

Happy Reformation Day! Five hundred years ago, Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses, ideas for improving the church, to the castle church door in Wittenberg, Germany. Luther's ideas led to a **reformation**. Luther transformed Europe's religious, political and social spheres. Martin Luther's ideas and movement were so positive and powerful that back in the year 2000 they topped the lists of most influential people of the last millennia. Martin Luther's ability to communicate God's love known in scripture brought the hope of the gospel to people of his day and today. The two pillars of the reformation are grace and vocation.

Grace is the belief that God's love wins. No evil in the world nor sin we can commit can overpower God's love. God's love for us has no strings attached. God's loving us isn't based on what we do, it is about what God has done and is doing. The Bible is story after story of God choosing us, loving us and being faithful to us. Love wins.

The second idea that fueled the reformation is vocation. Vocation is the belief that God has created everyone with strengths—strengths that are needed to create with God the kingdom of love and abundance God seeks for all creation. Grace and vocation are the pillars of the reformation that Luther set in motion 500 years ago. It is difficult to overestimate Martin Luther's impact on our faith and world.

Today's reading fits perfectly with the milestone of the 500th anniversary of the reformation as King Solomon first announces the building of the temple in Jerusalem and then the dedication where the furnishings, previously in the tabernacle, are brought to the temple. Once the ark of the covenant is placed in the most holy place in the temple, the temple is filled

with the glory of the Lord. God's presence was so palpable that the activities in the temple had to be suspended—God was active and moving. Solomon is king at this major turning point in the history and religion of Israel; his name lives on.

In 1520 Martin Luther wrote a treatise—*Freedom of a Christian*, at its core is the belief—the Christian is a free lord of all, subject to none and a servant of all, subject to all—we are all saints and sinners. The apostle Paul said, "While we were still sinners Christ died for us (Rom 5:8)." We aren't perfect and God loves us.

Is this true of Solomon? Was Solomon saint and sinner? You maybe noticed that there were two parts to our reading from 1 Kings. One of the things we didn't read is how the temple was built. Solomon creates huge "work gangs" to carry out the labor in Lebanon where they got the wood. The only other place the Hebrew word "work gang" is used is in Exodus in relation to the Pharaoh's brutal treatment of the Israelites. It's hard not to see the use of this word as a negative judgment on Solomon's labor practices. So saint and sinner.

What about Martin Luther? Was Luther a sinner and saint? By 1538 Luther started to write about the Jews—that God had deserted the Jews, leaving them to wonder without a land or temple. He concluded that, with good conscience, you could despise the Jews. Even Luther's friends begged him to stop his anti-Jewish rants but Luther continued. Luther also advocated for education—Luther's wife Katie ran the estate and business—their relationship modeled education of family. Martin Luther sinner and saint.

We are all sinner and saint. As humans we fall short of the glory of God—we are not God—but at the same time God partners with us to make the world the generous, abundant, loving place God desires for all. Like Martin Luther and King Solomon we all have amazing strengths we can give to this world. We are all called by God to participate in creating the abundant life Jesus preaches about.

This last week you were all doing that—I know you all have stories you could tell about how in the last week you participated with God in making a difference in the world. But as part of your giving to Peace Luther, this week you created a home. A group of 15 people from Lord of Life in Maple Grove, Annie Bonow and I from Peace, spent the last week on a mission trip in the Dominican Republic. In the mountains two hours outside of Santa Domingo in a small shanty town your generosity payed to buy the materials that built a home, for this family, Jenny, Manuel, Evelin and Rosemary. Your giving makes a difference. Your giving makes possible the bulletins and buying music for the choir and your giving moved Jenny, Manuel and their two daughters out of the one room shack into this home. We are together creating the world God desires. Thank you! Annie and I will be preaching on November 19 and telling you stories about God showing up through the mission work in the Dominican Republic.

God is active. God shows up—in the temple, in the reformation of the church and in Peace's work in the Dominican Republic—God's activity is a divine interruption, reminding us that despite all the pomp and circumstance, the planning and the holy practices, God cannot be managed by human beings. God is active. God is at work. The divine presence takes precedence over our plans. We often attempt to limit God's

freedom and manage God's action. But we cannot contain God—God is loose in the world.

God had said one thing (verse 12) but Solomon did something else (verse 13). God's presence in the temple affirmed that God inhabited the structure. But surely, the God whose glory disrupts all activity in the temple cannot be housed by it, nor be contained by it. The God whose love has been present throughout the ages, is most clearly seen in the love of Jesus Christ, continues to show up, continues to be active and like in Solomon's time God shows up in the likely places: in the Word and water in bread and wine. And God's love continues to be wild and on-the-loose, moving into places where we wouldn't expect, calling us into new venture with ending yet unseen. 500 years ago as Martin Luther nailed his thesis to the door of the castle church he was answering a call, daring greatly and stepping into God's future. Let us continue this tradition and boldly adventure with God.