



## FESTIVAL OF THE REFORMATION

October 31, 2012

*The Anniversary of the Reformation –  
A Reminder to Praise God for **The Answer**.*

### **Sermon Text: 1 Peter 2:9**

*“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”*

Dear Heirs of the Reformation,

“...I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing...”

How do we reconcile these two? On the one hand, the Scriptures tell us that we Christians are a chosen people – priests of a king, members of a holy nation, a special people – saved to be God's own, and messengers of His wonderful, glorious works.

On the other hand, we know from the Bible and the Law of God written in our hearts – the loud voice of our own consciences daily convicting us as a witness to that Law – that we surely deserve nothing but God's righteous wrath and temporal and eternal punishment on account of our many sins.

With a soul beset by a convicting conscience and sorely troubled by the Law of God written in his heart, a man named Martin Luther, sought the remedy for his soul's salvation within the Catholic Church's teachings and so reasoned within his own mind how he might satisfy the demands of God.

Devoting himself to the focused hardships of life as a monk, he set about to do all that he could possibly think of to try to appease an angry God. Martin fasted many long days, prayed for hours on end, and even beat himself – literally whipping and tearing at his own flesh – so severely that he bled.

Yet within his mind and soul he could find no peace in the synergistic doctrine of work-righteousness taught by the Catholic Church. Martin was continually plagued with doubt and sorely anguished because of his many sins. For in all these works, in all these

physical sacrifices, he could find no solace, no redemption for his sins, no self-won-righteousness, no true peace or reconciliation with a righteous and angry God.

Where could he find true salvation and peace for his tortured soul?

By the grace of God, Martin discovered a Bible and found *The Answer*.

And *The Answer* for us – indeed, for the whole world – is the same as it was for Martin Luther: the Gospel of Jesus Christ found in *Scripture Alone*. It is God's *Grace Alone* through Spirit worked *Faith Alone* in the redemptive work of Christ Jesus which gives to us the free unmerited gift of the forgiveness of our sins, true peace with God, and creates within us newness of life in Christ.

Natural, unregenerate man in the darkness of his mind must be driven to his knees by the Law of God, where he can do naught, but abandon all hope of self-redemption and despair of finding anything of merit in or of himself. Then and only then must he be shown the Light that is Christ, freely given the sweet soul-healing balm of the Gospel. For therein alone lies the full forgiveness of sins and true peace with God.

And we, as Christians – lest we become jaded and spiritually lazy – we need to be reminded that we are still beset by our Old Adam, which would have us succumb to the daily temptations of our soul's enemies – the Devil, the cares and wanton vanities of this World and the lusts of our own sinful flesh.

Daily these forces of darkness will indeed viciously attack us. Hence we must be prepared and daily most actively engage in battle with them.

Why?

Well, *firstly*, because we are the Lord's.

And we know from Scripture that the Devil, the World and our own sinful flesh *hate* all that which belongs to the Lord God Almighty.

Secondly, we need to recall and hold fast – not just with our minds, but with our very hearts and souls – what a great and gracious thing Jesus Christ, our Lord did for us when He humbled himself took upon Himself true humanity, was made flesh, subjected Himself to the demands of the law, endured the same temptations with which you and I are tempted, and then suffered mocking humiliation, being whipped, spat upon, and finally murdered – crucified on a wooden cross by the very people He came to save. We have the full forgiveness of all our sins and the blessed promise of everlasting life in heaven, not because of anything we deserve or could ever even hope to merit with our good works, but *solely* because of what God has accomplished *for us* in Christ Jesus.

Dear Christians, the precious Gospel of Jesus Christ, restored to the world in all its truth and purity by God Himself through Martin Luther is the *only* motivation for our Christian conduct and life.

Is your salvation in Jesus Christ truly precious to you?

Then daily equip yourselves – go and have your faith strengthened and prepared for daily battle – not by your own reasoning or good works, but with the pure Holy Word of God.

Using God's Word, put down (and even more!) daily *drown* – forcefully put to death – that old man of sin that remains within each of us and fights against the Spirit.

For God has called each of you out of the Darkness of Sin and Eternal Death by His Holy Spirit. Through the Gospel He has called you to be a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession.

Furthermore, He wants each and every one of you to live your daily lives *in Him*. Yes, God desires that each and every child of His should be nourishing their faith through *daily* meditation on His Word and (*if possible*) in regular attendance at worship services with fellow believers. And this, so that we grow daily in faith and sanctification of our Christian lives, willingly conforming to His will as revealed in His Word, and boldly showing forth His praises before the whole world with our good works and songs of thanksgiving in our hearts.

*You* can show forth His praises by being truly compassionate to those who are in any bodily need in this life and by showing love and mercy to those souls who are troubled by their sins and repent, proclaiming to them the sure hope, life and marvelous light there is for all who by faith alone receive the free gift of the Forgiveness of Sins prepared and offered to the *whole world* in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Dear Friends, Let us give thanks and praise to God for restoring to the world by the Reformation the pure knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and so graciously preserving this marvelous treasure to us!

And in a world that loves ignorance more than Truth and Spiritual Darkness rather than Light – in a world that is so often openly hostile to the crucified and risen Christ and the preaching of His Holy Word – let us strive by the Power of God, the Love of Christ and the Communion of the Holy Spirit to conduct ourselves as God's chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, ever conscious of our exalted position. ever active in the performance of our high calling in Christ Jesus. For we can *indeed* do all things through Christ, Who strengthens us.

And so we declare with Martin Luther:

***“A mighty fortress is our God, a trusty shield and weapon;  
He helps us free from every need that hath us now overtaken.  
The old evil foe now means deadly woe; deep guile and great might  
Are his dread arms in fight; on Earth is not his equal.*”**

*With might of ours can naught be done, soon were our loss effected;  
But for us fights the Valiant One, whom God Himself elected.  
Ask ye, who is this? Jesus Christ it is.  
Of Sabbath Lord, and there's none other God;  
He holds the field forever.*

*Though devils all the world should fill, all eager to devour us.  
We tremble not, we fear no ill, they shall not overpower us.  
This world's prince may still scowl fierce as he will,  
He can harm us none, he's judged; the deed is done;  
One little word can fell him.*

*The Word they still shall let remain nor any thanks have for it;  
He's by our side upon the plain with His good gifts and Spirit.  
And take they our life, goods, fame, child and wife,  
Let these all be gone, they yet have nothing won;  
The Kingdom ours remaineth."*

*Hymn 262 (TLH)*

To God belongs all the glory, honor and praise forever and ever.  
Amen.