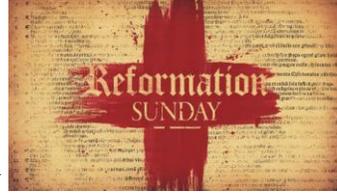


Screen 1



I know its Reformation Sunday and like a good Lutheran pastor

I should be giving a hearty full-spirited Reformation Day sermon that would get you all fired-up bout being Lutheran.

But because of this contraption immobilizing my left arm I was particularly taken by one passage in

particular that we read this morning – Psalm 46



Screen 2

For those of you who know me, even just a little bit more,

than just as your pastor who stands up here every Sunday morning leading worship and giving a sermon ... you also know that I like projects and being physically active.

We have a cabin up in Pine ... you know,
a place to go and relax,
a place to take naps in the afternoon,
a place to read a book on the deck ...

but first, I have a lot that has to be done – fixing the this or that, clearing away brush, starting on a new project ... and when all is done, I always find other things to do.

I've never been particularly good at

relaxing, I've never been really good at ... just being,
just taking in the moment,
just smelling the air after a rain, for instance,
just celebrating, in a quiet moment, being alive
with the gift of life that God has given me.

I've never been real good at that.

Being productive is my game.



Screen 3

Productivity has been my savior in a certain way ... when I'm productive, you see,

I feel worthy,

I feel good,

I feel like I've earned the right to be alive ... being productive can compensate

for my shortcomings – Productivity can even chase the demons & devils we have to deal with into the corners of our lives where we don't have to see them so much; out of sight, out of mind, as the saying goes.

PAGE 2

Of course, our culture has elevated productivity to be a kind of gold standard of

worthiness ... productive people are praised,
they are admired and envied,
productive people are rewarded with a lot of social affirmation,
productivity is good ... right?



And then I come to the line in our Psalm today:

Screen 4

Be still and know that I am God

Is it God's sense of humor?

Is it God's attempt at teaching me a lesson?

Or, is it just a coincidence ... WHAT ELSE CAN I DO with this contraption strapped to one arm?

I've never been trained to "*Be Still*" ... but seems I haven't much choice now.

No choice but to be physically idle ... that's what being still is, isn't it ... idleness?

Ever heard the phrase, "*Idle hands are the devil's tools*"?

Be still and know that I am God

seems to fly in the face of all I've been taught
and what our culture teaches and values.

And so, the pastor/theologian in me knows only one thing

to do ... I had to get busy and analyze the words "BE STILL" ... what does the

psalmist mean when he writes the words, "*Be still*"?

In the Hebrew language, these two words (*be still*) are derived

SABBATH

from the word Sabbath Screen 5 ... which means in Hebrew to quit,
to desist,
to refrain from,
to terminate,
to be at an end.

Literally, in the Hebrew, the word “Sabbath” means to refrain from physical labor ... this is where we get the common understanding of the Sabbath Day as the Day of Rest.

Even more enlightening is that in the ancient languages of the Cannonite culture from which the Hebrew language has its roots ... there is the understanding that Sabbath is the act and time for quieting the heart.

PAGE 3

And so what the psalmist does (in this Psalm 46) is to call the people

Screen 6

Have faith
in the God of creation

to have faith in the God of creation – Therefore we will not fear, though
the earth should

change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the
sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the
mountains tremble with its tumult.

Screen 7

Have faith
in the God of the nations

to have faith in the God of the nations – The nations are in an uproar, the
kingdoms totter; He

makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.

Screen 8

No matter
the times & the troubles

No matter the times & the troubles – God will be present, God will
deliver.

Such faith requires a quieting of the heart ... and

**Be still
and know that I am God!**

'Be still, and

know that I am God!

So, what is *being still* ... how do you *quiet the heart*?

I suppose there are many ways ... I know one thing though, *being still*

does not mean in-activity, necessarily;
it does not mean “not moving a muscle”;
it does not mean total idleness.

Seems to me, that *being still*, is a

de-cluttering of our thoughts, a
releasing our worries & anxieties enough, a
setting aside the “to do” lists from time to time
slowing down our pace in the race to be productive ... to recognize the presence of God
in all things ... large & small,
important & trivial,
spiritual & secular.

God is God of all ... that's the thrust of Psalm 46.

There is no separation between your spiritual life and your everyday life.

God is present in both.

Being still is a way of being that recognizes this.

PAGE 4

One of my favorite things to do

between projects at our cabin in Pine and when it gets dark on a clear night is to look at
the stars ... with no city lights to interfere with viewing, it's quite spectacular.

One of the things I learned that “*stills*” me every time I see it

is the Andromeda Galaxy ... Andromeda, is 2.5 million light years from Earth and is the
most distant object you can see with the naked eye in the night sky.

Actually, I can't seem to spot it
with the naked eye, but with a pair of binoculars I can ... and when I first spotted it, I
was awe struck ... I was "*stilled*"

It appears as a little smudge of light and that smudge is a massive galaxy like our own,



the Milky Way Galaxy ... it looks like this through binoculars

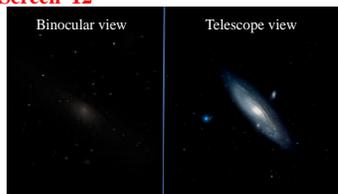
Screen 10

it looks like this through the Hubble Space telescope



Screen 11

Screen 12



Here's the crazy thing ... when I see that galaxy through the

binoculars, I'm not

seeing it as it is now, I am seeing it as it appeared 2,500 million years ago – that's how long it takes for the light from that galaxy to reach us here ... 2,500 million years.

That boggles my mind that I can see something that far away with a pair of binoculars.

And then I think of how small we are ... we are like a grain of sand on the beach, a grain of sand split into thousands of slivers and we are only but one of those slivers.

And then I think, there are billions of other galaxies like this (like ours) up there ... we are so small, why does God even care about our lives and what happens to us? I am
"stilled"

Does God care ... we are so small?

Is God involved with us ... we are so small?

Are we in relationship with this awesome amazing Creator ... we are so small?

And then I am "stilled" again, I think of Jesus.

Jesus is God caring.

Jesus is God being involved.

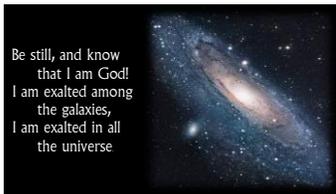
Jesus is the flesh & blood of our relationship with God ... "I am stilled"

Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth.

If I were the Psalmist writing this Psalm

as I peer through my binoculars looking at that little smudge of light called the

Andromeda Galaxy in the night sky ... that galaxy 2,500 million light years away, the
closest galaxy to our own among billions of
others that exist, I would write in addition:



Screen 13

Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the galaxies,
I am exalted in all the universe.

So yes, it is Reformation Sunday ... and addition to

all of the Lutheran history and church history associated with this day, another thing that

Reformation Sunday is meant to illicit within us is the constant need for reform.

Not only the reformation of the church

where there needs to be some correcting, but also the reform of our own hearts and spirits

where there needs to be a correcting as well.

For me, I need to always work at reforming my approach to “*being still*” ... I need to

always be reminded of how small I am in the scope of things,

how small I am in the scope of my trials and troubles ... and while

so small, that I am still loved, I am still cared for, and

I am in relationship with the God who created Andromeda,
with the God exalted in all the universe.

AMEN