



“...The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many” St. Matthew 20:28b.

Martin Luther writes: “May you ever cherish and treasure this thought. Christ is made a servant of sin, yea, a bearer of sin, and the lowliest and most despised person. He destroys all sin by Himself...” because, “...there is no greater bondage than that of sin; and there is no greater service than that displayed by the Son of God who becomes the servant of all...and bears their sins.”

Last year at about this time, we were looking forward to celebrating the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. As we praise and thank God for His gift of the Word and the return to the Word brought about in the Reformation, we also thank God for the reason for the Word given us in the first place. The Word gives us Christ!

When Luther first nailed the 95 theses to the Castle Church door in Wittenberg in 1517, not only had the Reformation begun, but cultures were affected as well. The printing press made Luther’s 95 theses available to everyone in quick order. As the Reformation would continue many would be able to read God’s Word in their own language. While much was changed by the Reformation the most important was the return to the truth of God’s Holy Word.

God’s Word gives Christ who gives forgiveness life and salvation. As Luther said “...there is no greater bondage than that of sin.” When we recall and celebrate the Reformation, we remember and celebrate much more than a particular historical event. One central truth of the Reformation was and remains the fact that sin is the greatest problem known to humanity. There is no human solution to the very human problem of sin. No one can escape sin, no one can cover up sin, no one can eliminate sin from our human nature. In simple terms, the sinful human condition is completely hereditary and a condition from which no one can set himself free, therefore, the need for a Savior.

To remember the Reformation is more than remembering October 31, 1517. To remember the Reformation is more than to remember the Castle Church door in Wittenberg on which Luther nailed the 95 theses. To remember the Reformation is more than to remember that Martin Luther never intended to start a new church but to reform the church, nor did he intend to have any new church named for him.

To remember the Reformation is to remember the words of King David in Psalm 51:10b, “...in sin did my mother conceive me,” that we would acknowledge that we are by nature sinful and unclean. To remember the Reformation is to see our need of a Savior. As sinners, we always need restoration and reformation of the heart, the renewal that comes through God’s Word and Sacrament as we are given the very blessings of the cross, the Savior Jesus Christ who sacrificed all for us. The Reformation brings us back to the God who loves us in Christ Jesus showering us with His abundant grace.

The Reformation is about Jesus and hearing the truth of His Word which reveals Him to us and then actually gives us what He has accomplished on the cross and in His resurrection. From this, we can see that the Reformation is truly a time of great celebration. Not only do we give thanks for God’s Word given to us, but for the truth of His Word proclaimed in all of its purity that we would hear of God’s abundant love for us in Christ.

We are indeed born into the bondage of sin which condemns us to a life of misery and ultimately punishment. But in Christ, we are redeemed from that bondage and restored to the relationship of peace between us and God the Father. The Reformation therefore, is far more than an event from history. Rather, it teaches Christ, the One greater than our bondage to sin, for He became the servant of all and bears our sin on the cross and brings peace between us and God the Father. We are indeed saved by God’s grace through our Lord Jesus Christ as the hymn writer gives the comfort of eternal life through Christ:

By grace I’m saved, grace free and boundless;

My soul, believe and doubt it not.

Why stagger at this word of promise?

Has Scripture ever falsehood taught?

No! Then this word must true remain;

By grace you too will life obtain.

LSB 566 “By Grace I’m Saved”

In Christ, Pastor Ahrendt