

The Hymn of the Day for Reformation Sunday is “A Mighty Fortress is Our God”(LSB 656). This hymn was inspired by the words of Psalm 46. Luther found great comfort in this psalm.

When Luther was writing this hymn, he was fighting turmoil all around him. Both political and theological forces were after him. He was often in the darkness of depression.

In the first half of stanza 1 Luther made a powerful statement about what God is and what God can do. A “fortress” was familiar to him because he lived in one. It was high on a hill built with cement and stone. It was almost impregnable and there was only one road up the hill. The word “shield” brings back thoughts expressed in Ephesians 6 where it protected the whole body.

The second half of stanza 1 is a stark reminder of how powerful and dangerous the devil is. We can not defeat him without help from the Lord.

Stanza 2 begins with a continuation of the dangers of Satan. It, however, soon points to Jesus as the sure source of strength in our fight with the evil forces of this world. It reminds us that he will prevail in every age.

Stanza 3 continues the warning about the evil spiritual forces at work in a Christian’s life. It ends, however, in the confident expression that the devil is judged and “one little word can fell him.” For our assurance that “little word” is Jesus.

Stanza 4 is one continuous victory lap of praise. It expands on the great effect of Jesus and his many gifts that he rains upon us. We can move through each day convinced that our place in God’s kingdom is secure.

Prayer: Almighty and gracious Lord, pour out Your Holy Spirit on Your faithful people. Keep us steadfast in Your grace and truth, protect and deliver us in times of temptation, defend us against all enemies, and grant to Your Church Your saving peace; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen (Collect for Reformation Day).