

Reformation Day October 25, 2020

21st Sunday after Pentecost 20th Sunday after Trinity Proper 25 (30)
Lectionary Year A – the Gospel of Matthew

Living the Lutheran Lectionary

A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.

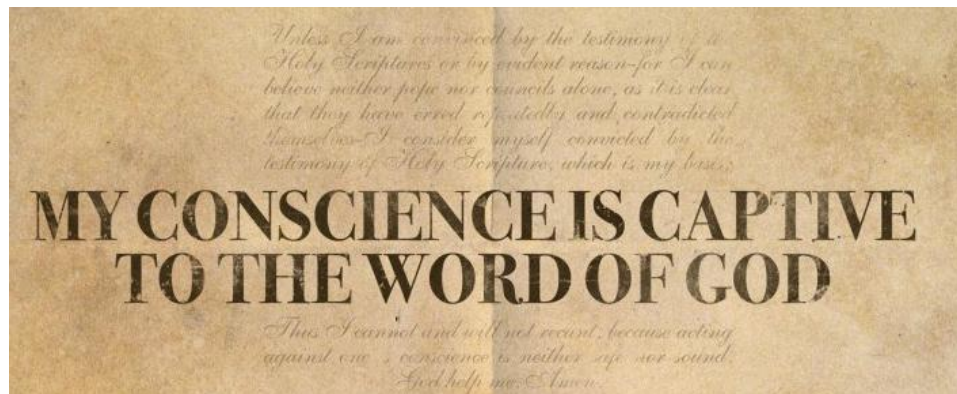
An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.

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- ✦ **Wednesdays at 7 PM in a house church setting:** For details, contact Harold Weseloh at puritaspastor@hotmail.com
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- ✦ **On Facebook through Messenger** in a discussion group shared by people throughout the United States, Kenya and Uganda. Contact Harold Weseloh on Facebook Messenger.



<https://www.jacobabshire.com/news/wallpaper-rollup-a-reformation-day/>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 555 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 377

“Salvation unto us has come”

“One of the chief hymns of the Reformation, “*Es ist das Heil uns kommen her*” was written by Paul Speratus in 1523, during an imprisonment that was supposed to end with his burning at the stake for his Lutheran beliefs. Instead, influential friends secured his release, and he and his wife went to live in Wittenberg, where Speratus became a colleague of Martin Luther. “*Es ist das Heil*” had already become known to Luther: it is said that he wept upon first hearing it sung by a beggar outside his window. Never before had he heard his theology expressed so beautifully and movingly in music. This hymn would be included in the first Lutheran hymnal, the *Achtliederbuch* of 1524, and would be a staple of Lutheran hymnals for centuries to come.” (14 verses)

- <https://www.lutheranchoralebook.com/texts/salvation-unto-us-has-come/> The Free Lutheran Chorale-Book is an ongoing project with the goal of making the best of Lutheran hymnody readily and freely available in English to everyone.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E8JqXIHB10U> Congregational singing. [Memorial Lutheran Church Houston, TX](#)

Can't let Reformation go by without “A Mighty Fortress”

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBhVuCcz9GI> A Mighty Fortress filmed by Fountainview Academy as part of The Great Controversy in Rome, Italy.

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001
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O. T. - “Fear God and give him glory”

Psalm – “God is our refuge and strength”

Epistle – “For by works of the law no human being will be justified”

Gospel – “***So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.***

or “***He who has ears to hear, let him hear***”

**Reformation Day Observed, Revelation 14:6-7; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL),
Deuteronomy 34:1-12 or Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18 (Next week: All Saints Day, Revelation 7:2-8,
9-17; RCL, the same reading)**

Like the beginning of a great meal, Revelation 14:6–7 goes well with the psalm for this Sunday (Psalm 46) for the celebration of the Reformation. They are excellent companions because both express unshaking vision to see the presence and activity of God, even in the midst of great trial and calamity, even in the midst of terrible natural and human caused trauma. They both speak dramatically and forcefully to those who suffer calamity and suffering. Though “the earth be shaken and mountains quake to the depth of the sea,” we do not fear (Ps 46: 3). Why? Because “God is our refuge and our strength, an ever present help in distress” (Ps 46:1) and because this God, “The Lord of Hosts is with us; our stronghold is the God of Jacob” (Ps 46:7).

Who is the Lord of Hosts? “Then I saw another angel flying overhead, with everlasting good news to announce to those who dwell on earth, in every nation, tribe, tongue, and people. He said in a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give him glory, for His time has come to sit in judgment. Worship him who made heaven and earth and seas and springs of water” (Rv 14:6–7).

Served together they make a great pair, but this is not totally good news. The God who is our refuge and strength, who is the creator of all things, comes to judge. There does need to be something else added to the meal, and the preacher must do so as he uses the rest of the appointed readings to holistically speak both law and gospel. The preacher will find the additional ingredients in the epistle reading (Romans 3:19–28) or one of the two gospel readings (John 8:31–36 or Matthew 11:12–19) for the day. But can the preacher also find it further along in Revelation? “Here is what sustains the holy ones who keep God’s commandments and their faith in Jesus. I heard a voice from heaven say, ‘Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Yes,’ said the Spirit, ‘let them find rest from their labors, for their works accompany them” (Rv 14:13). Even these additional verses from Revelation desperately need the additional ingredient of the pure and sweet gospel: “All have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God. They are justified freely by his grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus” (Rom 3:23–24).

To stay with the picture of God as returning to judge, even to make right that which is wrong in the world, and having that as the primary emotional element of the sermon leaves all hearers in despair. Adequate preaching demands at least all the ingredients above...”

- <https://concordiatheology.org/2014/10/reformation-day-%E2%80%A2-revelation-146-7-%E2%80%A2-october-26-2014/> Bruce Hartung

The Lamb and the 144,000 Verses 1-6

The Messages of the Three Angels Verses 6-13

⁶Then 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. ⁷And 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.”...

The Harvest of the Earth Verses 14-20

“Our text is one of the traditional readings for Reformation Day, Revelation 14:6-7. There St. John writes: “Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim... Now the question immediately arises: How did this text come to be a reading for Reformation Day? What does this vision of an angel flying directly overhead with an eternal gospel to proclaim—what in the world does that have to do with the Lutheran Reformation?”

Well, believe it or not, beginning already in Luther’s lifetime, people identified this angel of the Revelation with . . . the messenger of the Reformation, namely, Martin Luther. They saw Luther as this angel having an eternal gospel to proclaim to every nation. As early as 1522, just five years into the Reformation, a man named Michael Stiefel wrote a poem called, “On the Christ-Formed, Properly

Grounded Teaching of Doctor Martin Luther.” In the opening stanza Stiefel says, “John wrote for us of an angel who would set forth God’s Word with complete clarity.” And there Stiefel plays on Luther’s name, because the German word he uses for “clarity” is *lauter*. *Lauter*, *Luter*.

That was in 1522. In 1546, at Luther’s funeral, the preacher, Johannes Bugenhagen, made a similar comparison. He said: “This angel who says, ‘Fear God and give him the honor,’ was Dr. Martin Luther. And what is written here, ‘Fear God and give him the honor,’ are the two parts of Dr. Martin Luther’s doctrine, the Law and the Gospel, through which all of Scripture is unlocked and Christ, our righteousness and eternal life, is recognized.” So from then on, the linkage was established: The angel of Revelation 14 became associated with the person of Martin Luther. And that’s how this text came to be a reading for Reformation Day.

But were they right? Were Stiefel and Bugenhagen justified in seeing Luther in this vision from Revelation? And how does this apply to us today?... That’s what we’ll consider now...

But first let’s see how this text fits into its context in the Book of Revelation. In the chapters leading up to our text, John has described an end-time battle, in which powerful enemies have been waging war against God’s people...

But then John sees something else. He sees the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him the 144,000. This is a picture of Christ and his church—the whole lot, the full number, nobody missing. They bear his name on their foreheads, and they’re singing the new song. This is saying that the church, redeemed by Christ, will endure in spite of persecution.

Next John says, “Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth.” John has seen angels before in this book, and now he’s seeing another. But note this: The Greek word “angel” can have kind of a double meaning in Revelation. To be sure, it can refer to the heavenly being we usually think of as an angel. But “angel” can also mean simply “messenger.” Any messenger, whether heavenly or earthly. And a pastor is an “angel,” of sorts, a “messenger.” An earthly messenger with a heavenly message. And the angel that John sees flying in this vision, while no doubt a heavenly being, has everything to do with the proclamation of the message here on earth.

Our text says the angel is “flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim.” Where it says “directly overhead,” there the Greek literally says “in midheaven.” Why “midheaven”? Why not just “heaven”? To say “midheaven” is to say, right smack-dab in the middle of the sky, like the sun shining directly overhead. In other words, in the midst of the darkness of this world, when it looks like the light is about to be extinguished, snuffed out, God reassures us: No, the darkness shall not overcome it. The gospel light will continue to shine brightly. After all, this gospel comes from heaven. It’s God’s gospel. It’s not man-made, so man cannot destroy it. It’s an eternal gospel. It will last forever. And God means to have it proclaimed. His messengers will preach this gospel to every nation, tribe, language, and people. What is this eternal gospel, the good news that is being proclaimed? To use the language of Revelation, it’s about “the Lamb who was slain,” the one who “by his blood ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.” It’s about “him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.” It’s about Jesus Christ, “the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.” He, Jesus, our exalted Lord, comes to us and says: “Fear not. I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades...”

➤ <https://stmatthewbt.org/2019/10/26/an-eternal-gospel-to-proclaim-revelation-146-7/>

Rev. Charles Henrickson, St. Matthew Lutheran Church Bonne Terre, MO

Psalm 46; RCL, Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17 or Psalm 1 (Psalm 149; RCL, Psalm 34:1-10, 22)

“Luther’s ramshackle cart wobbled its way to Worms, Germany, in April of 1521. He had been summoned to appear before the Emperor and Catholic prelates to give an account of this new “heresy” he was teaching called “justification by faith alone.” The learned Johann Eck laid out all of Luther’s writings and then asked Luther if he was prepared to recant.

Luther retired to his room that night to think over his answer. His Bible fell open to Psalm 46. Luther returned the next morning to stand before his detractors. In response to their call to recant, Luther responded:

“Unless I am convinced by Scripture and plain reason—I do not accept the authority of the popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other—my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen.”

The Reformation was off and running.

Psalm 46 was Martin Luther’s favorite Psalm. During the dark and dangerous periods of the Reformation, Luther would turn to his trusted friend Philip Melanchthon and exclaim: “Let’s sing the 46th Psalm, and let the devil do his worst!” It inspired his great hymn “A Mighty Fortress is Our God...”

- <https://csbible.com/rest-psalm-46/> Dr. David L. Allen Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

God Is Our Fortress

To the choirmaster. Of the Sons of Korah. According to Alamoth.^[a] A Song.

- 46** God is our refuge and strength,
a very present^[b] help in trouble.
- 2** Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,
- 3** though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble at its swelling. **Selah**
- 4** There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
- 5** God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved;
God will help her when morning dawns.
- 6** The nations rage, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.
- 7** The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress. **Selah**
- 8** Come, behold the works of the LORD,
how he has brought desolations on the earth.
- 9** He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the chariots with fire.
- 10** “Be still, and know that I am God.

I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!"

¹¹ The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress. **Selah**

- a. [Psalm 46:1](#) Probably a musical or liturgical term
- b. [Psalm 46:1](#) Or well proved

"A Mighty Fortress is Our God" -- the hymn, which according to Ulrich Leupold, "more than any other epitomizes Luther's thought and personal experience" -- is a rather free paraphrase of Psalm 46.

For that reason, the psalm is assigned for Reformation Sunday. But as Leupold notes, Luther "did not write [the hymn] to express his own feelings, but to interpret and apply the 46th Psalm to the church of his own time and its struggles."¹ This is a fine summary of the preaching task -- to interpret and apply the biblical text to our own time and struggles...

The psalm's final stanza culminates with a statement of trust that is cloaked as an invitation and then with a promise. The invitation is the imperative cry, "Come!" which occurs in Psalms 95 and 66 in calls to come, see what God has done, and therefore to praise God. Here, the call is not so much to praise God, but to come and be silent -- to witness God's powerful ability to crush rebellion and then to be silent.

In the end, God even speaks the promise: "Be still, and know that I am God." To know, in Hebrew, does not mean just to acknowledge something intellectually, but to internalize or to embody the truth fully. And then God's voice closes the psalm by asserting God's exaltation over both spheres of creation that have been in rebellion against God in stanzas 1 and 2 of the poem: "I am exalted among the nations" (stanza 2) and "I am exalted in the earth" (stanza 1).

That is the promise of both the psalm, and in a larger sense, of the entire Bible. That the God of Jacob and the Lord of Israel will, in the end of all things, prove a faithful refuge for those who are caught in the fallen condition of creation and humanity.

The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1110
[Rolf Jacobson](#) Professor of Old Testament and Alvin N. Rogness Chair in Scripture, Theology, and Ministry, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

Romans 3:19-28; RCL, 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8 (1 John 3:1-3; RCL, the same reading)

"This is one of the more theologically loaded passages in the New Testament..."
(continued after the reading)

God's Righteousness Upheld Verses 1-8

No One Is Righteous Verses 9-20

...¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. ²⁰ For by

works of the law no human being^[c] will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

The Righteousness of God Through Faith Verses 21-31

²¹ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— ²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

²⁷ Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸ For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

- a. [Romans 3:9](#) Greek *Are we*
- b. [Romans 3:9](#) Or *at any disadvantage?*
- c. [Romans 3:20](#) Greek *flesh*

“As is common, the lectionary gives us a poorly defined text. The section properly begins at 3:21 and runs through 3:26. There is a clear end to a rhetorical movement in 3:20, and the battering of rhetorical questions that begins in 3:27 and continues through 4:10 demonstrates Paul dealing with the imaginary objections that might issue from what Paul declared in 3:21-26. But perhaps not all is lost because of this quirky division of the text. This unfortunate break-up of the natural rhetorical flow of Paul’s argument forces the reader to connect things in a new way. If anything, the lectionary’s division is an invitation (one that I would strongly suggest preachers should not ignore) to say a few words about the wider argumentative and rhetorical context of this passage (which one can find in a good commentary).”

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2246 Kyle Fever, Director of Beyond Ministries, Ingham-Okoboji Lutheran Bible Camps, Lake Okoboji, Iowa

In Romans chapter 3, Saint Paul is inviting us to envision a cosmic courtroom. In this courtroom the entire world is on trial and the charges are based on the perfect Law of God. That Law presents an unrelenting stream of accusations that expose all our faults. There are no loopholes for us to squeeze through because the accusations come from God's perfect Law. Even if you can claim ignorance of the Law, it makes no difference. In Romans chapter 2, Paul says, "All who sin apart from the Law will also perish apart from the Law." Those who did not know the Law showed by their lives that they had the Law in their hearts and their consciences accused them. There's nothing more to say. In the end we all stand condemned together.

In Eugene Peterson's paraphrase of the New Testament, called *The Message*, Romans 3:19-20 reads: "This makes it clear, doesn't it, that whatever is written in these Scriptures is not what God says about others but to us to whom these Scriptures were addressed in the first place! And it's clear enough, isn't it, that we're sinners, every one of us, in the same sinking boat with everybody else?"

In the December 23, 2002, issue of *Time* magazine, Lev Grossman wrote the following: "Every year on the first Saturday in December, twenty-five hundred of the most brilliant college students in North America take what may be the hardest math test in the world - the Putnam Competition. How tough is it? Although there are only 12 questions, the test lasts six hours. And although these are the best and the brightest young minds our country has to offer, the median score on last year's test was one point. Out of a possible 120."

But God's Law presents an even more rigorous and imposing demand - perfection. When that Law is finished making accusations, when every mouth is silenced, when there is no more defense, when all of our attempts to justify ourselves dissolve, then judgment is pronounced. And that judgment is devastating. We are all guilty. We all deserve the fullest condemnation of the Law - eternal damnation in hell. We have no basis to plead for mercy...

Denise Bonderman, from Hannibal, Missouri, tells about an experience with her final exam in the youth ministry class at Hannibal-LaGrange College in Missouri:

"When I got to class, everybody was doing their last-minute studying. The teacher came in and said he would review with us before the test. Most of his review came right from the study guide, but there were some things he was reviewing that I had never heard. When questioned about it, he said they were in the book and we were responsible for everything in the book. We couldn't argue with that.

"Finally, it was time to take the test. 'Leave them face down on the desk until everyone has one, and I'll tell you to start,' our professor, Dr. Tom Hufty, instructed.

"When we turned them over, to my astonishment every answer on the test was filled in. My name was even written on the exam in red ink. The bottom of the last page said: 'This is the end of the exam. All answers on your test are correct. You will receive an A on the final exam. The reason you passed the test is because the creator of the test took it for you. All the work you did in preparation for this test did not help you get the A. You have just experienced grace.'"

It isn't often that we experience grace in situations like that. More often than not it is the cold, hard reality of justice that confronts us. But there is one experience of grace that tops them all. It is when we stand at the foot of the cross and hear the words of Jesus, "You are forgiven." At that moment all boasting comes to an end. There is no more need for self-justification, no more need to claim that you are better than someone else, because the only thing we can boast about is what Christ has done for us. Because of that gift of grace we can boast about the salvation we have received in Christ Jesus. Now we are free from any attempt to justify ourselves before God. We need to simply say, "God be merciful to me a sinner."...

➤ <https://www.lutheranhour.org/sermon.asp?articleid=7999> Presented on The Lutheran Hour on October 28, 2007, By Rev. Ron Rall, Guest Speaker

John 8:31-36 or Matthew 11:12-19; RCL, Matthew 22:34-36 (*Matthew 5:1-12; RCL, the same reading*)

“John 8:31-38 is a “drama” in progress. Its context extends back to John 7:1-13, where Jesus travels to Jerusalem for the Jewish Festival of Tabernacles, also known as the Festival of Booths. Jews from all over Israel would ascend to Jerusalem for this eight-day celebration.

The festival marked the end of the fall harvest (Exodus 23:16) and God’s guidance of Israel in the wilderness journey from Egyptian slavery toward freedom (Leviticus 23:39-43). During the festival, pilgrims built tabernacles or small temporary booths, which symbolized God’s sheltering presence during Israel’s wilderness sojourn. Other rituals included the gathering of water from the Pool of Siloam to pour upon the altar and the lighting of candles.

In John 7-8, Jesus depicts himself as the actual fulfillment of Israel’s faith and hope, which the Festival of Tabernacles symbolically commemorated. As important as the water from the Pool of Siloam and the lighting of candles were in the Festival of Tabernacles, Jesus declares that he is the supreme source of living water (7:37-38) and the light of the world, burning brighter than any candle ever could (8:12). Finally, in John 8:31-38, Jesus asserts that he, too, is the ultimate source of freedom, the concept at the heart of the Festival of Tabernacles.

Jesus declares that his followers will receive divine truth that will emancipate them (v. 32). Certain persons in the crowd take offense at Jesus’ claim, believing that they had never been slaves and are already free. Jesus refutes their response...”

- <http://www.theafricanamericanlectionary.org/PopupLectionaryReading.asp?LRID=2>
Brad Braxton, Commentator

“The Holy Gospel beginning in the 8th Chapter of St. John”

(Casting the First Stone) Verses 1-11

I Am the Light of the World Verses 12-30

The Truth Will Set You Free Verses 31-38

³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, **“If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”** ³³ 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?’”

³⁴ Jesus answered them, **“Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. ³⁵ The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. ³⁷ I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. ³⁸ I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father.”**

You Are of Your Father the Devil Verses 39-47

Before Abraham Was, I Am Verses 48-59

“It is hard to miss the theme of freedom in our text from John.

And since this is Reformation Sunday, it useful to remember that freedom was a key concern for many of the Reformers. One of Martin Luther's most famous writings is "The Freedom of a Christian," which he wrote in 1520 just before he was excommunicated by the church.¹ Preachers might find their proclamation well-served by reviewing this classic work. Freedom is also a slippery word. It can mean a multitude of different things and proclaimers who focus on freedom need to clear a path if the biblical word of liberation is to be clearly heard...

Of Christian Freedom

The key to freedom is Christ: for freedom Christ has set us free (Galatians 5:1). And the best preaching does not offer liberation or make it conditional upon the response of the listener. It is not held up as a doctrine that needs to be "believed" or a story that needs to be "applied." It does not move quickly and nervously to all the things freedom is "for": the work for justice, the care for the poor, the need to tend to creation. All such activity is laudable and such things can be stressed in other parts of worship or in future sermons.

But, above all, be sure to announce loudly and clearly that the day of liberation has come! Now! Declare unmistakably that the captives have been delivered. The proclaimer must announce with boldness that freedom has happened and that there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). Preach with urgency so that your listeners hear the most important news they can possibly hear: the foes of sin and death have been routed by Christ crucified and risen. The Son has made them free and they are free indeed (John 8:36)."

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1632
[Mark Tranvik](#) Professor of Religion, Augsburg College, Minneapolis, MN
- Read this article in "Brian P. Stoffregen Exegetical Notes" for a study of key words in this reading. <http://www.crossmarks.com/brian/john8x31.htm>

"The Holy Gospel beginning in the 11th Chapter of St. Matthew"

"It's damned if you and damned if you don't. That's our Lord's lament for today. God had sent John the Baptizer to prepare the way for Jesus. He preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. John came, singing a funeral dirge: "Die to yourself. It's in the water where you find life to live!"

Who would have thought that? Not only did John prepare the way for Jesus, but he also prepared the way for the baptism that Jesus would put into place in the New Covenant, which fulfilled circumcision in God's Old-Covenant (Colossians 2:11-14).

John came, not eating and drinking. And, yet, the religious leadership said that a demon had taken over him. And then—when the Fulfillment to whom John pointed, Jesus, came along—He came eating and drinking. And the religious leadership said that Jesus was a glutton and a drunkard. It's damned if you and damned if you don't..." (Continued after the reading)

Messengers from John the Baptist Verses 1-19

...¹² From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence,^[d] and the violent take it by force. ¹³ For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, ¹⁴ and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. ¹⁵ He who has ears to hear,^[e] let him hear.

¹⁶ “But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates,

¹⁷ “We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.’

¹⁸ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ ¹⁹ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds.”^[f]

Woe to Unrepentant Cities Verses 20-24

Come to Me, and I Will Give You Rest Verses 25-30

“This is the Gospel of the Lord” “Praise to You, O Christ”

“In all of your reading of Scripture, did you ever see God giving us a choice to choose the God we want? You won’t find it. God’s way is His way. It’s His way or the highway, for “narrow is the road that leads to life” (Matthew 7:14).

Let’s face it: We don’t like John the Baptizer’s preaching any more than anyone else. There’s a reason he was in prison and killed by being beheaded. Sinners never want the Law to be the Law! We want God’s Law to be our lapdog. We want to put a collar on its neck and lead it around by a leash. For no one wants the Law to kill him! No one wants the Law to make him stop eating and drinking, laughing and breathing!

We’re no different from anyone else. And the truth of the Reformation recognizes that! Reformation Sunday is not a reason to boast. On October 31, 1517, Luther posted 95 theses, doctrinal statements, on the church door at Wittenberg. He wanted to debate others in the Church about purgatory.

The first thesis Luther posted said this: “/

- <https://kimberlinglutheran.com/2015/10/25/matthew-1112-19-reformation-sermon/> Pastor Rich Fitrell. Shepherd of the Hills Kimberling City, MO

TO COMMEMORATE THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REFORMATION, WE'VE PRODUCED THIS COMIC STRIP ON AN *ACTUAL* GUTENBERG PRINTING PRESS.

IT'S ARTISANAL!



DRG

REFORMATION 500

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The Matthew Challenge How about if you come up with one?

Weekly review thoughts



WWW.AGNUSDAY.ORG

MATTHEW 22:15-22

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“...Dr. Luther calls us to repent on this Reformation Sunday. For we don’t like—deep down, or maybe not so deep down—the sting of the Law. We don’t want to believe that we’re more helpless than a helpless baby when it comes to contributing to our salvation. But thanks be to God! He has still preserved a place where we can hear that truth, which people scorn and despise, for our life and salvation!

In your sin, when it comes to God, you *are* powerless and pathetic. Admit it. Own it. That’s why Jesus took your sins and made them His own. That’s why He died your death. That’s why He got buried underneath God’s wrath for you on the cross. He did that because you couldn’t. Then, on the third day, He walked out of the tomb—alive!

What does that mean? In means that Jesus now pours out heaven freely. He gives it out to sinners, even babies. It *is by grace alone*, not because of anything we do!”

“Our pastor, Rich Futrell, was born in Alaska and raised in Washington state. His spiritual journey is a bit atypical, maybe even sordid. He was raised Southern Baptist (he is, after all, a first-generation Yankee!), but during his teen years, he became an athiest and was so for about a decade.

After being prompted to read the Bible through circumstances in his life, he was brought back to the faith. He eventually became a Lutheran based on his reading of the Bible without his previously preconceived notions.

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