

Festival of the Reformation 2020

The Festival of the Reformation is a time of joy and reaffirmation that the Gospel (Good News) of Jesus Christ is the heart of the Christian faith. This Gospel of Jesus Christ is centered on the work of Jesus Christ, not on our human work. All who trust in Jesus Christ for forgiveness and life with God are saved by God.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

Martin Luther was born into the Roman Catholic Church in 1483 in Eisleben, Germany. (There were no “denominations” at that time. There was only the Church with the Pope in Rome and the Eastern Orthodox Church.) He was baptized as a baby and grew up learning the church teachings popular at the time. A key emphasis in the teaching was that humans contributed to their own salvation. Good works were required and numbered, being a monk or a nun could gain credit towards salvation, and indulgences to pay off time of suffering in purgatory were among ways that were taught to assist one’s salvation. Martin Luther grew up thinking of Jesus more as a stern judge than as a friendly savior.

There were a number of people who tried to get back to the Bible’s teachings that in Jesus all might be saved through faith alone, not just Martin Luther. John Hus (1372-1415) tried to reform Roman Catholic teaching but that movement was not wide spread. As Luther studied Scripture as a Roman Catholic monk, priest and professor he came to see the joy of salvation in Jesus Christ. Many other priests, nuns, professors, lay people and rulers during Luther’s time also came to see the joy of the Gospel and became committed to it. Luther’s teaching, writings and translations of the Bible into German helped spread the true understanding of faith in Christ all across Europe. Martin Luther “rang a bell” to call attention to the Gospel, but it was not he alone that reformed the Church. Martin Luther was excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church for his teachings, and thus some separations from the Roman Catholic Church began.

Thus, the celebration of the Reformation centers on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We thank God for the teachings and leadership of Martin Luther and other Christian Reformation leaders. But always the focus of Reformation is the joyous forgiveness, life and peace we have in the crucified and risen Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sermon Notes:

Good News for All!

1. The angel (messenger from God) has an _____ gospel.

This gospel is for _____ people.

2. _____ God and give _____ glory.

The Christian faith is founded on God’s _____ in Jesus Christ, not on _____ efforts.

Free to Be God's People

1. Christian freedom is freedom from _____ , _____ and the power of the _____ .

2. Christianity is not about worldly _____ and _____ .

3. The Holy Spirit gives Christians power to trust that in Jesus they need not _____ anything in this life, but can follow Jesus and _____ all people.