

Reformation Sunday
“The Wild Boar of the Reformation”
Hebrews 12:1–2
Dr. Harry L. Reeder, III
October 30, 2022 • Sunday Evening Sermon

Hear the Word of the Lord. Hebrews 12:1-2 says [1] *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and (the) sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, [2] looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

This verse comes out of the context of Hebrews 11, in which we have listed for us those who have gone before us with their imperfect lives, but lives that were marked out and affirmed by God's grace in various ways. Some would even call Hebrews 11 the Hall of Fame. I have a hard time doing that as I read some of the names that are in there, but on the other hand, the reality is that all of God's people who are saints in Christ are also imperfect in their lives on this side of eternity. That doesn't mean we can't learn from them.

The Christian church doesn't engage in a cancel culture because of the imperfections of the saints, although we willingly note the imperfections, but we do look at what happens when someone is focused upon Christ. That's what Hebrews 12 brings us to – that what you're looking for when you learn from those who have gone before, is not to fix your eyes on them, but to fix your eyes on Jesus, the great Author and Perfecter of our faith – the One who went to the cross for the joy set before Him and He endured its shame so that we could be declared saints. We not only to be declared saints in the righteousness that is imputed to us, but also be transformed so that we can grow in that grace with our eyes fixed on Jesus all the way to eternity. So, it's appropriate that this matter of saints be examined.

So why do we celebrate the Reformation so close to Halloween? There's actually a reason why of the conjecture of these two activities happened historically. Now, most people know we do the Reformation because of what happened on October the 31st, when Martin Luther nailed the 95 theses to the Wittenberg door of the Castle Church. That means it was a church that had been established in honor of the Crown and that this particular city was one that was receiving benefits, most notably from one of the great princes who operated as a king. His name was Frederick, and he becomes known as Frederick the Protector as I will refer to him a little later in this study. One of the things that he had done in the context of this Castle Church is he had, outside of Rome, the largest collection of relics that one could visit and by making pilgrimages to these places with offerings and observations of the relics, then one could gain the merit that one needed in the sacrament of penance.

What is Halloween? It actually means All Hallows Evening. That is the evening that introduces the day of All Hallows Day. Hallows meaning another way to speak of the saints – all the saints. This particular holiday is hundreds and hundreds of years old. It goes all the way back in the first three centuries after the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus and the martyrs that were dying for the faith throughout the Roman Empire. There came to be the practice of certain ones that were martyred as to collect their bones, if possible, and bring them to Rome to be consecrated. Each time one was consecrated, a day would be named for them. The number of the martyrs that were given sainthood in their martyrdom grew so rapidly and so much that after a while it just couldn't be contained and so as they approached the 4th, 5th, and then eventually,

by the turn of the 6th to the 7th century, they just decided that when they honored the saints, they would do so all on one day. Thus it was picked to be November the 1st and the 31st was the evening of that hallowed day. That's where it began.

In fact, there was a church that was dedicated for it. This is kind of interesting, at least I think it is but I'm a history nerd on this stuff. The church where they would begin to deposit the bones was consecrated for that purpose, and originally it was called the Pantheon Church. The reason was because this church was not originally a church. It was a pagan temple. It was built by the ancestors of a man named King Herod. This name should sound familiar. King Herod was an Idumean. He and his ancestors came into power in the Middle East, in Palestine, because of the generosity of the Roman emperors, who were more than happy to have a puppet king, to control that part of the empire with these troublesome lands that they had secured, particularly this land of Palestine, in particular.

They would be rather ruthless and pretty wise in what they did and this man's name was Agrippa. Now, later on he would have one successor that you would know as King Herod the Great and then would come his children and grandchildren referred to all throughout the New Testament. These leaders understood the only reason they could rule was because Rome allows them to rule so in whatever they wanted to do they learned how to honor Rome while doing it. One of the things Agrippa did which King Herod the Great picked up on was he named an entire city for an emperor – known as Caesarea by the Sea. His son named a city up at Mount Hermon which is called Caesarea Philippi. They learned if they put a person's name on something they were likely to be kept in power and they would send money to make sure those cities were successful, which is what we call today a stimulus package. This started taking place 35 to 40 years before the birth of Jesus, which started with Agrippa. He built a temple in Rome for twelve gods and called it a Pantheon to the Caesars.

Years later, as Christianity began to spread in the Roman Empire, a couple of emperors gave the Pantheon to a Pope Gregory and then a Pope Boniface. They then cleansed the temple of its paganism and then ordained it to be a church. Originally it was called the Pantheon Church and they consecrated it to Christian service in 609 A.D. which is when they begin to use it but then named it the Church of Saint Mary or Santa Maria and the Martyrs. That is where they would bring the bones and have the official celebration when they would consecrate someone to sainthood.

After the Reformation, some of the reformed churches said 'it's good that we honor those who are saints in Christ who have gone to be with the Lord, but they no longer embrace the concept of individual martyrs being named saints for all of God's people were saints according to the New Testament.' They would still remember the homegoing of those who had died that year and so the All Saints Day in the Reformed Churches was a way to honor those who had left the church militant to go to the church triumphant. Yet they jettisoned the notion of sainthood by martyrdom or sainthood by deeds of merit that go into the treasury of merit.

How does this overlap with us today? This overlaps with us because of what has happened in the life of a man by the name of Martin Luther. If you want to read one book and no more about Martin Luther I would recommend the book by Roland Bainton titled Here I Stand – A Life of Martin Luther. There have been so many biographies written on Luther, but almost all of them are done by scholars that are either revisionist or they want to get their cut or they want to get their little insight on it instead of just dealing with the facts in the life of this man. I believe Bainton's book is the best one out there.

To follow the life of Luther God in his Providence and Martin Luther in his lifestyle made it kind of easy because it seems like Martin Luther had some kind of a crisis every five years. It's a good way to put together his life as you try to remember his life and work your way through it. He was born in 1483 in a place called Eisleben and in God's Providence that's also where he would die of either a cerebral occlusion that led to a heart attack or a heart attack that led to a cerebral occlusion. I've actually stayed in the house where he spent his last days, and at the very end he was in a coma. Now, this seems to be historically verified as his pastor made the trip to be with him at that time. Pastors need pastors also.

His pastor came to him and they could tell he was rapidly coming to an end though his breathing so his pastor awakened him by speaking loudly into his ear. He said to him, "Martin Luther, do you still hold to the Gospel of salvation by faith alone in Christ?" They said his eyes opened and fluttered. He reached for a breath and was able to simply say, "yes" and then in the moments later, he died. He.

The town of Eisleben in 1483 had as its patron saint, Saint Anne, which was the name of the church he attended there and his home was down toward the bottom of the town. It wasn't in the upper reaches where the people with a little bit more money lived. His father worked in the mines, but his father was very industrious and actually had part ownership in mines and became somewhat of a self-made businessman. He desperately wanted his son to escape the life of peasants, the workers and live the lifestyle of serfs. He desperately wanted Luther to be set free from that, and so he was able to secure the money and secure the entrance of him out of that. After Luther's initial education, he went to the University of Erfurt to study law. He was an excellent student and was advancing very rapidly in his career.

All this information is all very important to understand how these 95 theses come to be nailed on this Castle Church door for one night when he was coming home, a significant, almost cataclysmic, epical thunderstorm, according to Martin Luther, hit. The thunder and lightning was crashing all around him continually to the point that he knew that in any moment he was going to be struck. He did what any good Catholic boy that had been raised in the church, particularly in a city where the patron saint was Saint Anne, he called out saying 'Saint Anne, if you will save me, I will become a monk' and he survived. Martin Luther was a man who was very principled in terms of his understanding of law, commitments and oaths so he immediately left the University of Erfurt.

In God's providence, Luther entered into a monastery, and it was not just any monastery. It was a monastery that had begun in the 12th and the 13th century. It was an order of monks that came out of an Augustinian study curriculum. In other words, Augustine was their focus, and as you study the reformers, those who were converted out of their Catholicism, almost to a man, every reformer was converted while or after or alongside of being educated in an Augustinian school. So it was with Martin Luther. Luther was very humble and these Augustinians focused upon writing and preaching, as well as fasting and holding on to all of their rituals that they were to do, which included hard work, minimal eating, and always was doing those things that would subdue the flesh.

Martin Luther would live in such a way that he himself would say, 'if monkery could save anyone, then I would have been saved by my monkery.' He was noted for these lengthy confessions that went on for hours to the point of frustrating those who were hearing him. One of them said to him, "Martin Luther, please, the next time you come to take ours, give me some kind of a sin worth all of this" because his eyes did not stay on the page of the Bible long enough so he felt he had sinned against God. He was so sensitive and as a lawyer he knew only the

righteous went to heaven so he thought, 'how can I get there without being committed fully in thought, word and deed to God's law?' So he was working his way to heaven. At that time in his life, that's how he thought he was going to get there. Obviously, he had no peace.

Luther was named a Biblical master and at this time he was teaching the Bible, translating the Bible from the original languages and he was into Latin. He became more or less a favorite academically, though he was a bother in the confessional booth. Luther rises up to the point that he, along with another student, was appointed to go to Rome. Now, that had a lot of benefits because going to Rome allowed a person indulgences, access to all the relics and all the places to visit, whereby a person could get what was known as congruent merit. That pilgrimage was worth unbelievable merits in terms of congruency but it was not condign. I want to try and explain this here.

When you're baptized, then you're Christianized, meaning the marks of Christ are placed upon you and you are now a Christian, unless you commit mortal sins. Now, once you commit those sins that are mortal, then at that point in time you have to be restored. Thus a faulty translation of Jerome from the Scriptures introduced into the Roman Church, another sacrament called the Sacrament of Penance. You couldn't go back and get baptized again, but you could go to get the sacrament of penance and that would require the confession of your sin, a heartfelt contrition for your sin as so determined by the priest, the absolution for your sins, and then it would require either you contributing to the treasury of marriage or drawing from the treasury of marriage, which you can by pilgrimages, indulgences and by relics. If you get to go to Rome, then you've hit the jackpot, because that's the number one pilgrimage and the places you go are going to give you access to the Treasury of merit. It was such a significant moment that Martin Luther even acknowledged in his writing of his letters that he was dismayed that his father and mother were still living because if they had died, his trip to Rome would have been dedicated to them and he could have taken them out of purgatory where they would have been freed because of all the merits a person accrues in such a pilgrimage. Luther ended up dedicating it to his paternal grandfather and that was in the year 1510.

Now we begin to see the five year intervals for in 1505 was when Luther called out to Saint Anne to save him and he becomes a monk. He rises up in the other of the Augustinian monks to the point of being appointed in 1510 to go with another colleague to Rome. His excitement was effervescent. He anticipated it. He couldn't wait to get there and this became probably the turning point in his life, because once he got there, he was utterly dismayed as he arrived at what he thought would be the greatest testimony of righteousness that would give him the righteousness that he needed.

When Luther arrived in Rome, he was confronted with clerics who would seek how fast they could recite the mass to see how many they could do in one day that would get them more money as they were paid for the recitations of the mass. Then he saw the sexual immorality of the clergy and the priest all the way up into the bishopric – sexual promiscuity to rampant homosexuality were taking place. Then he saw all of the corruption that was taking place in the administration of the sacraments and the greed. Luther was really coming to a crisis of his faith but he had one place he had not gone yet, and that was the Lateran Church, because that was the church that you could get the most merits from in the treasury of merit. It was said to contain the steps that Jesus followed up into the praetorium for the judgment and facing of Pilate. In fact, the steps had been brought back and put into this Lateran Church where a person could go up the steps reciting the rosary, saying hail marys and all those things one needed to do.

When Martin Luther got there, his intense focus was manifested as he went up each step on his knees, stopping on each one, kissing the step, uttering the various rituals and when he got to the top, no one could hear him. He later wrote this in a journal that he stood said vocally, but not loudly; 'Who knows if this is true?' And he comes back disappointed. He had a professor who helped him in his professorship, for he now taught at an Augustinian school. It was at the University of Wittenberg. He had risen up in this University to where he was pretty much the prize professor. He was the one that Frederick whose money had established this school, whose relics were in the Castle Church, became a favorite of Frederick because he was quite the speaker, scholar and quite everything. Luther received the choice opportunity in the curriculum by conviction of Frederick, his professor to teach the book of Romans. Here you see the Augustinian love for the book of Romans in the curriculum now moving into the life of Martin Luther.

As he began working through Romans he came to passages like Romans 3:22, that by faith we receive a righteousness. He is in an unbelievable quandary. He would go from the excitement of what he was discovering to utter despair as he looked at his own soul and his sin. Someone said to Luther one time, 'You must love God.' He said, 'Love Him? Sometimes I hate Him.' He had no peace. He went from Romans 3:22, this righteousness that is given to us by faith to the blessings that are listed in Romans 5. Romans 5:1 says *[1] Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Luther had always longed for peace with God through Jesus Christ. These things were raging within Luther.

In 1515 it was announced that the indulgences that were being sold under quite the huckster, a man named Johann Tetzel, were coming to Wittenberg. Now, this would require quite some courage on his part, because part of indulgences were relics and who had the second largest collection of relics? Frederick, who was his benefactor. Where? Here in Wittenberg, Castle Church. Johann Tetzel was just across the river. This would be quite the sales day, because All Saints Day was here. Penance was needed. Relics could produce merits. Giving was important. The ditty that would be sung by Tetzel went like this; Every time a coin in the coffer rings, the soul of a loved one from Purgatory springs.

Luther knew what was happening. There was a prince named Albert who not only had bought a bishopric, but he bought a second bishopric, which was against Vatican law. Then he had bought a third bishopric, but to do so it cost him I think 20,000 ducats of which he had to borrow 10,000 from the bankers of Germany. Albert needed money to pay them back so he got in on the fundraising with Tetzel. The Vatican was almost broke and they had undertaken this significant building project at Saint Peter's Basilica, which people can view today along with the Pantheon Church, there in Rome. Albert was opening up Germany for him and would support Tetzel so basically there was a three-way cut going on the indulgences, to put it crassly. Tetzel still got his cut, Albert got his cut and Pope Leo the 10th would get his cut for the Treasury back in the Vatican. Thus, whatever good motives that had been behind this sacrament of penance, it had now gone the way of corruption as other things as well. There was not only false doctrine happening, but now the greed of men had taken over in the church, in politics, and in the local arenas themselves.

In 1515, when Luther becomes aware of that, he then begins to double down in his studies and in his writings. He begins to take on this matter of penance in his classroom, among his students. When it is announced that Tetzel is coming across the river, then Martin Luther decides to take this on in an academic debate. On the night of October the 31st, Luther goes to the Castle Church door and nails the 95 Theses. Now, as one commentator said or one

biographer said, 'don't see this as an act of vandalism, because that's what you did with this door for this door was the bulletin board for the city and the college.' It also was not an attempt to start the Reformation. It was a professor calling upon the Vatican, calling upon the Pope, calling upon the theologians and the academicians to debate the sacrament of penance, the matters of congruent merit, relics and indulgences. That's what the 95 Theses were designed to do which was put in the language of the scholars. It was written not in German for everybody to read it but it was written in Latin.

Remember, Luther has been teaching so his students saw it and read it. Then they took it down and translated it into the common vernacular, German language. A nice little invention had come along by way of a man named Gutenberg with movable type so the students got the printing presses running and it has been said that within a fortnight or within 20 days, the 95 Theses had been put into the pamphlet form, had gone throughout Germany and an entire religious and political firestorm had started.

When it gets to the Vatican, the Vatican calls for the University of Wittenberg to send Martin Luther for trial in Rome, but Frederick now takes on a name. This is really interesting, given his investments in the relics. He had also been impacted to some degree by Luther. He respected Luther, and so he now intervened and said to the Vatican, 'If you wish to speak to my subjects, send your debaters here' and so two debate happened after this nailing of the 95 Theses; one at Leipzig and the other at Augsburg. The Vatican sent some of their best debaters. They sent a man by the name of Johann 'Hans' Eck, and he came to debate Luther. They also sent a German priest, and then sent a cardinal, Cardinal Cajetan, who was known for his academic prowess and his debating skills. Luther takes both of those on and they have the debates.

Now, Luther is not skilled at debating, and while he doesn't win the debates, Luther keeps quoting the more ancient fathers who support the Biblical understanding of the Gospel and quoting the Scriptures, but those he debated were able to show that Luther was rejecting the authority of the church, its councils and the authority of the Pope for the authority of Scripture. So they labeled him formally in their reports that Luther is a Hussite and they are referring to John Huss.

When we get to this point in time, we all look right here at Wittenberg, and we look at October the 31st and tend to say here is where the Reformation started, but actually, it began the century before. It began in England, where there are great scholars who are vying for the truth of the Scriptures to be understood and the Bible to be put into the languages of the people for them to have access to it. There was a scholar at Oxford by the name of Wycliffe, and then there is a European scholar by the name of Jan (pronounced John) Huss. The two of them are facing their own martyrdom because they believe that the Scripture should be translated for the people in their language, because salvation is by faith and faith comes from hearing the Word of Christ, and the Bible had become isolated.

Who was one of the earliest church fathers? Jerome, who translated the Bible in the language of the day, which was Latin and they would appeal if Jerome could translate the Aramaic, the Hebrew and the Greek into Latin for which we get the Vulgate, why can we not put it in the current languages of the day? Hasn't God's Word been given to get to the people not only in preaching, but also to be placed in their hands so that like Bereans they can examine the Scriptures to see if these things are so. If an Ethiopian eunuch can get his hands on it, why can't the everyday peasants get their hands on it?

Huss and Wycliffe, were followed by Tyndale who also committed with them to that translation. Wycliffe translated from the Latin into their language. Tyndale will go from the

original languages into the language of the day, the English language and Hus would not only argue for the translations to be made and given to the people, he will argue for the responsibility of private interpretation and why the councils, teachers, theologians of the church and even the Pope are of value. And that they must consider private interpretation to stand the test not of the church, because they can err but it ultimately stands the test of Scripture itself. The Scripture interprets the Scripture. That does not mean we do not value teachers, councils, creeds, confessions and all of the great works of the fathers, but it does mean they're not inerrant. God's word is inerrant, and in private interpretation, it must have input from outside, but ultimately to the Scriptures themselves.

This is called *analogia fidei*. The Scripture alone as our rule in faith, in practice, and the ultimate authority over the interpretation of the Scripture is the Scripture itself. Thus, Huss is put to death, and it becomes a word of treachery in the church to be labeled a Hussite. But Huss, when he's dying, would make a prophecy. The name Huss, in its root form, means goose. Huss says as he is dying 'You may burn the goose today, but a hundred years from now the swan will arise.' It was said and even Luther himself began to embrace that perhaps in God's Providence he was the fulfillment of that word. That's why if you go particularly to any conservative Lutheran church, you'll find the pulpits shaped as swans where Luther was the one that Huss was pointing to. That carried a lot of weight when the Vatican labeled Luther with the charge of a Hussite.

Now we come to our next five year mark, 1520, in which with that charge having been labeled in the sin of private interpretation, the supremacy of Scripture and the Declaration that councils, the Church and the Popes do err, now a declaration and death warrant was given. It was given in the form of a prayer from the papacy; 'Oh, Lord arise, a wild boar is destroying Your vineyard.' That wild boar was Martin Luther. Now Frederick intervenes again and he arranges safe passage for a debate in 1520. That debate will take place at the imperial Diet of Worms. It's like a parliamentary moment, except it includes all of the ecclesiastical authority of the Holy Roman Empire and Charles the fifth will reign over this. On the agenda is the interrogation of the priest, Martin Luther from Wittenberg.

Luther leaves Wittenberg with his friends with him. They come in a very small caravan, but everyone's looking for him. In fact, this may have undone him because when Charles the fifth came in, the people were reverent and respectful but when Martin Luther came in, this looks like a New York ticker tape parade for they were cheering everywhere for him. Martin Luther says he came trembling, but the voices of the people lifted him up as he looked to the Lord for his strength. Frederick, his protector, had arranged safe passage for him. Luther arrived on April the 16th, 1521.

The first debates and the interrogation began on April 17th, but it soon became obvious this was not a debate. The charge/decision had already been made by the Pope, the papal bull was clear. The only way Luther could avoid death is to recant. As they challenged him in all of his books, they finally got to the end of the challenge on the 17th and said, 'Martin Luther, do you repent?' as they pointed to the books. He acknowledged that there are errors in some things that he could repent but then they pointed to the particular books and the matter of justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, the supremacy and magisterium of Scripture over ecclesiastical magisterium and also over political magisterium. His voice went low and it trembled. Luther requested a night to pray, and so he entered into that night to pray.

His life was before him. He began to pray and question; Am I alone right with none standing beside me? Not only is this my life, am I bringing dereliction to an institution and therefore guilty of blasphemous sin? He went into the depths of prayer. He was by himself and

we have, from his own hand the prayer, or at least a distillation of it. That night he cried out, prostrate upon the floor praying for help;
Almighty, eternal God, how dreadful is this world? Behold its mouth opens to swallow me up And how small is my faith in you? "O God, Almighty God Everlasting! How dreadful is the world! Behold how its mouth opens to swallow me up, and how small is my faith in You! . . . Oh! the weakness of the flesh, and the power of Satan! If I am to depend upon any strength of this world – all is lost . . . O my God! help me against all of the wisdom of this world. Do this, I beg You! The work is not mine, but Yours. I have no business here . . . I have nothing to contend for with these great men of the world! I would gladly pass my days in happiness and peace. But the cause is Yours, my Lord . . . And it is righteous and everlasting! Stand by me! O faithful and unchangeable God! I lean not upon man. It would be vain! You have chosen me for this work. I know it! . . . Therefore, O God, accomplish Your own will! Stand by me in the Name of Jesus! In the name of Jesus Christ, who will be my shelter and my shield, yes my mighty fortress. (You can hear the echo of our great hymn and his appeal to Psalm 46) Be my mighty fortress through the might and strengthening of the Holy Spirit! I am ready even to lay down my life for this cause – patient as a little lamb for the cause is holy. It is Your own... though this world be filled with devils, though my body originally the work and creation of Your hands go to destruction in this cause...yes, though my body be shattered into pieces Your Word and Your Spirit, they are good to me still, it concerns only my body. My soul is Yours, it belongs to You, and will also remain with You forever. God help me, Amen.

The next day Luther comes in with a settled spirit. It's not like most of the movies portray it. He is confident, with no boisterousness, but in these moments, he so declares that his conscience is bound by the Word of God and that's the key. He was wasn't putting his trust in his conscience but in the Word of God. Luther says to them 'My conscience is bound by the Word of God and unless you show me from God's Word and reason that my writings are wrong, unless you show it to me by Scripture and reason, then my conscience is bound. Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me.' The place goes into an uproar. It becomes abundantly clear to the Emperor he has to acknowledge the safe passage agreement with Frederick the Protector. Martin Luther leaves and just outside of the Diet of Worms, Luther is quote, "kidnaped."

We learn later that he thinks he may have been kidnaped to be taken and burned at the stake. He is fully aware of the anger in Rome because when the edict of his death arrived in 1520, he burned it. I've stood at the tree in Wittenberg, where he burned the edict in 1520 and now on April the 18th, 1521 he is taken away and led to the castle of Wartburg. There he grows a beard. He takes the camouflage of a tinker and there in the coming weeks and months, he translates the Bible into German and in the translation creates the German language that they still enjoy today. Upon finishing it, he hears of the uprisings and he goes out among the peasants in order to minister and to quell the uprisings that were insurrections to bring the Gospel preaching to the churches, and thus the movement of the Reformation captivates Germany.

From there it will captivate Switzerland with Zwingli. From there it will captivate France and Switzerland with Calvin, and from there, Scotland with John Knox. From there England with Cranmer, Latimer and Ridley. Thus this great reformation movement goes built upon earnest prayer and the authority of God's Word. It sounds like the Book of Acts to me for we must not neglect prayer and the Word. Now the church is recaptured. It still has a long way to go for it has many fights and debates that are going to take place, but the confessions are going to be developed and the authority of God's Word is going to be established. Biblical magisterium will

reign and reform will come to the church in worship, in the sacraments, and the Bible will be placed in the hands of the people.

Now worship is done by participation, not spectatorship. Now all of those things are taking place because of this movement and Luther say 'here I stand, I can do no other.' Luther does live on and he goes back to Wittenberg as he finishes out his life there. He does a lot of traveling and obviously a lot of writing. He publishes two commentaries; one on Galatians, one on Romans. One library that I know of has 96 volumes of what he wrote and it's amazing the productivity this man has. He was not a perfect man, just like all of the reformers. We have only perfect Savior, but Luther was a man who was tempestuous and tender.

Some nuns left their convent. They showed up at Wittenberg and they asked Martin Luther to find them a husband. They said 'We can now get married and we're not losing our soul.' So, Luther found them all a husband out of his student body and his clerical friends, except one. She was a hard case because she wouldn't take anyone he brought. She said to Luther, 'I want you.' Her name was Katharina and she was quite the woman for he nicknamed her prime rib. They had children. Read Luther's biography. If you want to read something tender, read how Luther held his daughter Magdalena with her last breath as she was dying at 13 years old. His tears flowing and she is wiping them away as she says to him, 'Father, I am going to my Heavenly Father, don't weep.' It was an unbelievable moment for Martin Luther and his son, Hans whom he named after his father.

There are so many stories in Luther's life that you need to study, know and follow to see what kind of person he was, but what you need to see is when we look at the reformers, the hero is always the Savior, and the pillars are the Word and prayer for the proclamation of the Gospel. Let's pray.

Prayer:

God, thank You for the moments we could be together. We praise Your Name for all of the blessings that You bring to us. Thank You for those who've gone before us for we rejoice to learn from them, but again, Lord, we don't want to live in the past. We do want to learn. Help us to live today so that the stories in the future will be about the glory of Jesus at work in His Church in this day, in the times that He has brought to us. I pray in Jesus' Name who is able, Amen.