

Bulletin No. 53 – June 2020

Trust and Obey

“Trust and obey, there is no other way!” This hymn seemed to remind us of one of the simplest and yet most important truths.

Trust is built in long-term relationships. Because the way of a person deals with people is worthy of our trust, we are willing to put our own trust in him and hope that he will do greater and better things in the future than he has done in the past. Moreover, when we associate with someone who is faithful and reliable, we gradually become like him. We reward our friend with loyalty, and this mutual trust between the two people maintains the relationship. So, here is a simple principle: while we trust others, we must also prove our faithfulness through our actions.

Such a simple principle can also be applied to our relationship with God, i.e. we need spend enough time studying His words and observing His actions. We read the Bible to learn how God rewards those who trust Him with all their heart. We also need experience firsthand what He has been doing in our life on earth. Does God really treat me according to His promises in the Bible? Such knowledge and personal experience will make us trust God more. Friendship does not stop when I start to trust someone. We must work hard to maintain this friendship and develop it and make it grow better. Likewise, the more we trust God, the more we glory Him through our faithfulness to Him.

Obedience to the Word of God has two parts for us. One part is to die in all sin and to say NO to all kinds of temptations through the Holy Spirit, so that the death of Christ may be manifested in me; and the other part is to love my neighbour as myself through the power of the Risen Christ.

Trust and obey, for there's no other way. To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey!

Xianghui Zhang

The Audacity of Faith

Martin Luther said:

"Faith is a living, reckless assurance of God's grace. And such confidence makes us joyful, bold and full of longing for God and all creatures."

Through his theological discoveries, Luther found audacious strength in “The scriptures alone - By faith alone - By grace alone - Jesus Christ alone”.

Martin Luther's bold faith. And yet he shows many faces.

He is a death-defying man. He is a righteous man. A depressive. A doubter. A know-it-all. A man of conviction. A stubborn one. A charismatic. A choleric. A self-torturer. A rebel. A Lord's servant. A reckless, daring man, who attacks authority.

He stands, he cannot help it, he follows only the Bible and his conscience, monk marries nun, if he has to, he risks scandal. His goal was not a schism in the church, but a return to the biblical foundations of faith. He pursued this goal as boldly and passionately as Jesus knocked over the tables in the temple and threw out the money changers.

In church reforms today we argue about loss of importance, lack of religious faith, lack of members, lack of pastors, lack of Christian knowledge.

Reformation starts differently. Reformation begins with certainty and passion. Reformation starts with people burning for something, that faith ignites in them.

The hammer blows from Wittenberg changed the world. One person begins to hear God's word anew. And what is in that word for a progressive world-improving power.

Listening to music by Johann Sebastian Bach, we find it is fed by a bold confidence in God's grace.

"The Lord God is sun and shield. He shall not make the pious want."

Bach has seen four of his brothers die. He is only ten years old himself. Then both his parents die in quick succession. During the time he is writing this cantata, he and his wife Anna Magdalena have five children. Three of them turn only a few years old. Three times the parents Bach stand at the grave of one of their children. And at work he experiences what we call bullying today. August the Strong abused religion in Saxony, to assert himself violently against others.

And yet we hear his music now, which leads almost audaciously from heartbreak to heartfelt joy. "Although the enemies rage against us" - as it says in one aria - Bach impressively sings of God as sun and shield in words from the 84th Psalm.

How can he do this?

Out of the darkness a bright light shines into his heart.

This cantata, which Bach composed for Reformation Day 1725, is exactly what Luther says: a living, reckless assurance of God's grace.

May this confidence also make you and all of us happy and courageous and full of longing for God and all creatures. With this attitude we will change our church and our society for the good. Therefore, we will now seek - and certainly find - the right tone and the right beat.

Let's go!

Stefan Prystawik

Supported Project: Bielefeld Sunrise Church



Bielefeld Sunrise Church
Evangelical Service in English

As a church, IBCB encourages creative initiatives to reach people with the Gospel. Stefan Prystawik is taking a step of faith by setting up the Sunrise church. We continue as partners in the Gospel, although Stefan will focus increasingly on this new evangelistic initiative.

More information:

<https://www.sunrise-church.org>

Submissions to your Bulletin

The Monthly Bulletin of IBCB is a platform with the aim of creating a more formal church communication through writings. Submissions of original articles on understanding of the Bible and Christian life, including book reviews and studies on church history, are welcome.

Please send your articles to: xianghui.zhang@ibc-bielefeld.org

<https://www.ibc-bielefeld.org/>