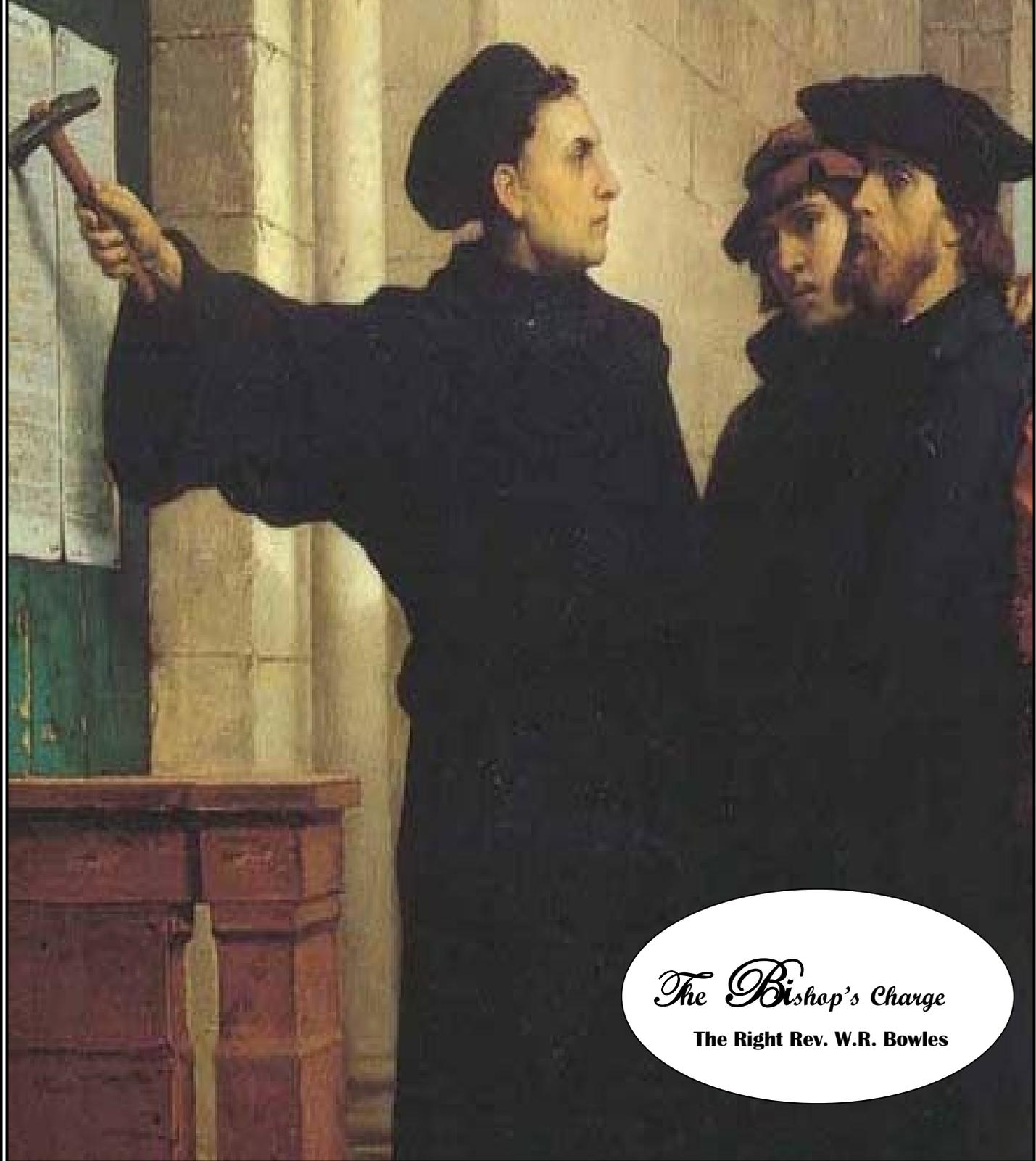


LUTHER'S 95 THESES
AT WITTEN BURG



The Bishop's Charge

The Right Rev. W.R. Bowles

**SERMON DELIVERED BY RT. REV. W.R. BOWLES
18TH DIOCESAN SYNOD
HEIDEDAL CONGREGATION
BLOEMFONTEIN
08TH AUGUST 2010**

WATCHFUL SERVANTS ARE KINGDOM DWELLERS

Luke 12: 32-40

I greet you all in the Wonderful Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is wonderful for me to be in your midst!

This Synod has the Theme “**Towards a new morality**”. It means that if we choose such a theme something is wrong with the moral Fibre of our Society, Community and our Nation. Our country is in the grip of corruption, ill-discipline and so **many things like rape, total lack of morality that we have to start to pick up the pieces.**

1. In our text we are called to be or to become **watchful-slaves/servants**. Jesus promised His disciples the kingdom- His kingdom as their focus for their life. Jesus so much wants them to free themselves from the attraction or distraction of their lives “sell your possessions (give it to the poor) as our theme of our last Synod said “Pushing back the Frontiers of Poverty”. If you **build and cling to your treasurer here on earth** – you won’t be able to grasp the Kingdom of heaven. For there **where your treasure is there is your heart.**

2. He wants His disciples to be watchful slaves! They must remain on duty. They must be ready for action – in this case dressed for action with their lamps lit.

It is a serious case and He uses the example of the slave s waiting for their master wide awake so that they may open the door for him when he comes from the wedding festival. The question now is what makes you a watchful slave/ servant of the Lord? It is of course our faith in Him.

In our Epistle reading Hebrews 11: 1 ff says “faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” For me of course faith is to believe to see = **om te glo om te sien.**

It is really amazing what our forbears did out of faith. The Bible mentions Abraham, Noah (yeah imagine Noah who build this ark = believing what God has said! and then the flood came. His faith made him ready for the flood.

Watchfully believing is for me the term I would like to coin. Jesus is offering His kingdom to His disciples = **the few that will persevere**, the little flock- Jesus is motivating them – **do not fear** because it is true it is not easy to believe – to have faith, To follow Jesus. If I think about Peter how the devil bashed him/how he almost lost the way, but because Jesus knew – this guy believes deep down inside – He could at the end say to Peter “Feed my lambs”, feed my sheep. Faith makes us to truthfully follow Jesus – To do what He instructs us to. Faith makes us obedient to the Lord.

FEARLESSLY WATCHFUL

How do you get the Kingdom? It is to know that we have not earned it. Jesus could well have said you have earned hell!

But what is happening to you is nothing but grace – promised to you out of the good pleasure of the Father, therefore only believe and you will have it. God is

our Protector, therefore we need not fear that is why Paul could say” If God is for us who can be against us.”(Rom 8:31 ff) I am convinced that nothing will be able to separate us from the **love of God in Jesus Christ**.

A state of **Watchful waiting** is that which is expected of Christians of the last days. Their loins will be girded = for immediate service – with out delay! The lights will be burning to avoid confusion. *Donker werk is konkel werk*.

When the Lord comes his servants, will be ready for him with joyfull alertness! I am respecting it is not many people who can have this faith, that is why Jesus said little flock!

TOWARDS A NEW MORALITY:

What if this Synod called us all to total repentance so that we can be spiritually transformed? If we move towards a new morality it means we need to be watchful of the things that this world wants to offer us. We should be wide awake of corruption, telling lies, raping women, abusing your wife, dishonesty, etc.

Towards a new morality means that we will have to be watchful as Cape Orange Diocese in how we relate to this world. **We are in the world but we are not of this world**. This Synod has to give direction to its members on how to become faithful in following Jesus Christ.

It won't be easy but Jesus through the Holy Spirit is ready to help us. Amen!