

Pastor Brian's
Mid Week Message
October 23, 2019

“REFORMATION”

On Sunday we will be remembering the Protestant Reformation in which Martin Luther was the central figure. The word “Protestant” was coined in the late 1520s to describe the “protesting states”, those who espoused the reforms of Luther and others had called for in the Roman Catholic Church. By that time Luther had been excommunicated, branded a heretic and declared an outlaw that could be legally killed by anyone by any means and at any time. These protesting states were city-states, kingdoms and provinces of the Holy Roman Empire who adopted the teachings of the reformers. We celebrate this Reformation in late October, as October 31st is the day that Martin Luther purportedly tacked his “95 Theses for Debate” on the door of the Schlosskirche (Castle Church) in Wittenberg Germany. There is no concrete historical evidence that he did actually nail them to the church door, but he most certainly did write them (in Latin) and send them up through the hierarchy of the Church. The Reformation was hardly a one-day event. It had its origins in “pre-reformers” such as Jan Hus in Bohemia and John Wycliffe in England in the 14th and 15th centuries. Martin Luther became a priest in the Catholic Church and a doctor/professor of theology in the early 16th century and led the movement to return the Church to the teachings writings of the apostles and the purity of the Gospel. Luther died in 1546 leaving a huge void in the Lutheran movement causing it to nearly die away. A 2nd generation of reformers led most notably by “The Second Martin”; Martin Chemnitz fought to unify the Lutheran Church and theology producing our Lutheran Confessions... “The Book of Concord” in 1580. Even beyond that the Lutheran and Protestant churches continued their reformation and struggles (even wars) against the Roman Catholic Church though most of the 17th century. As we look back to this important period in our Church history, we are called to look back even farther...another 1,500 years in fact...to the reforms brought about by our Savior Jesus Christ. His life, death and resurrection have reformed the entire world bringing God’s grace to the forefront of mankind’s existence. *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.* (Ephesians 2:8-9) Salvation; eternal life, comes as the gift of God’s grace alone, received by faith alone, given through Christ alone, revealed to us in Scripture alone and all to the glory of God alone. There is nothing that we can do to save ourselves, and nothing more that we need to do above what Jesus has already done for us. Ours is simply to receive Him and believe by the power of His Spirit, the Holy Spirit, working within us. That’s being reformed!