

A Little Luther



Martin Luther by Wilhelm Lindenschmit (1829-1895), wood engraving published 1879

A Little Luther Goes a Long Way (“long” is eternal life, the “Way” is Christ Himself)!

Psalm 68:5

⁵ Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.”

“I will return to you soon and be with you forever. You shall be protected against all devils, the world, sin, and death; and you shall live and conquer with Me.”

About A Little Luther:

Martin Luther was a German Reformer living in the 16th century. His writings contain much wisdom and understanding of God’s Holy Scriptures and are always subordinate to them, meaning the Bible itself is the sole true authority (*Sola Scriptura*). Luther simply had marvelous, God-given insight into His Word. Some of these nuggets are simply too good not to share. We’ve tried to highlight points that seem to us to summarize Luther’s teachings from these glorious passages of Scripture. May God bless your own studies of Scripture, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes (Rom 1:16).

The WORD

¹⁸ “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (John 14:19). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

In the estimation of the world and according to our own feelings, this small group of Christians appears to be poor orphans forsaken and forgotten both by God and by Christ, since He permits them to be reviled and mocked, condemned, persecuted, and murdered, and to be everybody’s door mat. Furthermore, their hearts are constantly frightened, saddened, and tormented by the devil. Hence they might well be accounted orphans, more so than all other orphans and forsaken people on earth, of whom Scripture says that God Himself, who calls Himself the Father of the fatherless (Ps. 68:5), must look after them, since they are forsaken by everybody. “But,” says Christ, “I will not forsake you, as it seems and feels. I will give you the Comforter, who will instill in you the courage to be certain that you are My true Christians and the true church. Moreover, I Myself will surely be and remain among you with My protection and My sovereign power, even though I now depart from you physically and visibly, and even though you will be alone, exposed to the wickedness and might of the devil and the world. But the world will not be so powerful, the devil will not work such havoc, and all the sages and scholars will not be so wise that **My Baptism and the proclamation about Me will not remain and be practiced, and that My Holy Spirit will not reign and work in you,** even though this is always assailed and seems imperfect among you yourselves.”

If the office of the ministry were not constantly being administered in Christendom and the Holy Spirit did not hold sway, it would be impossible to retain Baptism, the Sacrament, and the knowledge of Christ. Who could preserve these if it were not done by the exercise of the public ministry? Studying and praying in secret would not accomplish this. Others could not learn and attain them by such means. **What has been done is due to the fact that God has always given preachers and spread the Word, so that it has been spoken and heard by His own people, even though very imperfectly.** In many places His Word has been distorted or even perverted; and only a few have retained and administered it properly, while most people have fallen away from it. But despite this, **God has preserved His own and has always given some who preached against the false teaching** of the pope and other factions, even though they were persecuted and suppressed for a time. Thus Christianity has been preserved amid the greatest and most grievous errors and heresies, as at the time of Arius and later, and also during the horrible persecutions in the days of the martyrs. It has been wonderfully defended, and it has endured and carried the day against the world and the devil. Upheld by the Holy Spirit, it has expanded more and more.

Thus all Christendom has this comforting promise that it will not be forsaken or left without aid and help. Even if it is bereft of all human consolation, help, and assistance, still Christ will not leave it desolate and unprotected. It seems as though for a time He were leaving His Christians without comfort and protection. The devil and the world—and they too, by reason of the weakness of their flesh—might imagine that it is all over for the Christians and that they are completely suppressed and subdued. It must have felt and looked like this during the three days when Christ was taken away, most shamefully executed, and laid in the grave. But even this should not rob them of their comfort or drive them to despair. **Despite everything they feel and see, they should cling to the promise He gives them here when He says: “I will not stay away from you; and though I must depart from you for a little while physically, I will not remain away long. I will return to you soon and be with you forever. You shall be protected against all devils, the world, sin, and death; and you shall live and conquer with Me.”**

Luther, M. (1999). Luther’s works, vol. 24: Sermons on the Gospel of St. John: Chapters 14-16. (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald, & H. T. Lehmann, Eds.) (Vol. 24, pp. 130-132). Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House.