

1 THE FREEDOM OF A CHRISTIAN 1520

Session #4

The Power of the Living Word of God

Paragraphs #18-30

2 UNIT 2: FACING GOD

- Session 4: The Power of the Living Word of God (paragraphs 18 – 30)
- Session 5: The Power of Sin (31 – 38)
- Session 6: The Power of Faith (39 – 51)
- Session 7: The Power of Freedom (52 – 69)

3 INTRODUCTION (PARAGRAPH 18)

- "Many people view Christian faith as something easy...even count it as if it were related to the virtues."
- "They do this because they have not judged faith in light of any experience...."

4 FAITH IS LEARNED THROUGH TRIBULATIONS (PARAGRAPH 19)

- A person who has not "tasted its spirit in the midst of trials and misfortunes" can't begin to write well about faith or understand what has been written about it.
- Luther felt that even his own sufferings, which he saw as "great and various trials" only helps him attain "at least a drop of faith"

5 THE MAIN THEMES (PARAGRAPHS 21 AND 22)

- 1 • "An easier way for common folk"
 1. The Christian individual is a completely free lord of all, subject to none.
 2. The Christian individual is a completely dutiful servant of all, subject to all.
- 2 • Appear to contradict each other but "serve our purposes beautifully"
 - 1 Corinthians 9:19
 - Romans 13:8
 - Philippians 2:6-7

6 THE MAIN THEMES (PARAGRAPH 23)

- Approach these themes from a "rather distant and unsophisticated starting point"
- "Every human being consists of two natures: a spiritual and a bodily one."
- Scriptures says that these two "human beings" fight against each other in the very same person.

7 THE SPIRITUAL, NEW AND INNER PERSON (PARAGRAPH 24)

- "In looking at the inner person first, we grasp how someone may become righteous, free, and truly Christian, that is 'a spiritual, new and inner person'"

8 WHAT CHRISTIAN FREEDOM DOES NOT CONSIST IN (PARAGRAPH 25)

- "No external thing at all, whatever its name, has any part in producing Christian righteousness or freedom. Nor does it produce unrighteousness or servitude."
- "Righteousness and freedom of the soul will require something completely different...."

9 THE WORD OF GOD IS NECESSARY FOR THE SOUL (PARAGRAPH 26)

- "One thing and one thing alone is necessary for the Christian life, righteousness, and freedom, and that is the most holy word of God, the Gospel of Christ."
- "...the soul can lack everything except the word of God. Without it absolutely nothing else satisfies

the soul."

10 DAVID IN PSALM 119 (PARAGRAPH 27)

- "This is why the prophet throughout Psalm 119 and in so many other places [in the Psalter] years and sighs with groans and cries for the word of God."

11 GOD'S CRUELEST DISASTER (PARAGRAPH 28)

- No greater disaster as a result of God's wrath than when there is "a famine of the hearing of his word," as stated in Amos, just as there is "no greater grace than when God sends forth his word (Psalm 107)"
- "...the apostles, bishops and the entire order of clerics have been called and established only for the ministry of the word."

12 WHAT THE WORD OF GOD IS (PARAGRAPH 29)

- "You may ask, 'What is this word and how should it be used, when there are so many words of God?'
- "To preach Christ means to feed, justify, free, and save the soul—provided a person believes the preaching."
- "For faith alone is the saving and efficacious use of the word of God."

13 FAITH ALONE JUSTIFIES!! (PARAGRAPH 30)

- "For the word of God cannot be received or honored by any works but by faith alone."
- "...the soul needs the word alone for life and righteousness, because if the soul could be justified by anything else, it would not need the word and, consequently, would not need faith."

14 SUMMARY

1. • "Sticks and stones may break our bones but words cannot hurt us"
- What makes water, bread and wine sacraments is the WORD.
- Faith of the believer and the word of God belong together.
- Word of God is like an explosive detonation shattering the chains and bars that imprison our souls.
2. • Trust in the words of the gospel liberates us from the compulsive need to justify ourselves.
- Caution: the gospel sets us free but does not make us perfect.
- Everything depends on faith because everything depends on God.
- Faith is what makes our works good or bad, not the works themselves.

15 QUESTIONS

1. What words of Scripture resonate most with you? How do they make you feel?
2. What do you think Luther (following Paul) meant when he said that if an action does not proceed from faith, then it is sin? (Romans 14:23)
3. How would the world be different if our decisions, actions and behavior proceeded from sincere faith and genuine love?

16 FOR NEXT WEEK....

- Session 5: The Power of Sin
- Read paragraphs 31 through 38 in Freedom of a Christian