

Oct. 30, 2022 Reformation Sunday
Pr. Steve

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This was the key to the Reformation. It's what Martin Luther was all about. We've forgotten how to read the Word. It's not just in the Bible. The Word is not about words or wordiness, not just teachings and dogma. The Word is the very dynamic creative source, energy, of Life. That's why Luther got excited--he really did.

This Word, it can't be contained--it's how we got here. The Word is not just concepts; it's not theology. It's that life-giving impulse. The Word comes as Mercy, it comes as Healing and Transformation. The Word comes as Wisdom, comes as Justice, comes as Insight, comes as Community, stirring all of these.

And...

Christians, believe that that Word--the very source of the creative cosmos--the Word has become flesh, has become human, has become real, so that we can communicate with that Word. And to be honest, that's outrageous, isn't it? It's not just the non-Christians who don't get it. We've all got friends who say, 'You believe that? How could the creative source of the universe become human like us?' That's the ineffable mystery we practice, preach, learn from, engage. God became like us, so we could 'get' God—a baby, a rambunctious teenager...a great teacher. The Word became flesh.

The Word cannot be contained. That's the great tragedy of the Church--we think we've got a grip on God and will keep Him under control. *'We're just volunteering, God, to make it easier on you!'*

...CANNOT BE CONTAINED. The Word is that vital force that goes on creating. The Word has been spoken through the prophets. All of the great prophets throughout history have been like Martin Luther King. You hear that voice, you hear that word, and you go: *'I can't get enough of this!'* And then you say, *'I wish he'd stop talking! Let's put an end to this, and get rid of them.'* Because that's what happens to all the good prophets. That's the Word they're speaking--that Word which stirs life--especially when we don't want it. And the Word comes in the arts, and the Word comes in creation, and the Word comes through children.

So today on Reformation Day, which is all about reforming, and refining, and being open to changing, and hearing the Word in new ways, we're going to watch a music video from the UN sponsored environmental disaster series. And this group, Playing for Change, (just phenomenal, I think you will be stunned) is bringing together musicians from around the world. ['*When the Levee Breaks*' in the video: *Peace Through Music: A Global Event for the Environment.*)

[<https://www.playingforchange.com/videos/when-the-levee-breaks-feat-john-paul-jones-song-around-the-world>]

So the first song is called '*The Levee's Gonna Break*', '*The Levee Done Broke*'. Those lyrics are on the insert. You'll want to bring that along, just to scan them in advance

If it keeps on raining, levee's going to break
If it keeps on raining, levee's going to break
When the levee breaks, we'll have no place to stay

That mean Old Levee taught me to weep and moan
That mean Old Levee taught me to weep and moan
Got what it takes to make a mountain man
leave his home

Oh yeah
Don't it make you feel bad
when you're trying to find your way home
Don't it make you feel bad
when you're trying to find your way home
And you don't know which way to go

And if you're going down south
They got no work to do
And if you're going down south
They got no work to do
Cause you're going down to Chicago

Crying won't help you, praying won't do you no good
Crying won't help you, praying won't do you no good
When the levee breaks, mama, you got to move

All last night I sat on the levee and moaned
All last night I sat on the levee and moaned
Thinking about my baby and my happy home

I'm going to Chicago sorry, but I can't take you
Going down, going down now
Going down

The Levee Done Broke is talking about the eco-crisis, friends. It has arrived. Isn't that amazing! We human beings, we put it on the calendar for 2050, didn't we? That's when we thought the eco-crisis would finally become serious.

That's what we do. We don't want to hear. So the first song is all about that. Then I'll share a comment. There will be two songs after that which you will thoroughly enjoy.

So, bring the insert if you wish. Let's go out (to the Gathering Hall)--and hear the Word as it's coming to us today. There are seats.

*** "When The Levee Breaks" is a powerful, thought-provoking and emotionally-charged classic by Led Zeppelin, from their Led Zeppelin IV album. The song is a rework of the 1929 original release by Kansas Joe McCoy and Memphis Minnie about the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927; the most destructive river flooding in U.S. history. "It seems that little has changed since 1927, or even 2005 with Katrina. It's still a really powerful track, both musically and lyrically." - John Paul Jones

[viewing of the video]

24:35 So, the Word permeates endless forms, and is always at work whether we are aware of it or not. But it changes everything--when we're paying attention. Origins matter a great deal to us as human beings. We would like to know where we came from, how we got here, and what we're supposed to be doing here. So, Origin stories are really, really, important. But I appreciate an Episcopal priest friend who said years ago--he said, "You know, I'm a Protestant, but I'm also glad I had somebody to protest against!" Isn't that good? OK?

So, the refining, the reforming, is always going on with our Origin stories, where we get a different sense and clarity about who we are. Here's one. We all learned in school that our ancestors first were hunter-gatherers, and

then shepherds, and then farmers and agriculture, and then Civilization--which is the way coolest thing that ever existed, right? Right? Isn't that the process?

The problem is that's an 18th century... 'myth' is the polite word, 'lie' is the correct word--a total fabrication because as folks from Europe were coming to the New World, and especially in the Northeast among the Iroquois and other tribes, the indigenous folks were questioning how we lived. *'Why do all of you submit to those who have more wealth than others? We're all free people. Why do you want to live like this?'* Tedious lies, tedious culture, so that the upper 2% can have good lives. We didn't want to hear it. There were philosophers in the indigenous circles, there were debate societies. Some of them travelled to Europe.

Libby gave me this book called The Dawn of Everything.' It will change how you see the entire planet—it's incredible! Our Constitution is based (some of you may know) on the Iroquois Confederacy, six tribes. We use that Wisdom. So it's changing, refining, reforming how we come to see ourselves, and, frankly, relate to indigenous people. It's a great resource.

Another Origin story—cave men and women. You know... *'Thank God we didn't live then!'* right? You know the caves in southern France--anybody recall the name, where those first paintings, the first artwork shows were? Anybody know the name? [Lascaux caves] There it is.

So what we know about it is these the handprints the first thing, they would chew flowers then in time fish were added and then deer and then shamans or priests (because everybody like priests...come on, gang!)

We only just found out, so recently, that the places inside these subterranean caverns which go on and on and on forever, are also the premier acoustic sites inside of these caves--which means not just that they were calling each other, voices could be heard a long distance—but we've found instruments there, (for) dancing, creating ritual, praying. And we know that they were caring not only for the dead, but for the ill. Wow.... The whole origin story is changing, marvelous!

One other one has do with the personal origin story of each one of us. 29.26 We say that a person has come to life, right, when the baby draws its first breath, right? It comes from that book Charlene gave us, 'Breath'.

And the magic trick now

And we
Longevity comes from breathing slowly.

The religions around the world have been teaching this, practicing