalms show us why we need to know church history.

In the first part of Psalm 105 there are ten commands. In these ten commands the psalmist tells people to worship the Lord because He rules over history.

1. Give thanks to the Lord (vs. 1).
2. Call on His name.
3. Make known His mighty deeds to the world.
4. Sing praises to God (vs. 2).
5. Tell of His wonderful works.
6. Glory in God's holy name.
7. Rejoice in the Lord.
8. Look to the Lord and His strength (vs. 4).
9. Seek God's face or the knowledge of God.
10. Remember God's marvelous works.

### **Why Should We Learn Church History?**

#### **1. It reveals our family heritage**

Church history is our family history. The more we know about our spiritual forefathers the more we will love and appreciate them...and want to be like them. When we think about Augustine, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitfield, and Charles Spurgeon we are thinking our own family.

I am convinced that two things plague the modern church: we don't know Scripture very well and we don't know church history or even Baptist history very well.

#### **2. It deepens our understanding of God**

We see His sovereignty and control of all history. We see His providence in people's lives and circumstances. We see His faithfulness, His grace and mercy, and His patience.

### **3. It sharpens our discernment of truth and error**

We need to understand what is true and what is false. The issues and people of church history help us to see what the issues are and how they addressed them. As we study church history we see the faithfulness of God's people and their love of truth.

We should read and learn from wise men who walked closely with God.

***Proverbs 13:20*** *He that walketh with wise men shall be wise.*

In the mid-1800s Charles Spurgeon had a personal library of about 25,000 books, and he wrote a very good book called *Commenting and Commentaries*, in which he wrote a few thoughts about Bible commentaries. In that book answers those who might object to using commentaries. He said, "It seems odd, that certain men who talk so much of what the Holy Spirit reveals to themselves, should think so little of what he has revealed to others."

We are blessed by the writings and experiences of many godly people who have served the Lord since the days of the apostles, and we would do well to learn from them.

### **4. It challenges our level of devotion to Christ**

Many of our spiritual ancestors suffered and died for what they believed. They had strong convictions about truth and they knew that some hills are worth dying on.

J. C. Ryle wrote a book called *Five English Reformers*, and in the first chapter he asks the question: "Why were our reformers burned?" He is talking about people who were burned at the stake in the days of Bloody Mary because they took a stand for the Gospel against the false teaching of Roman Catholic Church. They loved the truth more than their own lives. A total of 288 people were burned at the stake for their commitment to the Gospel and the Protestant faith. Others like John Wycliffe and William Tyndale were martyred for their work of translating the Bible into the English language.

History has recorded the lives and deeds of some of the Christian martyrs, and some of their last words have been preserved for us. For example, Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley were both burned at the same time and just before the fire was lit, Latimer famously said: "Be of good cheer, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out."