

REFORMATION SUNDAY 2017 REFLECTIONS

CORNERSTONE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP



[live painting by Alena Ratcliffe]

On October 29, 2017, Cornerstone remembered the 500-year anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. The Protestant Reformation was both a time in which our Holy God moved to cleanse and re-align His church and a time that was twisted by humanity resulting in violence, oppression, unholy division, and gross individualism.

As we worshiped the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of life this Sunday, we corporately confessed our transgressions, declared the Trinity's continued steadfast love, and asked for a fresh release of Christ's prophetic anointing on us, His Bride, in the sacred and everyday spaces of our lives.

The following pages contain portions of the liturgy for your further reflection.

REVELATION 1:4-6 (NIV)

Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

ROMANS 12:1-6 (MSG)

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

I'm speaking to you out of deep gratitude for all that God has given me, and especially as I have responsibilities in relation to you. Living then, as every one of you does, in pure grace, it's important that you not misinterpret yourselves as people who are bringing this goodness to God. No, God brings it all to you. The only accurate way to understand ourselves is by what God is and by what he does for us, not by what we are and what we do for him.

In this way we are like the various parts of a human body. Each part gets its meaning from the body as a whole, not the other way around. The body we're talking about is Christ's body of chosen people. Each of us finds our meaning and function as a part of his body. But as a chopped-off finger or cut-off toe we wouldn't amount to much, would we? So since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvelously functioning parts in Christ's body, let's just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren't.

FROM THE PROPHET ISAIAH, CHAPTER 61 & 62

CALL: I will greatly rejoice in the Lord;
my soul shall exult in my God,
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation;
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness.

RESPONSE: I am as a bridegroom who decks himself like a priest with a
beautiful headdress, or as a bride who adorns herself with jewels.

CALL: For as the earth brings forth its sprouts,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
to sprout up before all the nations.
For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet,
until her righteousness goes forth as brightness,
and her salvation as a burning torch.

RESPONSE: The nations shall see your righteousness,
and all the kings your glory,
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the Lord will give.

CALL: You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.
You shall no more be termed Forsaken,
and your land shall no more be termed Desolate,
but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her,
and your land Married;
for the Lord delights in you,
and your land will be like a wedding celebration.
Your children will commit themselves to you, O Jerusalem,
just as a young man commits himself to his bride.

RESPONSE: And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,
so shall your God rejoice over you.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

CORPORATE CONFESSION

[created by Justin Ryan Boyer]

Introduction

Nobody likes divorce. No two people coming together would ever have wanted their relationship to climax off the cliff or slowly die into a void causing emotion wreckage, legal difficulties, generational complications, and spiritual scars. Redemption and healing are available, but even when, in all sincerity, it may be "for the best" or justified in the law of God, nobody gets married in hopes that it will unravel in divorce.

Of all the good that came from the Protestant Reformation, one of the major fall outs was that the Church suffered divorce over and over and over again. Denominationalism, the splintering of the Church, the cutting up of Christ's Body, allowed us to assert our independence and receive our identity not from God, but from our preferences of doctrine or duty or design. *"This person, this group is not the Bride of Christ for they don't... think like me, vote like me, look like me, love like me."*

Yes, Paul says that there must be some kind of divisions among us to show sincerity of faith, but this has no doubt been abused in self-promoting ways. We have practically, with our words, sought to divorced Christ from His Bride. We have practically, with our actions, sought to separate and tear apart the Body of Christ. And a house divided against itself cannot stand.

Additionally, there are a handful of *couples* that are married in the heart of God, yet that we often cast away from each other. We play favorites preferring one part of the couple over the other, usually whichever one we think is easier to get along with or gives us what we think we want. These couples aren't people, but spiritual principles and foundation stones like faith, works, spirit, truth, strength, beauty, etc... These aren't no fault divorces, these are our fault divorces... pre-reformation, post-reformation, here now 500 years later in Lebanon and across the globe. What God has joined together, let no one separate.

As we pray, *Lord have mercy*, we are asking for the reconciliation of God's spirit to make a way where there doesn't seem to be a chance in hell, to bring back together these couples that aren't separated in the heart of God, but are seemingly separated in the heart of the Church. We pray this for ourselves and intercede on behalf of the church in our city, county, and region.

What God Has Joined Together, Let No One Separate¹

<p>TRUTH & SPIRIT ruptured sent away into different boxes worship becomes humanistic in emotionalism or intellectualism</p>	<p>We confess we have sought an unholy separation, a divorce between SPIRIT & TRUTH. Together we pray: <i>Lord have Mercy</i></p>
<p>WORKS & FAITH segregated sent away into contrasting dwellings a body trying to earn what can't be earned a figure paralyzed in sentiment</p>	<p>We confess we have sought an unholy separation, a divorce between FAITH & WORKS. Together we pray: <i>Lord have Mercy</i></p>
<p>PEACE & RIGHTEOUSNESS isolated sent away into divergent residences movements become lonesome a false unity around compromise</p>	<p>We confess we have sought an unholy separation, a divorce between RIGHTEOUSNESS & PEACE. Together we pray: <i>Lord have Mercy</i></p>
<p>SPIRIT & MIND estranged sent away as clashing kindred prayers of idolatry settle in misguided zeal or self-centered thought</p>	<p>We confess we have sought an unholy separation, a divorce between MIND & SPIRIT. Together we pray: <i>Lord have Mercy</i></p>
<p>BEAUTY & STRENGTH severed sent away into peculiar houses foundations built upon unbridled brutes or manipulative malpractice</p>	<p>We confess we have sought an unholy separation, a divorce between STRENGTH & BEAUTY. Together we pray: <i>Lord have Mercy</i></p>
<p>WONDROUS WORKS & GLORIOUS SPLENDOR disconnected sent away into deviating temples envisioning a deity handsomely uninvolved a celestial of ignorant character</p>	<p>We confess we have sought an unholy separation, a divorce between GLORIOUS SPLENDOR & WONDROUS WORKS. Together we pray: <i>Lord have Mercy</i></p>
<p>GRACE & TRUTH detached sent away into discrepant homes their substance deploying coercion their context creating disorder</p>	<p>We confess we have sought an unholy separation, a divorce between TRUTH & GRACE. Together we pray: <i>Lord have Mercy</i></p>

¹ scripture references: Matthew 19: 1-10; John 4:23-24; James 2:18-26; Psalm 85:8-11; 1 Corinthians 14:13-19; Psalm 96:4-6; Psalm 145:4-7; John 1:14-17 (Thanks to Gene McCumber for helping to connect some dots.)

CORPORATE DECLARATION

[created by Matthew Hershey]

Father, Your Wisdom protects us, guides us, and disciplines us. You set boundaries around us that allow us to walk in true freedom. You set these boundaries in love and compassion, reminding us that we belong to you and not to the world or any idol in the world.

Together we declare: *Your steadfast love endures forever.*

Jesus, Son of God, it is through suffering that you have brought life to our spirit, our relationships, our families, our church, our community. Your suffering was never at a distance. So that we may know you more intimately, you have invited us into this suffering so that we may know you, and know life abundantly. You do not walk above us, around us, or past us, instead you walk with us.

Together we declare: *Your steadfast love endures forever.*

Holy Spirit, your voice is unmistakable. Your whisper rises above the screams of the world. You declare Truth, Grace, Mercy, and Justice. Your words lead us home, to those places—on earth as it is in heaven—that we are to live and move.

Together we declare: *Your steadfast love endures forever.*

SELECTIONS FROM COMMUNION HOMILY

Numbers 11:24-30 (ESV)

[24] So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. [25] Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it.

[26] Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. [27] And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." [28] And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, "My lord Moses, stop them." [29] But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!" [30] And Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

John 6:32-35 (ESV)

[32] Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. [33] For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." [34] They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." [35] Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

1 Corinthians 14:1-4 (ESV)

[1] Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. [2] For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. [3] On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. [4] The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church.

Hebrews 1:1-3 (VOICE)

[1] Long ago, at different times and in various ways, God's voice came to our ancestors through the Hebrew prophets. [2] But in these last days, it has come to us through His Son, the One who has been given dominion over all things and through whom all worlds were made. [3] This is the One who—imprinted with God's image, shimmering with His glory—sustains all that exists through the power of His word. He was seated at the right hand of God once He Himself had made the offering that purified us from all our sins.

/// NOTES /

/// QUOTES /

"The church was not a role model, there was corruption, there was worldliness, there was greed, and lust for power. [Luther] protested against this. And he was an intelligent man." [Pope Francis]

"When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, "Repent", he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance... Yet it does not mean solely inner repentance; such inner repentance is worthless unless it produces various outward [subduing] of the flesh."
[Martin Luther, 95 Theses]

"The Reformer is always right about what's wrong. However, he's often wrong about what is right." [G.K. Chesterton]