

3200 Years...500 Years...

The Song Never Grows Old

✦ Song of death for the enemy (vv.1-3)

✦ Song of life in the land of the living (vv.4-11)

In the Name of **Christ** our refuge and strength, dear fellow heirs of the Lutheran Reformation:

Maybe some of you can relate. There was a time when celebrating the Lutheran Reformation seemed a bit much. Aren't we supposed to honor God, not man? But over the years I've read Luther's sermons from his eight volume *Postil*. And this 500th Anniversary gave us many new books, articles, movies to renew God's Reformation in our hearts. Still many don't know the difference between Dr. Martin Luther, the pastor; or Dr. Martin Luther King, the political activist. So the Holy Spirit advises: **"Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."** (Hebrews 13:7f NIV84) The value of this 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation is not the man, but the Savior who used this man to renew His Church by the Gospel. Luther's love of music grew in Psalm 46. From **"the Sons of Korah," The Song Never Grows Old** whether it be **3200 Years** or **500 Years**. Sadly, it is still a...

✦ Song of death for the enemy (vv.1-3)

Remembering your leaders can be painful. The whole family of Korah would always remember something terrible that happened after the Exodus with Moses in the wilderness: **"Korah son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and certain Reubenites—Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth—became insolent and rose up against Moses. With them were 250 Israelite men, well-known community leaders who had been appointed members of the council. They came as a group to oppose Moses and Aaron and said to them, "You have gone too far! The whole community is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is with them. Why then do you set yourselves above the LORD's assembly?"** (Numbers 16:1–3 NIV84) Korah and his allies rebelled against God's church officials.

In one of the most dramatic events of the Old Testament, the LORD's prophet Moses called for a test whether Korah and company were right or wrong. God judged them guilty: **"As soon as [Moses] finished saying all this, the ground under them split apart and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them, with their households and all Korah's men and all their possessions. They went down alive into the grave, with everything they owned; the earth closed over them, and they perished and were gone from the community. At their cries, all the Israelites around them fled, shouting, 'The earth is going to swallow us too!'"** (Numbers 16:31–34 NIV84) The rest were terrified because of their own sins. How often have we rebelled by words and actions and feelings against what God commands or forbids?

Down through the ages the family of Korah would recall how the earth practically did dissolve, how mountains tumbling into the sea would be nothing like whole families being swallowed by the earth. And yet, they must have heard more than the **Song of death for the enemy**, because they sang, **"God is our refuge and strength, a helper who can always be found in times of trouble."** (EHV¹) Somehow God got through to them and us. Somehow God always preserves for Himself a remnant of believers. Now for over **3200 Years The Song Never Grows Old** for the Sons of Korah. God conquered **the enemy** of sin in their family, then raised up some stouthearted believers who could enjoy by faith this ...

¹ Unless noted otherwise, Bible quotes *Evangelical Heritage Version (EHV): NT, Psalms*. NPH 800-662-6022. Kindle Edition.

✦ Song of life in the land of the living (vv.4-11)

One thing you read again and again in biographies and sermons of Martin Luther was his concern for God's truth. His great fear? The Medieval Church for 1,000 years had preached salvation by works – through penance, indulgences, saint worship, etc. So how could Martin be correct and they all be wrong? How could he disagree with church fathers like his favorite Augustine? Isn't that what you'd have to ask yourself if you believe differently than your parents or grandparents? You're right, they're wrong?

Psalm 46 answers in the dramatic shift from earth shattering judgment to God's peace (vv.4-11): ***“There is a river—its streams bring joy to the city of God, to the holy dwelling of the Most High.”*** Martin Luther had tried through his early years to swim against the current of God's anger at his sin. He became an Augustinian monk, the most poverty-stricken of the orders. But starving and beating himself only left him drowning in more guilt. Finally his father confessor got Luther a professorship at the new University of Wittenberg. There studying the Bible would be Luther's job, and hopefully his release.

Teaching the Psalms and then Paul's letters to the Romans and to the Galatians, Luther discovered God's peace is like a river. God sent His only Son Jesus to bring down to us the righteousness and holiness God demands. We have nothing to give up to Him but sickness in our soul, immoral lust in body and terrible thoughts in our minds. But once the *river* of God's grace ran through Luther's soul, he could see heaven stands wide open to us sinners. It's time to stop rebelling and admit our sin to see our Savior.

For the last **500 Years** believers in Christ alone have marveled at the awesome way God raised up His remnant in Germany and Scandinavia, all over Europe, America, China, Africa... **The Song Never Grows Old** as Luther's legacy in the Gospel of full and free forgiveness rings true in our day.

People still try to rebel. Shocking news in our media about politicians and bad actors only masks the fact that this has been going on behind closed doors for decades and centuries in our land. How can we claim to be guiltless if our box office purchases and political contributions have supported disgraceful behavior? Directly or indirectly, the problem is really our own rebellious hearts. With enough time and power and money would we be any better? God demands absolute holiness and perfection. Who can give it? We'd be drowning in the debt of our own sin if God had not preserved the Good News of grace alone, received by faith alone, proclaimed in Scripture alone – all focused on Christ alone, and surely all to the glory of God alone! ***“Nations are in turmoil. Kingdoms fall. God raises his voice. The earth melts. ⁷The LORD of Armies is with us. The God of Jacob is a fortress for us.”***

Many rebel in our day by worshiping creation without the Creator. They demand we “save the planet” without the Savior. They want to be “spiritual” without the Holy Spirit. Still the Holy Spirit calls through the Sons of Korah: ***“Come, look at the works of the LORD. What a wasteland he has made of the earth! ⁹He makes wars cease to the end of the earth. He shatters the bow. He cuts up the spear. He burns the carts with fire.”*** What? An end to weapons and war? God makes earth *a wasteland*?

We see the fires that burned out West and the storms that demolished the East plus earthquakes all over, even in the midland. How can you sleep at night with such violence in our cities? Not to mention the nagging voice of your conscience about the things you should be doing, but don't; should not, but do?

“Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted on the earth.” We are among those nations rejoicing that this is our God. He sent His Son to be our Savior. He keeps sending His dear Holy Spirit to reform our hearts. Once His enemies by nature, we have become His own dear children by rebirth in Baptism. ***“The LORD of Armies is with us. The God of Jacob is a fortress for us.”*** What helps us see God's great love are the same trials and temptations that have always troubled God's people. When God works in you His great gift of repentance, when He convinces you that God cannot lie, that His Word is forever true for you, when He trains you to put your full weight on Christ alone – then God is your Fortress and Strength. Then Reformation overflows your

life. For you too **The Song Never Grows Old**, for it has become your **Song in the land of the living**.
Glory to God! Amen.