

trinity *Tidings*

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lutheran
reaching hearts, touching lives

500 Years...

If it happened five hundred years ago, most of us would probably say, "It really doesn't matter today," and, in many cases, that could be and would be true. Some things are merely history, but other events continue to change history. October 31, 1517, marks the 500th year since Martin Luther objected to what was occurring in the church of his day.

Why does that event, the Reformation, still matter today?

Still Grace Alone

We've heard the phrase, "Some things never change." We often use it to imply that something should have changed, but still hasn't.

Five hundred years ago, Luther insisted, based on God's Word, that we are saved by grace alone, by nothing we do, only by the goodness, love, and mercy of our God.

Today, we still insist on that same truth. "Nothing in my hand I bring; simply to the cross I cling." Five hundred years ago, no one could be saved by their good deeds or earn their way to heaven and that truth remains unchanged today. You and I, we are still saved purely by grace. Our "good deeds" are always and only a response to what God has done. It was grace alone then and it still must continue to be grace alone today.

Still Faith Alone

Years before Luther made the headlines, salvation was obtained by faith alone. No good deeds; no "look at what I've done" or "I've been a good

person." But that truth was watered down in Luther's day so much that faith was only a part of salvation. One could be saved by faith plus their good works.

Luther was compelled to speak because salvation by faith alone was how it had been and how it needed to be.

Today, in the midst of a world that's far too focused on salvation being obtained by own's own efforts, we need to stand on faith alone. "For by grace you are saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." Five hundred years later, we can do nothing less than insist that it's still faith alone.

Still Scripture Alone

In the early 1500's, the church had drifted. The Bible wasn't the sole authority, but it was human reason coupled with the Bible, a notion that didn't square with

God's Word.

Today, our world wants to diminish the Bible's value and lift up human reason because we think we have a better idea. No matter how intelligent our world may be, it's still Scripture alone. The Word is still the sole source of truth. Grace alone and faith alone depend on us holding to Scripture alone.

For some, it may seem insignificant. To them, what occurred five hundred years ago doesn't matter. But for us, for the remainder of our time on this side of heaven, for the next generation, we must hold on to the truth. Five hundred years ago or yesterday, it's still grace alone, still faith alone, still Scripture alone. It can be no other way.

