



Reformation Sunday  
October 28, 2018

## Jesus, Luther and Our Shadow

### ROMANS 3: 19-28

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Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.

But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. Because of what law? The law that requires works? No, because of the law that requires faith. For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.

### SERMON

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ON THE COMMEMORATION OF THE REFORMATION, WE CELEBRATE LUTHER'S LIFE AS SIGNALING THE BIRTH OF THE INDIVIDUAL CONSCIENCE.

AND BECAUSE, AS A PASTORAL PSYCHOTHERAPIST, I HOLD IN TENSION THE SPIRITUAL AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL, LET'S REFLECT ON THE INDIVIDUAL HUMAN EXPERIENCE THIS MORNING/EVENING. IF YOU STAND IN THE BLAZING SUN AND LOOK BEHIND YOU, YOU WILL SEE YOUR SHADOW. MOST OF THE TIME WE DON'T SEE OUR SHADOW BECAUSE WE ARE LOOKING STRAIGHT AHEAD OR FROM SIDE-TO-SIDE.

IN ADDITION TO THE VISUAL EXPERIENCE OF OUR SHADOW, SHADOW IS WHAT WE CALL THE FEATURES OF OUR PERSONALITY THAT WE DISOWN AND PUSH OUT OF OUR CONSCIOUS AWARENESS. OVER TIME, WE COLLECT THESE CHARACTERISTICS INTO A BIG OLD BAG WE DRAG BEHIND US.

BY THE TIME WE ARE APPROACHING FORTY, OUR BAG IS ABOUT FIVE MILES LONG. AND WE WONDER WHY WE LOSE ENERGY AS WE AGE!

OUR BAG IS HEAVY AND TEEMING WITH ENERGY. AND, THE OLDER WE GET, THE MORE ENERGY IT TAKES TO KEEP OUR BAG CLOSED UP TIGHT.



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HOW DOES OUR SHADOW FORM BEHIND US?

AS A CHILD, I HIT MY SISTER AND MOM SAYS “DON’T HIT YOUR SISTER. THAT’S BAD!” AND SOME OF MY AGGRESSION GOES INTO MY BAG.

I RACE AROUND PLAYING AND YELLING AND DAD SAYS, “CAN’T YOU EVER JUST SIT DOWN AND BE QUIET?” AND SOME OF MY PLAYFULNESS AND EXUBERANCE GOES INTO MY BAG.

MOM CATCHES ME LOOKING AT DAD’S PLAYBOY I FIND UNDER THEIR BED AND SHE YELLS, “OH MY GOD, GIVE ME THAT FILTHY THING!” AND PART OF MY HEALTHY SEXUALITY GOES INTO MY BAG.

MY SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER TELLS ME TO COLOR ONLY BETWEEN THE LINES AND THERE GOES SOME OF MY CREATIVITY. MY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER SAYS, “CAN’T YOU SIT QUIETLY IN YOUR SEAT AND STOP SHOOTING BILLY WITH PAPER WADS” AND THERE GOES MORE OF MY PLAYFULNESS AND ASSERTIVENESS.

AND ON AND ON AND ON UNTIL THERE’S ABOUT 60% OF ME WALKING AROUND AND I CAN’T FIGURE OUT WHY I FEEL SO INCOMPLETE AND EMPTY.

MY MOTHER MISTAKES MY PLAYFULNESS, CARE-FREE APPROACH TO LIFE, AND ETERNAL OPTIMISM AS SIGNS THAT, AT FIVE YEARS OLD, I LOOK JUST LIKE HER BROTHER, MY UNCLE LOUIE. UNCLE LOUIE WAS ONE OF THOSE AFFABLE GUYS WHO NEVER MET A STRANGER, A UNION ORGANIZER, BUT ALSO AN ALCOHOLIC AND WOMANIZER. SO, SHE TOOK IT UPON HERSELF TO TRY AND FORCE THAT PLAYFUL, HAPPY-GO-LUCKY, FUN-LOVING ENERGY OUT OF ME. FOR AWHILE SHE WON, BUT THANK GOD SHE EVENTUALLY FAILED.

NOW THE WAY WE ALL HIDE OUR SHADOW FROM ONE ANOTHER—AND THIS IS NECESSARY AND A GOOD THING—IS BY CONSTRUCTING OUR PERSONA, WHICH IS LATIN FOR MASK. RECALL THAT IN THE EARLIEST THEATER, ACTORS WOULD HOLD UP MASKS TO SHOW HAPPINESS, SADNESS, AND OTHER FEELINGS.

SO, OUR PERSONA IS THE MASK WE WEAR IN PUBLIC. THE FACE WE WANT TO SHOW THE WORLD. THIS MORNING, I HAVE ON MY PASTOR PERSONA.

MY PASTORAL PERSONA CONTAINS MY PLAYFULNESS, MY CREATIVITY, MY EXUBERANCE, MY OPTIMISM. SO, I MAY NOT BE AS PIOUS OR AS TRADITIONAL AS OTHER PASTORS.

IF WE ARE EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY, OUR PERSONA MATCHES AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE TO OUR INNER LIFE. SO THAT, TO A LARGE EXTENT, WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU GET.

BUT PEOPLE ALSO CAN PUT ON A FACE THAT DOESN’T MUCH RESEMBLE WHO THEY ARE ON THE INSIDE. I THINK OF THE STORY ABOUT THE MINISTER WHO IS WALKING DOWN THE SIDEWALK WHEN HE COMES TO A GROUP OF YOUNG BOYS SURROUNDING A DOG.



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THE MINISTER ASKS THE BOYS WHAT THEY ARE DOING AND ONE BOY PIPES UP, "WE FOUND THIS STRAY DOG AND WE ALL WANT HIM, BUT ONLY ONE OF US CAN TAKE HIM HOME. WE DECIDED THAT WHICHEVER ONE OF US TELLS THE BIGGEST LIE WILL GET TO KEEP HIM."

THE MINISTER IS TAKEN ABACK AND LAUNCHES INTO A FIVE-MINUTE SERMON AGAINST LYING, ENDING WITH, 'WHY, WHEN I WAS YOUR AGE, I NEVER TOLD A LIE.'

THERE IS DEAD SILENCE AND THEN ONE OF BOYS SIGHS AND SAYS, "OKAY, YOU WIN. TAKE THE DOG."

BEING UNAWARE OF OUR SHADOW LEADS TO HYPOCRISY. FOR EXAMPLE, WHICH DENOMINATION HAS THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF ALCOHOLICS? THE SOUTHERN BAPTISTS WHO EACH SUNDAY MAKE A PLEDGE TO GOD NOT TO DRINK....

WHAT IS SO DANGEROUS ABOUT IGNORING AND DENYING OUR SHADOW IS THAT, UNRECOGNIZED, IT TRIPS US UP EVERY TIME.

LIKE THE WOMAN GREETING THE PASTOR AFTER THE SERVICE WHO, INSTEAD OF SAYING, "I LOVED YOUR SERMON," SAYS "I LOATHED YOUR SERMON."

IF YOU WANT TO SEE YOUR SHADOW, THE THREE MOST OBVIOUS WAYS ARE:

IN YOUR DREAMS, WHERE OVERLY GOOD PEOPLE SHOW UP AS CRIMINALS OF EVERY ILK.

WHEN YOU USE DRUGS OR ALCOHOL. DON'T WE ALL KNOW THE SWEET GUY WHO BECOMES MEAN AS A SNAKE WHEN HE HAS A FEW TOO MANY?

AND TAKE A LOOK AT THE PEOPLE YOU INTENSELY DISLIKE. THE PARTS OF OURSELVES WE HATE ARE PROJECTED OUT INTO SOMEONE WHO SLIGHTLY RESEMBLES US IN OUR WORST QUALITIES. THIS ONE IS A REAL EYE-OPENER. AS JESUS SAYS, "WHY DO YOU SEE THE SPLINTER IN YOUR NEIGHBOR'S EYE AND NOT THE LOG IN YOUR OWN EYE?"

THERE'S ABOUT TEN YEARS OF SPIRITUAL WORK AROUND THIS ONE INSIGHT. WE'D ALL DO WELL TO TAKE IT ON.

ON THIS REFORMATION SUNDAY, GIVEN THE HATE CRIME, TRAUMA AND TRAGEDY AT TREE OF LIFE SYNOGOGUE IN SQUIRREL HILL, WE MUST FACE LUTHER'S SHADOW, WHICH CONTAINED A VITRIOLIC HATRED OF THE JEWS.

AT FIRST, LUTHER THOUGHT THE JEWS DID NOT ACCEPT JESUS BECAUSE THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH HAD NOT ADEQUATELY PREACHED THE GOSPEL.

BUT AFTER THE REFORMATION, WHEN THE JEWS REMAINED TRUE TO THEIR OWN FAITH, JESUS BEGAN WRITING VICIOUSLY ABOUT THE JEWS:

IN A 65,000 ANTI-SEMITIC TREATISE, HE ARGUES THAT JEWISH SYNOGOGUES AND SCHOOLS BE SET ON FIRE, THEIR PRAYER BOOKS DESTROYED, RABBIS FORBIDDEN TO PREACH, HOMES BURNED, AND MONEY



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AND PROPERTY CONFISCATED. THEY SHOULD BE SHOWN NO MERCY OR KINDNESS, AFFORDED NO LEGAL PROTECTION, AND "THESE POISONOUS ENVENOMED WORMS" SHOULD BE DRAFTED INTO FORCED LABOR OR EXPELLED FOR ALL TIME. HE ALSO SEEMS TO ADVOCATE MURDERING THEM, WRITING, "WE ARE NOT AT FAULT IN SLAYING THEM."

IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO DRAW A LINE FROM LUTHER'S VENOMOUS WRITING TO THE NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMPS AND THE MURDERS AT TREE OF LIFE.

ISN'T IT UP TO PRESENT-DAY LUTHERANS TO BOTH EMBRACE LUTHER'S GENIUS AND WORK TO TURN HIS SHADOWY HATRED INTO LOVE FOR OUR JEWISH BROTHERS AND SISTERS?

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, THE UNFORGIVABLE SIN IS THE SIN OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH, IN TODAY'S LANGUAGE WE CAN TALK ABOUT AS DENYING WE HAVE A SHADOW.

THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS ARE THOSE WHO SEE THEMSELVES AS ONLY GOOD, UPRIGHT, AND VIRTUOUS.

AN ANNOYING SELF-RIGHTEOUS MAN WENT TO THE DOCTOR FOR A CHECK-UP.

HE SAID, "I FEEL TERRIBLE. PLEASE EXAMINE ME AND TELL ME WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME."

THE DOCTOR REPLIED, "LET'S BEGIN WITH A FEW QUESTIONS, "DO YOU DRINK MUCH?"

"I'M A TEETOTALER. NEVER TOUCH A DROP."

HOW ABOUT SMOKING?"

"NEVER," REPLIED THE MAN, "TOBACCO IS BAD. I HAVE STRONG PRINCIPLES AGAINST IT."

"WELL, WHAT ABOUT YOUR SEX LIFE?"

"OH, NO. SEX IS SINFUL. I'M IN BED BY 10:00 EVERY NIGHT AND ALWAYS HAVE BEEN."

THE DOCTOR PAUSED, LOOKED AT THE MAN AND ASKED, "DO YOU HAVE PAINS IN YOUR HEAD?"

"YES, SAID THE MAN, "TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE PAINS IN MY HEAD."

"OKAY," SAID THE DOCTOR, "THERE'S YOUR PROBLEM. YOUR HALO'S TOO TIGHT."

IF YOU THINK YOU PLAY BY THE RULES, THAT YOUR HEART IS PURE, THAT THE OTHER PERSON ALWAYS IS THE PROBLEM, THAT THE WORLD WOULD BE A BETTER PLACE IF EVERYONE JUST LIVED LIKE YOU, THEN YOU HAVE NO NEED FOR JESUS CHRIST, NO NEED OF TRANSFORMATION, AND NO NEED FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THIS IS WHAT JESUS AND LUTHER MEAN WHEN SPEAKING ABOUT THOSE WHO JUSTIFY THEMSELVES BY WORKS OF THE LAW.

TO JUSTIFY YOURSELF MEANS YOU RATIONALIZE YOUR BAD BEHAVIOR, IGNORE THE BAG YOU'RE DRAGGING BEHIND YOU, AND SEE YOUR OWN SHADOW IN EVERYONE ELSE.

"I DON'T SMOKE AND I DON'T CHEW AND I DON'T GO WITH GIRLS THAT DO."

IN THIS REGARD, THE BEST AND TRUEST STATEMENT I MADE OVER THIRTY YEARS AGO IS WHEN I ADMITTED, "I AM NOT A NICE GUY." THAT BEGAN A PROCESS OF OWNING MY SHADOW. IN THIS CASE, FACING THE SHADOW SIDE OF ME WHO SOMETIMES ISN'T NICE, WHO SOMETIMES DOESN'T CARE,



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WHO BLUNTLY SPEAKS THE TRUTH REGARDLESS, WHO DOESN'T SUFFER FOOLS GLADLY, AND WHO IS NOT GOING TO GO ALONG TO GET ALONG....

WE'VE BEGUN TAKING A LOOK AT LUTHER AND LUTHERAN BELIEF AT FAITH AND FAMILY CAFÉ. LUTHERAN FOLKLORE SUGGEST THAT LUTHER CAME TO HIS GREAT REFORMATION INSIGHT WHILE SITTING ON THE TOILET READING THE BOOK OF ROMANS. SO, FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, LUTHER IS EARTHY AND IN TOUCH WITH HIS SHADOW. NO SACRED VISION ON A MOUNTAINTOP. NO HOLY HAPPENING IN A CATHEDRAL. NO RELIGIOUS AWARENESS AT A RETREAT CENTER. NOPE. SITTING ON THE COMMODORE, THE JOHN, THE HEAD, THE POT, THE CAN, THE THRONE.

AND, IN PSYCHOLOGICAL LANGUAGE, LUTHER, WHO HAS BEEN LOOKING AT HIS SHADOW FOR YEARS AND, BECAUSE OF IT, BECOMES INCREASINGLY DEPRESSED, ANXIOUS, AND DESPAIRING OF EVER BEING PLEASING TO GOD. HE COMES TO THE INSIGHT THAT, ALTHOUGH HIS SHADOW WILL ALWAYS REMAIN, IN THE BEATEN AND BRUISED BODY OF JESUS CHRIST ON THE CROSS, GOD ACCEPTS HIM IN ALL HIS UGLINESS, GOD LOVES HIS SHADOWY SELF, AND GOD FORGIVES HIS INABILITY TO BE ANYTHING OTHER THAN WHO HE IS.

WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS, STATES ST. PAUL—WHILE WE WERE STILL DRAGGING OUR FIVE-MILE LONG SHADOWY BAG BEHIND US, JESUS CHRIST DIED FOR US.

WE'RE NOT OKAY, BUT THAT'S OKAY.

AS FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST, WE NO LONGER HAVE TO JUSTIFY OUR LIFE AND HOW WE CHOOSE TO LIVE IT, BECAUSE OUR TRUST IN THE MERCY, GRACE, AND LOVE OF GOD IS ALL THE JUSTIFICATION WE NEED.

OUR LIVES REMAIN BROKEN, SHATTERED, WRECKED, AND FRAGMENTED, BUT CHRIST'S BLOOD HOLDS US TOGETHER.

LET ME PROVIDE SOME BRIEF VIGNETTES OF HOW WE LIVE WHEN WE FACE OUR SHADOW AND NO LONGER WORK TO JUSTIFY OURSELVES BEFORE GOD AND ONE ANOTHER.

ST. AUGUSTINE, WHO WAS A HELLRAISER, FATHERED A CHILD OUT OF WEDLOCK AND, PERHAPS, IS THE GREATEST TEACHER IN THE ANCIENT CHURCH ONCE PRAYED, "GOD, MAKE ME SEXUALLY PURE, BUT NOT YET."

ALMOST STUBBORNLY HOLDING ONTO AND OWNING HIS SHADOW.

LUTHER ONCE SAID, "I'D RATHER HAVE A MUSLIM WHO IS A GOOD DOCTOR THAN A CHRISTIAN WHO IS A BAD DOCTOR."

LUTHER DOES NOT FALL INTO THE TRAP OF THINKING THAT SOMEHOW BEING A CHRISTIAN MAKES YOU A BETTER ANYTHING.



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A FUNDAMENTALIST MINISTER AND LUTHERAN PASTOR ARE SITTING NEXT TO ONE ANOTHER ON A FLIGHT TO PITTSBURGH. AFTER THE PLANE IS AIRBORNE, THE FLIGHT ATTENDANT ASKS THE LUTHERAN PASTOR IF HE WOULD LIKE A DRINK AND HE ASKS FOR A JACK AND COKE.

THE FUNDAMENTALIST MINISTER LOOKS AT THE LUTHERAN PASTOR WITH SCORN BUT, NEVERTHELESS THE FLIGHT ATTENDANT ASKS HIM IF HE WOULD LIKE A DRINK.

HE REPLIES WITH DISGUST, "I'D RATHER BE RAVAGED BY BRAZEN WOMEN THAN LET LIQUOR TOUCH MY LIPS."

THE LUTHERAN PASTOR HANDS HIS DRINK BACK TO THE ATTENDANT AND SAYS, "ME, TOO. I DIDN'T KNOW WE HAD A CHOICE."

THE LIVING GOD COMES TO US THROUGH OUR SHADOW. ON THE CROSS, GOD COMES TO US THROUGH HIS SHADOW—IN SUFFERING AND A SHAMEFUL, BRUTAL DEATH, AS LUTHER DECLARES. THE LIVING GOD COMES TO US WHEN OUR SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS BLOWS UP IN OUR FACE AND WE MUST FACE THE DARKNESS THAT LIVES WITHIN THAT CANNOT BE ERASED.

THIS IS WHY LUTHERANS, IN OUR EARTHINESS, ARE THE MOST CHRIST-CENTERED PEOPLE ON EARTH.

FOR ALL HAVE SINNED AND FALLEN SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD, AND ALL ARE JUSTIFIED FREELY BY HIS GRACE THROUGH THE REDEMPTION THAT CAME BY CHRIST JESUS.

## **SERMON SONG**

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HALLELUJAH BY LEONARD COHEN