

October 2020

When brought before Emperor Charles V in 1521, Martin Luther was under extreme pressure to retract what he had been writing concerning Christ and His Church. He was called on to stop publishing and teaching at the threat of being deemed an outlaw within the empire. As he stood before the Emperor, he spoke these famous words:

Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures and or by clear reason... I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience.

I cannot do otherwise, here I stand, may God help me. Amen.

(Luther at the Diet of Worms, April 1521)



Here I stand. Luther's remarks flow from the fountainhead of Scripture. What had been clouded over for years once again was being proclaimed boldly - the crucifixion and blood of Christ is the complete and total hope of salvation for sinners who look upon that holy death to justify them before God. This is the truth of Scripture and the comfort of the cross of Christ. Luther would not back down or buckle because the truth was at stake. Here I stand.

It is because of God's work through Luther and his colleagues that we celebrate Reformation Day in the church. The truth of Christ continues to go out. We are inheritors of this great heritage built on the truth that sinners are justified before God by grace alone through faith alone for the sake of Christ alone, a truth revealed to us in Scripture alone. These are the things that saturate the landscape of the Lutheran Church. From our great and strong Reformation era hymns to our highest regard of God's Word and reverence before the altar of Christ, we are bathed from the great fountainhead from which Luther and the Reformers also drank.

We too should say *Here I Stand*. We should stand firm on all of what has been handed down to us in a world that seeks to confound us. Because what has been handed down to us is the clear and beautiful announcement of Jesus alone as our Redeemer and our hope in the midst of fear. "In [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7). We are under pressure to deny not only this truth but other truths which flow from Holy Scripture, such as: God creates life at conception; marriage is one man and one woman. If we begin to deny parts of the truth of the Word of the Lord, we are in grave danger of denying the Lord Himself. Luther understood this well and staked everything he had on God's clear Word and the mercy of Jesus' shed blood - *Here I Stand*.

Have you been away from church for a while, the place where the life giving Word of the Lord goes out and Jesus hands over His blood to you? Come and rediscover anew this most wonderful gift which caused Luther to confess *Here I Stand*. Let's bask and be strengthened together once again in what the Reformers were so thrilled to defend - the very truth of God's Word and the mercy for sinners found in the crucified and risen Christ. He places himself in our midst each Lord's Day by His Word and Supper to give life and salvation to us who are surrounded by chaos and pressure so that on the last day we will stand bathed in His mercy.

The Lord of hosts is with us; the God Jacob is our fortress. Happy Reformation.

- Pastor Suggitt



EXPLANATION OF LUTHER'S SEAL

The black cross in the center reminds us that Jesus died to take the punishment for our sins. The red heart reminds us of the love God has for us in sending Jesus to be our Savior. The red of the heart is the color of the blood of Christ, shed for us and for our salvation. The white rose helps us remember the work of the Holy Spirit, who makes us pure and holy in God's sight by bringing us to faith in Jesus and by helping us to live our lives for him. The sky blue background pictures the joy of the new life God gives to all who believe and trust in him. Finally, the golden ring outlining the seal reminds us of our eternal inheritance—a home in heaven where we will enjoy complete joy and happiness in our Savior's presence.

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