

# COMMEMORATION OF MARTIN LUTHER'S DEATH

Observed February 19, 2017

by Pastor Timothy Appel, Grace Lutheran Church, Smithville, Texas

## WE ARE WEAK, BUT JESUS IS STRONG

Text: Psalm 31:5

Object: none

Summary: Jesus is our strong Savior, who does not let sin, Satan, or death separate His people from Him.

Do you know the words to the song “Jesus Loves Me”? Let’s sing the first stanza together: *“Jesus loves me! This I know, For the Bible tells me so. Little ones to Him belong; They are weak, but He is strong.”* That’s a great song to remind us that we are weak sinners, but we have a strong Savior. We can’t save ourselves, but Jesus has saved us by His death and resurrection.

That song comes to mind for me today as we remember the death of Martin Luther. On February 18, 1546, the German pastor Martin Luther died in Eisleben, Germany, the same town where he was born. After he died, some of his friends found a note in his pocket. Martin Luther had written on that note: “We are beggars. This is true.” As Martin Luther died, he knew that there was nothing that he could give to God. Just like the song says, Martin Luther remembered that he was weak.

But that’s not all Martin Luther remembered. Just like the song says, he remembered that Jesus is strong. On the night before he died, Martin Luther said many Bible verses to himself. One of those passages was Psalm 31:5, which is a prayer that says, “Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God.” Martin Luther knew that even though he was weak, he had a strong Savior. He knew that even in death, he would not be separated from Jesus. Jesus wouldn’t let that happen. Martin Luther was weak, but Jesus is strong.

The prayer from Psalm 31:5 is our prayer too. Each one of us is a weak sinner. We know we can’t save ourselves from sin. That’s why we commit ourselves into the hands of Jesus, who forgives our sins in Word and Sacraments. We know that we can’t save ourselves from the devil. That’s why we commit ourselves into the hands of Jesus, who has defeated our enemy for us. We know that we can’t save ourselves from death. That’s why we commit ourselves into the hands of Jesus, who will not let even death separate us from Him. Even when we die, Jesus keeps us with Him, and He will raise us on the Last Day. In all times and in all places, we commit ourselves into the hands of Jesus, the

strong Savior for us weak sinners! *Close with prayer.* Dear Jesus, . . . we are weak, . . . but You are strong. . . . Into Your hands . . . we commit ourselves. . . . In Your name we pray. . . . Amen.

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