

THE MESSAGE for October 30, 2011**1 Corinthians 2:6-16*****How Can I Read The Bible With Greater Understand?*****The Rev. Dr. R. K. Miller**

Today we celebrate The Reformation. As Lutherans this is a high holy day for us. It is the birthday celebration of our Lutheran Church. So Happy Birthday! Today I want to do something a little different. I want to show a video clip of Luther and the Church in his day.

Let me set the stage: There was only one Church in Luther's day - The Holy Roman Catholic Church. But it wasn't very holy. It had become so corrupt and so self-serving, it was rotten to the core. The Church in 1500's was the most powerful institution on earth. And it, or the people who ran it, controlled all of life in a very oppressive way.

Luther had a problem with how the institutional Church was misrepresenting God and the faith and the Bible. The Church was driven by finances and not faith to the point where the Church was selling forgiveness and salvation in order to raise money. That's never good. The Church had become a fundraising institution and not a faith building enterprise. Luther had a problem with that as any Christian should.

Luther had had enough with the corruption and lack of faith in the Church by the Pope and religious leaders. One day he sat down to make a list of his concerns, 95 to be exact, 95 Theses; you received a copy of them here this morning. Luther nailed his 95 concerns to the castle door as was the custom in that day when you wanted to discuss something. Since the printing press had just been invented, Luther's 95 Theses was one of the first things mass produced for everyone to read. Luther then used the printing press in a strategic way to share his books and his writings to create a new system of faith in the Church.

In this video clip Luther is on his way to defend himself before Charles the V, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Charles had just come into political power at the age of 19. He was a devout Catholic and wanted to defend the Catholic Church at all costs. Frederick the Wise convinced Charles not to hand Luther over to the powers of the Church and Pope Leo X but to give Luther a chance to defend his position before Charles at his next parliament, the Diet in Worms. Luther would not waste this opportunity.

This is where our video clip picks up. Check it out:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rY6hMVMtjPg>

This video clip is part of a larger documentary about Luther. We've included the web site in the bulletin if you want to see more of this documentary of Luther and The Reformation. I would encourage you to watch it sometime this week.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ni1gupkGAW0>

I also want to point out one very important thing in this video. Luther turned to the Bible as a guide for life in the Church and the world. The Bible was his manual for living the faith. That's how we understand the Bible. It is our manual for living the faith. Every verse in the Bible can be read as either law or gospel. It depends on how it speaks to you and where you are in this journey of faith.

A few weeks ago I decided it was time to pull the engine and fix our Mazda Tribute. So a friend of mine, who works in a dealership, gave me this manual so I can do the work (show manual). In this manual some of the pages are more applicable to me and my situation than other pages are. And some of the pages don't make any sense to me at all. At times I need help from someone who knows how to read this manual and how to fix a Mazda Tribute. My friend has a friend who explained to me that this manual is a guide but it won't tell me everything I need to know. "You have to figure things out as you go along." He said. How True!

The Bible is our manual to guide us through life with faith. The Bible won't tell us everything we need to know. It won't fix all our problems. We have to figure some things out as we go along. How true!

Question -- How can we read the Bible with greater understanding?

Answer -- It begins by seeing the Bible as our manual for life, reading it, letting it reform us, living our lives every day as a tribute to the one who makes all of life possible Christ Jesus, our Lord. He is The Greatest Reformer. Amen.