

MINNESOTA VALLEY CHURCH; October 26, 2025
Reformation Sunday; Singers: Carrizales. Kruse

PRELUDE: Rebekah Olson

CALL TO WORSHIP: From Psalm 46

PASTOR: God is our refuge and strength,
ALL: An ever-present help in trouble.
PASTOR: Therefore we will not fear,
ALL: Though the mountains fall into the heart of the sea
PASTOR: Nations are in uproar,
ALL: Kingdoms fall.
PASTOR: The LORD makes wars cease
ALL: To the ends of the earth;
PASTOR: "Be still, and know that I am God;
ALL: I will be exalted among the nations.
PASTOR: The LORD Almighty is with us;
ALL: The God of Jacob is our fortress.

HYMN #141 "A Mighty Fortress"

PRAYER

HYMN "The B I B L E" (Two Verses, 2nd-The B L O O D... like we sing it in Sunday School)

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE:

READER: Carol Hoikkala

FIRST LESSON: *Revelation 14:6-7 Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. 7 He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water."*

EPISTLE LESSON: *Romans 3:19-28 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. 20 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. 21 But now a*

righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. 25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— 26 he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. 27 Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.

READER: Here ends the reading of God's Word.

CONGREGATION SINGS: God be praised, for His glad Tidings!

CONFESSION OF FAITH: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ, His only son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit; born of the virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate; Was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven; And is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From where He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; The holy Christian Church; the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the Life everlasting. Amen

GLORIA PATRI: *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is not, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS & PRAYER

PRAISE SONGS: 1 or 2 praise songs chosen by HANNAH

SERMON: "THE POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD" Matthew 24:32-35, Pastor Tom Olson *Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen*

THEME: The big theme from the Reformation is what? JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH. A second major theme from the Reformation is what? THE WORD OF GOD, THE BIBLE.

REFORMERS: The reformers were targeted for death because they were committed to getting the Bible into the hands of the people in their own language. William Tyndale was executed by the corrupt King Henry VIII because he translated the New Testament into English and taught justification by faith. Today we want to focus on this second aspect of the Reformation, THE POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD

I. GOD'S WORD PREPARES US FOR THE FUTURE

Matthew 24:32-35 "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. 33 Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door."

CONCERNED: We all are concerned about the future. God knows and cares about us and has given us His Word to prepare for the things that will come upon the earth. Jesus lists many things that will intensify before He returns for us. He doesn't want us to be surprised when we see an intensification of wars, famines, earthquakes, one world government, one world currency, the anti-Christ.

FEAR: Jesus tells us in *Luke 21:26 Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken.* Those are the people who don't know the Word of God.

FORTRESS: Those of us who know the Word of God can stand on Martin Luther's favorite Psalm, which inspired his great "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" reformation hymn.

Psalm 46:1-2 "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea."

HOW: You might say, "How can I have that kind of confidence if there is another pandemic that is worse than COVID? How can I be at peace and rest if Russia starts to use nuclear bombs in the Ukraine war?"

WORD: The only way to be prepared for the future is to know the Word of God. The Bible assures us all will be well. The Bible helps us "understand the times." The Bible trains us to be strong when everyone else is terrified.

BIRTH: When our son was born someone asked me this question, "How can you bring a child into this troubled world?" I told them I was far more fearful of prosperity than hard times for my children.

PROPHECY: Studying prophecy helps us be confident and prepared for the future. We will walk with a strong faith and be used mightily by God. Those who are frightened will want to know where we get the joy and peace we have in times of trouble. GOD'S WORD PREPARES US FOR THE FUTURE. SECONDLY...

II. GOD'S WORD GIVES US HOPE

Matthew 24:34 I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.

BOMBS: I read that when prisoners war hear the bombs of the advancing armies getting closer it is a sound of hope and rescue. To their cruel captors, it is the sound of doom. To one hope, to the other dread.

SIGNS: Amazing things are happening. The signs that Jesus gave us of His return give us hope. To the lost, they are signs of judgement day. To the child of God, they are signs that help is on the way. The prophetic signs show us that fig tree is budding and putting out its leaves, like our bulletin cover photo shows. Every day we are one day closer to the return of Christ...perhaps we are the generation this verse is speaking about!

EXAMPLE: What hope do we have? The Word of God gives us beautiful descriptions of what will come to pass when Jesus comes back. Isaiah 65 for example:

Isaiah 65:20-25 "Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth... 21 They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit... as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands... 25 The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox... They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain," says the LORD.

HOPE: This is the Word of God that comforts us no matter what the headlines of the news are. GOD'S WORD GIVES US HOPE. The best is yet to come! THIRDLY...

III. GOD'S WORD LASTS FOREVER

Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

INERRANT: God never goes back on His promises. His Word is truth. When God inspired the prophets, apostles and evangelists to write down His Word, it was without error. It lasts forever.

HUMANS: Men are fickle, they change their mind, they don't always tell the truth. Even honest people forget and misspeak. In times of emotion, we say things we regret. I have done that many times. People erase their social media comments before they run for office.

PERMANENT: God doesn't erase His Word. In fact, the Bible says that those who change the Word of God will lose their salvation. **Revelation 22:19** *"...if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city."* That is how serious God is about his Word. Deuteronomy 18:19-22 says the same thing. God doesn't want anyone quoting Him incorrectly. That is why I am so cautious about saying words like, "God told me..." We base our eternal soul upon the reliable Word of God. One of the themes of the Reformation is THE WORD ALONE.

Martin Luther was asked to renounce his teachings and submit to the popes and councils that claimed to speak with God's authority. The Popes and councils still to this day claim to speak the Word of God with the same authority as the Bible. Here is Luther's reply:

I cannot submit my faith either to the pope or to the council, because it is clear that they have fallen into error and even into inconsistency with themselves. If, then, I am not convinced by proof from Holy Scripture...I neither can nor will retract anything; for it cannot be either safe or honest for a Christian to speak against his conscience. Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen.

SOLA: Luther had come to realize that the Bible ALONE is God's Word. It lasts forever and is the only final authority we have upon which to base what we believe.

STAND: We stand on the Bible. Our lives are transformed by the Bible. The world may mock the Word of God but in it we have found the words of eternal life. In it we have found a Savior, offering his innocent blood on the cross of Calvary to pay the price for the forgiveness of all our sins.

TODAY: Today's Reformation Sunday reminds us that The Bible is the Word of God. Our Free Lutheran church still believes that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God. We say with Luther, "Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise.

Now may the peace of God that passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen

HYMN "The Bible Stands" Power Point Only (Hymn #178 in the "Great Hymns of the Faith")

LORD'S PRAYER: *Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen*

BENEDICTION & DOXOLOGY: *Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise Him all creatures here below, Praise Him above, ye heavenly host, Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen. A-men. A---men.*

POSTLUDE: Rebekah Olson