Reformation Sunday
Texts: Rev 14:6-7; Rom 3:19-28; John 8:31-36
October 25, 2026

Reformation Revelation

As Lutherans, there are certain things that we all naturally and automatically associate with Reformation Sunday; e.g., Martin Luther nailing 95 theses to a Wittenberg church door immediately comes to mind, singing *"A Mighty Fortress is Our God,"* red paraments, etc. Because of the geographical nexus of the Reformation, wonderful Germanic things like bratwurst, beer, and polka music also tend to be main woven deeply into our Reformation tapestry. Even though Oktoberfest wouldn't come into existence for another three-hundred years *after* the opening shots of the Reformation in 1517, thanks to tradition, the things of Oktoberfest have become for many Lutherans a part of our Reformation celebration.

What about the book of Revelation? ***When you think of the "Reformation," does your mind immediately go to the book of Revelation?*** Probably not. In terms of Scripture references, we think of the book of Romans, particularly that passage that got the Reformation ball rolling with Martin Luther, *"All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, and all are justified by His grace as a free gift. We are justified by faith apart from works of the law."* Faith alone, grace alone, Christ alone. That's the message of the Reformation in a nutshell. That makes sense. ***But Revelation?*** That's all apocalyptic doom-and-gloom, right? That's end of the world kind of stuff. Armageddon? Yes. Reformation? Not so much.

Well… that's where you're wrong. In fact, today's lesson from Revelation hits the Reformation nail on the head. Think about it (and don't over-think, because it's not difficult). The angel—the messenger from God—is flying directly overhead—high noon. This is showing that the time to listen up and pay attention is ***right now.*** It's immediately overhead, and it's urgent. This heavenly messenger has an eternal Gospel to proclaim, ***not just to bratwurst-loving Lutherans,*** but to all who dwell on earth, *"to every nation and tribe and language and people."* That means **EVERYONE!** And what is that universal Gospel message? *"Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come."* Okay… that doesn't sound very "Gospel-ish," does it? *"The hour of His judgment has come."* That certainly doesn't sound very "Reformation-ish." That's a dead-ringer for Judgment Day. ***Why? Because it has the word "judgment" in it?!***

Folks: Look to this cross. Here is God's judgment, in the flesh. In all the history of mankind—***past, present, and future***—here is the hour of God's judgment. Here is that moment in time when all of God's righteous wrath was poured out on living, breathing flesh as punishment for all sin for all time. Here is where all sin for all time was paid for—in full. Look to this cross; look to God

Himself in the flesh, battered, bloodied, and dying for you in your place; battered, bloodied, and suffering His Father's ***righteous judgment against sin*** so that you would **never** have to taste even a single second of it for yourself. He died the death to sin so that you wouldn't have to. It is finished, once and for all in Him alone.

And because of His all-atoning death and resurrection, our heavenly Father shows us grace. ***He justifies us. That's a judgment word too***. The Divine Judge declares us innocent of all sin; He justifies us. We are saved; not because of our works, but because of Him and His justifying grace. The Truth (as in, "The Way, the Life, and the Truth") has set you free. Notice the language here. It's so very important, and yet so often missed. You are ***set*** free. You don't ***earn*** your freedom. You don't ***make*** yourself free. **The Truth sets you free, therefore you are free indeed.** ***Umm… isn't all this reason to fear God and give Him glory?*** Look! His hour of judgment has come! It's come and it's been fulfilled in Christ! This is precisely why that angelic messenger also says, *"Worship Him!"*

Folks: This is what the Reformation is all about! This is what Christendom is all about—always has been and always will be. ***All the focus is on Christ and His all-atoning sacrifice.*** All the focus is on the heavenly Father and His unconditional, unmerited free gift of grace, which He bestows upon us, not because of our works, but because of Christ alone.

It's sad when you think about it. This all seems so simple (and it is), and yet… it was so revolutionary in Luther's time. ***Even worse, it's still revolutionary in our time too.*** Many will say that they're saved through faith alone in grace alone because of Christ alone, but then in the next breath say, *"and now here's what you need to do."* Salvation for so many Christ-loving Christians remains a ***question mark.*** *"Am I saved? Am I good enough? Have I done enough? Have I done too much?"* They love Jesus, and yet look past His cross to their own works, where they will only find uncertainty or false assurance—neither one is good. It is to this ***darkness and fear and uncertainty and false works-righteous assurance*** that our Lord's heavenly messenger still proclaims, *"Fear God and give Him glory, for the hour of His judgment has come! Worship Him!"*

Dear friends: You know the Truth, and that Truth has set you free. May that Truth be ***revealed*** through you. May this light of Christ; this light of your justification in Christ and because of Christ, shine forth in your heart and soul like the noon day sun. May it shine forth ***in you and through you*** in all that you say and do; ***in your daily worship.*** In terms of Reformation, may you be that heaven-sent messenger of justifying Gospel to every tribe and nation and person that your Lord brings you into contact with in your daily comings and goings, ***always***

pointing to and glorifying Christ. Faith alone in God's grace alone because of Christ alone. That's what it's all about. That's reason to rejoice.

All glory, all worship, and all honor and praise be to Him alone… **AMEN.**