

## **Gospel and Sermon Transcript -Reformation Sunday - October 26, 2025**

Welcome to worship on this Reformation Day.

What would I say? That not all churches commemorate it. Lutherans like to do that.

And I think it's important that we maybe take Martin Luther down a peg or two.

He wasn't the only person who came to the same conclusion that the quest for a gracious God

only reveals a gracious God that's been looking for us and found us all along.

I think that's the Reformation in a nutshell. The rest of it is the working out of that reality.

In our prayers, months ago now, you kindly were offering prayers for a gentleman named Chris

from the High Line of Montana who had been in a catastrophic car wreck.

Well, I am thrilled to tell you that Chris went back to work on Thursday.

So, the amazing strength that it took that family to go through that ordeal

I think is a miracle right along with the physical healing.

We're going to ask you to keep praying for that family,

but also now to remember another dear friend of ours, Peggy,

who is going through medical ordeals that are almost too long and intricate to mention.

But this is a very difficult time for her. So please be thinking of Peggy and praying for her.

And certainly for all who surround her in love and in care.

[Music]

[Music]

### **The Holy Gospel according to Saint John, the 8th chapter.**

Jesus said to the Judeans who had believed in him,

"If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples.

And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

They answered him, "We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone."

What do you mean by saying, "You will be made free?"

Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits a sin is a slave to sin.

The slave does not have a permanent place in the household, but the Son has a place there forever."

So, if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

The Gospel of my Lord.

Won't you be seated?

### **The Sermon**

Grace, peace to you from the one who was, who is, and who is to come.

Just so you know, the reading from the Gospel today is a traditional one on Reformation Sunday.

I'm afraid that I'm responsible for the communication lapse between that and the bulletin.

So, there you go.

John's Gospel speaks about faith in ways that I think are unique to the Gospel.

We might think of faith as that thing where we have a list of notions or propositions or things that we regard as true,

and we say that's faith.

The Jesus that John's Gospel presents looks at faith very, very differently.

Faith and belief is about this unconditional blank trust that we have in one who is trustworthy.

At 1st Lutheran this morning, there was a baptism of a young guy.

He'll be a year old in about a month's time.

And we decided that a good analogy for the kind of faith that John speaks about is to think about the absolute trust that Caden puts into his mom and his dad and his family who surround him.

And lucky him, he's not quite old enough to have to overthink all that yet.

Imagine having that sort of trust in God.

That's the sort of faith that Jesus describes when he uses one of John's favorite words, "to remain or to abide."

It has everything to do with relationship and connection.

Not so much about attitudes or beliefs.

I noted as we got together this morning that Martin Luther wasn't the first or the last to come up with a notion of faith as being just letting God do what God does which is to love us unconditionally.

It's intriguing, at least to me, I don't know about you,

that there are times when faith seems to brush up against institutional religion.

And there's conflict that happens there.

It's a lot of what John's Gospel is about, truthfully.

First, it's Jesus run-ins with the religious authorities, but it's also really about when John's Gospel was written, which was at a time when a whole group of people were estranged from their siblings in faith.

And so, if I can use a phrase from the commentaries, the rhetoric that John uses

speaks about what it is that we hold on to.

What is it that we continue in? What is it that we trust in?

We can go right back to the first chapter of John.

In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God, the Word was God.

And later in that same chapter, we would hear that this essence of God becomes incarnated.

So the Messiah for whom we all yearn is not an abstraction, but a particular human being, an individual who embodies God's unwavering love for us and for all creation.

So when Jesus asks his followers to lean into that and to rest in that and to trust in that, that's the same thing as abiding in the Word.

I might offer one other reference to abiding.

Jesus speaks of it as like vines and branches in a vineyard.

Do they have those around here? I just play and I know they do.

But where does the vitality of the grape come from?

From the roots, from the earth, from the soil, from all of that connection, whatever happened for sun and rain and bugs and everything else, that that vitality comes up through the roots and out into the branches and out to the grapes.

I think that's what a bible means for a Christian community about our connection to this God of steadfast love.

And that our works are an outgrowth of that. They're a result of that.

And so on a day like today, when the church continues to reform and God alone knows what it'll look like, may we continue to abide in this way.

Trusting in that love of God that Martin Luther himself discovered individually and became a spokesperson for goes like this.

A love from God that can't be bought, it can't be sold, and it definitely can't ever be lost.

Thanks be to God.