

CALL to PRAYER - pray that God would send a revival among His people

Acts 8:9-23 - 95 Theses & the Protestant Reformation

INTRO - Today is a special day/date in church history. The world celebrates Halloween on 10/31 *The Day of the Dead*. The church, however, celebrates 10/31 as *Reformation Day* - a day of new life and revival. It was on October 31, 1517, that Martin Luther nailed his *95 Theses* on the door of the church at Wittenberg, Germany. That event is seen as a catalyst for the great revival called *The Protestant Reformation*. Martin Luther was incensed about the corruption in the church and distortion of the gospel so he publicly posted a 95-point sermon that he wanted to discuss. I don't have 95 points today - but the point is that today is the day it happened.

The Reformation shaped western culture as well as the church and it laid the groundwork for our own country and the principles of freedom we enjoy. Protestantism is what sets the USA apart. The farther we get away from Protestant principles the farther we get away from freedom and liberty. One tenant of Protestantism is that there is an innate corruption in humanity and in human institutions and religious institutions are not exempt. Money has a corrupting influence, morality suffers, and the message of church gets altered. When this happens, we need a revival!

SIMONY

- 100 years before Martin Luther, John Hus called "simony" a great heresy in the church
 - The Roman Church called Hus a great heretic and burned him at the stake
 - Cancel culture is not new. (they really canceled you out back then)
- What is *Simony*?
 - Simon the sorcerer in Acts 8 not so much his magic but his money
 - Simon "*believed*" but he believed he could buy the gifts/grace of God with money
 - Simony= using money to buy influence/position/gifts in the church
 - This doesn't happen today, does it? (just old dusty history)
- Martin Luther condemned the wealth of the Pope and his "church"
 - The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil - in society and the church

INDULGENCES

- The sale of indulgences was one thing that incensed Martin Luther
 - An indulgence is a "kindness" the Pope offers to reduce temporal punishments for sin in Purgatory in exchange for.....
 - Get out of jail free card pay to get paroled early buy brownie points
- To build St. Peters Basilica the Pope authorized the sale of indulgences to raise money
 - Teztl "when a coin in the coffer rings a soul from Purgatory springs"
 - Salvation for sale if you give you will get grace
- The catholic church is not so crass today...you have go to the Protestant church for that
 - "you need a miracle/blessing/salvation? Send in your gift"
 - "Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling..."

PAPAL AUTHORITY/PURGATORY

- Luther challenged the Popes power over Purgatory
 - Why didn't he just set all the souls free if he really has that power?
 - why don't the faith healers clear the hospitals with their power?
 - In Catholicism baptism takes care of the sins before baptism but purgatory purges the sins after that are not fully dealt with in confession/penance
- Luther challenged the sacramental system and said faith was necessary
 - There is a tendency for man to think that external religion makes us acceptable
 - #1 of the 95 was that repentance was a matter the whole person and all of life
 - Religion reduced to externals is corrupt
 - Go to church...go through the motions...get wet....give....I'm good
- Luther challenged the succession of Peter in the Pope
 - Where power and authority is passed down to the elites
 - The priesthood of the believer is a protestant principle 1 Peter 2:9
 - We don't have to go through the Pope or a priest
 - We can go directly to God

THE TREASURY OF MERIT

- A bank where extra righteousness of the saints is stored/distributed at Popes discretion
 - Catholicism believes that certain saints have extra goodness (more than they need) if you are low in your account than they can transfer some to you
 - The merits of past people can be applied and given to me on church approval
- This is such rank corruption of the gospel
 - We get Jesus' righteousness by faith. I don't want mother Teresa's - Phil 3:9
 - I am glad for the faith of my fathers, but I need my own faith
 - We cant get in on anyone else's coattails.....except Jesus

APPLICATION FROM HISTORY

- "Man tends toward trouble like the sparks fly upward" Job 5:7
 - There is an innate corruption in us.
 - Are the sins of past history present in me?
- Simony - do you think that the giving of money gives you extra standing in the church?
- Indulgences - do you think you can earn brownie points with God?
- Authority - is some religious leader the head of the church....or is Christ?
- Purgatory - who pays for your sins?
- Treasury of Merit - are you counting on the faith of your family or someone else?

There was a preacher named Mike King who went visited Germany and was so taken with what Martin Luther did in leadership of Protestant Reformation that he returned home to Georgia and changed his name and the name of his son to Martin Luther King so as to emulate this leader of revival and reformation. Today is a significant day in church history. May a similar revival occur in our churches. Who will post the 95 point sermon?