

About The REFORMATION and Taking Stands For One's Beliefs

ST. LUKE LUTHERAN CHURCH 1999-2000 CONFIRMATION CLASS
Class #5, Sunday, October 31, 1999, 9:45 am - 10:45 am:

Class Handout
Peter J. Jessen

Last Sunday: CELEBRATION Sunday

Paraphrasing Sam Keen: To be a true celebrant of life you must be ready at an instant's notice to proclaim our own 3-day weekend, take time off, take a nap, declare a special day of praise to God from whom all blessings flow who forgives us and always gives us second chances.

Spiritual Practice: Any use it during the week?

1. Breathe, concentrate on a verse: "The Lord is my shepherd"
2. and on "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."
When in a quandary, negative attitude, angry, or fearful, (1) pause, (2) breathe deeply, slowly, and (3) pray: "Help me to feel your love, Lord, help me to respond with love."

Today's lessons:

OT lesson: Joshua 3:7-17 - God asks them for an act of faith: water-cross-dry
God wants them to take a stand. TRANSITION crossing FROM lives as wandering slaves
TO new life in the new land
Not about logistics of crossing a river but about being a reminder: land is a gift from God
Live out the promise. Step in seemingly chaotic waters of the future

NT Epistle: I Thessalonians 2:9-13 A kind of "here I stand" statement
Refutes opponents' charges working for own ends
Commends his own life as it mirrors his beliefs: **takes a stand; he "walked the talk"**
Reminds them: they worked to support themselves
Recall what they experienced: Paul to them like a loving father, seeking their good, not his

NT Gospel: Matthew 23:1-12 **Another "here I stand" statement**
Opponents trying to trip Jesus up
Jesus silences them with Q of Messiah's identity
Jesus then critiques them
Warns against teaching what they fail to embody
They don't walk the talk.
Problem was not what they said but that they didn't live it.
2 most important commandments are what?
Love God love neighbor. SO, key is not, as New Agers say, "love self is first"
(Dahli Lama). Whether teaching or pastoring, = functions performed on
behalf of the community, not honors conferred on the the people doing them

Webster's 9th New Collegiate Dictionary

Hypocrisy: what is it? From Greek: hypokrisis: act of playing a part on the stage.
A feigning to be what one is not or feigning to believe what one does not practice.

Hypocrite: from Greek hypokrites: actor. One who affects virtues or qualities he does not have.
List individuals or groups that fit this category

What is integrity: dictionary define and on board (whole)

1. An unimpaired condition.
2. firm adherence to a code of esp. moral or artistic values; incorruptibility.
3. The quality or state of being complete or undivided. Completeness. Syn: see honesty.

List individuals or groups that fit this category

Discussion:

Theme: Jesus, our teacher

Purpose: To hear how Jesus asks us to live

To hear how Jesus challenges us to live with integrity.

Theme conversation: **we are all** teachers and learners

Key verse: Mt 23:8b: "For you have one teacher and you are all students."

Key terms: Jesus sees hypocrisy, asks us to live with integrity (whole).

Whatdo we Lutherans celebrate today? **Reformation Sunday:**

take turns reading Martin Luther's "here I stand" speech.

Oct. 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed his **95 theses** to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany. His public protest against practices of the church which he believed to be wrong. That single event is commonly recognized as the official beginning of the Protestant Reformation. On Reformation Sunday, Protestant churches of all denominations have an opportunity to explore their origins and reconnect with the spirit of radical protest out of which they were born. ... Many of the concerns of reformers revolved around questions of integrity and leadership in the church, themes we explore in our readings today.

Read , pp. 360, para 1 to 362, last para, "The Story of Civilization," The Reformation

Martin Luther statement at the end of the Diet at Worms: Since your Majesty and your lordships desire a simple reply, I will answer without distinctions....Unless I am convicted by the testimony of Sacred Scripture or by evident reason (I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other), my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against my conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen.

Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) would later write, in the 19th century, that this was "the greatest moment in the modern history of man."

Q: have you had difficulty living the way you know you should?

What helps you be true to your beliefs?

Q: hence the Q: "WWJD: what would Jesus do?"

Is this a good way to evaluate what to do and who to do it with?

Q: What struggles to kids in your group have in living out what they believe?

How can the church offer support to youth in their struggles?

Q: Today is Reformation Sunday: a time of thinking about people who live their lives with integrity, who have lived out the great commandment to love God, Others, self, by calling the church to have integrity.

Q: Who do you admire the most (parent, teacher, someone famous)? Why?

Q: Re the WWJD bracelets (use handout)

Creator God, we thank you for the gift of creation and we thank you for your presence among us. Help us to be signs of your love and truth in the world. Amen.

Close with Lord's Prayer