

Yesterday's Sermon - In 10 Sentences or Less

Identity Check (Week 5) - Reformed, And Always Being Reformed:



- 1) In our second to last week of this series, we head back to the Protestant Reformation itself, and note that the spark that ignited the eventual inferno was Luther's desire to reform the out-of-bounds practice of selling indulgences.
- 2) A hundred years removed from that Luther and his 95 theses, Reformed Christian groups encapsulated their reformation origin and ongoing spirit with this maxim - "The church is reformed, and always being reformed."
- 3) So why should we embrace reform? First, because we believe we need it...that is, of all the different Christian groups, Reformed Christians have the most healthy, pronounced belief in human fallibility, including human institutions like church.
- 4) Reform is to groups what repentance is to individuals.
- 5) As 20th-century theologian Karl Barth put it, reform will come from heeding the criticism of both the Lord and the watching world (see too The Confession of 1967, 9.42).
- 6) We also embrace reform because it's who God is, what He's doing, and what He will continue doing.
- 7) God's work in us, His church, and the wider world is one of movement, deep change, and transformation.
- 8) Thus, we are less agents of change than we are its recipients, and all too often, to resist change is to resist God.
- 9) Last, we embrace reform that's prompted by continuing interaction with scripture.
- 10) Jesus Himself counsels that we often mistake our own traditions for God's own Word, and it is scripture itself that reveals that fact (Matt. 15.6-9).

More to Explore

- Here are two shorter, accessible articles from the PCUSA's Mission Agency about that maxim, "The church is reformed, and always being reformed"...you'll note that Pastor Chris drew some of yesterday's material from both -

[Presbyterian Mission Agency Reformed and Always Being Reformed](#)

[Presbyterian Mission Agency Ecclesia Reformata, Semper Reformanda](#)

Martin Luther on the Priority of Scripture

Four years after nailing his 95 theses to the church door in Wittenberg, Luther stood trial for heresy, among other charges, at Worms (an event called "The Diet of Worms), and his life hung in the balance.

At the end of the speech he made in his own defense, he says the following...and note the priority he puts on scripture:

"Years ago all the pope's pronouncements were called Christian truth and articles of faith, yet these were merely human. And then it happened that people sank into the abyss and lost everything that pertains to God's Word and Christ..."

...Unless I am convinced by scripture and plain reason, I do not accept the authority of popes and councils...My conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise, God help me, amen."

A Prayer for the Week

Every day this week, take a moment and slowly pray what follows (we ended the service with it yesterday...so succinct and powerful):

"Good God, convert the world. Begin with me, amen." (From the church in China)