



FROM OUR
PASTOR

Remember, Repent, Rejoice

Here we are on the verge of our celebration of the 500th year since the Reformation; 500 years since Martin Luther walked over to the Castle Church in Wittenberg and posted his 95 Thesis. He had some serious concerns which he wanted to address; concerns which impacted the eternal well-being of those for whom Christ died.

Luther had re-discovered the Gospel, the Good News! Once he discovered it, there was no shutting him up. We **remember** how he stood before princes and emperors, church officials and theological educators with the threat of death, if he did not recant. He boldly confessed that a sinner is declared righteous for Christ's sake alone. A sinner could be absolutely certain that he could stand before his Maker on Judgment Day and receive the gift of life eternal by faith in the merits of Jesus Christ alone.

How could Luther be on trial for simply stating the central message of the Bible? How could the Gospel have been lost in the first place? History teaches us that it was not the first time man lost it. Read 2 Chronicles 34 sometime. The Good News was re-discovered in the 18th year of King Josiah's reign. It was not until the priest Hilkiah, found the Book of the Law that a reformation began; 622 B.C. It was an era where man's wisdom was elevated over and above God's wisdom. Pleasure was placed over obedience.

Fast forward to Luther's day and you find a similar situation. Man's wisdom was placed over and above God's revealed wisdom. Pleasure was placed over obedience and low and behold, the Gospel was lost once again.

Where are we today? Does any of this sound familiar? Pleasure before duty...man's wisdom elevated over and above God's wisdom? Just plain neglect? A lackadaisical approach to worship? Boredom with the message that sin is forgiven? Empty pews? Has the Gospel been lost?

Many in Christendom are calling for a modern day reformation and a return to the authority and primacy of God's Word in the Church. For instance, I am always amazed at the reactions I get from Christians (!) when I say that I believe God made the universe and everything in it in six solar days. Isn't that what the Bible states? If one doesn't believe the six day account of creation, I find it hard to believe that they will grasp the significance of the three day account of Christ's death, burial and resurrection.

Has the Church lost the Gospel? Do we know where our Bibles are? Do we know the way to eternal life? Are we sure of it? Do we see ourselves as poor, miserable sinners in need of rescue from eternal death and damnation!? Do we cling to God's gift of Jesus with every fiber of our being because He is the Way, the Truth and the Life? Do we need a modern day reformation?

If you are not sure of the answers to these questions, you need to **repent**. Josiah, of the Old Testament, tore his clothes to show his sorrow. Perhaps, instead of tearing our clothing, we can simply pick up our Bibles and read them, prepare ourselves to worship on the weekends, say "no" to those things that take place during our prescribed worship times, be regular in Bible class, teach our children so that, we might not lose the message of our salvation.

I once challenged the Men's Club that if they were not in the custom of reading their Bibles on a daily basis, to try it every day for one week. My promise, which really wasn't mine to make, was that their lives would be more peaceful, that God would talk to them in their reading, that they would feel closer to Jesus. Please note that I never promised that life would be easier. Well, God was true to His Word and that is precisely what the men stated the following week and that led to **rejoicing**. The men rejoiced when they discovered that life is sure a lot more fulfilling when the One who defeated death goes through it with you, provides comfort and that He has big plans for you when you leave planet earth.

Life teaches us that if you possess something very valuable that you guard it and protect it. We have our safes, our safety deposit boxes, locks on our doors. Can that be said about our attitude towards God's Word? Do we treasure it, safeguard it, and use it that it not ever get "lost"?

The best place for the Word, that makes us wise unto salvation, is in the heart. How does it get there? It gets there, so to speak, when we read it. It gets there when we come to God's house and gladly hear and learn it. It gets there when we discuss it with each other. We literally ingest it. When these things happen, it can never be lost!

Are we in need of reformation? The short answer is, "yes!" Always! We will always be sinners in need of reformation this side of heaven. Is the Church in need of reformation? Once again, absolutely! Perhaps we should post our thesis on the doors of our church. We could do that. But perhaps, what would be even better is that they would be written upon the tablets of our hearts (Proverbs 7:3) that we might treasure them, guard and protect them and tell the world of *the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light* (1 Peter 2:9).

In His Service,
Pastor Szczesny