

# **The Good News**

Romans 1:16-17

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“The Gospel is a power which saves all who believe it . . . it is the Word which is powerful to rescue all who put their trust in it.”

So wrote Martin Luther in his world-changing commentary on Romans.

499 years ago tomorrow Martin Luther stuck his 95 theses to the door of the chapel in Wittenberg calling for debate on theological issues surrounding God’s grace and our salvation. This moment has become the symbol for the start of the Reformation which led ultimately to severe divisions within Christianity in Western Europe, the formation of multiple Protestant groups, dramatic changes in Roman Catholicism, and to a series of violent wars and persecutions with results still affecting our global community today. The historical outcomes of this event include both curses and blessings, and in the next few years we will have opportunities to explore the rich and complex heritage we have inherited from the Reformation and what it means for us in the twenty-first century.

So this year I decided to take as my text two verses from St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans which were essential to Luther’s understanding of the Christian faith. Hear in them the good news for all of us.

Romans 1:16-17

For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, “The one who is righteous will live by faith.”

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