



The 31<sup>st</sup> of October 1517: Martin Luther nailed 95 Theses on Indulgences to the church door in Wittenberg. This was not an extraordinary event per se; Luther was letting other doctors and theologians in town know what he wanted to debate, to talk about in an academic environment, to iron out something Luther saw as in error. Yet that document put Luther on a path that would lead to what we now call the Reformation, and 500 years later that Reformation lives on.

What was the Reformation about? Re-forming the Church of Christ in Rome. Those theses on indulgences were just the tip of the iceberg. Luther truly believed that the Pope in Rome did not know what was being sold and perpetrated in Germany under the name of Jesus. Forgiveness of sins could not be bought and sold, at least not according to the Bible. Surely once the Pope knew it would change.

But it did not change. In fact, Luther had opened a kettle of worms. Indulgences were a great way to market and build the church up financially. Rome needed the money to build St Peter's Basilica, to pad the coffers of the various bishops and the like. Who was this monk, Luther, to challenge the Vicar of Christ on earth over what the Church was allowed to do or not to do?

Luther was a man who stood with the Word of God. He was by no means perfect; in fact, Luther was a pretty typical German; he had a hot temper that boiled quickly and all too often and flowed out his pen. But he relied upon God's Word for teaching the Church what she was to believe and what she was called to do.

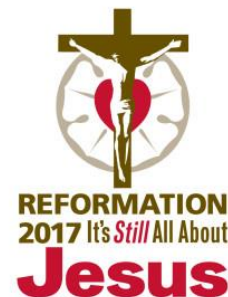
But Luther did not topple down everything that Rome had ever done. Not everything in Rome was corrupt. With one eye firmly in Holy Scriptures, Luther offered reforms to the Church's teaching,

making sure that Jesus Christ alone was the centre of all she taught. **Christ Alone!** Jesus had come to save lost sinners, and that salvation was given to us as a free gift, not attached to our works or our

worthiness, but according to God's free grace. **Grace Alone!** All this we are to receive by faith, believing and trusting in Jesus life lived for us. **Faith Alone!**

Of all that Luther taught and wrote, and he did write prodigiously, the most important writings we have are the translations of the Bible into German and the Small and Large Catechisms. These documents show his concern to teach Christ and him crucified for us sinners in the utmost.

The Bible in the language of the people gave everyone access to read God's Word themselves. The bible is not a document only for the learned, it is for all Christians. The Catechisms show us how to read that Word of God rightly, dividing the Law of God (what God demands of us as his creatures) from the Promises of God (the precious Gospel of what our God has done and continues to do for us), and seeing how in every page, the whole point of the Bible is for us sinners to see Jesus, our Saviour!



That's the heart of the Reformation: Jesus Christ, our Saviour! The Reformation is not about Luther, it's about Jesus!

This fall, as we celebrate 500 years of the Reformation, let us focus our eyes upon the one Luther would have us focus on: Jesus Christ, and him crucified for us!

In Christ's service,  
Rev Joel V. Kuhl, Pastor.