

Wednesday Word

May 1, 2024

Isaiah 43:19: “Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”

As I shared two Sunday’s ago, I was driving home from the LCMC district gathering and I felt the Holy Spirit speak three specific words into my spirit for Living Word specifically. While I did share them that next Sunday AM, I wanted to expound on them and give a bit more detail into what I believe the Lord is leading us into as a church community. I will take the next three weeks to share one “Word” per week. Please take these to the Lord in prayer as you process and consider.

One of my favorite things to do when I was a kid was go to my Grandparents house and look at their photo albums. My grandfather owned a pipe factory with his brothers-Lundberg Pipe Co.- and a hardware store in Fircrest. Once they sold those businesses my grandparents built three homes. Two in University Place and one in Lake Havasu Arizona. My favorite pictures were the pictures taken during the construction of the homes. I loved to see what things looked like before they were fully developed and as I know the houses looked like completed. It was very fun to see the process. I also liked to look at the hairstyles, clothing, and just how different things looked before I was born.

This got me thinking about the second word I want to share: “Reformation.” This is a word we are very well used to as we celebrate reformation Theology and our spiritual father, Martin Luther, played a key role in reforming the church. Martin Luther noticed some things that were wrong within the church and wanted to see those things changed but not the church itself - he wanted to reform certain aspects of the churches practice to align them first and foremost with scripture but also with the needs of the Body of Christ mainly getting scripture into their hands and homes.

The challenge we face as the church in the 21st century is how do we continue this tradition of Reformation to meet the needs of the body of Christ and also the needs of our community to share with them the good news of Jesus. The big struggle I have with reformation is that it requires change. Honestly, I don’t like change - I like the way I have always done

things. This truth hit me very hard when I became a youth pastor and I found that the young people of the 2010's speak an entirely different language than I speak. Once I figured this out, I knew I had to change the way I have been doing things to make sure I was reaching them with the gospel. I had to change my teaching style completely, I had to change my music taste completely, I had to change my need for schedule and order. It was difficult.

However, the fruit from those years has made it so worth it. Next week I travel to Redding California to celebrate one of the young men in my youth ministries graduation from Bethel School of Ministry. In June I head to Montana to celebrate a young lady who is graduating from a YWAM Bible Program. I have another young man moving to Texas for Seminary and two young ladies heading to both Mexico as full-time missionaries. Plus, others doing well and serving God through the trades and other areas.

The fruit of my ministry reformation was worth it completely. I never changed the message or my doctrine. If anything, I strengthen them. All I did was adjust my delivery method away from my preference and toward what this group of teenagers needed to make the gospel understandable to them.

Reformation is key to church growth, church sustainment, and church impact. The Apostle Paul said that he would become all things to all men (1 Cor. 9:22-23). In other words, he would learn the language and customs of the people he was trying to reach and adapt their ways of doing things for the sake of the gospel. He didn't compromise - He got creative.

We have an opportunity to seek the Lord and ask Him what type of reformation he would require of us in this season to best reach those in our church and community. Then, we will have to seek God and ask Him again what he needs us to reform once this season has passed. Reformation is an ongoing process that requires us to be flexible and obedient to the Holy Spirit.

Let's seek Him together and do what he asks of us!

I Love You and God Loves You!

Pastor Eric