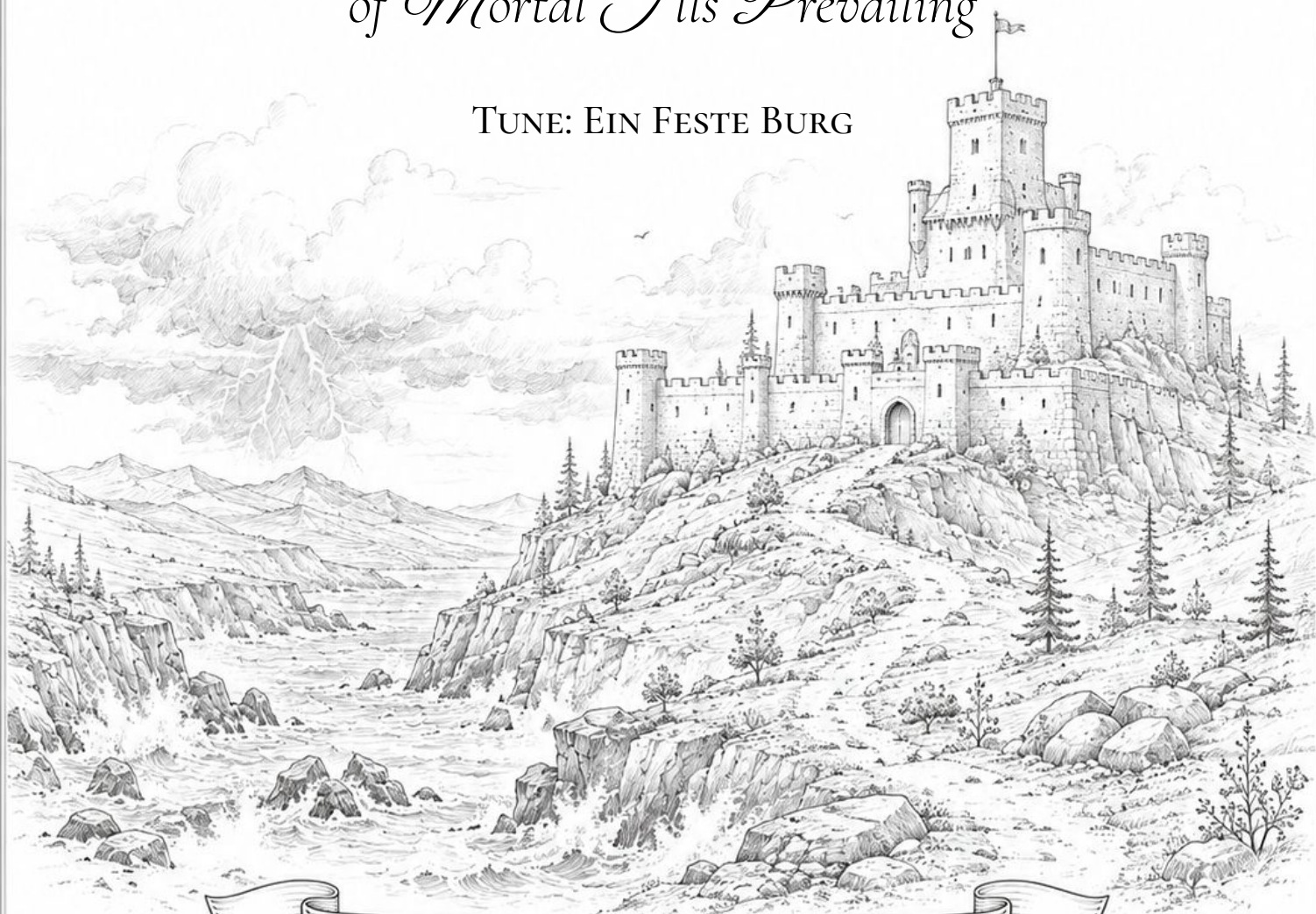


A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

*Our Helper He Amid The Flood
of Mortal Ills Prevailing*

TUNE: EIN FESTE BURG



"The name of the LORD is a strong
tower; the righteous run to it and
are safe." - Proverbs 18:10



INTRODUCTION



Every person faces times of fear, uncertainty, or trouble. We may feel small, weak, or overwhelmed. This hymn reminds us that we are never to lose heart, because God, Himself, is our refuge and strength, and He will be victorious in the end.

Martin Luther wrote “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” nearly five hundred years ago during the Reformation - an extremely difficult time in church history. He based the hymn on Psalm 46, which begins,

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

Luther compared God to a mighty fortress—a place of safety where His people can run when danger comes. Castles and walls cannot truly save us, but the Lord never fails His children.

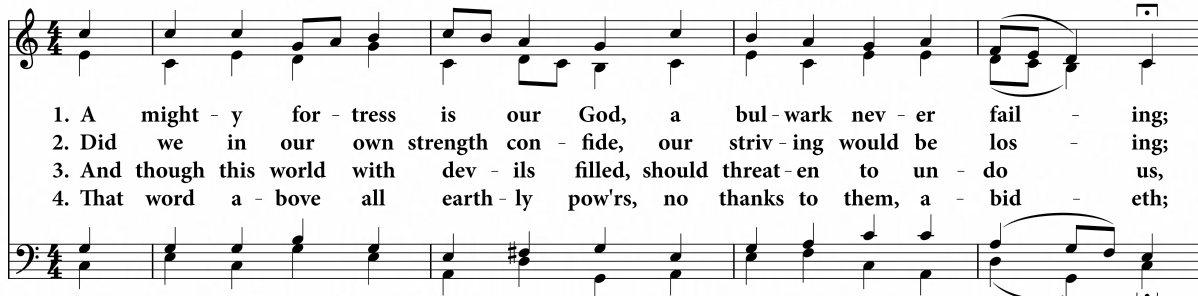
As you study this hymn together, encourage your students to think about times when they have been afraid. Help them see that our confidence is not in ourselves or in our circumstances, but in our great God, who is King over all.



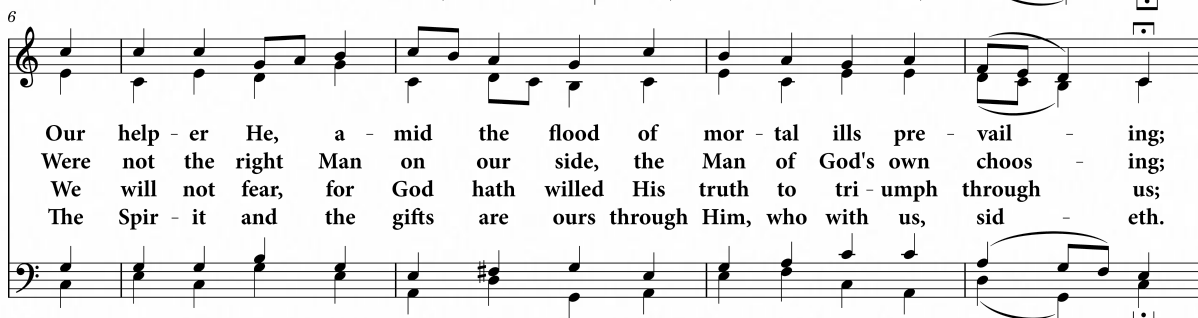
A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD

Martin Luther, 1529

Ein Feste Burg



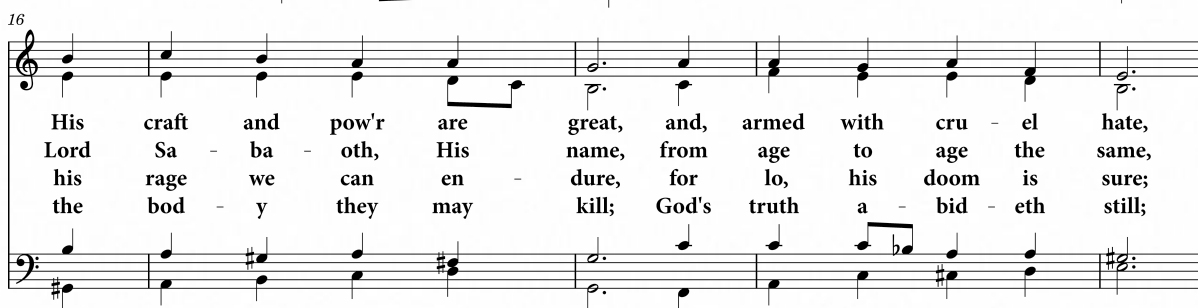
1. A might - y for - tress is our God, a bul - wark nev - er fail - ing;
2. Did we in our own strength con - fide, our striv - ing would be los - ing;
3. And though this world with dev - ils filled, should threat - en to un - do us,
4. That word a - bove all earth - ly pow'rs, no thanks to them, a - bid - eth;



Our help - er He, a - mid the flood of mor - tal ills pre - vail - ing;
Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choos - ing;
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to tri - umph through us;
The Spir - it and the gifts are ours through Him, who with us, sid - eth.



For still our an - cient foe doth seek to work us woe;
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Je - sus, it is He;
The prince of dark - ness grim, we trem - ble not for him;
Let goods and kin - dred go, this mor - tal life al - so;



His craft and pow'r are great, and, armed with cru - el hate,
Lord Sa - ba - oth, His name, from age to age the same,
his rage we can en - dure, for lo, his doom is sure;
the bod - y they may kill; God's truth a - bid - eth still;



On earth is not his e - qual.
And He must win the bat - tle.
One lit - tle word shall fell him.
His king - dom is for - ev - er.



A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD



A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;
Our helper, He, amid the flood of mortal ills, prevailing.
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing,
Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing.
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He!
Lord Sabaoth His name, from age to age the same;
And He must win the battle.

And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us.
The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure, for lo! his doom is sure;
One little word shall fell him!

That Word above all earthly powers no thanks to them abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;
The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still;
His kingdom is forever!





LIVING QUESTIONS



- What does this hymn teach us about who God is?
 - What is a fortress? Why would people build one?
 - When have you been afraid or needed help? How can Christians have courage even when the world seems frightening?
 - This hymn says our "ancient foe" is still trying to harm God's people. Who/what is our greatest enemy?
 - Luther says, "Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing." Why can't we overcome sin by trying harder? Why do we need Jesus?
 - Which is stronger—Satan's power or Jesus' power? How do you know? How does knowing that help you when you are afraid or tempted?
 - Sometimes it can seem like evil is winning. How does this hymn remind us that God is still King?
 - At the end of verse 3, it says of Satan, "One little word shall fell him!" What do you think this word is? (Luther, in other writings, says the word is "Liar!" (rooted in John 8:44 and Revelation 12:10))
 - If God is our mighty fortress, what does it look like to "run to Him" when we are afraid, tempted, or discouraged?
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VOCABULARY



Old English terms:

Hath = has

Lo! = Look! Behold!

Doth = does

Abideth = remains

Sideth = stands beside/supports

Fortress - A strong castle built to protect people from danger

Bulwark - A strong wall or defense that protects against attack

Amid - In the middle of

Mortal Ills - Troubles, hardships, or suffering

Prevailing - Winning or overcoming

Ancient - Very old; from long ago

Foe - An enemy

Woe - Great sadness, trouble, or suffering

Craft - Cleverness used to trick or deceive others

Confide - To trust in or depend on

Striving - Trying very hard or struggling

Sabaoth (sah-bah-owth) - A Hebrew word meaning "Lord of Hosts" or "Lord of Heaven's Armies"

Willed - Chosen or decided

Triumph - To win a great victory

Grim - Harsh, frightening, or terrible

Doom - Certain judgment or destruction

Fell (verb) - To knock down or destroy

Kindred - Family members or relatives





SCRIPTURE CONNECTIONS



Psalm 46:1-3

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

Proverbs 18:10

"The name of the LORD is a strong tower;
the righteous man runs into it and is safe."

Psalm 18:2

"The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer,
my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge,
my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."

Colossians 2:13-15

"And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him."

Revelation 12:10b

"...the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down,
who accuses them day and night before our God."





THE STORY



This hymn was written almost five hundred years ago. At that time, most people in Europe belonged to the Roman Catholic Church. Few people owned a Bible, and many could not read one even if they had it. Instead, they depended on church leaders to teach them God's Word.

Sadly, over time the church had drifted away from many of the Bible's clear teachings. People were often taught that they could earn God's favor by doing good works, participating in religious ceremonies, or even by paying money to the church. The simple, joyful message of the gospel—that we are saved by God's grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ alone—had become hidden beneath many false teachings and practices.

At that time, a German pastor named Martin Luther carefully studied the Bible. As he did so, God helped him see clearly what the Scriptures had taught all along: that salvation is God's free gift, received by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone.

On October 31, 1517, Luther nailed a list of ninety-five statements, called the Ninety-five Theses, to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. He hoped this would begin a conversation about the teachings of the church, but instead his actions sparked what became known as the Protestant Reformation. The Protestant Reformation was one of the most important events in church history. Many of the churches our families attend today grew out of this movement to return to the teachings of the Bible.

Luther faced fierce opposition. He was declared an outlaw, and there were times when his life was in danger, yet he found courage in God's Word, especially Psalm 46, which begins:

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

Years later, Luther wrote "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" to remind Christians that their greatest hope is not found in earthly rulers, strong castles, or even their own courage. Our hope is found in God alone. Through Jesus Christ, sin, death, and Satan have already been defeated.

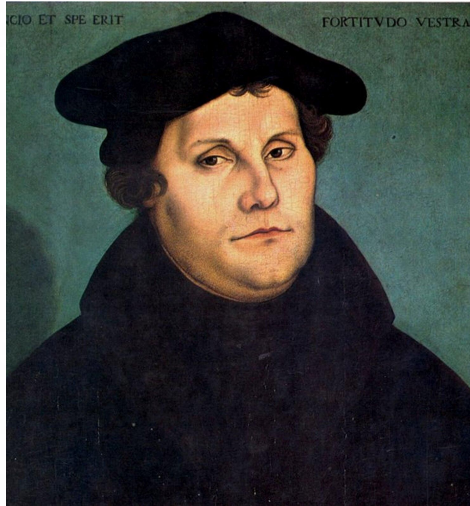
Today, this hymn reminds us that no matter what challenges God's people face, our Savior has already won the victory, and His kingdom will last forever.



DID YOU KNOW?

Every year on October 31, many Christians celebrate **REFORMATION DAY**. They thank God for preserving His Word and for reminding His church that salvation is by grace alone through faith in Christ alone.

THE AUTHOR



MARTIN LUTHER

Born: 1483

Died: 1546

Country: Germany

Occupation: Pastor, Teacher, Hymn Writer, and Bible Translator.

Quote: "Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise."

Interesting Facts

- He wrote both the words and tune for "A Mighty Fortress."
- He is often called "the Father of Congregational Singing." Before his time, many churches had very little singing by the people. Luther encouraged churches to sing together.
- He played the lute, a stringed instrument similar to a guitar
- While hiding in Wartburg Castle, Luther translated the New Testament into German so ordinary people could read God's Word for themselves.
- He wrote more than 30 hymns. This is his most famous.
- He was married and had six children. They often sang hymns together as a family.
- He was funny! His students often wrote down things he said because they loved his stories, jokes, and wisdom.

GEOGRAPHY



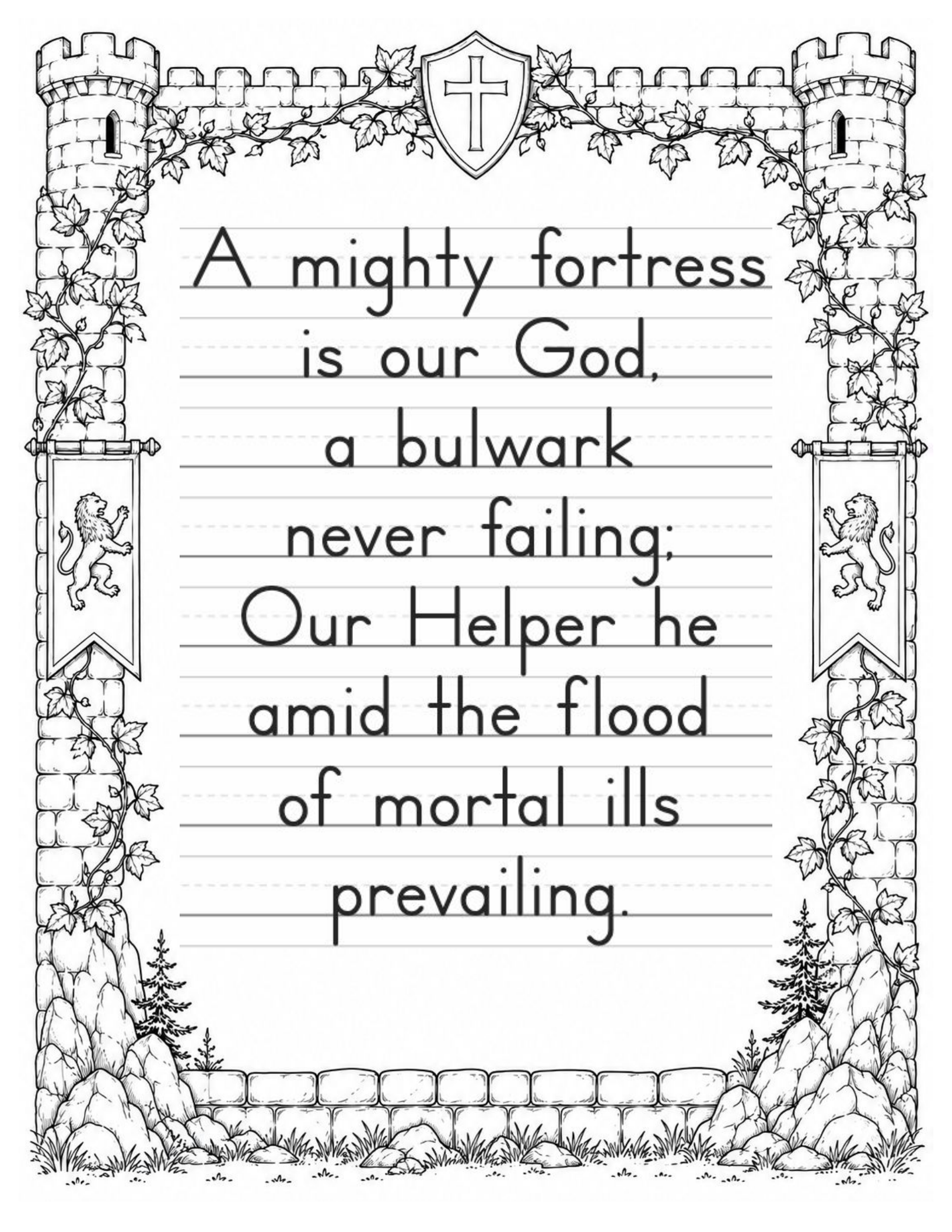
The Holy Roman Empire

Martin Luther lived in the Holy Roman Empire during the early 1500s in a region that we would now call Germany. Germany at that time was not one united country. Instead, it was made up of many small kingdoms and territories ruled by princes. It was right in the center of Europe.

Most of Luther's work took place in the town of Wittenberg, where he taught the Bible and preached about God's grace. This is where he famously nailed his Ninety-five Theses to the door of Castle Church.

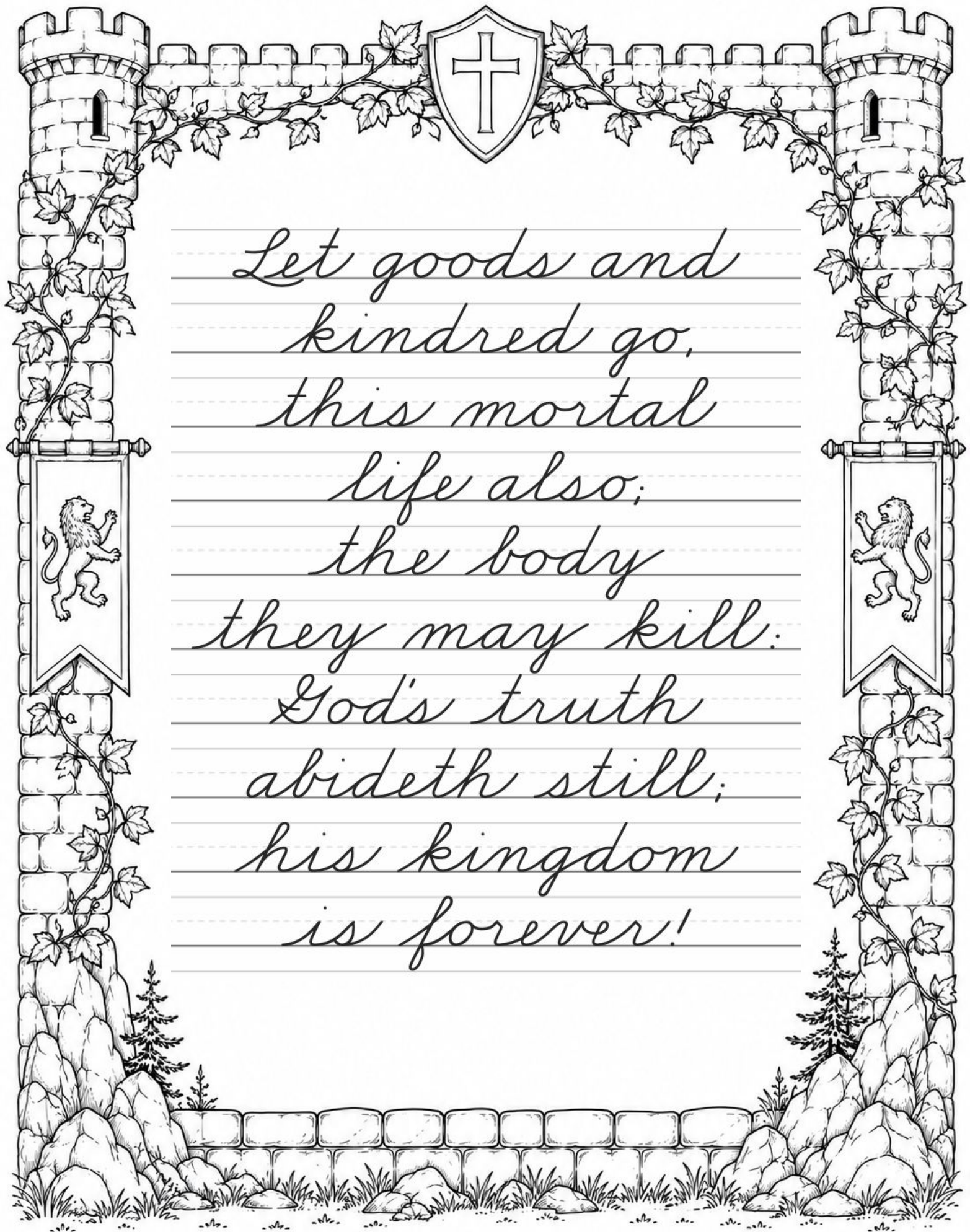
Later, Luther was forced to go into hiding at Wartburg Castle in Eisenach, Germany. While in hiding, he translated the New Testament into German.

Stone castles, fortress walls, and church towers filled the landscape where Luther lived. These strong buildings helped inspire Luther's picture of God as "a mighty fortress."



A mighty fortress
is our God,
a bulwark
never failing;
Our Helper he
amid the flood
of mortal ills
prevailing.





Let goods and
kindred go,
this mortal
life also;
the body
they may kill:
God's truth
abideth still;
his kingdom
is forever!



A Mighty Fortress
Is Our God.

