

Week 5 Sermon-Given on Reformation Sunday
John 8, Romans 3:23ff

Some things Matter

- Some things matter enough for us to stand before kings and rulers and declare with boldness, “Here I stand, I can do no other. God help me, Amen.”
- We are celebrating Reformation Sunday today because during the 14-16 centuries the “church” didn’t reveal what mattered. The truth of the Gospel, the Good News declared in God’s word, didn’t matter-at least not as much as papal power and personal political gain.
 - Priests didn’t know God’s word, didn’t teach it, or preach it.
 - Many priests, and bishops and other rulers who had bought their power in the church did not want God’s word mucking up the structures and powers that kept others in.
- There are different ways of slipping into bondage.
 - Sometimes it is forced upon us.
 - The slaves kidnapped from Africa and brought to this nation or other areas of the British Empire.
 - Kids today kidnapped and sold into brothels in places like Thailand, Cambodia, or horrifyingly in a hotel off of Interstate 5.
 - Sometimes we chose our own bondage.
 - Our “pet” sins are examples of this.
- Jesus in John 8 declares today that anyone who commits sin is a slave to sin
 - This was told to delusional church leaders under Roman rule who claimed they were in bondage to no one.
 - Yet Jesus hammered them by claiming anyone who commits sin is a slave to it. Know anyone like that?
- How we are slaves.
 - Anyone have an argument with a family member in the past month? Even after years of living on this earth, we still can’t figure out how to get along because we are slaves to pride, selfishness, anger, etc.
 - If you live in America you are either partially or completely a slave to materialism. You look at what you have and think you need to replace what already works or get another that is the latest model. Or have everything that begins with a lowercase “i.”
 - Jesus points out that as we continue in these things we are slaves-because we can’t stop.
 - The reaction should not be to deny this like those church leaders of Jesus’ day. But admit it. Because sin has eternal consequences. It separates us from God. Not just now, but forever. We are bound for Hell if we are slaves to sin.
- Yet Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. The punishment that we should bear for our sin Christ took upon himself. He bore the punishment, judgment, and consequence for our sins and took them to the cross.
 - If Christ has born these things-we are free indeed. We may struggle with them in this life while we are still attached to this sinful flesh.

- Romans 3:23-28 Jesus took on our sin-He became the propitiation (the replacement for our sin), the bearer of our sin so that when he took on our judgment, He ended it.
- Now in Luther's day the church was selling merit. You could tap into other people's merit and buy your way into heaven. I don't think so. That's completely ridiculous. Luther shook the world by arguing from the Bible that God gives salvation as a free gift to all who have faith in the person and work of Jesus.
- Today people either think they can earn salvation, which is bogus, or that they deserve it, which is just as far from the truth. Sin won't allow it. We don't deserve salvation, because we are slave to sin.
- *In Romans 3 Paul tells us what we are saved from, Peter tells us what we are saved for.* 1 Peter 2:9-10 tell us what we are saved for, "1Pet. 2:9 ¶ But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light"
- Do you see how you are saved in order "that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him . . . "
- Illustration at end: Can you think of anything worse than someone released from prison or slavery and sits down and says, "Woohoo, I'm free (very nonchalant)." Or sits down once a week and says "Woohoo, I'm free."
- What are priests?
 - Priests pray to God for people. Offer sacrifice for people. Intercede for people on behalf of Christ.
 - Now I would not trade my life for Luther's, because he had enormous struggles in his ministry. Yet in regard to mission, in order for Luther to do missions, He had to get good preachers into pulpits because most people went to church. For his generation to hear the Good News good preachers had to get into well listened to pulpits.
 - If we do the same today, 80% of the people in our city won't ever hear God's word.
 - People in this city need priests named (list off names of people in your audience) who will tell people of God's good news. Declare the things that matter so that people can be freed from the slavery to sin, death, and hell.
 - God's word needs to be heard, my friends. Needs to be spoken in order to be heard. We have been given Good News for our salvation, and so that we can offer that salvation to others in the name of Jesus.
 - God's word still needs people who stand up and say, "Here I stand, I can do no other, God help me, Amen."