August 7, 2022

REFORMATION & EXPLORATION

More Than Conquerors (Romans 8:31-39)

## *Follow the way of the cross, not the sword as you share the gospel with others.*

*Sermon prayer*

CG intro video

* WT: Erin, Ricky, Nick, Serena, Kaden
* Set: Rattle, Great Are You Lord / Raise a Hallelujah

Energizer, LoC (Serena and Steve S)

* Connect Card
* Nick (and Lauren) on stage – last Sunday
* Devotions
* Missionaries preaching next week, ACM next week

Sermon

Offering (Sarah B and Scott)

# Hook – 1492 (8min)

* In August of 1492, Christopher Columbus set sail from Spain with the support of Ferdinand and Isabel, the rulers of Spain. His goal was to reach the East Indies because the Silk Road to the East was closed to Christians by the Ottoman Empire. Columbus had visions of vast sums of money, gold, and people converted to Christianity. Spain had just ended a series of wars known as the *Reconquista* against the Muslim Moors in Spain – and that mentality was carried into the New World.
  + “Discovery” is a misnomer—there were already people in each of the lands.
* On October 12, 1492, they landed on an island in the Bahamas. Columbus wrote that the indigenous people would become Christians quickly, and he would take them captive and bring them back to Europe.
  + Dunn, Oliver; Kelley, Jr., James E. (1989). The Diario of Christopher Columbus's First Voyage to America, 1492-1493. University of Oklahoma Press. pp. 67–69. ISBN 978-0-8061-2384-4.
* News of his voyage spread quickly, and future ventures began rapidly as European kingdoms raced to claim new territories and resources. There is a lot of history here, most of it pretty tragic.
* This affected church history as well. Most of the explorers were Christian and brought missionaries with them. There were even laws passed in Europe to protect the native population. But—especially the conquistadors—ignored those laws and enslaved the Native Americans. The missionaries—usually friars and monks—tried to protect the Natives but were ignored or sent home.
* In 1511, a Dominican friar named Antonio Montesinos preached against the “educational enslavement” of Indians called *encomienda*.
  + \*On what authority have you waged such detestable wars against these people who dwelt quietly and peacefully on their own lands? Wars in which you have destroyed such an infinite number of them by homicides and slaughters never heard of before. Why do you keep them so oppressed and exhausted, without giving them enough to eat or curing them of the sicknesses they incur from the excessive labor you give them, and they die, or rather you kill them, in order to extract and acquire gold every day.
  + Bartolome de Las Casas: Witness: Writing of Bartolome de Las Casas. ed and trans by George Sanderlin (Maryknoll: Orbis books, 1993) 66-67.
* His sermon offended the governor, Diego Columbus (Christopher’s son), and King Ferdinand had Montesinos shipped back to Spain – but as his case was made, Ferdinand was convinced he was right, and passed the Laws of Burgos to protect the indigenous people.
  + Montesinos stayed in Spain, continuing to advocate for the Native Americans. He wrote many books about the problems in the colonized lands. But the financial interests won out, and his books—which led to people questioning the morality of what was happening—were eventually banned.
  + Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, vol. 1, 382-383. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonio_de_Montesinos> (accessed 8/1/2022)

## \*\*Good and Bad of History – we need to reckon with both.

* + Authentic Christianity, after all, has nothing to fear from history.
    - NT Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, p.123
  + The great risk and investment to spread the faith in Jesus – that is something to learn from and follow.
  + The desire for money and resources – and doing horrible things to get them.
  + Using the methods of violence in the name of Jesus.

## 1 Corinthians 1:27-28

27 Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. 28 God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important.

*Prayer*

# The Cross and the Sword (10min)

## \*Follow the way of the cross, not the sword as you share the gospel with others.

* + As we look at history, we see humans (including Christians) naturally gravitate to the way of the sword, forcing others to follow our way. This is still happening today…
  + Matt 16:24, “Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me.”
  + Matt 26:51-52, But one of the men (Peter) with Jesus pulled out his sword and struck the high priest’s slave, slashing off his ear. “Put away your sword,” Jesus told him. “Those who use the sword will die by the sword.”
  + *Which way are we seeking to follow?*

## \*\*Reformation in Europe (Gonzales, *Story*, vol 2, chs.1-12)

* + German princes sided with Luther, forming a new “nation,” with a state church.
    - Many peasant revolts, citing economic needs and the writings of Luther, against these princes – but the princes suppressed them violently. Luther supported order but also their needs – and was put in a hard position.
  + Zwingli led the Reformation in Switzerland, saying that whatever is not in the Bible should be cut out of Christian life.
  + Radical Reformers (Anabaptists) took it further with the goal of returning to the early church in all aspects – this was radical for people of the age.
    - They are the first ones who live out the principle of state power being absent from church rule.
  + John Calvin, born 1509 – brilliant thinker who wrote systematically about the Reformation thinking in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. He also had an interesting history in Geneva, trying to run it as a Christian city.
  + In Great Britain, Henry the VIII broke with the Catholic Church mainly for power – and the ability to divorce. He married six times and produced three heirs to the crown – Edward VI (died six years later), Mary Tudor (“Bloody Mary” who persecuted and killed Protestants), and Elizabeth (1558, goal was to unite the nation under Protestantism, Book of Common Prayer).
  + Counter Reformation – Catholics responded to the theology of Protestantism in the Council of Trent in 1545 – while also addressing the need for reform, especially amongst the clergy. Declared Protestantism wrong, Bible in Latin, seven sacraments, and more. This set the tone for Catholicism moving forward (until Vatican II, 1962).
    - They especially wanted to limit the expansion of Protestantism, using laws to limit evangelism (never works).

## \*(map) Thirty Years War (1618-1648)

* + //Outside our timeframe, but so influential – almost every country got involved (even Sweden!)
  + Europe had been divided among Catholic and Protestant lines, but Protestantism kept growing beyond their boundaries.
    - Estimated a population loss in the Holy Roman Empire of 7 million people from fighting, disease, starvation, and refugees.
    - A horrible war with many atrocities done on both side – both in the name of religion (but really about political power).
  + Many historians consider this the last major war over religion, and this war leads to the thinking of the separation of church and state powers. Others consider this the beginning of religious apathy, leading to modern secularism. (Gonzalez, *Story*, vol 2, 140).

## Have we learned the lessons from history, or are we doomed to repeat them?

* + Jesus showed us a different way – will His followers follow that way?
  + Today, are we following the way of the cross or the sword?

# More Than Conquerors (12min)

Romans 8:31-39 (p.941)

31What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? 32Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won’t he also give us everything else? 33Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself. 34Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God’s right hand, pleading for us.

35Can anything ever separate us from Christ’s love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? 36(As the Scriptures say, “For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.”) 37No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.

38And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. 39No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## \*Risk financially and physically to spread the Word of God.

* + Paul risked his life – and experienced victory.
  + We will hear today from Sarah about her mission trip to Africa.
  + Last week we heard how our giving to Building Hope is making a difference in Egypt, and we can see the transformation happening to our campus, and we planted a new church last year!!
    - Three Funds
    - Your giving is making a difference
  + Historically, even though bad things happened – WE HAVE LOST the passion and risk for the mission of God that lived during this time of history.
    - Will you make a commitment to have this in your life?
    - Use the METHODS of Jesus.

## \*Forms of colonialism are still happening.

* + Colonialism is taking political power over an area to exploit its people or resources.
  + Economic colonialism – are companies spreading moving into other countries, spreading their products and values? YES.
  + *I did missions in Ensenada, Mexico for over 10 years from 2000-2010. I saw the countryside change as a Walmart, Home Depot, and Starbucks went in. There is nothing wrong with those stores – but I saw the people falling in love with “stuff.” I could see some economic development affecting people positively, but I could also see how my brothers and sisters in Christ—who are so focused on relationships in Mexico—were buying the lies of materialism and debt that infect America.*

## \*Follow the way of the cross, not the sword as you share the gospel with others.

* + Greg Boyd, *The Myth of the Christian Nation*, shows how the quest for political power is destroying the Church (his subtitle).
    - We CAN be politically active, but we must not think that the Kingdom of Jesus will come through human government.
    - Government always rules with “power over.”
    - The way of Jesus is servanthood – “power under.”
    - Don’t confuse the power of Jesus with the power of the world.
  + Live in the way of the power for Jesus.
  + Take the mission seriously and personally!

# Punch – Circus Clown (5min)

* The philosopher Søren Kierkegaard once told a story about a circus that caught fire. The flames from the circus fire spread to the fields surrounding the circus grounds and began to burn toward the village below.
* The circus master, convinced that the village would be destroyed and the people killed unless they were warned, asked if there was anybody who could go to the village and warn the people. The clown, dressed in full costume, jumped on a bicycle and sped down the hill to the village below.
* “Run for your lives! Run for your lives! A fire is coming and the village is going to burn!” he shouted as he rode up and down the streets of the village. “The village is going to burn! Run for your lives!” Curious villagers came out from their houses and shops and stood along the sidewalks. They shouted back to the clown, laughing and applauding his performance. The more desperately the clown shouted, the more the villagers cheered. The village burned and the loss of life was great because no one took the clown seriously. After all, he was just a clown.
* Application: Like the clown in the story, pastors and priests play a role in the church that negates their message when they go out into the world. We cannot expect the clergy, therefore, to tell the story of the Gospel to the world; the world doesn’t take them seriously. Instead, it’s up to us—ordinary people—to take Jesus seriously and to go and preach the Gospel to the world. (See Mark 16:15.) We can’t expect the world to take the Gospel seriously if we are unwilling to tell others about Christ and to be a witness to His power and love.
  + Rice, Wayne. Hot Illustrations for Youth Talks (Youth Specialties (Paperback)) (Kindle Locations 731-746). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.
* *Will you personally invite others? And support the mission with your finances, time, and life?*

*Close in Prayer*

Communion, Nicene Creed – Scott and Serena

Teaching (1min) on communion

*Directions (intinction, gluten free, etc)*

Creed (about every quarter)

Invitation to faith—end with Lord’s Prayer

*Reading—1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (end by inviting people to come)*

Break elements (during reading) and hand to servers

Offering – Sarah B (mission trip update), with Scott on stage too

Benediction

* Connect Card, here to talk
  + Devotional and LGs
* *From Sarah B – blessing in Lugandan (video)*
* Benediction – Rom 1:16-17
* 1:16For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile. 17This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith.