

Sunday, October 29, 2006
Reformation Sunday

FIRST READING *Jeremiah 31:31–34*

In contrast to Judah's sin, which Jeremiah describes as "engraved on the tablet of their hearts" (17:1), the prophet envisions a future day when the law will be written "on their hearts" (31:33). To know God in this way is to have a direct and profound connection to God. Forgiveness of sins, which is so complete as to be forgotten, is the motivating force for keeping the law.

³¹ The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt — a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. ³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

PSALM (LBW) *Psalm 46*

The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold. (Ps. 46:4)

God is our ref- | uge and strength,*
a very present | help in trouble.

**²Therefore we will not fear, though the | earth be moved,*
and though the mountains be toppled into the depths | of the sea;**

³though its waters | rage and foam,*
and though the mountains tremble | at its tumult.

**⁴The LORD of | hosts is with us;*
the God of Jacob | is our stronghold. R**

⁵There is a river whose streams make glad the cit- | y of God,*
the holy habitation of | the Most High.

**⁶God is in the midst of her; she shall not be | overthrown;*
God shall help her at the | break of day.**

⁷The nations make much ado, and the king- | doms are shaken;*
God has spoken, and the earth shall | melt away.

**⁸The LORD of | hosts is with us;*
the God of Jacob | is our stronghold. R**

⁹Come now and look upon the works | of the LORD,*
what awesome things he has | done on earth.

**¹⁰It is he who makes war to cease in | all the world;*
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear, and burns the | shields with fire.**

¹¹"Be still, then, and know that | I am God;*
I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted | in the earth."

**¹²The LORD of | hosts is with us;*
the God of Jacob | is our stronghold. R**

SECOND READING *Romans 3:19–28*

Martin Luther and other leaders of the Reformation believed the heart of the gospel was found in these words of Paul written to the Romans. All people have sinned, but God offers forgiveness of sins through Christ Jesus. We are justified, or put right with God, through faith in Jesus.

¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. ²⁰ For "no human being will be justified in his sight" by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

²¹ But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, ²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, ²³ since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; ²⁴ they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put

forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; ²⁶ it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus.

²⁷ Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. By what law? By that of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸ For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law.

GOSPEL *John 8:31–36*

True freedom is not related to ethnic distinctions or social class. Only Jesus can free us from slavery to sin, and he does this through the truth of the gospel.

³¹ Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." ³³ They answered him, "We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, 'You will be made free'?"

³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. ³⁵ The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. ³⁶ So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.