

Growth Group Questions

Reformation Celebrated, October 29, 2023

Introduction

Reformation Day is October 31st. We celebrate it every year on the last Sunday of October. We don't spend a lot of time on the Reformation itself in worship, but why do you think Luther's Reformation has such a lasting impact while other reformation attempts did not?

Into the Word – Daniel 6:10-12, 16-23

1. Last week we saw Daniel blessed as God preserved him and his friends under a hostile government. This week we see Daniel's enemies using the government against him. How does Daniel stand firm against their abuse of government? What lessons are there for us here as we consider God's enemies using government against us today?
2. What are some faith practices or teachings that modern Christians are tempted to give up to better "get along" with the world?
3. We never read this account to the end in worship, probably because of children and for the sake of "propriety." Maybe we should though because the miracle in the pit is only half the story. What outcome from this event is recorded in verse 24? What outcome is recorded in verses 25-28?

Into the Word – Romans 3:19-28

4. Maybe it seems obvious to us, but why is "every mouth silenced and the whole world held accountable to God" by the law?
5. Some skeptics of Christianity consider it barbaric that the Father chooses to punish the Son. They ask, "Why not just let sins go unpunished and still forgive them?" Use verses 25 & 26 to give an answer to their question. (Hint: think about righteousness & justice)

6. Verse 28 brings this section to a strong close contrasting salvation by works vs. salvation by faith. Paul writes in Romans 11:6, "**And if by grace, then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.**" Why are "grace alone" and "faith alone" so important to our spiritual understanding?

Into the Word – Matthew 10:16-23

7. Name some of the ways Christians and churches must be "shrewd as snakes" in the way we carry the gospel out to the world today? What happens if we don't?
8. Name some times that members or leaders of Christian churches failed to be "innocent as doves." What were the consequences?
9. Verse 23 is important but didn't make it into this week's sermon. Note how Christians are told not to quit when persecuted but are given permission to move on. Take a moment and pray for someone or someplace that you, or the church, has had to move on from.
10. The disciples are long gone and Jesus (the "Son of Man") hasn't returned. Which of the following explanations (all possible) do you like to understand what Jesus meant?
 - Jesus was referring to his ascension. (Israel wouldn't be fully evangelized by these disciples when Jesus rose/ascended.)
 - The statement shows Jesus has all believers in mind as he says this. (Believers still have places to go in the land of Israel to share the gospel before Jesus returns.)
 - "Israel" is used to really mean "places where believers are." (This is like the last option, but broadens it to mean that believers will still be going around the world preaching when Jesus returns.)

Closing Prayer

Jesus, thank you for your Word of grace and love and life. Bless us to take your saving message to our family and friends, and give us boldness and words to speak. Amen.