

Reformation Sunday

10/25/2020

J.V.Trautwein

Celebrate (Introduction)

“Rooted in the past and growing into the future, the church must always be reformed in order to live out the love of Christ in an ever-changing world. We celebrate the good news of God’s grace, that Jesus Christ sets us free every day to do his life-transforming work. Trusting in the freedom given to us in baptism, we pray for the church, That Christians will unite more fully in worship and mission”

We are together in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Hymn: [“O Word of God Incarnate”](#)

Psalm 46

¹ God is our refuge and strength,
a very present[Ⓜ] help in trouble.

² Therefore we will not fear though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;

³ though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.*Selah*

⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.

⁵ God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved;
God will help her right early.

⁶ The nations rage, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.

⁷ The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.[Ⓜ]*Selah*

⁸ Come, behold the works of the Lord,
how he has wrought desolations in the earth.

⁹ He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear,
he burns the chariots with fire!

¹⁰ “Be still, and know that I am God.

I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth!”

The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Hymn of Praise: [“Praise to the Lord the Almighty”](#)

Prayer of the Day

“Almighty God, gracious Lord, we thank you that your Holy Spirit renews the church in every age. Pour out your Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep them steadfast in your word, protect and comfort them in time of trial, defend them against all enemies of the gospel, and bestow on the church your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.. Amen.”

1st Reading: [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)

2nd Reading: [Romans 3:19-38](#)

The Gospel: [John 8:31-36](#)

Hymn of the Day: [“O God Our Help in Ages Past”](#)

The Message: ([Video Link](#))

The Australian poet and cartoonists, Michael Leunig once wrote, “The hypocrisy of some is that we like to think of ourselves as sophisticated and evolved, but we’re still also driven by primal urges like greed and power.” Regardless of what history has taught us about the pursuit of greed and power, man has not been able to escape falling prey to their devastating consequences. When pushed to its limits it has been the downfall of nations, institutions, and even personal relationships. This is especially true when the pursuit of greed and power is at the price of others. The value of others is only in how they can help further one’s personal gain. This leads to holding others in bondage to the self-serving wishes of those who gain control.

Just as devastating is that in order to maintain control the basic principles, rules, and foundational doctrines are violated and changed to be advantageous to those in control. Basic truths are dramatically altered so that there can be justification for the deterioration of true, just, established foundational principles, and doctrines. This leads to corruption and further deterioration of a society or institution. The value of human life thus comes into question and love for others is swallowed up by egocentricity.

It was into such a world that Martin Luther lived some 500 years ago and it is the world which seems to be dangerously emerging today. In Luther’s time truth had long been altered by the greed and power of Rome and the kings and principedoms. It must be noted that throughout the prior centuries the church had become institutionalized and even nationalized. With no real checks and balances or controls governing the leadership, i.e. the papacy, the process of self-preservation of the papacy gradually got out of control. The very foundation and principles of the church’s being were corrupted in order to benefit the leaderships’ out of control self-preservation. Gradually, but emphatically, it became very evident that the church became the

papacy and the papacy became the church. The church became centered upon each of the pope's dictates for self-gratification and preservation. This was all at the expense of not only the people but the Gospel itself. Christianity thus became a religion in which one could buy one's citizenship into the kingdom of God. The purchase price was to support the preservation of the papacy's power and wealth. Christianity had become an exercise of works.

The need for change, for reform, had become quite evident to many for decades. One voice after another was raised, rejected or permanently silenced upon being judged heretics. Finally, there came a voice of reform at the right time, under the right circumstances, with the conviction and the intelligence to be the leader of reform. This voice not only challenged the practices of the powerful papacy but would gradually bring the necessary reform of Christianity back to the scriptures. The Gospel of Jesus was reintroduced to the people in its purest form and not filtered and corrupted by self-fulfilling policies and edicts of the papacy. Martin Luther, brought change by translating the scriptures into the language of the people and placing it in their hands. The scriptures then would speak for themselves in an uncorrupted form. The Reformation was the event which would return Christianity back to the very foundation of God's word.

In a very real sense, the Reformation not only brought about the reform of Christianity but also was a catalyst in bringing about a new world order in which mankind would find the freedom of intellectual, religious, and political pursuits. Perhaps the most important of these pursuits was that mankind was now free to understand and live his or her personal faith not as the result of purchasing it but by living it.

Luther's basic premise was that faith cannot be bought or sold and neither can salvation. Faith is the result of believing that God became man through Jesus and that through His death and resurrection God's love and forgiveness became known. This is God's gift to us, this is God's grace, freely given through His love. No amount of endeavors or works can purchase this gift. It is there for us to receive and live through faith. This was basic and central to Luther's message and the Reformation. His eyes were opened upon reading Paul's words in his letter to the Romans, "For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law." This was so powerful for Luther that he noted in his manuscript, "A person is justified by faith" alone.

The question then may arise, "What about works? Didn't Jesus emphasize doing for others, giving to the poor, feeding the hungry, visiting the sick? Are these not works? Didn't he also say that we need to love and forgive - are these not considered works?"

I believe the clearest explanation of the relationship between faith and works can be found in the letter of James, "So faith by itself, if it has no works is dead. But someone will say, 'You have faith and I have works'. Show me your faith apart from your works and I by my works will show you my faith.'" What James is saying is that the natural product or result of faith is works. Faith in God results in love and forgiveness. It can then be said that without love and forgiveness faith is dead. Love and forgiveness naturally play out in one's life as acts of kindness

to one's fellowman or what could be considered works. Although these acts may be seen by others as mere works, they are actually a natural outcome or reflection of one's love through faith in God's love for us.

A good example of this can be found in a parents love for their children. Parents do everything possible for the welfare of their children even to the point of extreme personal sacrifice. This is a natural response out of love. Many from afar see such outpouring and giving as works. But, in fact the parents see these acts as a giving of themselves in love for their children.

Luther was correct in saying we are justified by faith apart from works since it is God, through Jesus, who first gives us our salvation. It is through faith we receive this gift of citizenship into His kingdom. No amount of acts, deeds, or money aside from this faith will earn our way to salvation. By the same token one can tell the reality of faith by how this faith plays out in love and forgiveness and the subsequent works or deeds. These acts are a natural response to faith and are always present when faith is alive and well. This is why James stated "So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead."

Martin Luther struck down the corrupt practices of works within the papal church through this revelation. Of course this was disastrous to the papacy for they no longer had the monopoly and franchise of buying one's way into heaven. Salvation only comes through faith in God's grace. By living this faith love is known through each Christian's life.

In so many ways we live in a time when many who say that they profess a faith in the Gospels message ignore that faith when it comes to the problems of our society. They instead have faith on the god's of greed and power and their works prove it. This has led not only to the erosion of Christianity and the gospel of love but the basic rules, principles, and doctrines of our nation. No longer can we trust the goodwill, integrity, and word of one another which was basic to the institutions of our society.

We have come to the point in time which longs for another reformation. This reformation begins within each individual and it begins with an honest self-evaluation in light of our faith in the message of God's love. Have we become a slave to our prejudices, biased minds, and blind followings? Is our life one that reflects a life of faith in the message of the gospels or that of false and corrupting gods of hate and bitterness? In so many ways we must be that Martin Luther in bringing reform to a divided church and country. Therefore, this year's celebration of the Reformation needs to come alive breathing life into each of us and into our troubled society and nation. This breathe of life is a renewed faith in living God's love.

Anthem: ["Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring"](#) The Bishop's Stortford College Choie

Offering*

We give thee but thine own, what-e'er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.

The Prayer

God of grace, today we celebrate the life of Martin Luther and all the reformers of the reformation. Let us be renewed in our faith so that we may bring hope and new life to a shattered world and nation. May we have the commitment and perseverance to stand firm in living the message you gave us through Jesus. Give us the wisdom to know that living our faith can and will make a difference within the life that we live with others.

Instill within us the understanding that the needed change from divisiveness and hate to love, unity and peace begins within us. Continue to be with all those on the front lines of helping those who have been stricken by the pandemic and the natural disasters. They are giving so much of their lives while placing themselves in danger. We continue to pray for their safety and well-being.

We pray for all who need your comforting and healing presence especially Chad Bittinger, Heidi Brackbill, Danny Brackbill, Parker Brennan, the Elshafei family, Betty Fultz, the Johnson Family, Robert Karner, Ray Lambert, Donna Mayhew, Bev and Jim Mertz, Nic Nelson, Wendy Neumann, Elise Oliver, Peter Olsen, Dottie Reitz, Robert Reitz, Colin Shea, Jerry Shea, Tommy Shimer, Jack Smith, the Spiegler family, Linda Stephens, Randy Stephens, Kirk Strobel, Yongyin Sun, Esther and Buck Trautwein, Pastor Jack, and all those who are suffering pain, and sorrow as a result of this pandemic.

We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

The Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you;

The Lord make His face shine upon you;

The Lord lift up His presence upon you and give you peace. Amen

And now my brothers and sisters

Live on knowing God's love,

The joy of living this life of love,

And the peace which only come through the power of His presence within you.

So live on in Love, Joy, Peace, and Power.

Closing Hymn: ["A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"](#)

All are welcome to our outdoor Sunday morning service at 9:30 AM weather permitting. Social distancing and face masks are required. Bring a lawn chair.

Bible Study with Vicar Karen Pugatch, Tuesdays, 12:30-1:30PM more information attached below.

*Offering to be sent to:

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