



## From Fear to Faith + The Reformation Story

### Bible Study

**[Please provide:** if singing, musical accompaniment; Bibles and copies of the first seven pages of the Bible study for attendees; a copy of pages 8-15 for the leader.]

On October 31, 2008, the world began a decade-long celebration of the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the beginning of the Protestant Reformation in Germany in 1517. The pinnacle of the celebration will be Reformation Day, 2017, celebrated worldwide with ecclesiastical and cultural events, conferences, and large exhibitions.

In this Bible study let us turn to God's Word and the history books to learn about Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation, and, especially, about Jesus Christ and the value of the Reformation for our lives today! Let's celebrate!

### Opening Prayer

We praise You and adore You, O God, for Your overwhelming grace for us in Jesus Christ, made known to us in Your Holy Word, that we may, by the power and working of the Holy Spirit, believe in Jesus and be saved. Bless our study of the Reformation and of Your servant Martin Luther this day, and give us joy as we celebrate Your working in our lives. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

### Fear

The people were afraid.

There was the fear of purgatory, for the church taught that after death virtually every Christian went to purgatory on account of his or her sins. The sufferings of purgatory, they were told, were as intense as those of hell, except that they were not of eternal duration. Remission of time in purgatory could be obtained by indulgences granted for good works, pilgrimages, fasting, and prayers.

There was the fear of the priest, for the priest had power over the souls of people. He taught the law with all its fierce wrath and anger. He could grant forgiveness of sins or withhold it. He was the channel of sacramental grace: to be denied the sacraments was to be denied salvation. So the priest held a position of enormous power over peoples' souls.

There was also the fear of Christ, for at that time our Lord was depicted chiefly as a terrible judge, not a compassionate Savior. The way to find mercy at the hands of Christ, people were told, was to pray to Mary; she would intercede with her Son for sinners. So Mary was called the Refuge of Sinners.

All this fear was the result of ignorance: ignorance of the Bible. The Bible was a closed book to priest and people alike. Many priests did even not know the Lord's Prayer or the Ten Commandments or where in the Bible to find them, and so could not teach the people. Instead they preached about the legends of the saints and the duties of the people to the church.

Into this extremely tense world, Martin Luther (originally “Martin Luder”) was born on November 10, 1483. Luther, too, was afraid. He struggled with the awareness of his sinful nature. He only saw an angry and condemning God. He could not believe that God loved him or that he could love God enough to save himself or deserve God’s forgiveness. He thought that, perhaps, if he could inflict enough pain on himself, he could become worthy. He worked to save his own soul by being sorry, constant penances, and trying to literally beat the “Hell” out of himself, all to no avail.

***What does this mean? How is this done? Is this most certainly true? Time to discuss!***

Consider these Bible passages:

**Mark 12:30-31:** “‘... love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘... love your neighbor as yourself.’”

**Galatians 3:10:** *For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.”*

**Romans 6:23:** *For the wages of sin is death ...*

Left by ourselves, do we have reason to be afraid?

Do you know anyone who is really afraid of God? Why are they afraid?

## **Holy Scripture**

Terrorized by fear, in the summer of 1505, during a lightning storm, Martin Luther pledged to become a monk. Luther called himself “a monk without reproach,” and went about his monastic duties at the Augustinian monastery in Erfurt, Germany, with a fervor to make things right between himself and God, but he could not. Finding no merit and no relief in his own efforts, Luther turned to the Word of God. He studied, then taught, then preached God’s Word. There he found the answers and the peace he was seeking. In fact, Luther said he felt as if the gates of paradise had opened for him when he made life-changing discoveries in God’s Word.

On October 31, 1517, when Luther nailed the 95 Theses to the Castle door in Wittenberg calling for theological debate, he did not set out to found a new church or denomination. His hope was to reform the Roman Catholic Church of its errors and to help return the church to the true Word of God.

In April of 1521 at the Diet of Worms, when Luther was called to recant or take back his writings, he reaffirmed his belief in the unending value of Holy Scripture for doctrine and for life. He said:

Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason ... I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of

God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. I cannot do otherwise, here I stand, may God help me. Amen (trans. Roger A. Hornsby, *Luther's Works*, eds. George W. Forell and Helmut T. Lehmann, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958, 32:112).

For many months in exile at Wartburg castle, under the care of Frederick the Wise, the ruler of Saxony, Luther busied himself translating the New Testament into German so that the people could study God's Word in their own language. Before he died on February 18, 1546, Luther completed his German translation of the Bible.

***What does this mean? How is this done? Is this most certainly true? Time to discuss!***

A key Reformation concept is that the Bible is God's inerrant and infallible Word, in which He reveals His Law and His Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ. It is the only rule and norm for Christian teaching.

Read these passages and talk about what each one tells us about the power and effect of God's Word:

John 8:31-32

2 Timothy 3:16-17

1 Peter 1:24b-25a

Romans 1:16

In a sentence (or maybe two), what does the Reformation concept *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone) mean to you?

Martin Luther expressed the power of Holy Scripture over fear in his "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" this way:

Though devils all the world should fill, All eager to devour us  
We tremble not, we fear no ill; They shall not overpow'r 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.

LSB 656, verse 3, TLH 262, LW 298

## **Grace**

"**G**od's **R**iches **A**t **C**hrist's **E**xpense" and "giving us more than we deserve" are simple ways that some use to define God's grace.

Through Luther's study of Holy Scripture, he learned that being declared "just" and "right" before God, and receiving forgiveness and life and salvation, were not the result of man's works or efforts. They were not earned or deserved by "poor, miserable sinners" who were "dead in their trespasses and sins."

Luther wrote, in his explanation to the second article of the Apostles' Creed, "... Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person ... not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death ... "  
*(Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation).*

Another key Reformation principle is that only because of His grace, does God love and forgive the people of the world, even though they are sinful, rebel against Him, and do not deserve His forgiveness or His love. He sent Jesus, His Son, to love the unlovable and save the ungodly.

***What does this mean? How is this done? Is this most certainly true? Time to discuss!***

Read these passages and talk about what each one tells us about the amazing grace of our God:

Ephesians 1:7

Ephesians 2:8-9

Romans 5:8

Give an example from earthly life to help those in your group better understand God giving a free gift, no strings attached, by grace.

In a sentence (or maybe two), what does the Reformation concept *Sola Gratia* (by grace alone) mean to you?

## **Faith**

Faith has been described as the hand that receives the gifts of God. Faith itself is a gift from God, created and fostered in us through Word and Sacrament, by the power and working of the Holy Spirit.

A third Reformation teaching is that only by faith in Jesus Christ, by trusting in God's promises, not our own efforts, do we receive God's justification (His declaration that we are sin-free). Our faith, which is also God's gift, is the hand by which we take hold of the promises of God.

***What does this mean? How is this done? Is this most certainly true? Time to discuss!***

Read the following passages and discuss how by faith we receive what God promises:

Romans 5:1-2

Romans 3:21-25a

In a sentence (or maybe two), what does the Reformation concept *Sola Fide* (by faith alone) mean to you?

### **Reformation Responses**

When Martin Luther made his “great discovery,” he said, “Here I felt as if I were entirely born again and had entered paradise itself through gates that had been flung open. The whole of Scripture gained a new meaning. And from that point on the phrase the ‘justice of God’ no longer filled me with hatred, but rather became unspeakably sweet by virtue of a great love” (*The Story of Christianity*, Justo L. Gonzalez, New York: Harper One, Harper Collins Publishers, 2010, 2:25).

***What does this mean? How is this done? Is this most certainly true? Time to discuss!***

In a sentence (or maybe two) what does it mean to you to know from God’s Word that you are saved by God’s grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, your Savior and Lord?

### **Reformation Today**

Reformation Day 2017 will be the highlight of the Luther decade, but it will not be the end of our encounter with Luther’s life and efforts or with God’s reforming, transforming work in the hearts and lives of His people and in His Church.

***What does this mean? How is this done? Is this most certainly true? Time to discuss!***

What reformation still needs to be done in our world, in the Christian Church, in your heart and life?

Perhaps these passages will be helpful in your discussion:

Ephesians 6:13-18

Acts 1:8

Psalm 51:10-12

What good news do you have to share with others that God can use to move them from fear to faith?

## **Conclusion**

When Teddy was three years old he loved Halloween with all the excitement and the children. But he was not quite old enough to go trick-or-treating out on the streets, so he would stay home with his parents and help with the candy when the children in costume came to their door.

One time the door-bell rang, and Teddy ran to the door to open it before his mother or father could reach it. There, outside the door, were three of the scariest creatures Teddy had ever seen. He screamed a blood-curdling scream which alerted his dad who came right to his side.

When Dad stood at the door beside him, even with the goolies on the other side of the door, little Teddy was not afraid. One who loved him and cared for him was with him. Teddy knew that his dad was bigger than anything on the other side of the door and that nothing would happen to him as long as Dad was with him.

The message of the Reformation is that God, our Refuge and Strength, our ever-present Help in trouble, is bigger. No matter what is going on outside our door, He is bigger. He is bigger than our sin, big enough to deal with it by forgiving it. He is bigger than death, big enough to deal with it by giving us life. Big enough to hold us by our feeble, trembling hands and set us free, free from fear, by His grace to be His people of faith!

## **Prayer**

Gracious God, thank You for moving us from fear to faith by Your grace through Your powerful Word! Continue to reform us as You forgive our sins for we fall short and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, help us to keep growing in the true faith, and then to stand, against all odds, on the firm foundation of Holy Scripture! Bless Your Church and all who preach and teach and lead and hear and serve and believe, that we may tell the good news about Jesus to everyone, everywhere, at every opportunity that You provide, that hearing, they, too, may believe in Jesus, our Savior! In His name we pray. Amen.

## **“A Mighty Fortress is Our God”**

Stand up, sing, hum, read, meditate on Luther’s “Battle Hymn of the Reformation” (based on Psalm 46) and celebrate with the world God’s work, proclaimed in His Word, saving us, by grace, through faith, in Jesus Christ! Rejoice in God’s mercy that in Christ there is no need to be afraid, for by His mighty power He has moved us from fear to faith!

## **A Mighty Fortress is Our God**

1. A mighty fortress is our God, A trusty shield and weapon;  
He helps us free from ev'ry need That hath us now o'ertaken.  
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.

2. 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 Sabaoth Lord, And there's none other God;  
He holds the field forever.

4. 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,  
Though these all be gone, Our vict'ry has been won;  
The Kingdom ours remaineth.

LSB 656, verses 1, 2, 4, TLH 262, LW 298

From Fear to Faith + The Reformation Story  
*Written by* Rev. Larry Miller, East Helena, Montana  
*Published by* Lutheran Women's Missionary League, 2017



## **From Fear to Faith + The Reformation Story**

Leader's Guide  
Bible Study

On October 31, 2008, the world began a decade-long celebration of the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the beginning of the Protestant Reformation in Germany in 1517. The pinnacle of the celebration will be Reformation Day, 2017, celebrated worldwide with ecclesiastical and cultural events, conferences, and large exhibitions.

In this Bible study let us turn to God's Word and the history books to learn about Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation, and, especially, about Jesus Christ and the value of the Reformation for our lives today! Let's celebrate!

### **Opening Prayer**

We praise You and adore You, O God, for Your overwhelming grace for us in Jesus Christ, made known to us in Your Holy Word, that we may, by the power and working of the Holy Spirit believe in Jesus and be saved. Bless our study of the Reformation and of Your servant Martin Luther this day, and give us joy as we celebrate Your working in our lives. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

### **Fear**

The people were afraid.

There was the fear of purgatory, for the church taught that after death virtually every Christian went to purgatory on account of his or her sins. The sufferings of purgatory, they were told, were as intense as those of hell, except that they were not of eternal duration. Remission of time in purgatory could be obtained by indulgences granted for good works, pilgrimages, fasting, and prayers.

There was the fear of the priest, for the priest had power over the souls of people. He taught the law with all its fierce wrath and anger. He could grant forgiveness of sins or withhold it. He was the channel of sacramental grace: to be denied the sacraments was to be denied salvation. So the priest held a position of enormous power over peoples' souls.

There was also the fear of Christ, for at that time our Lord was depicted chiefly as a terrible judge, not a compassionate Savior. The way to find mercy at the hands of Christ, people were told, was to pray to Mary; she would intercede with her Son for sinners. So Mary was called the Refuge of Sinners.

All this fear was the result of ignorance: ignorance of the Bible. The Bible was a closed book to priest and people alike. Many priests did even not know the Lord's Prayer or the Ten Commandments or where in the Bible to find them, and so could not teach the people. Instead they preached about the legends of the saints and the duties of the people to the church.

Into this extremely tense world, Martin Luther (originally "Martin Luder") was born on November 10, 1483. Luther, too, was afraid. He struggled with the awareness of his sinful



nature. He only saw an angry and condemning God. He could not believe that God loved him or that he could love God enough to save himself or deserve God's forgiveness. He thought that, perhaps, if he could inflict enough pain on himself, he could become worthy. He worked to save his own soul by being sorry, constant penances, and trying to literally beat the "Hell" out of himself, all to no avail.

***What does this mean? How is this done? Is this most certainly true? Time to discuss!***

Consider these Bible passages:

**Mark 12:30-31** “ ... love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘... love your neighbor as yourself.’”

**Galatians 3:10** *For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.”*

**Romans 6:23** *For the wages of sin is death ...*

Left by ourselves, do we have reason to be afraid? – Yes! To face a just God with only our own “righteousness” would be a frightening thing.

Do you know anyone who is really afraid of God? Why are they afraid? – Answers may vary. Some may say that the reason they are afraid is that they do not know the love of God for us in Jesus.

## **Holy Scripture**

Terrorized by fear, in the summer of 1505, during a lightning storm, Martin Luther pledged to become a monk. Luther called himself “a monk without reproach,” and went about his monastic duties at the Augustinian monastery in Erfurt, Germany, with a fervor to make things right between himself and God, but he could not. Finding no merit and no relief in his own efforts, Luther turned to the Word of God. He studied, then taught, then preached God's Word. There he found the answers and the peace he was seeking. In fact, Luther said he felt as if the gates of paradise had opened for him when he made life-changing discoveries in God's Word.

On October 31, 1517, when Luther nailed the 95 Theses to the Castle door in Wittenberg calling for theological debate, he did not set out to found a new church or denomination. His hope was to reform the Roman Catholic Church of its errors and to help return the church to the true Word of God.

In April of 1521 at the Diet of Worms, when Luther was called to recant or take back his writings, he reaffirmed his belief in the unending value of Holy Scripture for doctrine and for life. He said:

Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason ... I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of

God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. I cannot do otherwise, here I stand, may God help me. Amen (trans. Roger A. Hornsby, *Luther's Works*, eds. George W. Forell and Helmut T. Lehmann, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958, 32:112).

For many months in exile at Wartburg castle, under the care of Frederick the Wise, the ruler of Saxony, Luther busied himself translating the New Testament into German so that the people could study God's Word in their own language. Before he died on February 18, 1546, Luther completed his German translation of the Bible.

***What does this mean? How is this done? Is this most certainly true? Time to discuss!***

A key Reformation concept is that the Bible is God's inerrant and infallible Word, in which He reveals His Law and His Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ. It is the only rule and norm for Christian teaching.

Read these passages and talk about what each one tells us about the power and effect of God's Word:

**John 8:31-32** *So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*  
– God's Word has the power to set people free, and does!

**2 Timothy 3:16-17** *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.* – The Word is inspired by God; His gift to us; valuable for teaching and equipping His people.

**1 Peter 1:24b-25a** *"The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever."* – God's Word and the truth expressed in it lasts ... forever!

**Romans 1:16** *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.* – God saves through His Word!

In a sentence (or maybe two), what does the Reformation concept *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone) mean to you? – Answers will vary. God's Word alone is the source and foundation for what the Church teaches and what I believe.

Martin Luther expressed the power of Holy Scripture over fear in his "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" this way:

Though devils all the world should fill, All eager to devour us,  
We tremble not, we fear no ill; They shall not overpow'r 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.

LSB 656, verse 3, TLH 262, LW 298

## Grace

“**G**od’s **R**iches **A**t **C**hrist’s **E**xpense” and “giving us more than we deserve” are simple ways that some use to define God’s grace.

Through Luther’s study of Holy Scripture, he learned that being declared “just” and “right” before God, and receiving forgiveness and life and salvation, were not the result of man’s works or efforts. They were not earned or deserved by “poor, miserable sinners” who were “dead in their trespasses and sins.”

Luther wrote, in his explanation to the second article of the Apostles' Creed, " ... Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person ... not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death ... " (*Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*).

Another key Reformation principle is that only because of His grace, does God love and forgive the people of the world, even though they are sinful, rebel against Him, and do not deserve His forgiveness or His love. He sent Jesus, His Son, to love the unlovable and save the ungodly.

***What does this mean? How is this done? Is this most certainly true? Time to discuss!***

Read these passages and talk about what each one tells us about the amazing grace of our God:

**Ephesians 1:7** *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ...* – Because of God’s free gift of grace we have forgiveness and salvation.

**Ephesians 2:8-9** *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.* – Not our own works or merit, but God’s grace!

**Romans 5:8** *... God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* – Simply amazing!

Give an example from earthly life to help those in your group to better understand God giving a free gift, no strings attached, by grace. – Answers may vary. Flowers on any old day. A note in a child’s lunch bucket to remind her how special she is. A huge pay raise, just because we could.

In a sentence (or maybe two), what does the Reformation concept *Sola Gratia* (by grace alone) mean to you? – Answers may vary. Forgiveness and life and salvation as a free gift of God through Jesus alone. I have hope, peace, and joy because of God’s free gift of grace!

## Faith

Faith has been described as the hand that receives the gifts of God. Faith itself is a gift from God, created and fostered in us through Word and Sacrament, by the power and working of the Holy Spirit.

A third Reformation teaching is that only by faith in Jesus Christ, by trusting in God's promises, not our own efforts, do we receive God's justification (His declaration that we are sin-free). Our faith, which is also God's gift, is the hand by which we take hold of the promises of God.

***What does this mean? How is this done? Is this most certainly true? Time to discuss!***

Read the following passages and discuss how by faith we receive what God promises:

**Romans 5:1-2** *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* – Believing God's promises we receive justification and peace, God's grace and hope.

**Romans 3:21-25a** *But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.* – Although, because of our sin, we do not deserve His gifts, believing God's promises we are justified and receive God's righteousness through Jesus and what He has done for us and our salvation.

In a sentence (or maybe two), what does the Reformation concept *Sola Fide* (by faith alone) mean to you? – Answers may vary. Believing God's promises we receive what He promises.

## Reformation Responses

When Martin Luther made his "great discovery," he said, "Here I felt as if I were entirely born again and had entered paradise itself through gates that had been flung open. The whole of Scripture gained a new meaning. And from that point on the phrase the 'justice of God' no longer filled me with hatred, but rather became unspeakably sweet by virtue of a great love" (*The Story of Christianity*, Justo L. Gonzalez, New York: Harper One, Harper Collins Publishers, 2010, 2:25).

***What does this mean? How is this done? Is this most certainly true? Time to discuss!***

In a sentence (or maybe two) what does it mean to you to know from God's Word that you are saved by God's grace, through faith in Jesus Christ your Savior and Lord? – Answers may vary. I have the assurance that God loves me, and because of His great love I have no reason to fear!

## Reformation Today

Reformation Day 2017 will be the highlight of the Luther decade, but it will not be the end of our encounter with Luther's life and efforts or with God's reforming, transforming work in the hearts and lives of His people and in His Church.

***What does this mean? How is this done? Is this most certainly true? Time to discuss!***

What reformation still needs to be done in our world; in the Christian Church; in your heart and life? – Answers may vary. A return to the use of God's Word in its truth and purity in our churches and homes; renewed zeal for carrying out the mission of the Church; standing firm in the faith in the face of persecution and opposition in the culture and society.

Perhaps these passages will be helpful in your discussion:

**Ephesians 6:13-18** *Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. – We, as believers and the Church, as Christ's body can stand firm on the truth of God's Word and need to do so especially today in light of the evils and dangers of the world and our culture. We need the truths of God's Word as much today as ever.*

**Acts 1:8** *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*  
– We and the Church have a mission and purpose to carry out by God's blessing and the power of the Holy Spirit. Now is the time!

**Psalms 51:10-12** *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. – We believers need the constant work of God reforming us each from the inside out!*

What good news do you have to share with others that God can use to move them from fear to faith? – Answers may vary. We are forgiven and saved and dearly loved by God's grace, His free gift, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ which God the Holy Spirit works in our lives through the Word of God! Through God's riches at Christ's expense we will never be the same, for eternity.

## Conclusion

When Teddy was three years old he loved Halloween with all the excitement and the children. But he was not quite old enough to go trick-or-treating out on the streets, so he

would stay home with his parents and help with the candy when the children in costume came to their door.

One time the door-bell rang, and Teddy ran to the door to open it before his mother or father could reach it. There, outside the door, were three of the scariest creatures Teddy had ever seen. He screamed a blood-curdling scream which alerted his dad who came right to his side.

When Dad stood at the door beside him, even with the goolies on the other side of the door, little Teddy was not afraid. One who loved him and cared for him was with him. Teddy knew that his dad was bigger than anything on the other side of the door and that nothing would happen to him as long as Dad was with him.

The message of the Reformation is that God, our Refuge and Strength, our ever-present Help in trouble, is bigger. No matter what is going on outside our door, He is bigger. He is bigger than our sin, big enough to deal with it by forgiving it. He is bigger than death, big enough to deal with it by giving us life. Big enough to hold us by our feeble, trembling hands and set us free, free from fear, by His grace to be His people of faith!

## **Prayer**

Gracious God, thank You for moving us from fear to faith by Your grace through Your powerful Word! Continue to reform us as You forgive our sins for we fall short and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, help us to keep growing in the true faith, and then to stand, against all odds, on the firm foundation of Holy Scripture! Bless Your Church and all who preach and teach and lead and hear and serve and believe, that we may tell the good news about Jesus to everyone, everywhere, at every opportunity that You provide, that hearing they, too, may believe in Jesus, our Savior! In His name we pray. Amen.

## **“A Mighty Fortress is Our God”**

Stand up, sing, hum, read, meditate on Luther’s “Battle Hymn of the Reformation” (based on Psalm 46) and celebrate with the world God’s work, proclaimed in His Word, saving us, by grace, through faith, in Jesus Christ! Rejoice in God’s mercy that in Christ there is no need to be afraid, for by His mighty power He has moved us from fear to faith!

### **A Mighty Fortress is Our God**

1. A mighty fortress is our God, A trusty shield and weapon;  
He helps us free from ev’ry need That hath us now o’ertaken.  
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.

2. 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 Sabaoth Lord, And there’s none other God;  
He holds the field forever.

4. 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,  
Though these all be gone, Our vict'ry has been won;  
The Kingdom ours remaineth.

LSB 656, verses 1, 2, 4, TLH 262, LW 298

From Fear to Faith + The Reformation Story  
Leader's Guide  
*Written by* Rev. Larry Miller, East Helena, Montana  
*Published by* Lutheran Women's Missionary League, 2017