**2 Timothy 4:1-5**

charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: **2** preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. **3**  For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, **4** and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. **5** As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

**“Be Ready!”**

October, 2017 means many people throughout the world are wondering about the upcoming celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. We know people are paying attention because PBS last month broadcasted the documentary, “Martin Luther: The Idea That Changed The World” and it surpassed expectations. Our Missouri Synod president Matthew Harrison noted, “The program had more viewers than every show that night on ABC, CBS and Fox…The show did well even in cities where one might not expect it. Among cities with the highest ratings were Seattle, San Diego, and Las Vegas… demonstrating that the show was reaching far beyond a Lutheran audience.”[[1]](#footnote-1) This response tells us Luther is not someone the western world should disregard lightly.

Likewise, on this LWML Sunday, there is another special celebration. 2017 also marks the 75th anniversary of the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League. Since its founding in 1942, Lutheran women have worked together to share and support the spread of the Gospel. Whether it is helping to train pastors and church workers, aiding partner organizations, or assistance to foreign missions, the LWML cannot be overlooked. A dual anniversary like we have as Lutherans in 2017 is to turn us to seek that blessing Solomon spoke, “The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers.” In an ever-changing world and among a growing culture of intolerance, be ready to confess Christ in fullness for no greater time needs to hear the Gospel.

1. **Be ready to confess Christ for we were called by the truth of God’s Word.**
2. “I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.”

* St. Paul wrote a final letter to Timothy a fellow pastor in the public ministry while in prison at Rome.
* The apostle knew his foreseen execution would bring challenges to preachers that would be against the Gospel.
* No matter how things changed, the charge given to Timothy from the church remained because it was before the presence of God and Christ Jesus.
* This readiness to “preach the word” rested upon the faithful teachings that believed, “All Scripture is breathed out by God (2 Tim 3:16).

1. God’s saving grace in Jesus has touched our lives to confess the truth.

* An authoritative Word of salvation came to us by baptism promising, “at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord (Eph 5:8).
* This light of truth poured into us that gift freely won by Jesus and we are to be ready to confess it in life.
* If it is just the “pastor’s job,” we miss how all were called to confess the good news with those in your life and the doors God opens for you.
* The truth is up for grabs today, so share in all honesty how salvation is only by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone.

1. **Be ready to confess Christ because error is at work against the Gospel.**
2. “For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.”

* St. Paul faced this falsity, but the time was coming that he would no longer be present to hold back that flood.
* Timothy was to see how natural man has no need for the Gospel of forgiveness in Christ and even wants to replace it.
* Luther during his time saw how relics, purgatory, invoking of saints, and so much else had overturned the gift God freely gave in Jesus.
* The Word proved to Luther sinners did not win salvation on their terms, but the righteousness perfectly offered up by Christ turned God to us.

1. The same old song of satanic deception has turned up the volume for us today.

* Our pop-culture has watered-down Jesus Christ to be more for marketing than any kind of Savior truly delivering forgiveness to sinners.
* Sound doctrine or healthy teaching with God’s Word has become mere opinion, so many have left the doors wide open to invite all kinds of errors.
* Scratching itches is what our society is all about and so false teachers offer the same sinful garbage of idolatry for the soul.
* Lots of noise, but today no scratching itches only Christ speaking forgiveness and no more wandering for Christ makes His way to us by the sacrament.

1. **Be ready to confess Christ in these times focused on His faithfulness.**   
   A. “As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

* Timothy had to keep his head on straight and remain steadfast unwilling to be caught off guard only being ready to confess.
* The times never seem right, but once the Gospel came to light by Scripture for Luther he only could confess.
* Who would have guessed that in 1942, when our nation was at war, when gas was being rationed, and when Japan attacked Midway in June.
* In that darkness, 100 women still met and formed the LWML seeking to encourage women in the LCMS and extend the work of missions.

1. How do we focus when there is so much to face in our times?

* Keep level heads set upon the truth of God’s Word.
* Lift up hearts to the love given by Christ Jesus.
* Seek to bear burdens for the cross is our glory.
* Be ready to confess the Gospel as the greatest gift.

More than “Mite boxes” for missions, the concluding sentence on the history of the LWML shows how these women confessed. “Its benefits can be seen in faith deepened through Bible studies, in confidence built through leadership training, in the befriending of career missionaries, in blankets and clothing gathered for the impoverished, in food shared with the hungry and, above all, in the friendships nurtured and the lives changed by sharing the love of Jesus Christ.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

As in every age, there are both troubles and new horizons, so the Biblical way and Lutheran way is to confess. Like those in the past, God grant the pure Gospel to be and remain with us. Paul reminded Timothy, it always rests on how God, “saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus…” (2 Tim 1:9) In an ever-changing world and among a growing culture of intolerance, be ready to confess Christ in fullness for no greater time needs to hear the Gospel. Amen. Now the peace of Christ that passes all understanding be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.

1. Facebook Post Sept 14th, 2017 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://unite-production.s3.amazonaws.com/tenants/lwml/attachments/21814/lutheran-women-in-mission-history-rev.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)