

RADICAL REFORMATION

Week 1: *Anabaptists & Us*

Week 2: *Anabaptists & Scripture*

Week 3: *Anabaptists & Church*

Week 4: *Anabaptists & Peace*

Week 5: *Anabaptists & Mission*

APPETIZER: The Nude Bible

John 5:39-40

Most Anabaptists combined a tremendous love for Scripture with a refusal to place it above or even alongside Christ as the Word of God.

~ Stuart Murray, *Biblical Interpretation in the Anabaptist Tradition*

ANABAPTIST INTERPRETIVE PRINCIPLES...

1. Jesus (not the Bible) is at the centre of our faith, and Jesus (not “justification-by-faith-alone”) is at the centre of the Bible. **1 Corinthians 3:10-11**
2. The Holy Spirit teaches and speaks through us all, regardless of our level of theological education.
3. We are a New Covenant people. Though the Old Testament is still scripture to us, we are not bound by its laws. **Colossians 2:16-17**
4. The Bible, more than creeds and confessions, interprets itself. The “bright” and “sunny” passages illuminate the “dark” and “cloudy” ones.
5. We can only *understand* the Scriptures if we *obey* the Scriptures. (Anabaptists did more “organic” rather than academic theology.)

OTHER ANABAPTIST FEATURES...

1. In some ways, Anabaptists followed basic Protestant hermeneutics, but also expressed concern that Protestants were not living out the radical implications of their own study of Scripture.
2. Sometimes Anabaptists accused Protestants of venerating the Bible which contains Christ, much the same way Catholics venerate Mary who at one point contained Christ.
3. Functionally, most Anabaptists held to a canon within a canon, with New Testament prioritized over the Old, Gospels over Epistles, and the Sermon on the Mount as the bullseye. **Matthew 11:28-30**
4. Some Anabaptists reserved language like “Word of God” and “authority” for Jesus alone rather than the Bible, so as to emphasize his pre-eminence as God’s ultimate revelation of himself.

Anabaptists have a high regard for the Scriptures and an even higher regard for Jesus. Jesus, even more than the Bible, is our final authority.

~ Palmer Becker, *Anabaptist Essentials*

5. Early Anabaptists carried around and/or memorized lists of Scripture verses (called “concordances”) on different topics to help them evangelize others, defend themselves when interrogated, or encourage each other when imprisoned.
6. Some Anabaptists (like the Brethren in Christ) have no doctrine of the “inerrancy” of Scripture. We are not anti-inerrancy; we simply emphasize the perfection of Christ more than we highlight the perfection of Scripture. Rather, we stick to biblical language like saying all Scripture is “inspired” and “useful” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
7. Anabaptists were considered heretics by other Christians from our inception. This may still happen today, though far less frequently, and much less violently.

DINE IN: This is my beloved Son... Listen to him!

Matthew 17:1-8 // Mark 9:2-8 // Luke 9:28-36

Luke 24:27

TAKE OUT: Use it or Lose it

1. Get your own Bible.
2. Bring it with you to Sunday service.
3. Take notes (in your Bible and sermon notes)
4. Put your sermon notes in your Bible.
5. Take it all with you to Home Church.
6. Do extra study and review at home.
7. BONUS: Get and use a second Bible (different translation) for study.

What do you already know is true that you aren't applying?

Home Church Questions

HANGOUT [Warming Up to the Topic – in one Large Group]

1. Review Sunday's message. Talk about what most encouraged, convicted, or puzzled you. There is lots here to talk about!
2. Catholics said, "Follow the teaching of the Church." Protestants said, "Follow the teaching of the Bible." Anabaptists said, "Follow the teaching of Jesus." How are these three approaches similar/different?

HEAR [Listening to God through Scripture – in Discussion Groups]

3. Read **Matthew 17:1-8**.
 - a. What verse or idea stands out to you?
 - b. Why do you think Jesus only brought Peter, James, and John with him to experience his transfiguration and not all of his disciples?
 - c. Matthew probably had **Deuteronomy 18:15-18** in mind as he wrote about this event. How does the backdrop of that passage inform our understanding about the transfiguration of Jesus?
 - d. Jesus' "sunny" face reminded the early Anabaptists that his light was the most bright and clear in all of Scripture. How might an early Anabaptist respond to the following questions/objections:
 - i. I don't know if God hates me or loves me. Sometimes in the Bible he is kind, and other times he will destroy you for the slightest thing.
 - ii. Why am I suffering? Is God mad at me? Punishing me? What have I done to bring this on?
 - iii. I'm ready to go to war if needed. After all, David was a man after God's own heart, and he was a warrior king.
 - iv. I'm waiting for God to bless me with riches, like King Solomon. Why is it taking so long?

HUDDLE [Making It Personal and Praying Together – in Huddles]

4. Use your regular huddle questions for discussion before prayer.

Quotes

Welcome back to our five week series about our spiritual roots.

Today's topic...
Part 2: *Anabaptists and Scripture*

Anabaptists studied the written Word of God to get to know the living Word of God, God incarnate, Jesus the Christ.
~ William R. Estep

Most Anabaptists combined a tremendous love for Scripture with a refusal to place it above or even alongside Christ as the Word of God.
~ Stuart Murray

He who honours the Scripture but lacks divine love must take heed not to turn Scripture into an idol.
~ Hans Denck (16th Century)

The Bible should not be taken as equivalent to the Word of God. Rather the Bible contains God's Word, the way a sheath contains the sword or a lantern contains the light.
~ Hans Umlauf (16th Century)

Jesus is our Teacher, Leader, and Guide. Him we must hear and follow.
~ Dirk Philips (16th Century)

The law was given by Moses, but truth came by Christ.
~ Peter Riedeman (16th Century)

Christ is the norm to which explicit appeal must be made in order to settle disputes of faith and practice.
~ Michael Sattler (16th Century)

All the Scriptures, both the Old and the New Testaments, on every hand, point us to Christ Jesus that we are to follow him.
~ Menno Simons (16th Century)

You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.
~ Jesus