

## Revelation 14:6-7

Reformation; November 3, 2024

He preached about 3,000 – 4,000 sermons in his life. On the average, he preached around 150 sermons per year. That would be about a sermon every three days. He studied hard, but he never used a manuscript. It was not unusual for his sermons to go on for hours at a time. But the people didn't seem to mind it. He spoke to them in a way that no one else ever had. His sermons focused on God's grace and how important it was for people to have faith in God. Luther made it clear that redemption does not come from human effort but would come from God's unmerited grace. That made his sermons so different than many of the priests or pastors of his day. They were filled with the **"eternal Gospel"** that John speaks about in our text.

Even though he lived in Wittenberg, he had travelled to his home town of Eisleben to settle a conflict between some noble families and the church. While he was there, his health began to get worse. He seemed to know his death was going to happen soon. On that Sunday, he cut his sermon short and return to the room where he was staying. The end came rather quickly. His heart began to beat wildly. Friends came to attend to him. He would go to bed and sleep only for a short while before waking up. He would wake up in the night because the pain seemed so great. Many tried to comfort him, but the only words that he kept saying were: **"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son... For God so loved the world that he gave his Son."** Four days later, he breathed his last breath and on February 18, 1546, Martin Luther passed away. God took his servant home to heaven.

When Martin Luther's funeral was conducted a few days later, it was held in Wittenberg. His body was taken from Eisleben to Wittenberg. Martin Luther's pastor in Wittenberg would use the words of our text as Luther's funeral sermon. **"Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water."** Pastor Bugenhagen preached on these words; he was not saying that Martin Luther was an angel. While it is true that God used Martin Luther to proclaim the eternal Gospel to the people in Germany and the world, all people could be comforted in knowing that the **"Eternal Gospel"** would not be silenced. This message would be proclaimed **"to every nation, tribe, language and people."** This Gospel message that would be proclaimed, would bring hope and comfort to all the people in this world. The Gospel message which had been lost in the Dark Ages of the church, was now being let loose **"flying in midair"** for all to see, hear and believe.

Martin Luther grew up in a day and age and church where people lived in fear of God. Instead of hearing the **"Eternal Gospel,"** they were made to fear God as this mighty Judge. No matter how much one would try to please God, they could never do enough. Martin Luther was terrified of God. It seemed like as hard as he would try to win God's favor, he just continually failed. Heaven was a target that he was trying to get to, but he continually kept falling short of. Then one night he came across a passage in the book of Romans: **"This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe."** (Romans 3:22) In other words, the righteousness that God required for heaven was given by God through faith in Jesus Christ. Because of God's grace and forgiveness in Jesus, **"The righteous will live by faith."** (Romans 1:17)

In a few minutes we will sing verse 3 of *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*. We will sing the words: *"One little word can fell him."* Do you know what *little word* did Luther had in mind? I have to admit that I had just assumed the *little word* was *Jesus* or *Grace*. Then I read an article this week that asked the question: What *little word* did Luther have in mind?

In chapter 12 of Revelation, John had seen a vivid vision of the Church's greatest enemies: **"The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him."** (Revelation 12:9) Satan's goal is to take as many people as he can with him. As the Devil carries out that work, lies just keep pouring out of his mouth like water. His lies seep into every nook and cranny of our world. They seep into our homes, churches and hearts. They come in all kinds of different shapes and sizes. The biggest lie that the Devil brings against us is that God doesn't love us anymore.

But then amid all of those lies, God sends his angel to proclaim **"the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people."** God calls out Satan for who he is. He is the Liar. He is the Deceiver.

The one little word is: *Satan*. God tells us to not listen to his lies. Against all the Devil's lies, God most certainly does love us. The proof that God demonstrates his love for us is found on the cross. You see on the cross, Jesus wants us to know that Satan, and his lies, are crushed. For it is on the cross, *"He's judged; the deed is done."* As Luther spoke about all the words and books that were written against him, he says that they *"are very easily refuted with the single word, 'Devil, you lie.'* So, when the devil tries to convince you that God doesn't love you because of the sins you've committed... When the devil tries to convince you that God doesn't love you because of the suffering you're enduring... Rather than listening to those lies, remember Jesus' cross and remember the payment made for your sins. And so, today, as we celebrate the Lutheran Reformation, we do not celebrate a man. We give thanks to God for his eternal Gospel. We remember how God uses imperfect people to achieve his purposes. His purpose is simple as the Apostle writes: **"Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water."**

May God grant it. Amen.