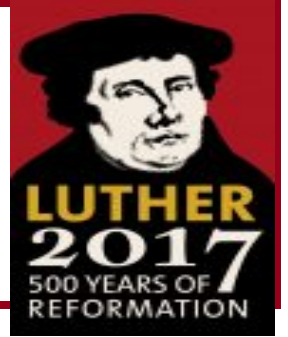


## *Sola Scriptura: The Word Alone!*

Is 40:6-11, 28-31 Eph 6:10-18 Mk 4:26-29

May 28, 2017

Pastor Dave Bolte



The **Lutheran Reformation** was a **unique episode** in the history of the one, holy, Christian, and apostolic church. It changed the entire direction of Christianity and rescued the Gospel of God’s grace in Christ Jesus from the hands of those who would twist and turn it into “**works righteousness**”.

God the Holy Spirit worked powerfully through Martin Luther and the Reformers. That is why **RED** is the color of the day. **Red** is the color that celebrates the Holy Spirit. **Red** is the color of the Pentecost **fire**, and **red** is also fittingly the color of the **Lutheran Reformation**.

In the **Lutheran Reformation**, God the Holy Spirit worked through the Word of God in a powerful way. Here is how Martin Luther described it in a sermon of 1522:

*“I simply taught, preached, and wrote God’s Word; otherwise I did nothing. And while I slept, or drank Wittenberg beer with my friends, the Word of God so greatly weakened the papacy that no prince or emperor ever inflicted such loss upon it. **I did nothing; the Word did everything!**”<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> AN ETERNAL GOSPEL TO PROCLAIM, October 30, 2014 Prof. John T. Pless, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN., quoting AE 51:77.

One of the key lessons of the **Lutheran Reformation** is that **God's Word is powerful**. It's powerful in your life as well. In the passage about the "Armor of God", the Word of God is called the "**Sword of the Spirit**." One of the most important truths about the Kingdom of God is that the Word and the Spirit always go together!

## **The Holy Spirit works through the Word of God!**

*So much so, that the Word is called the "Sword of the Spirit!"*

The Holy Spirit worked through the Word of God during the **Lutheran Reformation**, and that same Holy Spirit works through His Word in your life!

The Holy Spirit works through His **Word of Law** to convict you of sin and lead you to repentance. The Holy Spirit works through the Ten Commandments to show you your sin and lead you to confession. A guilty conscience is meant to lead you to repentance and confession! The Holy Spirit works through His **Word of Law** to convict you of sin and lead you to repentance.

And then the Holy Spirit works through the **Word of the Gospel** to comfort you with words of forgiveness in Christ the Lord. You learn and understand that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. You hear and believe that God does not hold your sins against you, but on account of Jesus' death and resurrection, you are set free and forgiven. You learn that this is all by God's grace and mercy and not because of your own good works or contribution. The Gospel creates faith so that you know and believe that Jesus is your Savior from sin, and that you are forgiven and reconciled to God. The Holy Spirit works through the **Word of the Gospel** to lead you to Christ!

**The Holy Spirit works through the Word of God to bring salvation to you --- and all people!**

It is that Word, and that Word alone, that Martin Luther confessed and fought for in every aspect in the **Lutheran Reformation**. God's Word is packed full of God's power. It says what it does and does what it says! It is the **Word of the Gospel**, the **Word of the cross**. Luther described it as **"the Word by which I became and remain a Christian."** That's why we "hold it sacred and gladly hear it and learn it. SMALL

CATECHISM"

One of the interesting stories of the **Lutheran Reformation** has to do with this symbol. **VDMA**. It's the first letters of the Latin phrase *Verbum Domini Manet in Aeternum*, which means **"The Word of the Lord endures forever."** It is based on Jesus' saying that **the heavens and earth will pass away but my words will not pass away**, and it is a quote from Isaiah 40:8: **The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of the Lord endures forever.**



This became the **motto** of the Lutheran Reformation, the confident expression of the enduring power and authority of God's Word. It first appeared in the royal court of Prince Frederick the Wise in 1522. He had it sewn onto the right sleeve of the court's official clothing, which was worn by prince and servant alike. It was a popular emblem: it was sewn on flags, weaved into banners, engraved on swords, carved into doorposts, chiseled into stones, imprinted on coins, stitched onto uniforms, etched on clocks, and even inscribed on helmets for warhorses! **VDMA** was a symbol of the unity of the Lutheran Reformation. **The Word of the Lord endures forever!**

There is a saying in the Lutheran church: **Sola Scriptura!...only Scripture!** Because the Holy Spirit works through Holy Scripture, Scripture alone is the **authority in our faith and life**.

One of our goals here at Trinity is that we are **biblically literate** and **doctrinally sound** people, that we know and understand the Bible and its great teachings of salvation in Christ. Our **world view** is shaped around the Word of God.

† Is that **true** for you?

† Is your **world view** shaped around the Word of God? Or does the world and its theories and ideas shape your thoughts, attitudes and beliefs?

† What is the **authority** in your life?

† Are you on a **lifelong mission** to be more and more biblically literate and doctrinally sound?

## As Lutheran Christians, we hold to *Sola Scriptura!...only Scripture!*

Because God the Holy Spirit works through Holy Scripture, Scripture alone is our **authority in our faith and life**. The banner that still waves over us even today is *Verbum Domini Manet in Aeternum*: **“The Word of the Lord endures forever.”**

### *Sola Scriptura*

*Sola Scriptura* (“Scripture alone”) **the formal principle of the Lutheran Reformation.** Scripture is the sole authority for Christian faith and life; and it primarily reveals to us the Gospel of Jesus Christ that is received ***Sola Fide*** (“through faith alone”) and ***Sola Gratia*** (“by grace alone”).

This summer, our worship series is going to be a study of the **Book of Romans**. Martin Luther called it the “Chief book in the New Testament.” Romans will remind us of how important God’s Holy Word is for us, and the book of Romans will carefully lay out the great truths of the Christian faith.

**One of the lessons of the Lutheran Reformation is that God’s Word is powerful. It’s powerful in your life as well.** May it be the authority in your life as it shapes your world view, and molds you into a biblically literate and doctrinally sound disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ!

**The Word of the Lord will endure forever!**