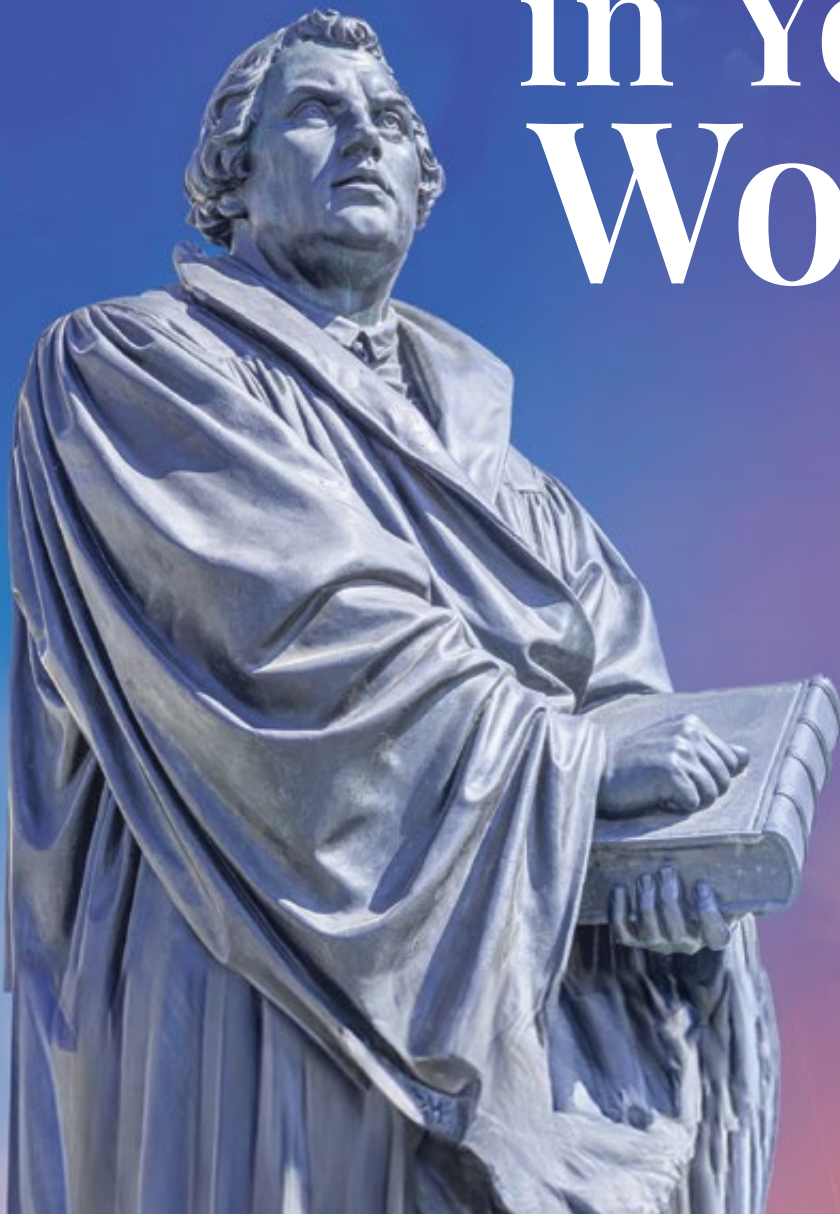


Steadfast in Your Word



A Service for Reformation

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Steadfast in Your Word

A SERVICE FOR REFORMATION

About This Service

This service for Reformation instills in us that we, like Martin Luther, are called by God to remain steadfast in the Word of the Lord, holding tight to the truth of the Gospel found on its pages. Our lives, too, should center on Scripture as the structure for our faith and the foundation upon which we build our connection with Christ.

This service contains: a complete order of service, a sermon, a children's sermon, prayers, music for the accompanist, digital files with text of the entire service in .pdf (portable document format) and .rtf (rich text format), newsletter/bulletin notices, hymns, visual media recommendations, contemporary music song suggestions and a PowerPoint document of the service with images and text (along with a copyright release) for use on screens.

What does a Bible like this tell us about the person who used it? (*Allow the children to respond.*) It tells us that the person was very religious and kept the Word of God close and really cared about the words that were inside of it. What do we call a person like that? We call that person “steadfast in the Word.” “Steadfast” is a word that means “faithful, devoted, dedicated and committed.” Someone who is steadfast is someone you can count on to be there for you any time you call them. So, someone who is steadfast in the Word is very strongly connected to what God has to say over a very long time. Year after year and decade after decade, a person who is steadfast in the Word follows what God says in Scripture and will not waver from it.

Martin Luther was a man who was steadfast in the Word. He spent many hours seriously studying the Scriptures. Through his study, he read the words from Ephesians 2:8-9: “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” Martin Luther realized that there is nothing we can do to save ourselves from sin, death and the devil. Only God can save us through faith in Jesus Christ, who died for our sins.

Some people asked Martin Luther to take back what he said about being saved by grace through faith. But he would not do it. Holding the Bible in his hand, he said, “Here I stand. I can do no other. So help me God.” He was steadfast in the Word at that moment, and what he did in that moment helps us to know what we should do if anyone ever questions our faith in Jesus. We should hold tight to the Word of God and trust in what it says above everything else.

So keep opening the Bible and reading it throughout your life. It will help you to remember that you cannot do anything without God. Let us pray:

Dear God, thank you for the Bible and the words of salvation in Jesus we find there. Let us keep the Bible with us wherever we go so that we will never forget your love for us always. Amen.

- **The Old Testament Reading**, Isaiah 6:1-6, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

☐ In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!” Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar.

- The **Epistle Reading**, Ephesians 6:16-20, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

¶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

- The **Gospel Reading**, John 1:1-18, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

¶ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”) For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

- The **Sermon Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Munich 76 76 D, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

O Word of God incarnate,
 O Wisdom from on high,
 O Truth, unchanged, unchanging,
 O Light of our dark sky:
 We praise you for the radiance
 That from the hallowed page,
 A lantern to our footsteps,
 Shines on from age to age.

The Church from you, dear Master,
Received the gift divine,
And still that light is lifted
O'er all the earth to shine.
It is the chart and compass,
That, all life's voyage through,
Mid mists and rocks and quicksands
Still guides, O Christ, to you.

O make your Church, dear Savior,
A lamp of burnished gold,
To bear before the nations
Thy true light as of old.
Oh, teach your wand'ring pilgrims
By this their path to trace,
Till, clouds and darkness ended,
They see you face to face.

- The **Sermon** is delivered by the pastor:

¶ Grace, mercy and peace be to you people of the Word of God. It is on a day like the Reformation when we realize how truly blessed we are to have the Bible, the Word of God, in our hands and at our fingertips in a language we can understand to open any time we want, day or night, in any place we are. This was not always so, of course. In the time of Martin Luther, the Word of God was only written in Latin, and it was only read aloud by the priest. The common, everyday person did not have access to a Bible and could not have even understood it very well if he or she had one as Latin was not the language he or she spoke.

So everything that the Word of God said was not known by the majority of the people of the day. The parts that got through and that were emphasized by the priests were the facts that we are sinful and should seek forgiveness from God in order to escape his wrath toward our sinfulness. As a result, people would confess their sins over and over again to God. Even Luther would beat and whip himself as a way of somehow receiving favor from God, he thought. The Church eventually began selling indulgences, which were pieces of paper that purported to grant people the forgiveness of their sins.

This practice continued without much resistance until Luther began reading the Word of God more in depth and realized that the message of the Great Exchange was getting lost in translation, literally. People were not hearing the Good News that our sins were laid on Jesus on the cross and in exchange his righteousness was laid on us. This revelation came to Luther in what is called the Tower Experience. Martin Luther was studying the Book of Romans in the tower of the Black Cloister of the Augustinian monks in Wittenberg, when he