October 28, 2018

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today: We hope to have a morning reading service and an evening catechism service. Classes after the morning service.

This week **Tuesday**, **October 30**, Rev. Witvoet serves us for a **Reformation Day** service at 7:00 p.m

Rock Valley has their service on Wednesday, Oct. 31, and Rev. Hofman hopes to be in Sioux Center Thursday, Nov. 1

Next Week: We hope to have a morning catechism service and a 2:30 p.m service with Rev. Witvoet. **No** classes after the morning service.

Advance Notices:

November 11, 9:30 a.m. conf. of faith & 2:30 p.m. Rev. Vergunst November 21, 7:00 p.m. Rev. Adams - Thanksgiving Eve December 23, 9:30 and 2:30 p.m. Rev. Witvoet December 24, 7:00 p.m. Rev. Adams - Christmas Eve.

-All the Lord Willing-

Offerings Today: 1st General Fund Next week: 1st General Fund 2nd Banner of Truth 2nd Treasured Med.

We Remember in Prayer:

- -Mr. Clarence Zomer who was diagnosed with lung cancer this past week and is awaiting further test results.
- -Those who have been unable to gather with us for some time, our widows and widowers, our elderly, the unborn, prodigal sons and daughters, any others who are unable to gather with us today, are under doctor's care, and all those who have hidden crosses.

MEDITATION

THE ESSENCE OF REFORMATION

"As it is written, the just shall live by faith." (Romans 1:17)

On October 31, we remember an event which was used in God's providence, for God's church on earth. Martin Luther was a Professor of Divinity at the University of Wittenberg. Luther not only taught Bible exegesis at the university, but also was a regional vicar over many cloisters and a preacher in the town's main church. There he nailed his 95 theses to the chapel door. Originally, the theses were meant to

start an academic debate with Johann Tetzel, who promoted the sale of indulgences for dead souls. However, God decided differently.

A movement started, which could not be stopped. It exposed the false doctrine and bad practices of the Catholic church, which led their constituents further and further away from God's Word, into spiritual darkness, for the church's financial gain. Luther, who endured severe soul struggles, was led by God's Spirit and by grace out of depressing darkness to a marvelous light. He was not able to remain silent any longer about the deceptive practices, especially of the Pope's henchman: Tetzel. Luther was used by God to show the people that the only way to salvation was: "Sola Scriptura, Sola Fide and Sola Gratia". (By Scripture alone, by faith alone and by grace alone.)

In the past, Luther also had been tangled in the web of tricky deceptions by the Catholic church. He diligently looked for an answer on the question that plagued his guilty soul: "How can I find a merciful God?" He tried to flee from his sins by joining a cloister, by doing penance and by punishing himself. He tried to follow the rules of the church scrupulously and nearly tormented himself to death to find peace for his soul. He was persecuted by God's justice which demanded payment. Luther hated the word justice, because it cursed and damned him. He said to God: "Won't Thou ever stop plaguing me with Thy wrath?" Luther had loathed Paul's words in our text until Heaven enlightened him in his extreme distress. Luther understood that Paul, when using the word "Justitia", did not mean justice which God demands from man, but instead, righteousness which God (in Christ) grants a true sinner.

Suddenly, Luther comprehended that grace is not earned by our good works, but granted by God in Christ, through faith. Faith is a gift of God. The way to heaven (Christ), which was hidden for Luther, became the gate through which a righteous people may enter. Rejoicing, loosened from the restraining band of sin and death, Luther was enabled to boldly witness against the deceitful and comfortless doctrine of the Catholic church, which shows people that salvation is earned by their good works.

All the above is still very pertinent today. The Catholic church still teaches this doctrine. Unfortunately, many so called "Protestants" err by teaching that there is some good in man or that he has a free will. Scripture is robbed of its power, equating it to the word of men, subjecting it to the critical human spirit. God's justice is ignored or given a different, erroneous meaning. Grace is no more grace. Sin and ignorance keeps these people in spiritual captivity.

Reader: Do you understand that you cannot exist before the majesty of God? Do you experience guilt before God? Do you wrestle for grace and for that righteousness that saves from eternal death? There is still no other way that leads to eternal life than by losing everything that is of self. It is still "Sola Scriptura" which can shed light in your soul, by the application of God's Spirit. It is still "Sola Fide"

which teaches you to reject everything outside of God and Christ and which finds life in God's justice. It is still "Sola Gratia" which saves, frees (releases) from restraints and gives liberty to the captives. (Isaiah 61:1)

Seek daily to know the core of the Reformation in your own heart and life. By God's grace, justification of unconverted people is *still* possible in these times of sin, ignorance and freewill. May it be to His honour and glory.

The Lord is just and merciful, And gracious to the meek; He saved me when I cried to Him, Tho' I was poor and weak. Psalter 312:3

-Rev. J. Baaijens

Notes

Consistory

Mr. Craig Timmer, President Mr. Norm DeWit, Treasurer
Mr. Dave Hoogendoorn, Clerk
Contacts

Bulletin announcements: Mr. Craig Timmer craigtimmer@ymail.com or (231) 942-1389

Sermon recordings: Mr. Ryan Rozeboom

Netherlands Reformed Congregation

Sioux Falls, SD



For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth... Romans 1:16

Church Times: 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 or 6:30 p.m.