

THE REFORMATION500 POEM:

A CELEBRATION AND A CHARGE IN 500 WORDS

IN THE MIDDLE AGES, THERE WAS A TRUTH THE CHURCH FORGOT

THAT YOU ARE SAVED BY GOD'S GRACE NEVER TO BE BOUGHT

OR TO BE EARNED BY MERITS, SWEAT AND TEARS

THE GOSPEL'S MAIN TRUTHS WERE LOST FOR MANY YEARS.

BUT MAKE NO MISTAKE, THE CHURCH WAS NOT FORGOTTEN

DURING ITS CORRUPTION AND WHEN THE THEOLOGY WAS ROTTEN

FOR GOD WAS ON THE MOVE FOR HIS WORD TO GO FAR

TO GET IT TO HIS PEOPLE, HE RAISED A MORNING STAR

THE BIBLE IN LATIN WAS ONLY KNOWN BY A FEW

SO JOHN WYCLIFFE KNEW EXACTLY WHAT TO DO

PASSIONATE THAT AUTHORITY WAS IN GOD'S WORD ALONE

WYCLIFFE TRANSLATED DILIGENTLY, LIKE A DOG ON A BONE.

GOD'S WORD TO HIS PEOPLE WITH A CLEAR COMMUNICATION

YET GOD'S WORK WAS JUST STARTING WITH A GREAT REFORMATION

A MONK WITH A MALLET IS WHAT PEOPLE THINK.

A MONK WHO BOTH MARRIED AND BEGAN TO DRINK

BUT MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT HIS ROLE

EVEN MARTIN LUTHER KNEW WHO WAS IN CONTROL

FOR THE NIGHT BEFORE HIS MEMORABLE STAND
LUTHER WROTE IN HIS PRAYER BY HIS TREMBLING HAND
“THE WORK IS NOT MINE, BUT THINE.” HE HAD PENNED
“I HAVE NO BUSINESS HERE... I HAVE NOTHING TO CONTEND”

LUTHER HAD SENSED GOD’S CALL FOR HIS STAND
TO BE IN THE LIVING BOOK THAT HE HELD IN HIS HAND
HIS CONSCIOUS CAPTIVE TO THE EVERLASTING BIBLE
HE WOULD STAND FIRM AGAINST THE QUESTIONING RIVAL

WHO ASKED HIM TO RECANT OF WHAT HE TAUGHT
TO OBEY GOD’S WORD WAS HIS ONLY THOUGHT.

THE MOVEMENT OF GOD THROUGH THE NATIONS PERSISTED
REFORM WAS ON THE RISE AND THE PAPACY RESISTED
“AFTER DARKNESS, LIGHT” WAS THE CRY OF THE SWISS
A METAPHOR OF THE GOSPEL BELIEVERS COULD NOT MISS

IN ENGLAND, THERE WAS A POLITICAL AND PAPACY STORM
MONARCHS WITH RELIGIOUS POWER WAS THE TROUBLING NORM
BUT MAKE NO MISTAKE FOR GOD HAD HIS MAN
THOMAS CRANMER WAS PART OF HIS SOVEREIGN PLAN

HIS WRITING ESTABLISHED BIBLICAL WORSHIP AND PREACHING
EVEN IN HIS MARTYRDOM, THEY WERE WORKS OF FAR REACHING
IN SCOTLAND JOHN KNOX WAS A MAN WHO WAS FRAIL
YET GOD STRENGTHEN HIS WORK SO HE WOULD NOT FAIL

THE PURITANS OF ENGLAND WERE MISTAKEN TO HAVE NO COMPASSION
BUT THEY LOVED GOD AND HIS WORD WITH A FIERY PASSION.
THEY DECLARED GOD'S BEAUTY AND GRACE IN ELOQUENT PROFESSIONS
THEY LEFT FOR THE CHURCH DOCTRINAL WRITINGS AND BIBLICAL CONFESSIONS

TO KEEP REFORMING THE CHURCH WE LIVE IN TODAY
BY THE WORD OF GOD IS THE ONLY WAY
LET'S PRAY THAT WE WILL SEE HIS GLORY AND HIS MIGHT
BUT MAKE NO MISTAKE WE MUST STAND WHERE GOD'S WORD IS RIGHT

IN OUR LIVES WE MUST TRUST GOD'S SUPREME AND SOVEREIGN PLAN
TO BRING GLORY TO HIMSELF AND TO SAVE ALL ELECTED MAN
BE IT THROUGH PEOPLE LIKE ZWINGLI, CALVIN AND HUS
JUST AS GOD HAD USED THEM, GOD WILL USE US.

WE MUST STAND AS STEWARDS OF A CONTINUING REFORMATION.
PROCLAIMING GOD'S TRUTH WITH BOLD DECLARATION!

THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

READING OF THE WORD:

Romans 1:16-20

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

PRAYER

WARM UP

For those who are not aware, my name is Eric Mattie I serve as one of the elders here at LEFC. I have the privilege to bring God’s word to you today. And today is a very special day as we join with Protestant and Evangelical churches around the world celebrating 500 years ago a **move of God that changed the Church of God and continues today**. On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther did something remarkably unrevolutionary: he posted a list of “theses,” on a church door. It notified the community of matters to be disputed in an academic debate. It was common practice and nothing rebellious about it.

But God utilized this one act to spark a reforming of His church that spread throughout all of Europe. To call her back to the purity and the authority of God’s word... and to preach the good news that we can be saved by grace alone through faith alone in the accomplished works of Jesus Christ alone based on the Word of God alone and that all is done to glory of God alone.

But our attention span with history is astonishingly short. I would dare to say that even the mention of the word “history” has cause many of you to already shut down, stare off, disengage and to endure the next 30 minutes the best you can by not falling asleep. The rest of you in the room have an interest or even passion for all things historical. You will undoubtedly keep my feet to the fire to make sure what I have to say is not only true but, because of your passion; to make sure I’m accurate.

But I stand before you as no expert in church history. I count 19 resources I have in my library having only fully finished 2 and having speed read the rest since summer. Not to mention the countless hours of messages I've listened to from conferences this year and great resources on the web about the reformation. I have a way to go. If you want history and resources check out the library table—also we have a give away book. While supplies last for anyone to get the overview –

But I know this-- I stand today as **man who is changed because of this movement** that started 500 years ago.

Had it not been for the move of God using His people like Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli and John Knox, you and I would only be **listening** in on a worship service that is spoken in Latin.

Had it not been for the move of God in Germany and Switzerland and Europe, you and I would be **looking** at the Lord's table or the baptizmal as the center piece of this stage, instead of the preaching pulpit.

Had it not been God's work through the labors of Erasmus, John Wycliffe and William Tyndale you and I would be **lacking** our own copy of the Scriptures in our own language.

Had it not been God's working through the faithful preaching of the Puritans you and I would be **laboring** for our own righteousness to save us, instead of leaning on God's grace alone by faith alone in Christ alone that they faithfully taught for over a century

I stand today as a man changed because the gospel message was recovered 500 years ago.

And I am not ashamed of that Gospel. And I am not ashamed of that move of God.

And neither should you.

Transition/Introduction

This verse in Romans has been coined as the Reformation Verse since this was the text God opened the eyes of Luther to help him realize that righteousness here is verse 17- It's a righteousness that is outside of us. Actually it is the righteousness of Christ. Not our righteousness mustered up in good works and character. Rather that it's a righteousness that credited to those who receive it by faith alone

And Luther said, "When I discovered that, I was born again of the Holy Ghost. And the doors of paradise swung open, and I walked through."

That is the power of the Gospel!

One of my favorite of the 95 Thesis is **Thesis 62**: The true treasure of the church is the Holy Gospel of the glory and the grace of God.

Today I want us to consider together ***The Power of the Gospel*** that is the title of my message- and from this thought my prayer is that we will learn how to treasure the Lord himself in a greater and more sincere manner. That we would love him with all our heart soul mind and strength.

Looking at the verse there will be **2 questions** I will be addressing: First

"What is the Gospel?"

And then 2nd “What does the power of the Gospel do?” That will take up the majority of the outline.

What is the Gospel?

When we say the word gospel ... we know it to mean "good news" Yet within that word we have impregnated it with full and divine and spiritual meaning. We'll get to that.

For now let's just keep our terms simple and remember that gospel means "good news" its heralding announcement of good news.

If that's at the very, very heart of the word *gospel*, if that's what the message is, the essence of the Christian message is news ... good, joyful news ... then this is the difference between the gospel and every other philosophy or religion.

The gospel is not good advice about what you must do. It's primarily good news about what's already been done for you, something that's already happened.

What is that good news? The nut shell version of the gospel is summed up by Peter:

Listen to Peter's words: “Christ suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God” ([1 Peter 3:18](#)).

- That is a full statement. That has a lot of inferences to tackle. We will address many of them as we move forward but I just wanted to get a simple definition in your head. Whether you are a believer here today or not a believer at all. This is the good news... this is the gospel.

Now the 2nd question

What does the power of the Gospel do? I've summarized it in an acronym to help follow these points and follow along.

The Power of the Gospel... (P.O.W.E.R.)

1. Graciously Provides

A. God's response to our rebellion has always been grace

We see throughout biblical history God responds to our rebellion with Grace.

Hints of his grace start early in the OT. We first see God's grace on display when God confronts Adam and Eve in the garden after the fall. Adam and his wife made themselves clothes out of leaves in an attempt to cover up their shame. When God approaches, he does not accept their coverings, yet he does not wipe them from the face of the earth either. Instead he slays animals and covers Adam and Eve with the skins of the animals so that their sinful nakedness might be covered. God deals with the immediate problem of their guilt in the manner of his own choosing. In other words, he provides the solution to the problem of Adam's sin.

In the NT Jesus Christ is of course the supreme manifestation of God's grace. If grace is God's response to the tragedy of a fallen world, then Christ embodies that response.

If we were going to be brought back from the dead and into the favor of God and enjoy that communion we were originally designed for, then God must take the initiative.

And He did ...The Scripture explains that when we see the Words "But God"

God's grace brought means of having life—He did this by sending His Son Jesus Christ.

"But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy..."

Titus 3:4-6

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

You see we can't boast because...

B. God's grace alone is the decisive cause in our salvation

God, and God alone, is the decisive cause of us being saved and adopted into his family, cleared of our guilt and shame and empowered for our daily life of faith and obedience.

None of my human willingness or feelings or human influence or action has contributed to it **at all**. It's God's grace **alone**

Whatever role we play in our salvation it is never, at the bottom, decisive. Significant, yes. Meaningful, yes. Necessary, yes. But decisive, never. Only God is decisive. This is what it means for God to be God. Only he is mighty to save

The Power of the Gospel Graciously Provides.

No 2. The power of the Gospel...

2. Deeply Offends

But if I, brothers, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed. Galatians 5:11

- If you've never tasted the gospel as offensive, you've missed something essential.

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 1 Corinthians 1:18

A. The gospel deeply offends the wisdom of humanity, the ability of people's strength and the moral work of men and woman.

Our message is not *you can do it*. It's not *you're good enough, smart enough, and people like you*. The cross is an offense because it says to the world, "You're a sinner."

B. The gospel says some things that people do not want to hear.

- It announces how deep the sin goes, how profound the rebellion is
- The horror of killing the Son of God points to the horror of our condition.

Yes, the gospel says **you're more loved than you ever could have dreamed**, but it also says you're more sinful than you ever imagined.

Tell people how good they are and they will love you for it. Give them therapy and feel-good fluff from the pulpit and you can fill an NBA stadium and write bestsellers.

C. But you cannot know the power of the gospel without knowing how powerless you are.

"As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

Romans 3:10-12

- You will not of heard the true Gospel without confronting deep human sin—your sin.

"If a man thus preaches something which exalts the skill and strength of the creature, he will never offend his unregenerate hearers."

Charles Spurgeon

So The Power of the Gospel will Deeply Offend

Yet let me add that once we have seen the offense of the gospel and offense of the cross and the dire condition of our soul and learn to be humbled by the sight of all of this... The Power of the Gospel does this very next thing..

No. 3 The Power of the Gospel...

3. Inspires Worship

"Christ became a servant . . . in order that the Gentiles **might glorify** God for his mercy"

Romans 15:9

"He chose us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him. He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ according to **the purpose** of his will unto the praise of the **glory of his grace.**"

Ephesians 1:4-6

"God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and

sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, **“Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”** 1 Corinthians 1:28-31

“Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to **the glory of God**”

1 Corinthians 10:31

Some 120 years after the Reformation got going, some 120 scholars assembled in Westminster to write the necessary documents for a reformed church in England. The first question and answer of their Westminster Shorter Catechism is a beautiful formed quote that summarizes the ends of what the gospel was about.

Question: What is the chief end of man?

Answer: Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

The Reformers held that through all the doctrines of grace that they had fought for and upheld, God was glorified and people were given comfort and joy.

Through justification by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ, God was glorified as utterly merciful and good, as both supremely holy and compassionate—and therefore people could find their comfort and delight in him. And that comfort and delight and happiness is found first in worshipping him.

The power of the Gospel inspires us to worship him...

No.4 The Power of the Gospel...

4. Saves Eternally

Roman 1:16: the gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

RESTATE: The gospel powerfully brings salvation. What is this salvation thing?

Now, We do understand that the gospel brings the first event of conversion for us.

“Since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; ... And this word is the good news that was preached to you.”

1 Peter 1:23,26

- We are born again by hearing and responding to the good news that is preached.

But is all God wants is converts? No.

What the gospel brings powerfully to those who continue to believe is not just the power to convert, but the gospel brings the powerful final act of God’s grace to bring his redeemed people-- that he called -- to eternal safety and joy

"[Believers] are being guarded through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

1 Peter 1:5

- This salvation is "ready to be revealed in the last time." It is not conversion. It is the last great work of God to rescue us and bring us to safety and joy in his presence forever and have joy in the magnificent presence of the living God.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him **should not perish but have eternal life.**"

John 3:16

So the Power of God Saves Eternally

But there is one last thing- not the very last -- just the last one we will emphasize today-

No 5. The Power of the Gospel ...

5. Relationally Reconciles

Again talking about salvation, the previous points we didn't really get into what God actually saves us from.

So we ask. Salvation from what? What's the problem? The gospel is not mainly the news that God saves us from our messy lives and bad decisions..., But its news that he rescues us from his own wrath. And as a result we can have a personal relationship with Him

"And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were **by nature children of wrath**, like the rest of mankind.

Ephesians 2:1-3

"For the mind that is set on the flesh is **hostile to God**, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot."

Romans 8:7

For if while we were **enemies** we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

Romans 5:10

- We needed reconciling... we were enemies.
- The reason why we need saving is that God is very angry at our unrighteousness and the way we suppress and distort the truth to justify ourselves. Before Christ we are enemies of God. We are fully condemned

But do you remember our nutshell definition of the gospel?

"Christ suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God"

1 Peter 3:18

Christ suffered once- Why? To pay the penalty of our sin and satisfy the just wrath of God. God being gracious and desiring to save His people, and yet having a just wrath needing to be satisfied, **he cannot simply dismiss the punishment our sins deserve.** That would be unjust. He paid it --He was our substitute

The righteous for the unrighteous- Because of what Jesus has done... God offers us an incredible **exchange.**

- Our sin and its punishment- for God's forgiveness and Jesus Righteousness
- Our sins are counted as His. And His righteousness counted as ours.
- We go from convicted and condemned to innocent and citizen of the year!!
- We go from getting a grade of "F in life no matter how hard we try and how good we are. And we are credited Jesus "a" because he lived the perfect life!!

That is the great exchange that we put our faith in. That Christ's work on the Cross is enough

That he might bring us to God- Christ reconciles our relationship to God so we are no longer enemies but now loved as His children.

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have **peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and **we rejoice in hope** of the glory of God." Romans 5:1,2

Don't miss the point of this...

- The punch line of the good news is not *just* "we don't have to go to hell when we die" You're missing the brightest gem of the power of the Gospel.
- You also might be betraying what you treasure most in being saved: You might be treasuring yourself.
- Heaven will be amazing, no question. But without Jesus as the centerpiece, there will be nothing of lasting good in heaven. Do you believe that? David tells us that joy isn't found in a location, but in God himself: "*in your presence* there is fullness of joy" ([Psalm 16:11](#)).
- It's all about enjoy a friendship with God!! And the power of the gospel establishes that!

Review The Power of God...

1. Graciously __provides_____
2. Deeply __offends_____
3. Inspires __worship_____
4. Saves __eternally_____
5. Relationally _____reconciles_____

Treasure the Holy Gospel of the glory and the grace of God. Treasure God as the Gospel!

Let me wrap this up...

How should we celebrate such a monumental anniversary of the 500 anniversary of the start of the reformation? Suggestion...

1. **Keep reforming your life to the Word of God.** There is a slogan that says Christians are “reformed and always reforming.” To be reformed means that we are Christians who have been *reformed by the word of God*. It means the word of God has changed us and purified us. But we are also to be always reforming because we are sinners. We don’t do this Christian thing perfect. Always reforming doesn’t mean conforming to the demands and the standards of the world. It means always turning to the authority of Scripture alone and submitting to it. Submission is not a gender issue, it’s a Christian issue
 2. **Reflect on the power of the Gospel in your life.** Treasure this truth because it is our life.
 3. **Remember God is the hero and hope of this Reforming movement.** We should be reminding ourselves and our children of God's rescuing power in the gospel every day. Every Lord's table. Even in the observance every October 31 the move he made in history to secure that, back in the 15 and 1600's.
3. **Rely heavily on Christ alone.** Have you place your faith in what God has done?
- I don't just mean, do you just intellectually agree with these truths? I mean are you leaning on Christ? Are you trusting in Jesus work? If not --place your trust in Jesus' work personally and sincerely today.
 - If you have already been converted are you still believing? Are you trusting your Rescuer? Have you enmeshed your identity in Christ into the way you look and live life? I pray you would respond this morning to a deeper **leaning into our savior and Lord Jesus Christ**. That you would treasure not just this news and truth—but that you would treasure personally and have your heart relieved of its pain, doubt, struggle and burden this morning.

Let's pray.

THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

ROMANS 1:16-17

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

WHAT DOES THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL DO?

1. GRACIOUSLY _____

TITUS 3:4-6 EPHESIANS 2:8,9

2. DEEPLY _____

GAL. 5:11 1 COR. 1:18 ROMANS 3:10-12

3. INSPIRES _____

ROMANS 15:9 EPH. 1:4-6 1 COR 1:28-31; 10:31

4. SAVES _____

1 PETER 1:5, 23, 26 JOHN 3:16

5. RELATIONALLY _____

EPH. 2:1-3 ROMANS 5:1, 2, 10; 8:7 1 PETER 3:18

HOW TO CELEBRATE 500 YEARS OF REFORMING