

Pastor Roy's Sermon from Oct. 25, 2015 (Reformation Sunday)

And you will know the truth and the truth will make you free.

Truth. Freedom. What is the most profound truth for you? Does it set you free?

When we are not mindful of our bondage, we are slaves to fear, our reactions, our expectations, our memories. We are prone to following instincts which sometimes cause us to feel the pinch of competing interests. But if we are honest with ourselves, we can begin the journey toward freedom by confessing the truth. The truth allows us to dig down through the layers of untruth. Can we be honest with ourselves? Can our faith lead us to the truth which brings peace? Hmm. Let's start with freedom.

How are we not free? We are Americans. Very similar reaction to the Jews who questioned Jesus. How are we not free?

--Why we are so concerned about what others think of us? Why so concerned about not having enough? Is confessing these, part of the truth that will make us free? Is confession the beginning of grace? --That we are what we are and we do best confessing that up front. Perhaps the most important confession is that to ourselves. True confession sets us free to be and become.

What made Jesus free?

Martin Luther found the greatest freedom in saying Yes to the Good News of Grace and mercy which is not earned, but a pure gift. The freedom is knowing the grace is free and ever-present—never absent. Every good response to grace is wonderful, but good responses don't make us free. We are free indeed. We are free to know and enjoy God's unending goodness. We do not create it. We simply open our hands and receive it.

None of us can fully appreciate freedom and grace. Part of our freedom is knowing that we will never quite understand it all. But that's ok. We spend so much time living in our brains. Yet freedom is also not found in thinking, but in breathing. In listening. In feeling. In loving. In observing. In enjoying relationships all around us.

We spend our lives moving between freedom and bondage. Truth and illusion, impressions, and overwhelming advertising.

Jesus calls us to the truth. Jesus calls us to freedom. Jesus calls us to keep pressing on. To refuse to be satisfied with appearances, gimmicks, violence, easy answers, greed disguised as responsibility, fear disguised as strength, hatred disguised as spirituality.

Jesus calls us to dig beneath the surface. To ask questions. To probe. To be satisfied only with the truth and her perfect freedom. Ask and you shall receive, Knock and the door will be opened to you. Jesus doesn't defend the truth. The truth can take care of herself. The truth is very personal and can only be accessed by me for myself, and you for yourself.

You will know the truth. And the truth will set you free. The reformation was about the truth and freedom of grace. The church had strayed from this truth of freedom in grace. We are always liable to cheap substitutes for grace. All we can do is confess our weakness and trust in all the wrong things, and then open ourselves to the goodness working all around us and within us.

Thanks be to God. Amen.