

Reformation Sunday, 2010
October 31, 2010
John 8:31-36
Title: Knowing What We Know

I couldn't believe what I was seeing. I'd gone to a public restroom, one of those uni-sex places, where there is no urinal. Had to raise the lid—and to my surprise, what did I see.....right at the bottom of the inside of the lid was this word—C H U R C H.....church.

You have got to be kidding --- a toilet named church. Kolher, yes,
Church, no.

Someone would name their toilet company church.

Imagine the phone calls you might receive---

“Hell-o, this is churches.”

“How do I get to your church?”

“Well, you sit on it.”

“Hell-o, this is churches”

“Can you tell me a little about what goes on inside your church?”

“Well, it's a moving experience.”

“Hell-o, this is churches.”

“What size in your church?”

“One size fits all.”

All humor aside---A toilet named church is a good reminder for life in Jesus' church precisely because it doesn't fit, because we reject it.

Look at Jesus' encounter with those in John 8 who were following him.

They reject his claims about their need for him

Jesus names that in him, discipleship in him, comes freedom.

They can't hang with it---doesn't fit them—

What are you saying to us **YOU WILL BE MADE FREE**

We get a window into their self-understanding,

A huge picture of who they are....WE ARE
DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM AND HAVE NEVER BEEN
SLAVES TO ANYONE. Knowing what they know blinds them to their
own need for Jesus....never been slaves to anyone
Such spiritual smugness---deserves a good flush!

It's as if we today were to say, we are descendants of Martin
Luther and have never been slaves to anyone.

Or to take the gift of baptism and use it as an excuse to wallow in
Sin.

In John chapters 7 & 8, the Jewish faith community has gathered to
celebrate their reformation....it's called the Festival of Booths. What it
is is an annual time to return to their roots....they remember the exodus
—they are to be gripped by the power of this foundational event

They were slaves — and who liberated them.

They were bound and a people without a future — and who
Rescued them from oppression

they were in need of deliverance — and who led them to
freed...who? The LORD GOD ALMIGHTY — God, our
refugee

and strength — God who writes his law on hearts---God who
came down in Jesus...that's who.

So here they were, come together to remember the time they'd been
slaves — making bricks for pharaoh — and when Jesus calls them to his
liberating work---they deny they've ever been enslaved.

Right there, right when they were owning their history of slavery, they
righteously deny it.

Here we are today come together to observe the reformation....that God
lifted up a someone named Martin Luther who in great struggle saw the
church of his day enslaved....and God used this conflicted man to
reform His church.

Surely it's not possible that we could take the reformation
And do what the Jews did with the festival of booths and just
....sit on it. And not see God in Christ saying again to us

I'm reforming my church—freeing it from the gripping
Power of sin
I'm taking my permanent place in the household—
I'll move the furniture around when complacency comes...
I'll sweep out the dust, I'll bolt the door so Satan can't
enter..I'll call my church to look more and more like ME.

Knowing what we know about Jesus let's expect this of Him.

Today on Halloween many of us will dress up for it. What used to be a children's door knocking spree has now become a way for adults to dress up. \$6 billion is spent on Halloween now.

One commentator observed about adults dressing for Halloween
We live in an age when we feel we can be whatever we want.
Halloween celebrates it by giving us permission to dress up

How are we to dress for Reformation? One size doesn't fit all.

Some of us come to Jesus' church dripping with the
Weight of broken relationships—chained to the anger we feel
Toward another—dressed in the heavy cloak of bitterness. Come
hear the loving one say to you ...I will lead you out of this bondage,
knowing that Jesus has a permanent place in the household.

Some wear the outfit of success and ambition ---securing our own future
at all costs. In the path are the casualties of relationships, those who have
been stepped oncome hear the liberator Jesus calling you to trust in
him again, to let go

Some come without hope. I think of the farm manager at the Mnene
Parish who seeks to manage a 4000 acre farm...with nothing---two
worn out cows, 75% of the land is rocky, no fences to keep the predators
away, no reason to get up each day and look at his farm. This farmer has
been trained at the best schools in Europe, he knows what could be, but
trapped in a cycle of despair. Who but Jesus can come to say in me you

are not alone...and that a sign of the hope that Jesus offers is that others now hear this blight....

And that even on Oct. 31, 2010, a preacher in Raleigh is mentioning among his people that God does not desert his people.

Knowing what we know about this Jesus, how will you dress for reformation?

Among the ways we can dress is in our congregational strategic plan. Can we not hear in it the voice of Jesus echoing...

Turn through the pages of this plan and hear Jesus saying

If the Son makes you free, you are free indeed.

Reforming us by nurturing faith practices---growing in our love for Jesus

Reforming us by building small Christian community through our Christ care groups.

Reforming us by becoming Biblically literate—immersing ourselves in the primary language of faith

Reforming us by growing a culture of giving—where we are so free in Christ we give to build up others

Knowing what we know about ourselves, we can calcify the faith, put it on the shelf

Knowing what we know about our Lord Jesus

Let us live in the power of his reforming spirit. Perhaps it's not a bad thing for the word CHURCH to be imprinted on a toilet. For God in Christ wants His church renewed and available...Only He has a permanent place in the Household

