

Good News for Beggars
Celebrating the Protestant Reformation

Romans 3:19-4:8; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 10-29-2017

Post Tenebras Lux: What is the Reformation all about?

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." – Romans 1:16-17

What is the history of the Reformation? One of the famous slogans of the Reformation is *post tenebras lux*, a Latin phrase meaning ‘after darkness, light.’ This is a great way to summarize what we see happening in the events of the Reformation.

The life of Martin Luther. Martin Luther was a German who lived from 1483-1546. He was born into a world in which the only Christian church that he knew was the Roman Catholic Church. Let me summarize his life and experience in light of five events:

- The Lightning Strike (1505): ‘St. Anne help me! I will become a monk!’
- The Wittenberg Castle Church Door (1517): ‘As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs.’
- The Tower of the Black Cloister (1518): ‘Thus *that place in Paul* was for me truly the gate to paradise.’
- Exsurge Domine* (‘Arise, O Lord’) Papal Bull (decree) (1520): A ‘wild boar from the forest’ seeks to destroy the ‘vineyard’ of the church!
- The Diet of Worms (1522): ‘Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen.’
- The Wartburg Castle Hideaway: ‘*Das Neue Testament Deutsch*’ (*The German New Testament*)

Simul Justus et Peccator: How should we celebrate the Reformation?

⁴ Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. ⁵ But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness, ⁶ just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works. – Romans 4:4-6

What was at the heart of the Reformation? A very important phrase that Martin Luther is famous for is *simul justus et peccator*, which means ‘at the same time, just [or righteous] and sinner.’

What is the practical importance of this idea? Don’t be surprised by your sin and the sin of others or content with either, but rest in the righteousness of Christ and show the grace that you’ve been shown.

Celebrate as sinners: *Don't be surprised when sinners sin.*

(1 John 1:8; Romans 3:23; Romans 7:21-23) That doesn't mean saving faith can be a dead faith; it does mean that saving faith and sin profoundly coexist in the Christian. How do you process the sin of any believer? Especially when the sin is against you! Don't be surprised by the sin of others; God isn't.

Celebrate as those who know grace: *If you know grace, show grace.*

(Romans 6:12-14; Ephesians 4:30-5:2; Matthew 18:32-35) That doesn't mean that Christians don't sin (as just stated above); it does mean that Christians should be committed to treating one another as God has treated us. We should respond to God's grace, don't react to people's sin.

Celebrate a Promised Savior: *Rest in what Someone else has done and in what Someone else says.* (Romans 3:28; Romans 5:17; Romans 1:16-17) That doesn't mean that you shouldn't be concerned about showing grace or about sinning (see above); it does mean that the gospel is about what Christ has done for us and that is the foundation for thinking about our sin and the sin of others. We should point ourselves and others to resting in an alien righteousness by gracious love, acceptance and forgiveness.

***Semper Reformanda:* Is the Reformation over?**

⁶ I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; ⁷ which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! – Galatians 1:6-8

Is the Reformation over? Some want to argue that the Reformation is over and that Roman Catholics and Protestants should reunite. First, examining the causes of the Reformation indicate that it isn't over. *What were the causes of the Reformation?* The theological factors centered around two issues: (1) What is the final authority for what we believe and do? (2) On what basis is a person declared righteous in God's sight? In addressing these two basic, fundamental issues, five themes emerged: (1) Sola Scriptura: Scripture Alone; (2) Sola Fide: Faith Alone; (3) Sola Gratia: Grace Alone; (4) Solus Christus: Christ Alone; (5) Soli deo Gloria: To the Glory of God Alone. Second, one of the famous Reformation slogan, *semper reformanda*, which means 'always reforming' or 'always being reformed' highlights the reality that will always need to grow in conformity to God's Word as the church corporately and as individual Christians.

Two Personal Questions: (1) Is the Bible your final authority in all matters? In every situation? In every relationship? (2) Is your faith in Christ alone? In the face of every sin? In the light of every victory over sin or good work? To the degree either of these is not true for you, your reformation is not over. It's only just begun!

"We are beggars. This is true."

Martin Luther