

TIME OF REFLECTION

“[Y]our brain can instinctively trust people simply because they sound as if they know what they’re talking about.... Put another way, ‘Whom we trust is not only a reflection of who is trustworthy, but also a reflection of who we are’....”

~Tim Herrera, journalist with The New York Times

“Religion used to be the opium of the people.... But now, we are witnessing a transformation, a true opium of the people is the belief....that for our betrayals, our greed, our cowardice, our murders, we are not going to be judged.”

~Czesław Miłosz (1911-2004), Polish-American poet and Nobel Laureate, regarded as one of the great poets of the 20th century

“A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross.”

~H. Richard Niebuhr (1894-1962), Yale professor, describing the religion of many American churches

“The trouble with human nature is that we are born with a heart that loves ourselves over and above everything else in this world, including God. In short, we are born slaves to the lust for self-gratification, i.e., concupiscence. That’s why, if left to ourselves, we will always love those things that make us feel good about ourselves, even as we depart more and more from God and his ways. Therefore, God must intervene in our lives in order to bring salvation.

~Dr. Ashley Null, English Reformation scholar and author

Sin “is irrational.... Sin deceives and destroys.”

~Thabiti Anyabwile, pastor and author

God “is not there to conform to us; we must conform to him. He summons us from outside of ourselves to know him. We do not go inside of ourselves to find him.... He is not known on our terms. This summons is heard in and through his Word. It is not heard through our intuitions.”

~David F. Wells, professor and author in *God in the Whirlwind*

“Recognizing who we are in Christ is the ultimate self-care because the Word of God doesn’t reinvent itself along with a constantly changing culture.”

~Alisa Childers, author and singer-songwriter

Worship through the Word

SERMON – “The Unconscious Dogma of the Church of Self” – *Pastor Don Willeman*

SERMON PASSAGE – *Jude 1-16 (ESV)*

¹ Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James,

To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ:

² May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

³ Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

⁴ For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

⁵ Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. ⁶ And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day— ⁷ just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

⁸ Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority,

and blaspheme the glorious ones. ⁹ But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you.” ¹⁰ But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively. ¹¹ Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion. ¹² These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees, in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; ¹³ wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.

¹⁴ It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, ¹⁵ to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” ¹⁶ These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.