

WELCOME 30th October 2022 – Reformation '22 C

Luke 9:28-35 & Acts 17:16-34

Welcome! It's great to be together again today! Today is the Sunday of the Reformation & we tap into the deeper riches of our faith legacy as a family of disciples...**Bible Study Qs** are there to equip you so God can lead you deeper into His word/work in your life, & so you can share that w/ someone else. We also use them for our **Zoom** Bible Study Catch-ups on Friday @ 1p.m.

As we move into this week...Nike has the **Swoosh**, McDonalds the Golden **Arches**, Apple has, well the **Apple**. Corporations & even churches **pay** big bucks to get & defend brand awareness that's instantly recognisable in their marketplace. Yet there is one icon that is far more universally known w/ greater market saturation than any other. One icon that is both ugly & beautiful, evil & good. One icon simultaneously repels & attracts, offends & delights, divides & unites. It causes anger & conflict and brings comfort & peace.

The Cross. More than an icon or symbol, the cross is the pivotal event in human history; & has the final word on all life. A symbol of hate, it reveals love. A reminder of guilt, it brings freedom. An instrument of death, it gives life.

Today...We'll **talk**...

*"I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me.
Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said.
He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day,
just as the Scriptures **said.**"*

The Cross is a specific, verifiable, sufficient, & sharable word of God to us that saves us & sets us on course w/ Jesus now & forever. The cross kills me to the life of this world & raises me to living the life of Jesus in this world

We experience the power of the Cross in all we do...Let's pray...

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord Jesus, as we gather we know this day again we need the gospel of your grace. Those you called to you during your ministry & to whom you appeared after the resurrection needed it. Our brother Martin Luther was reborn when he understood grace alone through Christ alone by faith alone was our only hope.

Until the Day you return to finish making all things new, we will always need to return to you for your forgiveness & assurance of life eternal in your presence..

Jesus, I never needed you to give me a second chance or to be a moral model for me to imitate. I never needed a spectacular religious experience or a new set of rules to keep. I needed you to live a life of perfect obedience that I never could...to fulfil the demands of the law that I never would...to take my place upon the cross & rise from death so I don't have to die apart from you...to rise so I could experience reconciliation with the Father & live now & eternally as God's beloved.

Reformation Day, is not as much about our history as it is about our destiny being made full & complete in you & that our hope is built on nothing less, nothing more, and nothing other than your blood and your righteousness. Let it be in us according to your word...Jesus in your Name... Amen.

Let's hear God's word...

FAITH CHAT:

1. If you had to explain the Reformation to someone, what would you say?
2. What image of the cross resonates with you most?

REFORMATION '22 C – TABLE TALK: THE CROSS

The family **table**...However it looks at your house or how it has changed over time, it's that place where there's honesty, openness...lessons learned, habits formed...lives not only shared but shaped...where what's on the plates is less important than who's around them. Life...Faith...how those connect...Hospitality & generosity, love, wisdom, understanding & joy are the best appetizers, mains & desserts to be had.

Some of Luther's best teaching happened at the table when he & his wife Katie would gather students or a dozen or so guests w/ them & their children for meals. There were always questions, back/forth discussions, almost always someone ate w/ one hand & took notes w/ the other. Life/Faith & how those connect...Hospitality & generosity, love, wisdom, understanding & joy were always on offer. While we aren't eating or around tables, we are for the next few weeks going to imitate that practice. Discussion, questions, you have an outline to today's conversation & can take notes I encourage that. Life/Faith & how those connect...

Paul's letter are a lot like that...especially to the church in Corinth. He planted the church there, raised up leaders & then would receive word of their progress as he & his companions travelled elsewhere. About Corinth, he heard troubling reports: division, immorality, lack of hospitality & care for one another. They wrote with prickly questions...He disciplined some of their members long distance because of their unChristlike behaviour. Deep in his love for them in Christ, his heart burned for their persistent folly & sin.

But like the best teachers...he's insistent that the main thing remain the main thing. So he opens his heart to share yet again the good news of Jesus...the gospel he preached ^{b/4}, that they were led by the Spirit to trust, & to which they still cling despite their lapses in faith & obedience...That's why we do this...daily immersing ourselves in God's Word, weekly engaging the promise of Christ in Word/Sacrament, connecting our lives to one another in prayer, fellowship & service, offering our lives to the world in words of witness & deeds of kindness. Paul says this...

Let me now remind you, dear brothers & sisters, of the Good News I preached to you before You welcomed it then, & you still stand firm in it...I passed on to you what was **most important** & what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, & he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. (first importance) NB...Paul's a Pharisee using rabbi-speak like he would to a group of students. He says **this** is a SPECIFIC word from God to us. "most important/1st importance" is how a rabbi would say, "Until you have this...completely...w/o any doubt/misunderstanding...etched in your heart ...don't go to the next thing."

Jewish rabbis say "1st/most" & it's not like my shopping list where there's a bunch of stuff & I can wander the aisles get this/that/the next thing & as long as I get the list how I get it doesn't matter. This ain't that. **Mt 6:33** – Jesus "**seek** 1st BτΘ" which means...go after the life I reveal & give you until you have that mastered in every part of your life...Until that is accomplished there is no 2nd – no next thing. There is only that 1st. **1 Cor 2:2** – I resolved while I was with you I would forget everything except Jesus Christ, & him crucified. – 1 sermon 1 Bible Study 1 pastoral counselling tool...**Cross**

*I passed on to you as of 1st importance what had also been passed on to me. Christ **died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, & he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said.** What Paul delivers as gospel *good news* that which *saves you* is a specific word about a specific person & a specific event... Jesus Christ crucified – buried – risen...ruling over all things because that applies to no one else according to the Scriptures...**What** Scriptures? **Ps 16:10**...My body rests in safety. For you will not leave my soul among the dead or allow your holy one to rot in the grave. **Ps 22:22-31**...praise erupts after the plea for God's intervention. **Is 53:10-11**...Yet when his life is made an offering for sin, he will have many descendants. He will enjoy a long life, & the LORD's good plan will prosper in his hands.*

How do we know God's great love? How do we know we are in a relationship w/ the Father? Not by miracles not through the wonders & beauty of nature not by some spiritual ecstasy or by some arm twist of political power that gets our side in office not by the overthrow of social custom & moral taboo maximizing our personal freedom & desire or some mythical scale of justice balancing act that tears down more than it builds up...not by megachurch-religiousness...Only by the cross of Jesus Christ...

"There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved." – Acts 4:12 *"For God has set a day for judging the world with justice by the man he has appointed, & he proved to everyone who this is by raising him from the dead." – Acts 17:31* The gospel - *good news* - that which *saves you* is a specific word about a specific person & a specific event...Jesus Christ crucified – buried – risen...ruling over all things because that applies to no one else according to the Scriptures The cross of Jesus is that specific word on which the destiny of you, me & all things in the universe depends...only that specific word grants hope peace assurance. How? Because that specific word is **also**...

A VERIFIABLE word...**He** was **seen** by Peter & then by the Twelve. After that, he was **seen** by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he was **seen** by James & later by all the apostles. Last of all, as though I had been born at the wrong time, **I also saw him**... From the earliest witness of the

women who were the 1st to go to the tomb on resurrection morning the unified declaration was Jesus is visibly verifiably alive right b/4 their eyes exactly as he told them he would be. **Mk 16** the women show up wondering how they'll roll the stone away but it's already gone & inside the tomb there's an angel who says: "Don't be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! **Look**, this is where they laid his body. Now go tell his disciples, including Peter, that Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will **see him** there, just as he told you before he died." Not only do they see him, they touch him, eat w/ him, talk w/ him & spend 40 days w/ him until he returns to the Father to reign. **Lk 24:31** – Jesus **has** been walking & listening & talking to a pair of dispirited travelling disciples heading to Emmaus from Jerusalem Easter evening & as he sits down to break the bread w/ them... Suddenly, their eyes were opened, & they recognized him. The SPECIFIC word of the cross is also the VERIFIABLE word of the resurrection. Which means it is **also**...

A SUFFICIENT word for all...all people of all time of all circumstances... **So** if the Son sets you free, you are truly free. No other freedom no other forgiveness no other eternal life except through the specific verifiable word of Jesus Christ crucified risen **ruling**: It is this Good News that saves you if you continue to believe the message I told you. This is sufficient...nothing else adds to your salvation...In fact to try & help Jesus help you costs you Jesus; **cuts** you off from his grace. **Gal 5:4** but even more...

I am the least of all the apostles. In fact, I'm not even worthy to be called an apostle after the way I persecuted God's church. But whatever I am now, it is all because God poured out his grace on me - & not without results. For I have worked harder than any of the other apostles; yet it was not I but God who was working through me by his grace. The cross alone (Christ crucified/risen/ruling) transformed Paul from Christ's biggest earthly enemy to his greatest earthly advocate. The cross shifts the axis not only of human destiny from rebellion & wrath to repentance & reconciliation w/ the Father; it shifts the axis of our lives now. From the moment he was knocked to the dust on the road to Damascus every thought wish dream desire hope & aspiration of Paul's shifted to knowing Christ fully, becoming like him & making the gospel known in every corner of the world that he could **reach**. **Acts 20:24** My life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus - the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God.

We are no longer the product of our history or feelings our traumas or **sin**... **Gal 2:20** - My old self has been crucified w/ Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me & gave himself for me. **Eph 2:10** - **For** we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. Paul's life became the lived result of the crucified risen Jesus taking hold of him in eternal **love**: Christ's love compels us.

Since we believe Christ died for all, we also believe we have all died to our old life. He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died & was raised for them. – 2 Cor 5:14-15

The SPECIFIC word cross is the VERIFIABLE word of the resurrection. Which means it is the SUFFICIENT word for all...all people of all time of all circumstances...which Paul says makes it...

The SHARABLE word for our neighbours...**I** passed on to you what was most important & what had also been passed on to me. We aren't keepers of a secret or some private mystery. There's no code to crack or a path to self-discovery to journey. I can only share what I have been **given**...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners - & I am the worst of them all. – 1 Tim 1:15 I can only obey what the risen Jesus commands ... **Go**, therefore, & make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father & of the Son & of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. because he gives the specifics of obedience...**If** any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, & follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. – Mt 16:24-25

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TAKE IT HOME –

What part of your life will you put under the cross this week so it can be raised to new life in Christ?

With whom will you share it?

Let's pray...Lord Jesus, lead me again today to your cross. Whatever you see in me that needs to die, kill it so that you can raise the new creation you intend. Grant me the assurance of your word & the power of your Spirit to serve & share freely without asking the cost. We ask all this & whatever you know we need but would never ask...for your name's sake. Amen