

Brand Lutheran

We've gone soft. The Lutheran church, the one that was hammered into shape on the anvil of Wittenberg's altars, has somehow drifted into lukewarm waters. What once burned with conviction, with the furious guts of a German monk banging his fists on the papal gates, has somehow turned into a watered-down brand, a logo stamped onto bland church signs and pamphlets. But that's the thing about brands—they're hollow unless there's something real behind them. And if Luther could see where things stand now, he'd likely be nailing his 95 Theses all over again, and this time, on our doors.

So many who go by the name of "Lutheran" have now traded the raw courage of the Reformation for a more palatable, polished version of Lutheranism. They've gotten comfortable and safe. Instead of being reformers, they have become quiet spectators.

But let's rewind to the days when Luther and the Wittenberg reformers were fighting a battle that wasn't just academic; it was life-or-death stuff, burning the fat of spiritual rot right off the church's bones. That was no polite negotiation—it was a fight for the truth of the gospel.

Today, we're like Siegfried, the dragon-slayer, with his cloak of invisibility and strength that seems unstoppable. But he lets his guard down, trusts too quickly, and is betrayed. That's what I see when I look at many today who go by the name Lutheran. They're Siegfried, once formidable, now fallen because they've let themselves become comfortable, invisible, and even trusted in the wrong things. They have traded their dragon slaying mission for a seat at the table with the very institutions they once challenged.

Take Luther's doctrine of Scripture Alone (*sola scriptura*). This torch was held high, enlightening the path that leads directly to Scripture without the middleman of church hierarchy or government edicts. It was a cry for a raw, unfiltered faith grounded in God's Word. Yet now, I see bending to cultural tides, swapping out core teachings to keep people happy and to stay relevant. Luther didn't stick his neck out so we could turn the faith into a watered-down version that's "nice" but toothless. He wanted a church grounded in Scripture that stood its ground against corruption and refused to compromise.

And it's not just *sola scriptura* that has been left to slide. Luther was relentless about Faith Alone (*sola fide*)—no reliance on works or indulgences, just the pure grace of God. Today, many seem too keen on adding their own qualifications, trying to mould faith into something comfortable and respectable. If Luther heard some of the sermons being preached today, he'd be digging his heels into the ground, demanding we go back to that gritty, unshakable core of grace, that pulse that drove him to stand before emperors and councils without flinching.

With that, another classic Germanic tale comes to mind: the Wandering Jew, the man who taunted Jesus on the way to the cross and was cursed to walk the earth until the Second Coming. That's almost the Lutheran Church today, with many wandering in spiritual limbo.

The Lutheran Church was once seen as a defiant force, willing to face exile and be bold. But now? The Lutheran Church has splintered, with many floating, stuck between who they once were and who they think they need to become to stay "relevant." The irony is that Luther never once worried about being relevant. He worried about being faithful, and there's a universe of difference between the two.

Many who still go by the name "Lutheran" have forgotten how to carry the fire, losing sight of the Reformation's urgency, refusing to tolerate spiritual rot, and insistence on truth over comfort. Luther wasn't interested in making allies but in rescuing souls, standing on Scripture, and nothing else. It wasn't some "brand." It was blood and bone, life and death. The Reformation wasn't a feel-good movement. It was a rebellion, a risk, and a call to arms.

The Reformation was never about comfort or relevance. It was about truth, even when it hurt, even when it cost. We must still be willing to step into the fire, face the dragons, risk exile, and speak uncomfortable truths. Because if not, then we're just coasting on a legacy that no longer belongs to us. We must remember who we are and remain faithful to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.