

FEAST OF THE REFORMATION 10/28/18

Mount Calvary, West View

REVELATION 14: 6-7, ROMANS 3: 19-28, JOHN 8: 31-36

HYMNS: SALVATION UNTO US HAS COME LSB #555,

THE CHURCH'S ONE FOUNDATION LSB #644,

A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD LSB #656

Theme: Free Indeed!

+ Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. AMEN +

Our Text is the Gospel for the Feast of the Reformation, the 8th chapter of John's Gospel:

Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So, if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

What is the point of the reformation? I know you *know* the answer, but the reason for *why* this is the reason I believe may have not the same impact as it did 500 years ago. What was the prevailing problem in the time of Martin Luther's reformation? Well, looking at the 95 theses nailed to the castle church door in Whittenburg gives us some clue; as well as searching the Book of Concord. Both give us insight as to what was the reformation all about. It was about setting the church right in its purpose, the purpose of preaching salvation by Grace alone, through faith alone, as written in Scripture alone. No outside work, as preached by the Anabaptists, no outside influences, as preached by the Arians, no historical traditions and no collection of counsels, such as the Pope and the council of Trent, no, none of these can go against such simplicity as We are saved by Grace alone, through faith alone as revealed in Scripture alone.

That was the message 500 years ago. Things have changed. We have digital media; social media; YouTube; more than 120 translations of the Bible including Urban rap and Klingon, of which Star Wars versions cannot be too far behind ó Oh wait, there is one. We have funeral homes with drive-through

service; and we have drive-through communion ó yes, it is an option at some places, and when asked for a particular statement on the validity of such an atrocity, the church leader opinionated, *“Drive thru communion is only a problem if it’s being done out of convenience. If you’re ‘too busy’ or ‘don’t have the time’ to stop for more than five minutes and “do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19), you’re doing it wrong.*ö I would love to ask him, *“What other reason is there to participate in drive thru communion?”*ö It cannot be reverence, for it is not tied in with a service of glory and thanksgiving to God. And it certainly is not to be communing with the family of believers when it is being doled out through a service window. There is only one answer, it’s to have God as a convenience and not as a source for rest and reverence and directing of thanks for everlasting life. With this as my context, one needs to ask, *“How messed up is this world,”*ö or better to ask, *“how messed up is this country’s religious climate that a reformation is needed still?”*ö I turn to the middle of my CPH catalogue, and here I see no less than 18 different options to read and educate on how bad the American landscape is concerning proper knowledge of God and the proper reverence to Him. We have human reasoning, and digital technology, and spiritual warfare, all letting us know that there is a problem out there we need to address, and we need to address it.

Jesus tells us, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin.”*ö This world and our American culture are indeed slaved to sin. That is the Biblical truth we have learned from the very beginning. We have truly fallen away from God and gone our own way to try and make God do what we want, ever since Adam and Eve first ate of the forbidden fruit. The problem at the Tower of Babel? We wanted to be equal with God. The Congregation at the bottom of Mount Sinai? Made a golden calf to represent the One True God that saved them from their bondage in Egypt. Every religion makes a god to worship, but only Christianity has a God that makes Himself known through the Scriptures. This is the problem in this country: there are many who have made a god, yet still call themselves *“Christian”*; they have not used the Scriptures to define or even know Who He is. To use a term from the great Anglican, Thomas the Tank Engine, *“This has caused Confusion and delay”*; delay, in that many are missing the opportunity to believe in the real Triune God as we professed Him historically and truthfully

in the Athanasian Creed. Yes, it is a historical creed, but it is also a truthful creed, coming from the Scriptures alone, to give words to the Faith we have in the Grace that comes from Our God to save us from our sins and set us free.

That is the why the reformation is still needed, and still going on. It is The Christ we need to let this world and especially our neighbors know: the Christ of the Old Testament and New Testament; the Christ professed and explained in the Book of Concord and in our Catechetical Instruction. We need to profess Him for this world has a very wrong view of Him. He is not a social reformer, He is not a proponent of the theology of Glory. Our God is a God of the Cross, a God of suffering for you so that you do not suffer for sins but are free to worship Him as He has given you grace to do. Our God has come from heaven itself to be born of the virgin Mary, to suffer under Pontius Pilate, be crucified, died and buried so that your sins would be placed in the vault of hell with Satan and His horde, never to be seen again. Our God is the Risen One, Who rose from the dead to prove the salvation is real and acceptable to the Father and sits at the right hand of God to judge you as forgiven by faith in Him alone. A faith given by the Holy Ghost in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, sustained by the sacrament of the Holy Supper, and kept by the Word of God in His divine Grace. With this assurance, Jesus words are even more concrete, *öThe slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So, if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.ö* The reformation cry is a cry to announce the true freedom we have in following Christ Alone. In Him we have life and breath, and eternal life to no longer be slaves to the sinful selfish flesh and world, but free, indeed, to believe trust and live a life in Jesusøblood and righteousness, as Saint Paul assures us, öJustified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christö!

Indeed, there is much work needed to be done in our community to explain Who Christ really is and why He has come to us. The actions of this world and all outside of scriptures prove that that works of the law no human being will be justified in His sight. Therefore, the work we do is vitally important, but it is not a slavery work for salvation, for that we already have by faith alone. Our slavery is to the Gospel and the knowledge of Christ and the desire to tell others the wonders He has done. May we do the

reformation work of spreading the gospel to a world that has forgotten Who He is, and endeavor to speak the truth of where freedom rings. In our Triune God's Name, we pray. **AMEN.**

+ AND NOW MAY THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING
KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS IN UNION WITH CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD. AMEN+

There are only two days on my calendar...today and the day of judgment