



Reformation Sunday
29 October 2023

Ascension Lutheran Church
Rev. Christian W. Marien

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

I need a little help this morning as we dig into the truth. Finish the slogan, tell me the company advertising the product...

My bologna has a first name...	(Oscar Mayer)
Gimme a break, gimme a break	(Kit Kat bar)
I don't wanna grow up...	(Toys R Us)
The whole world looks up to the rocket	(Oldsmobile)
It's gotta be good and It's gotta be sweet.	(cracker Jack)
They're magically delicious...	(Lucky Charms)
Dollar for Dollar you can't beat a	(Pontiac)
I want my baby back, baby back.	(Chilis)
Ho ho ho.	(Green Giant)
Like a good neighbor...	(State Farm)
If you don't look good, we don't look good.	(Vidal Sassoon)
I'm a Big Kid Now.	(Huggies)
The best part of waking up...	(Folgers)

Lucky Charms...magically delicious...really? Or just the marshmallows? And Huggies...I'm a big kid now...really? Or did you just graduate to a self-service diaper? And Folgers...the best part of waking up...really? Not in our house – not Folgers! The world will tell you anything. The world will tell you things that are not true. Jesus will tell you something else.

“If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” “Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. So, if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

Early on, after the death of my mom, while Covid was rampant and we were all homebound, my dad was at our house for meals 3 or 4 nights a week. This was also the time when the child of God who was in the white house was causing me to struggle to understand some of his words and actions. So, politics that are barely ever discussed, were front and center in our home. Now, I should explain that my dad and my wife are on very distinctly different sides of the political spectrum. After a particularly joyfully, somewhat heated conversation – dinner was over, and my dad went home. As soon as the front door closed, without missing a beat, my daughter, about to be confirmed today looked at my wife and me and said, “now, grandpa is a Republican and we are Democrats, right?” I looked at my daughter and said, “you are nothing, mom and I are Democrats.” It is okay that my children hear the divides of politics, even in our home, because they begin to learn the ability to listen to all sides and form an educated opinion. But imagine my surprise, when my youngest daughter, while sitting on the couch with me watching tv a few nights later, looked at me after four political ads in a row and said, “now, how do we know they are telling the truth?” I could not have been prouder.

It turns out that the word “truth” in the world today can often be barely recognizable from the “truth” Jesus speaks of today. I wonder if Taylor Swift told us a new truth today would the world be overrun with Swifties declaring the new “truth.” Apparently, Travis Kelce is now “famous” for his relationship with Taylor.



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The Kansas City Chiefs are now the most popular football team among 14–18-year-old girls across the nation. Does Taylor now offer us the “truth” we need to follow?

In 2020, social media captured the imagination of high school students with a new app for their cell phones called “Be Real.” Users would receive a notification at a random time once a day saying, 'Time to BeReal'. This opened a two-minute window for the user to post a picture of what they were currently doing. The purpose was to capture an authentic, unfiltered snapshot of a user's life. It skyrocketed in popularity thanks to its focus on authenticity. Photos were unfiltered, unedited, and given an asterisk if they were retaken. Photos taken outside of the designated two-minute time frame were marked with how late they were posted—a mark of shame, of sorts. Suddenly, the truth was out there. For 3 months the app and countless high school and college age followers stopped what they were doing to tell the truth of their lives to the world. And then that “truth” was over. And the world changed the definition of “truth” once again.

We can often forget what Jesus said, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” Which means we need to spend more time in the source of truth and less time with the world’s newest “truthful” source of information that tells us the truth we want to hear to reinforce what we already believe. Which leads me to these words of Scripture...

- In Isaiah 41: do not be afraid, for I am with you.
- Isaiah 43: when you go through deep waters, I will be with you.
- Deuteronomy 31: It is the Lord who goes before you and will be with you; he will not fail you.
- Matthew 11: Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest
- Romans 8: All things work together for the good of those who love God.
- Mark 16: Do not be afraid; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here.
- And John, Chapter 8: you will know the truth and the truth will make you free. My friends, how “free” do you feel? How “free” are you? When the world tells you that you are not enough, that you are broken, that you are alone, that you can do nothing to change the world to make it a better place – what does it mean when Jesus invites you continue in his word- to know the truth that makes you free? How easy it is for us to forget what the Apostle Paul writes, “I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.” Which leads me to this...

“On the edge of war, one foot already in, I no longer pray for peace, I pray for miracles,” writes author Ann Weems. I pray that stone hearts will turn to tenderness, and evil intentions will turn to mercifulness, and all of the soldiers already deployed will be snatched out of harm’s way, and the whole world will be astounded onto its knees. I pray that all the “God talk” will take bones, and stand up and shed its cloak of faithlessness, and walk again in its powerful truth. I pray that the whole world will sit down together and share its bread and wine. Some say there is no hope, but then I’ve always applauded the holy fools who never seem to give up the scandalousness of our faith: that we are loved by God...that we can truly love one another. I no longer pray for peace: I pray for miracles.

(8:30) Anna, Daniel, Anabelle, Lydia. (10:45) Colin, Genevieve, Maggie, Hailey, Aidan, Alina.



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The body of Christ has been given to you more times than you can count – whether or not you felt worthy, whether or not you thought you deserved the gift of God’s forgiveness; whether or not you have been awake enough on a Sunday morning to get both hands out when the bread has been offered to you. That is the truth. You have shared in the promise of God in bread and wine and brought hope to people who were waiting for God to act in their lives just by being present in this place. That is the truth. You have shared and remembered the promise of God’s love and forgiveness countless times through every “rake and run”, “shop and serve”, and Thursday night JOLT event. That is the truth. You have trusted the story of God’s love with every kayak paddling, zipline screaming, mountain climbing attempt you have made. (I have seen some of you sweating and praying at the top of the mountain.) Believe me – that is the truth! My friends – to show up, to receive, to share, to trust - is to resist all that is wrong with the world. This is the truth.

Resistance is the path of the follower of Jesus. Resistance to the lies of this world, to oppression, to injustice, to silence, to apathy, to loss, even to the power of death. So welcome fellow truth-tellers. Welcome to the powerful truth of who you are – of who we are together as the body of Christ. We, who are loved by God...who are taught to love one another...who trust the One who tells us we-actually-can love one another. Of course...pray for peace. But miracles...only fools pray for such things. And that may be the greatest resistance of all. Welcome to the resistance. Thanks be to God you have come. Amen.