

THEME FOR REFORMATION SUNDAY OCTOBER 25, 2009

“STILL UNASHAMED! SHARING THE NEWS THAT MOVES!”

REVELATION 14: 6 – 7

Throughout history, God’s Church has depended on His Good News, centered in Jesus Christ for its very existence, for its ongoing relationship with God, and for its faithful response in carrying out God’s mission. Despite the attempts over the years to drown out the Gospel, our Lord Jesus promises that nothing – not even the powers of hell itself – can conquer the Gospel and those who confess its truth.

Today we celebrate the anniversary of the Reformation and praise God for providing Christian reformers, including Martin Luther, who put their lives on the line in calling the church to return to the Biblical message of “Grace Alone...Faith Alone...Scripture Alone”. Let us ask ourselves this morning, “Does the Gospel still drive my relationship with God and my daily witness for Him?” May God bless us as we celebrate this important anniversary (492 years and counting!) in the life of the church.

Introit

Psalm 46

- L: God is our refuge and strength,
C: Always ready to help in times of trouble.
L: So we will not fear when earthquakes come
C: And the mountains crumble into the sea.
L: Let the oceans roar and foam.
C: Let the mountains tremble as the waters surge!
L: A river brings joy to the city of our God,
C: The sacred home of the Most High.
L: God dwells in that city;
C: It cannot be destroyed.
L: From the very break of day,
C: God will protect it.
L: The nations are in chaos, and their kingdoms crumble!
C: God’s voice thunders, and the earth melts!
L: The LORD of Heaven’s Armies is here among us;
C: The God of Israel is our fortress.
L: Come, see the glorious works of the LORD:
C: See how He brings destruction upon the world.
L: He causes wars to end throughout the earth.
C: He breaks the bow and snaps the spear; He burns the shields with fire.
L: “Be still, and know that I am God!
C: I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world.”
L: The LORD of Heaven’s Armies is here among us;
C: The God of Israel is our fortress.
ALL: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

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The First Lesson

Revelation 14: 6 – 7

(In the final chapter of God's plan for the world He created, His angel is pictured still shouting a "wake-up call" to each and every person by speaking the eternal Good News. Such Good News still has the power to move people, before it is too late, into a saving relationship with the Lord.)

⁶And I saw another angel flying through the sky, carrying the eternal Good News to proclaim to the people who belong to this world—to every nation, tribe, language, and people. ⁷"Fear God," he shouted. "Give glory to him. For the time has come when he will sit as judge. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all the springs of water."

Epistle Lesson

Romans 3: 19 – 28

(St. Paul points us to God's new salvation answer which centers in Jesus Christ and is received through His gift of faith.)

¹⁹Obviously, the law applies to those to whom it was given, for its purpose is to keep people from having excuses, and to show that the entire world is guilty before God. ²⁰For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are.

²¹But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. ²²We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.

²³For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. ²⁴Yet God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. ²⁵For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, ²⁶for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he declares sinners to be right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.

²⁷Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on faith. ²⁸So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law.

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Gospel Lesson

Matthew 11: 12 – 19

(God's rule in this world has often been opposed. John the Baptist's preparation message – and our Lord Jesus' own arrival – were rejected by many, even those who claimed to be God's chosen ones. Ultimately, God will vindicate His Son through His successful salvation work.)

(Jesus said,) ¹²“And from the time John the Baptist began preaching until now, the Kingdom of Heaven has been forcefully advancing, and violent people are attacking it. ¹³For before John came, all the prophets and the law of Moses looked forward to this present time. ¹⁴And if you are willing to accept what I say, he is Elijah, the one the prophets said would come. ¹⁵Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!

¹⁶“To what can I compare this generation? It is like children playing a game in the public square. They complain to their friends, ¹⁷“We played wedding songs, and you didn't dance, so we played funeral songs, and you didn't mourn.” ¹⁸For John didn't spend his time eating and drinking, and you say, ‘He's possessed by a demon.’ ¹⁹“The Son of Man, on the other hand, feasts and drinks, and you say, ‘He's a glutton and a drunkard, and a friend of tax collectors and other sinners!’ But wisdom is shown to be right by its results.”