

Steve Whitacre

SESSION 1: Martin Luther

I. INTRODUCTION

II. ENTER MARTIN LUTHER

“I kept the rule so strictly, that I may say that if ever a monk got to heaven by his sheer monkery, it was I. If I had kept on any longer, I should have killed myself with vigil, prayers, reading, and other work.”

“‘If I could believe that God was not angry with me, I would stand on my head for joy.’ Which is why, when he found the gospel, he was able to turn the world upside-down.”¹

III. THE REFORMATION BEGINS

“Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that ‘the just shall live by his faith.’ Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousnesses by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise.”²

“The implications of Luther’s discovery were enormous. If salvation comes through faith in Christ alone, the intercession of priests is superfluous. Faith formed and nurtured by the Word of God, written and preached, requires no monks, no masses, no prayers to the saints. The mediation of the Church of Rome crumbles into insignificance.”³

“Since then Your Majesty and your lordships desire a simple reply, I will answer without horns and without teeth. Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason—I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other—my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot

¹ John Piper, *Legacy of Sovereign Joy*, 84

² Bruce Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 239

³ Bruce Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 240

and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen.”⁴

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF LUTHER:

IV. LUTHER’S LIFE AND MINISTRY

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF LUTHER:

V. LUTHER AND KATIE

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF LUTHER:

VI. CRITIQUE

VII. LEGACY

A. Bible

- "I simply taught, preached, wrote God’s Word: otherwise, I did nothing. And when, while I slept, or drank Wittenberg beer with my Philip and my Amsdorf, the Word so greatly weakened the papacy that never a Prince or Emperor inflicted such damage upon it, I did nothing. The Word did it all."

⁴ Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand*, 144

B. Theology

- “It is very hard for a man to believe that God is gracious to him. The human heart can’t grasp this.”⁵
- Four fundamental questions: "(1) How is a person saved? (2) Where does religious authority lie? (3) What is the church? And (4) what is the essence of Christian living?"⁶

C. Church

D. Pastoral Ministry

E. Marriage, Parenting, & Family

VIII. A LUTHER TIMELINE

- **November 10, 1483 - Born in Eisleben to Hans and Margareta**
- **July 2, 1505 - A thunderstorm and a vow; off to the monastery**
- 1507 - Ordained to the priesthood
- 1510 - Journey to Rome
- 1512 - Begins studying for doctorate at the University of Wittenberg
- 1514 - Pope Leo X authorizes the sale of indulgences in Germany
- **October 31, 1517 - Luther nails 95 theses to the door of Wittenberg Castle Church**
- 1521 - Diet of Worms: “Here I stand. I can do no other.”
- 1521–22 - After being fake kidnapped by Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony, Luther hides in Wartburg Castle, translating the NT into German.
- 1522 - Luther returns to Wittenburg and publishes his German New Testament
- 1524 - Publishes *Bondage of the Will*
- **June 15, 1525 - Marries Katherina von Bora**

⁵ Stephen Nichols, *Martin Luther*, 69

⁶ Bruce Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 238

- 1529 - Publishes *Shorter Catechism*; Marburg Colloquy
- 1534 - Finishes German translation of Old Testament
- **February 18, 1546 - Luther dies in Eisleben**

IX. RECOMMENDED READING

- Stephen Nichols, *Martin Luther*. Less detailed than Bainton, this is an excellent biography, and very readable. Perhaps the best starting place for most readers.
 - Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther*. Long regarded as a definitive popular-level biography of Martin Luther. Fairly detailed, but still riveting.
 - John Piper, *The Legacy of Sovereign Joy*. Includes a chapter on Martin Luther that is partly biographical and partly theological. Exalts Christ in the life of Luther as only Piper can do.
 - Stephen Nichols, *The Reformation* OR Michael Reeves, *The Unquenchable Flame*. Two very accessible histories of the Reformation, each with a chapter on Luther. Both are outstanding.
 - Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, translated by J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston. If you want to read Luther himself, this is a great place to start. Packer and Johnston's excellent historical and theological introduction make this the preferred version.
 - Justin Taylor, "Martin Luther and the Reform of Marriage," in *Sex and the Supremacy of Christ*, John Piper and Justin Taylor, eds. A very edifying study of Martin and Katie's marriage, with a biographical section on Katie Luther. Highly recommended.
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