

October 25, 2015
Reformation Celebration!!!

Grab your hammers! Get your debate hats on because we're celebrating the Reformation today! If you got those references, good for you; you've been a Lutheran too long. Just kidding. But, for the rest of you, let me explain what I am talking about. Nearly 500 years ago, Luther found errors in the Catholic Church. In order to correct, them he posted 95 theses on the local church door. Keep in mind that this seems radical to us, as if Luther was at once heroically championing the correction of the church and accusing the church by driving nails into the door. But, calm down a little Luther lovers, because he wasn't really doing anything radical at all, well at least not by posting his theses on the door of the church.

You see the Church door was like our modern day bulletin boards. If you wanted somebody to take notice of something you posted it on the church door. So Luther's theses went up right next to the next week's potluck announcement, the children's Sunday School jousting event sign-up sheet and the priest's plea for a stewardship board meeting. Okay, not quite, but that is a much better picture than Luther with a halo and flowing cape setting out to "fix" the church.

As I said the church door was a place of public announcement, and some of the things that often got affixed on church doors for public viewing were theses. These theses would then be read by folks of all stripes until another learned fellow took on the task of debating them. So, Luther's theses went up as an invitation to debate his concerns with the church as it was back then.



But, we don't celebrate the Reformation because Luther was bold enough to challenge the church, even though if he hadn't things might not be

the same for us today. We don't even celebrate the Reformation because Luther was a great debater. No, we celebrate the Reformation because it was then that Jesus' action and message came to light in a big way for the masses. We celebrate the Reformation, because in a sense Luther's *radical theses* started the ball rolling so that people could see Jesus more clearly than ever before. So, as the theme for the upcoming 500-year celebration says, Reformation is all about Jesus.

One of the things that the fateful pounding of Luther's hammer on that church door led to was grace as an incomprehensibly free gift from God to man. No indulgence could buy it; no pope could bestow it; and no man could earn it, but God gave it freely to those hurting souls that desired it. That is what we celebrate, the free gift of forgiveness, life and salvation won by the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings of Jesus Christ our Lord. Because he paid for us with his blood, we don't need to waste our money on pieces of paper that promise what neither they nor the people who sign or seal them can deliver. Because Jesus suffered and died, we get relief and everlasting life.

Celebrate with me today! Celebrate the life we have in Jesus! Celebrate the love we have from God! Celebrate that "donkey-of-a-man" Luther who almost unwittingly became God's champion for true grace! But, make sure to celebrate Jesus; it's all about him!

Pastor Carl Jh

