

The Truth Shall Set You Free

Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word

John 8:31-36 (The appointed Gospel Reading from the Three-Year Lectionary for Reformation Day):

31 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." 33 They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?" 34 Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. 35 The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. 36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

As we approach the end of September and now the coming of October. We see the changing of the season into Fall. We notice the leaves changing colors and starting to fall off of the trees. This is a season change as we start to unpack the heavier clothing for winter and get ready for the changing of the weather.

One of the things that we certainly pray we will not change or move away from is the word of God. Certainly it is changeless truth of God into the end of the age. We pray that we would be kept faithful in the precious word and truth of God.

The end of this month marks the 489th anniversary of the Reformation. On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed the 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. This writing from Luther was written against the sale of indulgences. This challenged the Roman Catholic Church of the day on the nature of penance, the power and authority of the pope, and the usefulness of the indulgences. Those who bought the indulgences would hold on to them since it promised the forgiveness of their sins. The people were led by the Roman Church's teachings into thinking that purchasing this special piece of paper commissioned by the Pope would grant them the forgiveness of their sins. The people were confused and directed away from the Word of God.

Luther did not originally intend to break off from the Church of Rome, but merely wanted to have a scholarly debate about the issue of indulgences and wanted to reform the church from inside the church. He wanted it to return to the Word of God. Unfortunately, this and other writings from Luther were not received very well by the church leaders. As a result, the nailing of the 95 Theses has been seen as the beginning of the Reformation. The purpose of this Reformation from the start was to return the Church to the Word of God.

One of the many great hymns in our hymnals sung at this time of the Church Year is Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word (LSB 655, LW 334, TLH 261). We

pray in this hymn that the Lord would keep us steadfast in his word. We pray that we would not be deceived by those who work against the kingdom of God by teaching and working against it. We pray that Christ would defend His Holy Church and that we would be able to sing praises eternally to him in heaven. We also pray that there would be peace and unity on earth and that God would support us throughout our strife in the Church Militant and bring us safely out of death to eternal life.

This great hymn is in the section of our hymnal marked 'Church Militant'. The church here on earth is constantly attacked by Satan wishes that we would be deceived and taken away from the true comfort that only comes from God's Word. God's Word is the true and only source of comfort, peace and truth. In that truth of God's Word, we have the true freedom that only comes from the Gospel. The freedom in the forgiveness of sins and the salvation both won by Christ on the cross.

It is my prayer that Christ will keep you faithful in His Word. I pray that you will continue to be comforted by God's Word. I pray that you will be armed with that Word of God against Satan and all of the Church's foes throughout all of our struggles in this earthly life.

Peace in Christ Crucified,

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