



Hear the Word

from Pastor James N. McEachran



Gather... Encourage... Equip... Send...

Reformation Sunday

October 29, 2017

Luther's Top Ten

John 8:31-36

Jesus' words inform and direct the life of the Church in every age and time:

"If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples (discipleFit!); and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." (NRSV)

I hope you haven't missed it. 2017 marks the 500th Anniversary of the posting of the Luther's 95 Theses. There is, you will guess, some historical questioning of the literal action on the door, but this much we know, the printing of those words opened a door to the renewal, the re-formation of the Western Church. And some of us continue to be named by his name "Lutheran."

So, on this Lord's Day, I invite you, with a nod to David Letterman's "Top Ten," to the framework on which I believe Martin Luther and the Reformers would call for the renewing of the Church in this day. {And for those who might be concerned, this 10 point sermon lasts about as long as a "Three Pointer."}

1. GOD IS...Without that basic ingredient, there would be NO need for a theology, a church, a mission, we would not be here. Humankind in every time has had a general knowledge of god/gods. I have heard it said "I find god every day in creation. I see Mount Rainieror....." Luther began with this assurance that humans know THAT GOD IS, BUT NOT WHO GOD IS. He taught that in that vein "we play blind man's bluff with God," we reach out to grab, miss, and reach for another---like reason. This week I heard a person say "Amazon seems like god."
2. Sin and sins often bind us back. (Law) Paul noted that the good he wants to do, he doesn't; and the evil he despises is like a fresh box of chocolate or gold. Humans are curved in upon themselves. We learn that from experience. A little girl swiped a ball from Noah at Little Gym and he experienced the "I want it, I covet it, yours is mine. Each of us knows Sin/sins by just living, we experience it and Luther digs into the Word of God to find the source and power of Evil in life. He called it "unfaith" which robs us from knowing God. Want to see Sin/sins? Checking your breaking news or the places where you, where I, do not find and serve God first! Law condemns; Gospel forgives, and we can breathe again because...
3. Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life. It is about the rooting of the Cross, our Gospel Positioning System. Who is Jesus Christ for YOU today?

4. The Holy Spirit is “the Lord, the giver of life.” We know God/Creator through Jesus/Redeemer, in the power of the Holy Spirit/Breath of God within. Where is the Holy Spirit? How can we know/hear the Holy Spirit? (blow into your hand; it is like feeling the Spirit.) Once you know it, it is as real as the people of God here to be in the Word.
5. The Word of God / Holy Bible. Our book of faith. It was in the Word that Luther found Paul anew through his reading, his teaching, his translating of the B I B L E! Where is your Bible today? Where will it be tomorrow? Without the Holy Bible we would have to make things up! Some do, but Luther knew the Word to be the Lamp, the guide, the place to stand for we can do no other!
6. The Sacramental life --- Holy Baptism-The Lord’s Supper. The Word of God leads us to believe, teach, and confess that the Holy Spirit is found in the remembrance of and the commitment to the Means of Grace: the Word, the Font, the Table. Where we learn and experience anew and recall that if God is for us who can be against us! The words are “FOR YOU.” For Jim McEachran, child of God. For _____. Forever.
7. The Priesthood of ALL Believers. You are all ordained into the priesthood of all believers. Each of us called, set apart to steward/manage in confidence that we are called and chosen. To witness, to forgive as we have been forgiven, to love as we have been loved. To be like Jesus!
8. The Body of Christ is the World – Humble Servants. Each one of us is the Christ walking the face of the earth...servants/slaves bound to a Master who is love and served all. A bag of rice, a bar of soup, a place of shelter, a word of prayer, a moment of advocacy, a commitment to solidarity like a core value of Saint Andrew’s for home/shelter security; doing unto others as you would have others do to you. A rule as good as gold!
9. The Mission: Gather, Encourage, Equip, Send. The words are meant to be the launching pad to the ends of the earth. As in, “Lord, here am I send me.” Listening for the voice of the Holy Spirit that we are discipleFit, Spirit trained in this place, the workshop of the One who serves us, Jesus.
10. Pathways to Renewal. Takes commitment to prayer, discernment and action in the pace of the Holy Spirit who seldom acts in 30-second sound bites.

Martin Luther with thousands of others, thanks to moveable type, launched a spirit of re-form, re-newal, righteous living until Jesus comes again.

Out of the finding of Romans 1:16-17 anew which reads, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, ‘The righteous, the just will live by faith.’” Grace alone, faith alone, Christ alone!

Beloved in Christ, brothers and sisters in Christ, we are all God’s children. The Re-formation did not end the day the 95 Theses were Breaking News. IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 16TH CENTURY, A THIRD OF ALL BOOKS WRITTEN IN GERMAN WERE WRITTEN BY HIM. We are the grace heirs and now the reformation in 2017. We are to GO! GROW! BE! If you turn the page of you will find a personal THREE THESES. What are your Top Three for the next days of our shared ministry, our Mission as a congregation confessing “Jesus Christ is Lord?”

Write them down, don’t nail them anywhere, tape them to the daily mirror you look into, and remember THE ONE who looks at you each moment, our gracious God who, through the Cross, names and claims us in Jesus Christ forever!...Our Mighty Fortress secures and sends. Our Spirit Prayer leads us onward to say, “Here am I, here we are, send us!”