



IN THE WORD



Photo: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod/EKM, Lundborg

The **Word** of the **Lord** **Endures Forever**

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One of the most cherished slogans of the Lutheran church is abbreviated VDMA, “Verbum Domini Manet in Aeternum”—The Word of the Lord Endures Forever. It was first used by Elector Frederick the Wise and became the motto of the Schmalkaldic League, the defensive alliance formed by Lutheran princes in the sixteenth century.

For the Lutheran princes, their theologians, and pastors, the Scriptures alone had to be the source and norm of faith. It is the foundation of Lutheran doctrine and practice. Because the Word of God endures forever, we can rely on it. Traditions and the opinions of men and women come and go, but the Word of God endures forever.

The motto is based on 1 Peter 1:24–25. In this passage, St. Peter quotes Isaiah 40:6–8. What do both passages tell us about the Word of God? _____

The Authority of the Word of God

The Good News that Luther and the reformers cherished has been proclaimed by the Lutheran church for 500 years. Lutherans have believed, taught, and confessed that God became flesh to live a perfect life, carry our sin to the cross, suffer and die there to atone for them, and to earn forgiveness for us. They preached that His death destroyed death, and His resurrection opened the kingdom of Heaven to all who believe. They confessed that God the Holy Spirit called us by this Gospel, and that salvation is a gift by God’s grace alone through faith in him and his promises alone. This Gospel, and much more about the Christian faith, sounds crazy to people who do not believe in Christ.

So, how do we know the Gospel is true? (Luke 1:68–70; Hebrews 1:1–2) _____

How did God inspire the Holy Scriptures? Why should we believe the Word of God? (2 Peter 1:19–21) _____

How did the Old Testament Scriptures point to Jesus?
(Luke 24:25–27) _____

During the Missouri Synod’s battle for the Bible, the methods of modern scholars, which challenged the reliability and message of the Scriptures, were adopted by the majority of the faculty and students at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. In the end, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod rejected all such methods because they undermined the whole of the Christian faith.

What does Jesus teach about the reliability of the Old Testament? How should we view those who seek to weaken it?
(Matthew 5:17–19) _____

What does the Word of God do?

Men prepare to become pastors by studying the Word of God and its teachings for four years. Women prepare to show God’s mercy to people in need as deaconesses by studying Scripture for three years. But their reading of God’s Word continues until they die. They also constantly invite every Christian to join them in learning at the feet of Jesus.

Why do we study the Word of God? What do the Scriptures do for us? (John 8:31; John 20:30–31; 2 Timothy 2:14–17)____

How does the Word of God work to show us our sin?
(Hebrews 4:12–13) _____

Throughout recorded history, God gave the human race many talented artists, musicians, poets, and authors of great literature. They painted pictures, sculpted statues, built magnificent buildings, penned epic poems, and wrote stories, novels, treatises, and countless other works that we remember and teach children. We describe them as inspiring. Yet even the greatest of these rarely change us. The Word of God is different. It comes with the power to save.

How does the Holy Spirit create faith in us?
(Romans 10:14–17) _____

How do we find eternal life in the Scriptures? (John 5:29)____

Does God’s Word do what he intended it to do?
(Isaiah 55:10–11)? _____

How can we have God’s peace in our daily lives?
(Colossians 3:15–16) _____

Why is it dangerous to build our lives on anything other than the words of Jesus? What is the value in building on his words alone? (Matthew 7:24–27) _____

God’s Word is a great gift to us. He reveals himself to us in it because we cannot fully understand him. In it is everything we need to know about him, his will, and his plan for our lives. With it he sanctifies the water of Holy Baptism to wash away our sins and unite us with Jesus in his death and resurrection. With it he gives us in the Lord’s Supper his own Body and Blood with bread and wine to eat and to drink. Through it the Holy Spirit calls us with the Gospel, enlightens us with his gifts, makes us holy, and keeps us safe until we enter Christ’s sabbath rest. On the last day, as it was on the first day, by his Word he will call us from our graves to live with him forever. 🏰

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