

Reforming Our Hearts

Psalm 119:9-16

Into

Today, on this 508th weekend since the Protestant Reformation began, we begin with the stories of two great men who are divided by time and yet united by faith in one Word. In the fourth century, a restless young man named Augustine heard a voice say, 'Take up and read.' The voice would not release him and so he obeyed, opening up the Scriptures. As he read he was undone by the truth of Christ, never to be the same again. In fact, from that day forward he dedicated himself to righting his wrongs and reforming his life around Christ and his ways. A thousand years later, a tormented monk named Martin Luther was studying Romans when he read, 'The righteous shall live by faith.' As Luther read this verse, the Holy Spirit lit a fire in his heart that would ignite the revival that was the Protestant Reformation.

Both of these men were transformed not by tradition, ritual, or emotion. Rather they were transformed by the living Word of God. The reformation of their hearts would contribute to the reformation of many hearts throughout history. Today we stand in their legacy. We do not do justice to their legacy to admire it from afar, but rather to continue it by following after their example. The Reformation wasn't

a mere moment in history. It is a movement of the heart which has been experienced by countless believers throughout history up until today. In Christ we have a daily call to reform our lives around God's Word, rejecting the allure of the world and embracing the life Christ has won for us by his bloody cross and empty tomb.

Our text for today comes from Psalm 119 which is a powerful anthem of a heart being reformed. More than merely knowing about Scripture, a heart reformed is about loving it, living it, and letting it shape everything about us. This morning, we are not merely commemorating the Reformation. We are stepping into it. May the Spirit give us power to open our hearts to the Word of Christ that still reforms.

Discover

I. The word of God reforms the trajectory of our lives (9-10)

- A. It leads us to take pleasure in purity that brings glory to Christ rather than glorying in hedonistic pleasures.
 1. Knowing God's word is the pathway to keeping ourselves unstained by sin.
 - a) If we have the word in our hearts and are led by the Spirit, we will be victorious.

- b) Romans 12:1-2 CSB — Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.
 - c) James 1:27 CSB — Pure and undefiled religion before God the Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained from the world.
 - B. It leads us to want to chase after God rather than chasing after our own fleeting dreams.
 - 1. Matthew 6:33
 - 2. The mindset can only come from a person who is rooted in Christ's word and full of the Spirit of God. These two indeed feed one another. No one who is anchored in the word is apathetic to the Spirit, and no one who is full of the Spirit is apathetic to the Word. Truly Seeking after the one inevitably leads to the other.

II. The word of God reforms our attitude towards sin (11)

- A. Whereas we once lived for sin and its thrill, in Christ we see its bankruptcy.
 - 1. Colossians 1:21-23 CSB — Once you were alienated and hostile in your minds as expressed in your evil actions. But now he has reconciled you by his physical body through his death, to present you holy, faultless, and blameless before him — if indeed you remain grounded and steadfast in the faith and are not shifted away from the hope of the gospel that you heard. This gospel has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and I, Paul, have become a servant of it.
 - 2. Ephesians 2:11-13 CSB — So, then, remember that at one time you were Gentiles in the flesh — called “the uncircumcised” by those called “the circumcised,” which is done in the flesh by human hands. At that time you were without Christ, excluded from the citizenship of Israel, and foreigners to the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus, you who were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.
- B. We once treasured sin, but now we treasure the word that keeps us from sin.
 - 1. Matthew 13:45-46 CSB — “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls. “When he found one priceless pearl, he went and sold everything he had and bought it.
 - 2. The heart touched by the word of God is so reformed, that it is very willing to sell out the world entirely that he might have Christ as his sole treasure instead.

III. The word of God reforms our deepest desires (12-13)

- A. We move from being rebels against Christ to being people who long to be taught by him.

- B. We move from being proclaimers of the world's value system to being proclaimers of the gospel.

IV. The word of God reforms the way we think about God's way (14)

- A. We who once despised the idea of submitting to God's direction, now value his way above all others.
 - 1. "Oh Lord, I need You now more than ever, Would You put my heart back together? I searched the world 'til my head hurt, Just to find out Your way's better." -Forrest Frank
 - 2. Ecclesiastes 12:13 CSB — When all has been heard, the conclusion of the matter is this: fear God and keep his commands, because this is for all humanity.

V. The word of God reforms the focus of our hearts and minds (15-16)

- A. It puts within us an increasing desire to know it.
 - 1. The more I read and study the Bible, the more I want it!
 - 2. Unlike other books that I read and feel finished with, every time I read the Bible through it stirs in me a desire for even more. I can't stop going after God's word. I want to know it intimately and thoroughly. I want it to be what shapes my heart and mind about all else. This is the sign of a mind that is being reformed by the word according to Romans 12.
- B. It makes us want to embody the call of Deuteronomy 6 to know the word, to saturate our lives in the word, and to pass the word on to others.

Nurture

Who is God? He is the Lord who gives us his word.

What has God done? He has given us the living word in Christ, changed our hearts by the gospel, and has given us the Spirit to reform our desires.

Who are we? We are those who are called to reform our hearts around God's word.

What are we being called to do? We are called to make Christ and his word our true treasure that we might live lives which are pleasing to God and most satisfying for us.

Act

Satan is working overtime to steal your joy and effectiveness right now. Some may even be falling for his trap. I assure you, that his greatest offers to you will never ultimately amount to anything good and that the best thing you can possibly do is to sell out your life and be reformed at the heart level by God's word.

1. Repent and believe the gospel.
2. Return to Christ if you have drifted from the path he called you to.
3. Ask God to reform the parts of you that still resemble Adam and Eve rather than Jesus.