

Welcome to Worship at
Trinity Lutheran Church, Osceola, WI
End Times 1 - Reformation Sunday - November 1, 2020

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer. Amen.

Hymn #201 - *“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”*

**A mighty fortress is our God,
A trusty shield and weapon;
He helps us free from ev’ry need
That has us now o’ertaken.
The old evil foe
Now means deadly woe;
Deep guile and great might
Are his dread arms in fight;
On earth is not his equal.**

**With might of ours can naught be done;
Soon were our loss effected.
But for us fights the valiant one
Whom God himself elected.
You ask, “Who is this?”
Jesus Christ it is,
The almighty Lord.
And there’s no other God;
He holds the field forever.**

**Though devils all the world should fill,
All eager to devour us,
We tremble not, we fear no ill;
They shall not overpow’r us.
This world’s prince may still
Scowl fierce as he will,
He can harm us none.
He’s judged; the deed is done!
One little word can fell him.**

**The Word they still shall let remain,
Nor any thanks have for it;
He's by our side upon the plain
With his good gifts and Spirit.
And do what they will -
Hate, steal, hurt, or kill -
Though all may be gone,
Our victory is won;
The kingdom's ours forever!**

Confession of Sins:

P: Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

C: **Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against You in our thoughts, words, and actions. Therefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace and forgiveness for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. O Lord, have mercy on us!**

P: Upon this your confession, I as a called servant of Christ and His Word announce to you the grace of God, and in the place of and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

First Lesson: Daniel 6:10-12, 16-23

Now, when Daniel learned that the document had been signed, he went to his house. It had windows on its upper story that opened toward Jerusalem. Three times each day he would get on his knees and pray and offer praise before his God. He continued to do that, just as he had been doing before this. Then these men came as a group and found Daniel praying and seeking favor from his God. They then went and asked the king about the decree. "Your Majesty, did you not sign a decree that anyone who prays to any god or person for thirty days except to you, Your Majesty, would be thrown into the den of lions?" The king answered, "Indeed I did. The order is established as a law of the Medes and the Persians that cannot be revoked." Then the king gave the order, and Daniel was brought and thrown into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you." A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of

the pit. The king sealed it with his signet ring and the signet rings of his nobles so that nothing could be changed with regard to Daniel's situation. Then the king went to his palace. He spent the night without food, and no entertainment was brought before him. But he could not sleep. At dawn the king arose as soon as it was light and hurried to the lions' den. As he came near the pit, he cried out in a fearful voice. The king said to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, was your God, whom you serve continually, able to rescue you from the lions?" Then Daniel spoke with the king. "Your Majesty, may you live forever! My God sent his angel and shut the mouth of the lions. They have not hurt me because he found me innocent in his presence. Also before you, Your Majesty, I have committed no crime." Then the king was very glad and said that Daniel should be brought up from the pit. So Daniel was brought up from the pit, and he was unharmed because he trusted in his God. (EHV)

Psalm 46:

Refrain: The mighty Lord is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

**God is our refuge and strength,
An ever present help in 'trouble.**

**Therefore we will not fear though the 'earth give way
And the mountains fall into the heart 'of the sea.**

**Though its waters 'roar and foam
And the mountains quake with their 'surging.**

Refrain: The mighty Lord is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

**There is a river whose streams make glad the ci'ty of God,
The holy place where the Most 'High dwells.**

**God is within her, she 'will not fall;
God will help her at 'break of day.**

**"Be still, and know that 'I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted 'in the earth."**

**Glory be to the Father and 'to the Son
And to the Holy 'Spirit,
As it was in the be'ginning,**

Is now, and will be forever. ‘Amen.

Refrain: The mighty Lord is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Second Lesson: 2 Timothy 4:9-18

Make every effort to come to me quickly, for Demas, because he loved this present world, has forsaken me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is useful to me for ministry. I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus. When you come, bring the cloak I left in Troas with Carpus, and the scrolls, especially the parchments. Alexander the coppersmith did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will pay him back for what he did. You be on your guard against him also, because he vehemently opposed our message. At my first hearing, no one came to my defense, but everyone deserted me. May it not be counted against them. But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message would be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles would hear it, and I was rescued from the lion’s mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil work and will bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. (EHV)

Verse of the Day: Alleluia. If you continue in my Word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free. Alleluia.

The Gospel: Matthew 10:16-23

“Look, I am sending you out as sheep among wolves. So be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. Be on guard against people. They will hand you over to councils, and they will whip you in their synagogues. You will be brought into the presence of governors and kings for my sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. Whenever they hand you over, do not be worried about how you will respond or what you will say, because what you say will be given to you in that hour. In fact you will not be the ones speaking, but the Spirit of your Father will be speaking through you. “Brother will hand over his brother to death, and a father will do the same with his child. Children will rise up against parents and have them put to death. You will be hated by all people because of my name, but whoever endures to the end will be saved. And when they persecute you in one town, flee to the next. Amen I tell you: You will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.” (EHV)

The Apostles’ Creed:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Hymn #202 - *"If God Had Not Been on Our Side"*

**If God had not been on our side
And had not come to aid us,
Our foes with all their pow'r and pride
Would surely have dismayed us,
For we, his flock, would have to fear
The devil's wolves, both far and near,
Who rise in might against us.**

**Their furious wrath, did God permit,
Would surely have consumed us
And as a deep and yawning pit
With life and limb entombed us.
A hellish storm would o'er us roll
From Satan, who desires our soul
And seeks to overwhelm us.**

**Blest be the Lord, who foiled their threat
That they could not devour us.
Our souls, like birds, escaped their net;
They could not overpow'r us.
The snare is broken - we are free!
Our helper and our strength is he
Who made the earth and heavens.**

The Sermon: 2 Timothy 4:9-18

“Walking The Lonesome Valley”

*“You gotta **Walk That Lonesome Valley**. You gotta walk it by **yourself**. Nobody here can walk it **for** you. You gotta walk it by **yourself**.”* These are the first words of an old American folksong. The **message** of the song is clear: There are some things in life that you just have to do for **yourself**. For example, nobody else can believe in Jesus **for** you. **You** have to be the one who believes. And when we **do** believe, there will be times in our life as **Christians** when we feel like we’re **all alone** - times of hardship, persecution, and abandonment. And no matter how **difficult** those times get, we just have to find a way to keep on **going**, to keep on **Walking That Lonesome Valley**. I think that phrase provides a suitable background for today’s sermon text. With some of his last recorded words, the Apostle Paul wrote about **Walking The Lonesome Valley**. And since today is Reformation Sunday, these are also good words to use in speaking about the **Reformation** in the **church** which was brought about by **Martin Luther** over 500 years ago. Luther himself knew more than a little about **Walking The Lonesome Valley**. And we who have **inherited** the great Gospel truths of the Reformation, still face **Walking That Lonesome Valley** too. When those times **come** - when we feel as though we’ve **entered** the lonesome valley - how are we going to keep on **walking**? Let’s take a look at today’s **text** for the answer.

The first eight verses of our text certainly give us a sense that the Apostle Paul was very **lonesome**, and he had plenty of good **reasons** to feel that way. Paul wrote the words of our text from a **prison cell** in Rome. And unlike his **first** imprisonment, which was more of a **house arrest**, **this** imprisonment was very **harsh**. It certainly seemed to Paul that this imprisonment was going to end in his **death**, and to the best of our knowledge, that’s precisely what happened. For that reason, Paul’s second letter to Timothy is often called his **Last Will and Testament**. The coming days would be very **difficult** for Paul, and to make matters even **worse**, he was being **abandoned** by his friends. In the first few verses of our text we find out that a man named **Demas** had deserted Paul because he loved the **world**. Some of his **other** friends, like **Crescens** and **Titus** were **also** gone - but more likely it was for the **good reason** of doing missionary work. Paul says that only **Luke** was still with him. To make his lonesomeness even **worse**, Paul says that at his first **defense**, **no one** spoke up on his behalf. There he was, facing the trial of his life and **no one** was willing to stand up for him. Paul was certainly **Walking The Lonesome Valley**.

But now, let’s move **away** from that lonely **prison** cell to a lonely **castle** in Germany, called the **Wartburg**. The year was 1521, and the man in the castle was **Martin Luther**. Most of us know the story of Luther’s life, so we’re pretty

familiar with his great stand for **God** and His **Word** at the Diet of **Worms**. This is where Luther came before the **Emperor** of the Holy Roman Empire, and **refused** to **take back** what he had written about the **errors** of the church of **Rome**, and about the **truth** of **God's Word**. As a **result**, the Emperor had issued an edict which basically said anyone who **executed** Luther would **not** be held **accountable**. He was declared to be **an outlaw**. It was on his way back from the Diet that a group of Luther's friends "**kidnapped**" him and took him to the Wartburg castle to **hide**. In the next year, Luther would **Walk The Lonesome Valley** in and around that castle. His **friends** were back in **Wittenberg** and **other** parts of Germany walking around **freely**, but **he** was resigned to many long and lonely days **fearing** for his **life**.

These are both very **dramatic** scenes - Paul in **prison** and Luther at the **Wartburg**. I'm not sure how well we can **relate** to **either** of these scenes. I don't think any of us have had to sit in a **prison** cell for the sake of the Gospel, nor have we ever had an **emperor** place an imperial **ban** on us. But, that **doesn't** mean that our lives are completely free of **hardship**. Being a Christian means living in a world that **opposes** us and our message. For that reason, sooner or later, everyone of us is going to have to **Walk That Lonesome Valley**. It might happen at our **workplace** when we feel like we're the only Christian there. Or it could be at the neighborhood **block** party, or as we're talking with **family** members or **friends** who don't believe the same things that **we** believe. Whenever we boldly proclaim God's Word like **Paul** did, or like **Luther** did, we will find **opposition**. The question is, how will we **respond**?

The temptation is to **give up** and turn our **back** on God and His Word, because that's the **easy** thing to do. That was the **unfortunate** path that was taken by **Demas** in our text - the one who loved this **world** more than God's **Word**. Think about what would have happened if the Apostle **Paul** had taken that path - if Paul had turned his **back** on God, and **rejected** His Word in those lonesome hours. Think about what **harm** that would have done to all the **preaching** and **teaching** which Paul had done in the **past**. And the same thing would have been true if **Martin Luther** had taken the **easy** way out, and had simply told the emperor that he **took back** all the things he had written. If Luther had **recanted**, the **Reformation** would have come to a grinding **halt**.

We **also** do great **damage** when we take the **easy** way out, instead of **standing up** for God's Word. We might gain or retain some **friends** and **popularity** in the **short** term, but we aren't doing **ourselves** or anyone **else** a bit of good in the **long** run. We cause **damage** to our own faith, and we put our souls at

risk when we **abandon** the truth of God's **Word**, instead of **standing up** and **fighting** for it. It might make life easier for us here and now, but it's definitely **not worth it** from an **eternal** perspective. When we see that our **salvation** is at stake, we realize that we can't **quit**. We have to **keep going**, no matter how **hard** it is. We need to **Walk That Lonesome Valley**. But how can we **do** that?

Paul knew the **answer**. When he was at his **most** lonesome - when he was standing before the **judge** and **no one** came to his defense, Paul knew that he was **not** completely alone. He wrote, "*But the **Lord** stood by me and **strengthened me.***" Paul knew that the **Lord Jesus** was right there with him. He knew that he couldn't ask for **better** company. Jesus knew what it was like to **Walk The Lonesome Valley**. He walked it all the way to the **cross** and to his own **death**. His closest friends had **abandoned** him, yet Jesus **kept on going** until His mission was **complete**, and the world's salvation was **accomplished**. The message of Jesus and His untiring **love** is what gave Paul **strength** in those lonesome hours. It gave him the **courage** he needed to **speak up**, and accept whatever **consequences** would come his way. God's love in **Jesus** is the same thing that allowed **Martin Luther** to **keep on going**, even when his work seemed to be humanly **impossible**. Luther knew what the **Bible** said, and he stood on the **strength** of that Almighty **Word**, **not** on his **own** strength.

That's how we will be able to **Walk The Lonesome Valley**. The Lord Jesus is **with us**. When we **fall down**, when we **sin**, when we **turn away** from the **Lord** and His **Word**, God is still right there to **forgive** us - to pick us **up** and put us on the **right path** again. If we try to rely on our **own** strength, we aren't going to be **able** to keep on **walking**. But with the strength which **Jesus** provides in His Word and Sacrament, we **can** keep on walking. We **need** our Savior, and He will always **be there** for us, even if every **other** person in this world would **abandon** us. With **Jesus** by our side **simple**, **ordinary** people can accomplish **great** things.

Remember, with the power of **Jesus**, the Apostle **Paul** was able to boldly proclaim the message of salvation, so that **all the Gentiles** would be able hear it. With the power of **Jesus**, **Martin Luther** used those lonely days in the Wartburg castle to translate the entire New Testament into the German language, so that an **entire nation** would be able to **read** the Gospel message in their **own** language. And through the power of **Jesus**, we too can accomplish **great** things for our Lord. We can boldly **speak up** and **speak out** for our Savior, because we **know** that He will never **leave** us or **forsake** us.

Over the centuries, there were **thousands** of Christians who not only **understood** that, but who also **carried it out**. And in just 2 weeks, on **Saints Triumphant** Sunday, we'll be singing a **hymn** which **focuses** on them. It's called *For All The Saints*, but in **Latin** it's called *Sine Nomine* - which means "without a name." The words of this hymn were written for all the **unnamed saints** who have gone to heaven. In other words, they **weren't** the **famous** ones. They don't have their own **festival** days, and churches aren't **named** after them. Nevertheless, they are just as **important** as any of the **other** saints like Peter and Paul, or James and John. You all **know** some of those **unnamed** saints in heaven - people who lived their lives on this earth professing Jesus as their Savior in a **humble**, and **unassuming** way. They **Walked The Lonesome Valley** of this earth, and are now enjoying the mansions of heaven.

One day, **we'll** be there too. As we take encouragement from the Apostle Paul to keep on **walking** and **professing** our faith, as we look to the example of **Martin Luther** and so many **others** who have gone before us, **living** and even **dying** for their Savior, as we keep **walking** even when the valley is **lonesome**, our Savior will keep giving us the **strength** we need. In the words of our text, "*The Lord will **rescue** me from every evil work and will bring me **safely** into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the **glory** for ever and ever. Amen.*"

Prayers:

Lord our God, the enemies of Your Word are **many** and **powerful**, and they are continually seeking to **overthrow** Your precious Gospel of salvation. But we Christians in every age take comfort in Your **promise** that Your Word will endure **forever**, and that the gates of hell cannot **overcome** Your Church. Even though Satan and his wicked cohorts have always found **some** who are ready to believe **error**, and to **persecute** the truth, nevertheless, You have **curbed** their furious wrath, and have not permitted the **overthrow** of the Christian faith. For these blessings of Your protecting hand we are eternally **grateful**.

We further thank You that at a time when Satan had corrupted and deceived the minds of **many**, You graciously raised up Dr. Martin **Luther**, and **other** pious men. You placed a profound **love** for Your Word in their hearts, and **restored** the Gospel in its truth and purity through their labors. Continue to give us pastors and teachers whose consciences are bound by Your **Word**. We are grateful that **salvation** has come to us as heirs of the Reformation through **hearing** and **believing** that Jesus Christ has redeemed us from our sins.

As we celebrate the Reformation, we are especially conscious of the blessing

of Your **Word**, which was restored at that time to Your children. May our hearts **tremble** at Your Word, and **rejoice** in Your promises. Help us to teach Your Word to our children with **diligence**. Make us **zealous** to hear and learn it, and may it always shine like a **beacon** lighting the way to heaven through Christ - and like a **lamp**, guiding our footsteps through this dark and evil world. Cause Your Word to be preached in **all** the world, and through it, deliver sinners from the power of **Satan** into the kingdom of **Christ**.

Lord, **forgive** our sins for Jesus' sake. At this time we especially ask You to forgive our sins against Your holy **Word** - sins of neglecting to **read** it ourselves, and of failing to **listen** with all diligence when it is preached - sins of not seizing **every** opportunity to **witness** Your Word to others - sins of failing to believe wholeheartedly **all** Your promises - sins of not appreciating **fully** the **preservation** of Your Word among us in its truth and purity. **Forgive** our many sins, and grant us Your **grace**, and the will always to **live** according to Your Word. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name;
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses
 as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
But deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever.
Amen.**

Hymn #199 - "In Trembling Hands, Lord God, We Hold"

**In trembling hands, Lord God, we hold
Our heritage, your gift of grace,
Your gospel, bringing wealth untold;
All blessings here, in heav'n a place.**

**"In trembling hands" - for how could we
Retain your gift by our own pow'r?
The pearl of priceless worth would be
Soon lost - attend us ev'ry hour!**

**“In trembling hands” - with joyous awe,
Like Luther, we behold your Son:
For us he kept your holy law,
In dying full salvation won.**

**“In trembling hands” - and yet we cling
With grip of steel, which you must give.
To Christ, our all, our ev’rything,
To Christ, the life in whom we live.**

**“In trembling hands” - the treasure won
We only hold through Scripture, Lord.
Then keep us all, till life is done,
As people trembling at your Word.**

**“In trembling hands” - if it be so,
How can our hearts remain unstirred
While millions still in tatters go
Nor yet of wealth in Christ have heard?**

**In trembling hands, Lord God, we hold
Our heritage; now give us hands
That gladly share your heav’nly gold
With needy souls in many lands!**

P: Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your Word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit! As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

The Blessing:

P: The Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

C: Amen.

Hymn #752 - "In Christ Alone"

**In Christ alone my hope is found.
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This cornerstone, this solid ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my all in all,
Here in the love of Christ I stand.**

**In Christ alone - who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones he came to save.
Till on that cross, as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied;
For ev'ry sin on him was laid.
Here in the death of Christ I live.**

**There in the ground his body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain;
Then bursting forth in glorious day
Up from the grave he rose again!
And as he stands in victory,
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me.
For I am his and he is mine -
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.**

**No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the pow'r of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from his hand;
Till he returns or calls me home,
Here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.**