

Hello everyone! And welcome to our Wednesday Word devotion for today, October 28, 2020. Thank you so much for tuning in and for taking this time out of your day to focus on God and focus on your faith.

Today I would love to talk about and celebrate the Reformation!! The Reformation is generally associated with and celebrated on October 31, when Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses, or statements of discontent with the Roman Catholic Church, to the church door in Wittenberg, northeastern Germany, in 1517. This event is largely considered a beginning point for the Protestant Reformation as a whole, and the beginning of the Lutheran Church itself. (Which, fun fact, Martin Luther actually did not like having the movement called “Lutheranism”, because he wanted it more focused on God than just himself! But some things just stick I guess.)

So as much as I absolutely love talking about church history, European religious movements, and German stuff in general, I know that’s not why most of you are here today. We are here today to take a moment to focus on God, and our faith, and how God is working in our world. And talking about a Reformation of our own faith is a really beautiful and powerful thing we can consider as we also remember the Reformation of the church as a whole.

Many of us have trials and tests of our faith over the course of our lives. Maybe you’re going through just such a season right now, with the pandemic, the tension and frustration and vitriol in the world around us, the awakening to our deep need for racial justice in our country, grieving the death of a loved one or the loss of certain events or traditions, all the things. It can be hard to see where God is at work when things are so overwhelming and tough, and that can lead to some trials of faith.

And a lot of that work, that wrestling with faith is between you and God and that is a beautiful and holy process. I am convinced that asking questions, getting curious, and wrestling with stuff in our faith does nothing but actually make it stronger in the end. That strength and that conviction may not come overnight - sometimes it does, in incredible, “wow” kinds of revelatory moments. But sometimes the conviction comes little step by little step. One victory over another. Little moments of awe or wow amidst the hardship. Moments where you can just stop, and breathe, be still and know that God is here. Breathe in and know that you are created and deeply loved by God. And I often find that it’s in these little moments of assurance that our faith grows, and re-forms itself even stronger than before. Because if God is with us even in our darkest seasons and in our wildest wrestlings and stubborn scuffles and hardened heartbreak, God will deliver us too, by the power of the resurrection. There is no trial too great that God will not be with you in it. And even though going through those seasons is tough and disorienting and frustrating, we come out with a beautiful new life of faith from it all.

So in keeping with this Reformation theme, I’m going to share with you a psalm that inspired our forebear, Martin Luther, in many ways, including serving as the inspiration for the classic Lutheran power-hymn “A Mighty Fortress is Our God”. I hope you feel comforted, inspired, and assured of God’s love and victory over all things that threaten us in the words of this psalm. This is Psalm 46.

- God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
- 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
- 3 though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult. Selah
- 4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
- 5 God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.
- 6 The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.
- 7 The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah
- 8 Come, behold the works of the Lord;
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.
- 9 He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.
- 10 "Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth."
- 11 The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

The Word of the Lord.

Please join me in a word of prayer:

God our creator, sustainer, reformer, and heavenly Father, we give you thanks for the gift of the Reformation. Help us to know you are here in the midst of our own wrestling, hardships, and in the moments and acts of reforming our own faith. In you all things are possible Lord, give us the strength with you to face them. Protect all who are struggling in mind, body, or spirit, all who are caretaking others in their jobs and in their personal lives throughout this pandemic. Help us to be gracious and kind with ourselves and one another. Help us to have hope by the power of the resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ. In that name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

Go in peace, and have a beautiful day everyone! Amen.