

## Articles and Sermons :: Luther's last 4 theses

**Luther's last 4 theses - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2008/2/28 10:11**

92. Away, then, with all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, "Peace, peace," and there is no peace!

93. Blessed be all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, "Cross, cross," and there is no cross!

94. Christians are to be exhorted that they be diligent in following Christ, their Head, through penalties, deaths, and hell;

95. And thus be confident of entering into heaven rather through many tribulations, than through the assurance of peace

**Re: a question about Luther's 93rd thesis - posted by roadsign (), on: 2008/2/29 7:46**

The following line caught my attention. I do not think I am understanding it correctly. I will explain my line of reasoning:

Quote:

----- 93. Blessed be all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, "Cross, cross," and there is no cross!  
-----

The cross is indeed a major icon in Christianity, distinguishing it from all other religions. We wear it, we carve it, we sing about it, and we proclaim it. But that does not mean that we hear or accept the message of cross — that it is - identification in Christ's death.

To embrace the cross means we surrender all our idols, our own means of saving or purifying ourselves. It means surrendering our desire to be God and instead we let God be God in our lives — let him save us, love us, and work in and through us. It means new ownership and a new authority: Christ.

That truth about the cross tends to be eclipsed behind imagery and talk - and so really, there is no cross. So, why does Luther not say,

“Away with the prophets who say to the people of Christ, "Cross, cross," and there is no cross!

like he said

Quote:

----- 92. Away, then, with all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, "Peace, peace," and there is no peace!  
-----

Is he addressing the Catholic crucifix, maybe implying a denial of the resurrection???

Diane

**Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2008/2/29 10:08**

Hi Diane,

I have understood Luther's meaning to be a rebuke to the empirical tendency in powerful organized religion towards self-glory rather than self denial and God's glory. The Church/state system kept sinners ignorant that they could share directly and personally in Christ's death and resurrection unto eternal life, and instead asserted earthly triumphalist power to impose an autocratic ceremonial, and financial system of self-righteousness upon people. Luther had stated that a corrupt 'theology of glory' had replaced the 'theology of the cross' as the central proclamation of the Church.

The medieval magesterium was keeping the old rugged cross from sinners in order to keep them in awe of a glorious, mysterious, and ultimately superstitious priesthood. Yet while the Papacy was acquiring and selling much earthly glitter, it was destitute of true apostolic faith that is tried and tested as pure gold.

Blessings,

MC

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2008/2/29 11:32**

MC said,

Quote:

-----I have understood Luther's meaning to be a rebuke to the empirical tendency  
-----

And yet in his 93rd thesis, Luther is rebuking no one at all, but in fact, is blessing certain people. Who might they be?

If I reword Luther's statement in this fashion, could I be getting closer to his meaning:

“Blessed is the person who points people to the cross of Christ in those places where there is no acknowledgement of the cross.”

Or am I still missing the point? I fear I am. Somehow it doesn't seem to adequately reflect these words:

93. Blessed be all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, "Cross, cross," and there is no cross!

Compare that to the 79th thesis:

79. "To say that the cross, emblazoned with the papal arms, which is set up, is of equal worth with the Cross of Christ, is blasphemy."

The 79th thesis is a rebuke. This is what I assume the 93rd thesis should mean, for in this reference there is no cross in reality, just icons.

Diane

**Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2008/2/29 15:44**

Good point and question Diane. It makes me wonder if Luther ever wrote a commentary on his 95 thesis'. It would be interesting.

**Re: an explanation of the 93rd thesis - posted by roadsign (), on: 2008/3/1 10:38**

It looks like my confusion was due to syntax. I presented my question to a Reformation scholar and received this answer :

Luther's 93rd thesis means this: Prophets who insist on the cross -- both the cross that is unique to Christ and the cross bearing laid upon his people -- are blessed when faced with people who don't want Christ's cross (because they prefer to merit their salvation) and who don't want crossbearing (because they want easygoing discipleship, pain-free.)

If Luther were to say "Away with ...." he would be agreeing with those whose misunderstanding is utterly non-gospel. He wants to contradict and correct these people.

The 79th -- here Luther is denouncing the indulgence traffic and is denying that Christ's cross can be shared by the church in any way. Christ's cross is His uniquely; nothing the church undertakes (including the church's suffering) has atoning significance. The church (represented by the papal coat of arms) must not encroach upon the sole, sufficient, FINISHED work of Christ.

What do we see comparable to the "papal coat of arms" in contemporary protestant circles - in which man's means are lifted up as equating God's means: the cross?

How might we rightfully "insist on the cross" today - and thus be blessed by our Lord?

Diane