

REFORMATION DAY

October 25, 2020 – 9:30 a.m.

PRELUDE

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Pastor: Our help is in the name of the Lord,

People: who made heaven and earth.

Pastor: If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

People: But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.

Pastor: Since we are gathered to hear God's Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

People: Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

Pastor: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

SALUTATION AND COLLECT OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Almighty and gracious Lord, pour out Your Holy Spirit on Your faithful people. Keep us steadfast in Your grace and truth, protect and deliver us in times of temptation, defend us against all enemies, and grant to Your Church Your saving peace; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

FIRST READING *Revelation 14:6–7*

Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE *1 Thessalonians 2:1–13*

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict. For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not

only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory. And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

HOLY GOSPEL *John 8:31–36*

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the eighth chapter.

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free’?” Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

APOSTLES’ CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

SERMON “Who Did It?” Acts 17:1-9 and 1 Thessalonians 2:1-13

- I. The Insight to Reformations
- II. Paul’s Reformation in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9 and 1 Thessalonians 2:1-13)
 - Why was Thessalonica a great place to start a church?
 - What would be an American equivalent to Thessalonica?
 - Who is Jason? What happened to him?
 - “These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.” Acts 17:6-7
 - What made Paul’s reformation “go”?
- III. Luther’s Reformation
 - What does Luther credit the success and impact of the Reformation with?
- IV. Reformations Today
 - How is God’s Word at work today?

Every year, on the last Sunday of October, we celebrate the Reformation of the Christian Church. It began when a 33-year-old priest and professor named Martin Luther tacked on the church door in Wittenberg

his ideas about repentance, purgatory, salvation, and authority. His ideas and teachings spread like wildfire, and it led to a movement that changed not just the Church, Germany, or the West, but the world itself. As Luther reflects on this moment and his career at various points in his life, he shares the secret to what made it all happen. He shares the insight that gave the Reformation its spark and “umph.” However, this secret or insight was not unique to Luther. In fact, Paul saw it in person some 1,500 years earlier in Thessalonica, when he had a reformation of sorts there. What is the secret? What made these “reformations” go, and change the world? This morning, we’ll find out. We will see what makes “reformations” go.

Let’s look at Paul’s reformation in Thessalonica. His time there can be found in the book of Acts, specifically in chapter 17. Before getting to Thessalonica, Paul was previously in Philippi. He had started a church there, and then was arrested, beaten, and jailed for healing a demon-possessed slave girl. Eventually, he and Silas were released, and were asked to leave town. After saying goodbye to the believers in Philippi, Paul and Silas go on a 100 mile journey to a place called Thessalonica. Thessalonica was a great place to start a church.

Thessalonica was one of the most important and largest cities of the Empire. It had a population of roughly 200,000 people, which is pretty impressive since St. Paul has about 300,000 people. It was the leading city of the Roman province Macedonia, and was strategically located in the middle of the Roman Empire. Macedonia is roughly modern-day Greece. The main highway from Rome to the Easter part of the empire ran through there (Via Egnatia), and the city was located on a major sea trade route, too. As you can imagine, it had a large port as a result. Thessalonica was a huge land and sea trade center, located in the middle of the Empire, with people from all over, coming and going. An American equivalent might be St. Louis or Chicago, which are important U. S. cities located in the middle of the country (How many flights go through O’Hare, or how many highways and interstates pass by Chicago?). You can see why Paul wanted to start a church there.

And, he did. As was his custom, Paul first starts in the synagogue, and he preaches God’s Word there. For three weeks, Paul preaches in the synagogue, **“explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead.”** He taught and proclaimed how Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament, and how he was truly the Messiah. And Paul was successful. Some Jews, devout Greeks, and a good portion of the leading women of Thessalonica were persuaded. While that was a good thing, it wasn’t in the eyes of the Jews. They became jealous, and wanted to create some trouble for Paul and his companions. The Jews took some evil men and trouble makers, formed a mob, and then set the city in an uproar (very similar to some scenes that we have seen this year throughout the country). They then lead this violent mob to Jason’s house, where Paul and Silas were probably staying, and they began to destroy it. They hoped that their actions would bring out Paul and Silas in order to kill them, but they weren’t there. The angry mob had to settle themselves with Jason and some other believers. They dragged these believers to the city authorities and charged, **“These men who have turned the world upside have come here also, and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.”** The leaders of the city were disturbed at hearing this, but let Jason and the other Christians go on bond. Paul and Silas are then encouraged to leave Thessalonica in the dark of night, and head to Berea. That is certainly not the sending off that they wanted. Paul was only there three weeks!

In chapter two of his letter to the Thessalonian believers, he looks back on his time there and says, **“For your yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain.”** It really wasn’t. Paul’s stay was short and swift, but it was successful. A congregation had been formed. The seeds of faith had been planted, and some were beginning to bud; others were beginning to bloom; and others were beginning to burst up as a sprout. Paul reminds them of those trying circumstances that he faced when he brought them the Gospel. He reminded them of his conduct among them, describing himself as a nursing mother and nurturing father. The apostle reminds them that he thanks God for them, and tells them what made his work, well, work.

“And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the Word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as what it really is, the Word of God, which is at work in you believers.” The Thessalonians accepted what they heard from Paul as God’s Word, which it is. It was the Word that made Paul’s stay “not in vain” and fruitful. It was what made his reformation “go!” If it was man’s word in any way, it could never have produced the marvelous faithfulness and fruit that it did. But, since it was God’s Word, it worked effectively and continually to sustain their faith in spite of their constant suffering in the face of persecution. It was God’s Word, not man’s, that they believed. It was a word that was

and is working in them. It is not one that is dormant, lazy, or ineffective. Far from it. It is a word that turns the world upside down as it changes hearts, minds, lives, values, actions, and words. It really did. It forever changed the Empire.

That word gave human life value and dignity. It led to the creation of orphanages and adoptions. It elevated sexual morality, and it gave it women freedom and dignity. It led to the development of charities and hospitals for everyone, not just soldiers. It led to the abolishment of slavery, and impacted art, music, and literature. The Roman Empire was never the same when Christianity entered the scene. The Word produced the “Thessalonian Reformation.” Paul admits that. Luther realized that himself. Paul’s insight was nothing new. Luther admits that.

What made Luther’s work and career so impactful wasn’t his abilities as a speaker, teacher, or preacher. It really wasn’t his talents and incredible mind. It really wasn’t his writing ability. These were all great blessings and aids to what he did, but it was something else that made the Reformation “go.” It was the Word! In a sermon preached in December of 1531, he says,

“The Word seems to be a trifling matter. But it proved to be a thunderbolt so powerful that its impact turned the whole Roman Empire with its wisdom, might, and sanctity into a pile of rubbish. There lay Minerva and the Pantheon with all its idols. So Christ the hero beat everything down among Jews and Gentiles through the marvelous power of His Word in the apostles. And nowadays: What have I done...I have never drawn a sword but have struck only by word of mouth and the Gospel...Thereby I have accomplished more than all the emperors and kings could have done with all their power. I have taken only the rod of His mouth and beaten upon the hearts. I have let God carry on, and I have let the Word work. This has caused such a disturbance....”

What changed the world? The Word. What did Luther do? Preach it. He let God do His thing, and let Him work through that Word.

Luther realized this early on. In 1522, some five years after he posted the 95 Theses, he said, “In short, I will preach it, teach it, write it, but I will constrain no man by force, for faith must come freely without compulsion. Take myself as an example. I opposed indulgences...but never with force. I simply taught, preached, and wrote God’s Word; otherwise I did nothing....the Word did everything.”

What made Luther and his reformation so impactful was God’s Word. The Word did everything! It was that Word that people accepted not as Luther’s, but as the Lord’s. It was that Word that is at work in believers, changing hearts, minds, and lives. It was that Word that turns the world upside down. It wasn’t the 95 Theses that started the Reformation, it was God’s Word that did.

And we see that Word still at work today. It worked at Thessalonica. It worked at Wittenberg. It *works* in St. Paul. God’s Word is at work in believers, in you and me. It is a word that brings to faith. It is a word that provides comfort and hope in the midst of unbearable suffering and agonizing temptations. It is a word that soothes broken and seared consciences, and one that delivers all of God’s promises. It is a word that bespeaks us righteous, and declares us justified in Jesus Christ. It is a word that transforms hearts, minds, lives, actions, and deeds. It is a word that unites with, and gives us Jesus through the waters of baptism. It is a word that delivers Jesus’ body and blood in the Lord’s Supper. It is a word that brings us forgiveness and life, and all that Jesus has won at the cross. Simply put, it is a word that delivers Jesus, and all that He offers and gives.

The Word started Paul’s reformation. It started Luther’s reformation, and it is at work in God’s people today. What is the secret behind reformations? What starts them? What truly changes the world for the better? Simple. It is God’s Word that delivers all that Jesus has said and done. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

MUSIC DURING PREPARATION

PREFACE

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Pastor: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, for the countless blessings You so freely bestow on us and all creation. Above all, we give thanks for Your boundless love shown to us when You sent Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, into our flesh and laid on Him our sin, giving Him into death that we might not die eternally. Because He is now risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity, all who believe in Him will overcome sin and death and will rise again to new life. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS

People: Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth adored;

Heav'n and earth with full acclaim shout the glory of Your name.

Sing hosanna in the highest, sing hosanna to the Lord;

Truly blest is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

In Your righteous judgment You condemned the sin of Adam and Eve, who ate the forbidden fruit, and You justly barred them and all their children from the tree of life. Yet, in Your great mercy, You promised salvation by a second Adam, Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, and made His cross a life-giving tree for all who trust in Him.

We give You thanks for the redemption You have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may faithfully eat and drink of the fruits of His cross and receive the blessings of forgiveness, life, and salvation that come to us in His body and blood.

Hear us as we pray in His name and as He has taught us:

LORD'S PRAYER

People: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

Pastor: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

PAX DOMINI

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: Amen.

DISTRIBUTION

You are invited to receive the Lord's Supper if you believe and confess that Jesus Christ is your Savior from sin, you are a baptized child of the Triune God, and you believe that He gives you His body and blood in the bread and wine you receive. White grape juice can be found in the center of each tray for those who cannot receive alcohol. Children are welcome to come forward for a blessing.

POST-COMMUNION COLLECT

Pastor: Let us pray. We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

BENEDICAMUS

Pastor: Let us bless the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

BENEDICTION

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

People: Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

POSTLUDE "The Church's One Foundation" *LSB* 644

1 The Church's one foundation

Is Jesus Christ, her Lord;

She is His new creation

By water and the Word.

From heav'n He came and sought her

To be His holy bride;

With His own blood He bought her,

And for her life He died.

2 Elect from ev'ry nation,

Yet one o'er all the earth;

Her charter of salvation:

One Lord, one faith, one birth.

One holy name she blesses,

Partakes one holy food,

And to one hope she presses

With ev'ry grace endued.

3 Though with a scornful wonder

The world sees her oppressed,

By schisms rent asunder,

By heresies distressed,

Yet saints their watch are keeping;

Their cry goes up, "How long?"

And soon the night of weeping

Shall be the morn of song.

4 Through toil and tribulation
And tumult of her war
She waits the consummation
Of peace forevermore
Till with the vision glorious
Her longing eyes are blest,
And the great Church victorious
Shall be the Church at rest.

5 Yet she on earth has union
With God, the Three in One,
And mystic sweet communion
With those whose rest is won.
O blessed heav'nly chorus!
Lord, save us by Your grace
That we, like saints before us,
May see You face to face.
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Acknowledgments

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

GENEROSITY THOUGHTS: *John 8:36* – “*So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.*” Today we celebrate Reformation Day! Luther is rightly remembered as a champion of the Gospel, but he also called himself “the apostle of good works.” For only in being set free by the Gospel can we do good works. Jesus has set us free, and His blood covers over our sins. We stand before God as His beloved children, and we are invited to live our lives to His glory for the good of His kingdom.

THANK YOU: On behalf of Oromo Evangelical Church of Minnesota, I would like to thank you for your unreserved support in opening your door for us to use the church building for our services. Your respect for our services, your love for our members, and your care for our entire ministries were well noted and was presented to our members during our Church Annual Meeting on September 13, 2020. The members expressed their gratitude and decided to write a thank you letter for your church. Accordingly, it is my pleasure to say thank you on behalf of the members of our church for what you have done and still are doing to strengthen our church service. It would not have been easy to be where we are today if you hadn't opened your door for us. May God bless you abundantly. Sincerely, Yemane Aleku

YOUR HELP is needed again this year for the Mission's annual Thanksgiving food distribution. The past few years the Social Ministries Committee has been able to collect food and create meal bags for the Union Gospel Mission. For over 60 years, Union Gospel Mission Twin Cities has provided thousands of meals during Thanksgiving to our community, while offering volunteer opportunities and building connection with local churches. Due to the realities of COVID-19 and the impact it has on how they serve the community, we know that the need for their services and access to meals will be more vital than ever this Thanksgiving season. To maintain safety for our community members, their volunteers, and staff, they are changing the format of our Thanksgiving Food Drive this year, while still serving our community with compassion and hospitality. Union

Gospel Mission is accepting **financial donations only**. Due to COVID-19 and its spread, we are asking individuals to donate money only to our Thanksgiving Food Bag event. They will purchase Thanksgiving food items in bulk, stretching your dollars even further. A donation of \$25 will purchase everything for a complete Thanksgiving Meal, however, any amount is welcome. Please use the following link to donate if you are able: <https://app.mobilecause.com/vf/TGBags/team/EmmausLutheranChurch> or you can donate via text: Text TGBags10 to 71777 (Msg & data rates may apply). Even though this event will look different this year, the gospel and how we live out our faith hasn't changed.

PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY: Starting on Wednesday, November 11th at 2:15 p.m., we will have a prayer and Bible Study group. Each week, we will gather together to pray and study a text. We will be meeting in-person and virtually. For those that attend virtually, we will have you join us via Zoom (contact Pastor Kooi for the link). Please contact Pastor Kooi for more details.

MITE BOXES: We will be having our fall LWML Mites collection on Sunday, October 25th. You can bring your box in anytime this month or if you prefer checks will be accepted also.

FROM SOCIAL MINISTRIES: Coming in November we will begin collecting new toys for the Salvation Army Toy Drive. We are looking for a Thrivent member to sponsor a Thrivent Action Grant to help with this collection. If you are interested, please e-mail Marie G. We will be doing our Hat and Mitten drive in December and would like to get a Thrivent grant for that also.

HEAR "THE LUTHERAN HOUR" on Sunday mornings at 6:05 a.m. on WCCO 830 AM radio. Next week's broadcast: "Some People Never change?" Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler. Some people never change. Most people do. With God, all people can. (Daniel 4)