

“The whole being of any Christian is faith and love.  
Faith brings the person to God, love brings the person to people.”  
(Martin Luther 1483-1546)

October 31<sup>st</sup> of this year will be a very special date. No, it doesn't have anything to do with Halloween. October 31<sup>st</sup> of this year will mark 500 years since Martin Luther posted his 95 theses on the church door in Wittenberg, Germany. In those statements, Luther spelled out the problems he saw in the church at that time. Ultimately this event marked the beginning of what has become known in Church History as the Protestant Reformation.

This year, the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary, will be a legal holiday in all of Germany. In this country, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will be hosting an event commemorating Luther's courageous activity in Washington, D.C. Yes, this is a very important time for the church to remember.

It was never Martin Luther's goal to start a new church. His purpose was simply to point out how the church had strayed from Scripture. His particular complaint was that the church should not in any way place salvation up for sale in a practice known as indulgences. Luther saw salvation by grace as a free gift from God which is a hallmark of Protestant Reformed Churches today.

Luther stated of his transformation:

“I have asked God to send me neither dreams, nor visions, nor angels, but to give me the right understanding of His Word, the Holy Scriptures; for as long as I have God's Word, I know that I am walking in His way and that I shall not fall into any error or delusion.”

Luther's courageous actions very nearly cost him his life. But that didn't matter to him. All that mattered to Luther was scripture. In fact, when he was threatened and asked to take back some of the things he had said, Luther replied:

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

Luther's focus upon Scripture as the sole authority for the church led to many changes which he did not anticipate. However most of those changes were needed then as others are now. May we be courageous enough in our confused and broken world to acknowledge the importance of scripture as Luther did.

So, with your candy and trick or treating this Halloween take a few minutes to remember the monk from Germany who helped his time realize its errors. And let the church today, which seems eager to compromise on the authority of scripture, find new and contemporary ways to express the love of God which is what all scripture calls us to do.

Have a great month and  
**Happy Reformation Day!**

Pastor Tim