

Sermon 10/15/17 The Word I Peter 1:25

Dear Believers in the Word of God:

God's Word is our great Heritage

When I taught at a Lutheran High School in Saginaw, Michigan back in the late 70's the hymn that we always sang for chapel was God's Word is our Great Heritage which is number 582.

God's Word is our great heritage And shall be ours forever; To spread its light from age to age Shall be our chief endeavor. Through life it guides our way, In death it is our stay. Lord, grant, while worlds endure, We keep its teachings pure Throughout all generations.

I Peter 1:25 "The Word of the Lord stands forever"

One of the legacies of the Reformation and Martin Luther is the proper focus on God's Word. Before the Reformation at the time of Martin Luther some things had crept into the Church which were wrong...

- The Pope's word had greater authority than that of the Bible
- That buying a piece of paper, an indulgence, could earn one's forgiveness
- That people were discouraged from reading the Bible lest they misinterpret it and go astray

When God uses His words, those words always have an impact.

- His words always accomplish what He wills
- His words always accomplish what He intends

God called the universe into existence with His Word.

- He spoke and light appeared

- He spoke and dry land appeared
- He spoke and the waters were gathered into the oceans
- He spoke and the sun, moon and stars appeared in space
- He spoke and the universe was created

“By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible”
Hebrews 11:3

In Isaiah God compares His words to rain and snow.

- The rain and snow fall and water the earth and the crops grow
- The rain and snow do what they are supposed to do
- They do what God sends them to do
- His Word is like that – It accomplishes the purpose which God sends it

Jesus, the Word, who was and is God, was sent by the Father to accomplish His purpose.

- Jesus did exactly what He was sent to earth to do
- Jesus came to take our sins onto Himself
- Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate the forbidden fruit
- God spoke His Word to them: “You shall surely die” Genesis 2:17

That same Word speaks to us in our sin: “The wages of sin is death”
Romans 6:23

All of our sins...

- Misspoken words
- Hurtful words

- Every bit of gossip
- Hurtful thought and action
- Envy and greed

Every sin was borne in Jesus' own body on the cross.

For our sins, Jesus the Word made flesh suffered the penalty of death decreed by the Word of God

- The Word accomplished all that the Father sent Him to do
- The Word rose again on the 3rd day
- The Word will return to earth again

The Word of God still has authority. It still accomplishes what it is sent out to do.

- It is a living Word that creates faith by the power of the Spirit
- The Gospel is a Word that brings life, just as the rain and snow bring new life and growth to the plants and crops
- We have been born anew thorough the Word of God
- Born again of water and the Word in Holy Baptism

Because of what Jesus has done for you and me, God declares us not guilty.

- We hear that our sins are forgiven
- For the sake of Jesus our sins are forgiven
- What God says, happens.
- Our sins are cast so far from God's sight it is as though those sins have been lost forever in the depths of the ocean.

500 years ago, a German monk Martin Luther wrestled with God's Word. Luther wondered, "What does the Word of God mean when it speaks of 'the righteousness of God'?"

- Does it mean that He is the righteous God who punishes sinners?
- Does He send to hell those who don't measure up to His righteousness?

During Luther's struggle and meditation upon God's Word he was guided by the Holy Spirit to...

- Understand the righteousness of God
- Understand what a right relationship with God is
- Understand that God's righteousness is a gift of God to unrighteous sinners
- Understand that God's righteousness is a gift of grace, God's undeserved favor for sinners

The righteousness of God is a gift for all who believe in Jesus, a gift that is free for us because the price was paid in full by the Savior's blood. It is a gift...

- Received by faith
- Received by trust in the Word
 - Trusting that God means what He says
 - Trusting that God gives what He promises

About 20 years before Martin Luther nailed the 95 statements to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, the Italian artist Michelangelo carved the *Pieta*, the beautiful marble statue of Mary holding the body of the dead Christ across her lap.

In the hands of the brilliant young artist, the carved marble took on the appearance of living flesh, but when the finished statue was put on display, Michelangelo overheard a visitor give credit for his masterpiece to another artist.

Rightly outraged and unwilling to see his work attributed to someone else, Michelangelo took up his chisel again and carved the words in Latin, “Michelangelo Buonarroti, Florentine, made this,” onto the sash across Mary’s chest.

It was the only work he ever signed.

Martin Luther certainly could have taken credit for the events of the Reformation.

- He struggled to find a merciful God as he wrestled with the language and grammar of Holy Scripture
- His 95 statements against the selling of indulgences which were pieces of paper that declared one forgiven if one put money in the church’s coffers caught the attention of the world
- His writings, teaching and preaching spread the message of the Gospel across Europe

But Luther himself did not take credit for the events of the Reformation or the rediscovered truth that we are justified only by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

- Luther said he did nothing
- The Word of God did everything to bring about the Reformation

All glory and honor for our salvation might be engraved across each new life in Christ.

The Son of God, the Word made flesh, made this!

- We trust the Word of God
- We trust the living Word that promises forgiveness
- We trust the living Word that promises life to us through faith in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.

I Peter 1:25: “The Word of the Lord stands forever” became the motto of the Reformation.

VDMA

The Latin phrase of this passage is *Verbum Domini Manet in Aeternum*

The initials of that motto VDMA were sewn onto clothing, flags and banners and etched into swords and even into the armor of war horses.

The Word of the Lord stands forever.

- What is that Word of the Lord?
- What is that eternally enduring Word?
- What is that Word from God that we can trust?

This Word is the Good News that is preached to us....

- From the days of Abraham, the father of all believers in the Old Testament
- From the days of the Apostle Paul in the New Testament
- From the days of Martin Luther 500 years ago during the Reformation

To our day, today, October 2017.