

The Answers are Found in God's Love

Martin Luther was troubled. He was committed to being the best monk possible. He dedicated his life to serving God and the Church. Yet he found that God was impossible to please, and the Church was far from perfect.

On October 31, 1517, in Wittenberg, Germany, Luther posted his thoughts about God and the Church. His teachings gained purchase with many. The result was the 150-year movement in Europe that became known as the Reformation and that continues to have an impact today. Luther was not alone in his struggles and desires.

Steven Hawking, renowned physicist and acknowledged atheist, recently said that humanity will not last another thousand years on this earth. He suggested we move to another planet - which we haven't found yet. He has also warned of other life forms beyond Earth of which humanity needs to be aware. People often think Hawking represents the brightest and the best, and Hawking sees trouble for our world.

Our society perceives itself in many ways. Science and reason have become our saviours. Humanity and nature have become our wards. Most people are convinced God must be subject to our decisions and desires. Yet all of us exist in a reality which we can't totally control or even understand.

This 500th anniversary of the Reformation reminds us that our fears and needs have not changed. With all our progress and knowledge, we are still concerned about questions of death and our place in the universe.

The answers Luther found in the Reformation address our concerns today. How does God feel about us? What do we do in the face of an overwhelming reality like death?

Luther read the Bible and discovered that God has made Himself known to us as a God of love. Luther's fundamental discovery was in how he read the Bible. Luther's heart skipped for joy when he understood God's character. God shows mercy to the guilty and love to the unlovable. Luther saw himself as the recipient of God's undeserved kindness, not the target of His deserved anger.

Luther discovered that God is love. God sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross as a sacrifice for sinful mankind. Jesus wasn't guilty of any sin. His death paid the price for sin. God's wrath over sin and all who do wrong was poured out on Jesus.

The Reformation is summed up in a brief statement by Luther: “I must listen to the Gospel. It tells me, not what I must do, but what Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has done for me” (*Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, Chapter 2*). Because of Jesus, God turns toward humanity in love. God forgives all those who have faith in Jesus. After His death on the cross, Jesus rose from the dead. He conquered death for all those who believe in Him.

In the Reformation, Luther taught that humans don’t earn God’s love by trying to please Him. God’s love is a free gift because of Jesus. This is the good news of the Gospel. Faith in Jesus as God’s Son and our Saviour gives forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

These answers address humanity’s needs. The individual’s standing before God and the perpetual battle against death are answered in Jesus Christ. He is God’s love. He conquered death. He reconciles you to God.

Our world has turned to science and intellect for answers, but they have failed to save us. We have looked to human ingenuity and evolution to deliver us from death, yet death is still inevitable. Even the most learned among us are looking for answers outside of our world.

Five hundred years have passed since Luther began the Reformation. The truth is still the truth. Humanity’s situation hasn’t changed. Luther needed answers. He found them in God’s love. Luther taught everyone that God sent Jesus to forgive sins and to give eternal life. Where are you looking for answers?