



A Man Named
MARTIN

PART 1: THE MAN



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Nearly 500 years ago, an unknown monk from a backwater town in Germany, set in motion a movement that would literally transform Western civilization.

The impact Martin Luther had on the growth and development of Christianity is enormous. But *how* did this unknown miner's son change the world? In this Lutheran Hour Ministries' Bible study, we will examine the life and times of this religious reformer. From his humble beginnings in Germany to his indefatigable work to understand Scripture and share the truths of the Bible, Martin Luther inspired a Reformation that reverberates throughout Christendom to this day.

For the Study Leader

Group Discussion:

- Please feel free to move at your own pace through this study and take as much time as you need for each lesson.
- You are welcome to dig in as deep as you want for your personal study, or you might use just the Bible passages and questions included in the discussion guide.
- If you have a limited time for this study, have participants take a few minutes to look through the sessions and choose as a group those questions they would most like to discuss.
- We have designed our questions to be open-ended, thus allowing those in your group to share their experiences and unique perspectives.

A downloadable PDF for this study can be found at lhm.org/martin1.



Using Our Digging Deeper Icons

This is an interactive study guide. We designed it to be flexible, so it will fit both group and personal use. It includes icons that link the user to internet sites, where he or she can browse and explore a subject more thoroughly.

We encourage you to look through the Digging Deeper icons to see which ones your group might want to discuss. While you may use the paper discussion guide during your group study, you may want to assign homework for those in the group to check out the various internet sites on their own time. Doing so makes the study much more interactive.

Once you have downloaded the electronic PDF copy of the discussion guide, click on the icons in the text or at the end of the session. When you click on an icon, it will take you to that specific link, which will then open up the corresponding website.

There are only two steps you need to find the Digging Deeper links for this study:

- 1) Visit lhm.org/martin1.
- 2) On the bottom of this page, click “Additional Resources.”

Now you can click the links that interest you and start digging.

To This Discussion Guide User: Because of the changing nature of the internet, occasionally a web link included in a Lutheran Hour Ministries Bible study may change or be deleted altogether by the agency or individual posting it. When you notice an internet link has been modified or has become inoperable, please report this to our Response Center so we can find an alternate site. Thank you.

Please send changes to LHMResponse@lhm.org.



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A Man Named MARTIN PART 1: THE MAN

SESSION 1

Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for extending Your Kingdom around the world through ordinary people like us. Guide our study of Martin Luther's life so that we may see Your hand at work in the events of history. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Watch the Video: Session 1

- What did you see in the video that means the most to you?

Luther's World

Like all of us, Martin Luther was molded by the world into which he was born. As he grew he found strict discipline and fear wherever he turned—at home, at school, and in church.

In the video, Dr. Paul Maier noted,



“In one morning (Luther) was caned or disciplined somehow 15 times for not having prepared his Latin lesson correctly.”

Dr. Joel Biermann recalled an incident when Luther's parents disciplined him for stealing a nut:



“Luther said, ‘The blood flowed’ from the punishment he got.”

- Describe the world in which you grew up. Was it harsh like Luther's world?
- What was discipline like in your home, school and church?
- How did your experiences mold you into the person you are today?
- How did your experiences with your earthly father color your view of God the Father?



[Click Here to Learn More about Young Luther](#)

A Father's Dreams

As Dr. Robert Kolb pointed out in the video, Hans Luther saw amazing potential in his second son:



“He had dreams of moving his son into the bureaucracy where there was more money, more security, more power, and he had a vision for the Luther family that was on the move, upward and onward.”

- What ambitions did your parents have for you?
- Describe the influence your parents had on your career path. How much pressure did they exert?
- How did God make use of Hans' ambitions to equip Luther for the Reformation?

Turning away God's Wrath

In Luther's day the church taught how you must be saved. In the video, Dr. Ken Schurb described that message the church conveyed:



“Do what is in you, and God will not refuse you grace. At least, do the best you can.”

Of course, no one is perfect. So when you messed up, Dr. Biermann described the next steps to take: “I would meet the priest one on one and I would confess to him. He gives me some kind of satisfaction to perform, something that needs to be done to show that I have a truly penitent heart ... What if I don't do enough penance? What if I don't quite cover all the sin? The answer is some time in purgatory ... you're the one earning the forgiveness; you're the one paying the price; you're the one accomplishing it, so the onus is on you to make sure it gets done.”

- Why does the idea of doing something to satisfy God for our sins make more sense to our minds than doing nothing and simply confessing our sins and trusting God's forgiveness?

In the Roman Catholic system, it is a sin to be sure of your salvation. That is the sin of pride, and it is one of the seven deadly sins.

- How did this Roman Catholic system of penance leave people uncertain they'd make it to heaven?

If anyone ever had a claim to religious righteousness, the apostle Paul was that person. In Philippians 3:4-6 he lists the works he had undertaken before meeting Jesus Christ. They are the accomplishments he might have boasted about before but—like Luther—once he got to know the real Jesus, everything changed.

Read Philippians 3:7-9.

⁷But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

⁸Indeed, I count everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ
⁹and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the Law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.

Once he knew Jesus Christ and His free salvation, Paul threw away those accomplishments, confessed his sin and guilt, and depended on Jesus' gift of righteousness alone.

- Why does Paul consider his accomplishments in the flesh “loss” and “rubbish” instead of something he can add to Jesus' merits?
- Why do you think we are so inclined to put the focus on ourselves and our works rather than focus on Jesus and His works for us?

Turning from the Here to the Hereafter



[Find Out More about the Plague](#)

At the University of Erfurt Luther earned his bachelor's and master's degrees and was beginning his doctoral studies in law. But tragic events shifted his focus from the here to the hereafter. In the video, Dr. Maier explained, “A friend of his named Alexis died, and Luther wondered, ‘What if I were Alexis?’ Two of his colleagues in Erfurt died of the plague at the time, ‘What if it was I?’ Luther said.”

In Luther's time there was an ever-present concern about death. With modern medicine we get sick, take medicine, and get better. We just don't think about death too often. It wasn't that easy 500 years ago.

- Describe how and when you first came to realize your mortality.
- Have you had a close brush with death? Can you share that experience?
- How do you think the three deaths of Luther's friend and colleagues, as well as his own two near-death experiences, influenced his decision to withdraw from school and enter the strictest monastery he could find?
- What sorts of things make you think about what waits for us beyond this life?

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank You for earning our place in heaven and removing the curse of hell from us by Your perfect life and innocent suffering and death on the cross. Through Your resurrection, assure us that we will rise to new life with You for all eternity. Amen.



Additional links and resources available at lhm.org/martin1

[Comprehensive Reformation Website](#)

[Observant Augustinians](#)

[Welcome to a Day in the Life of a Monk](#)

A Man Named MARTIN PART 1: THE MAN

SESSION 2

Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, forgive us for so easily forgetting You are always with us, an ever-present help in times of trouble. Draw us near to You through Your Son Jesus Christ. We pray in His Name. Amen.

Watch the Video: Session 2

- What jumped out at you in this session of the video?

Life in a Monastery

In the video, Dr. Schurb described Martin Luther's experiences as a monk:



“Luther is now introduced to a monk's life which is a very regimented thing ... Luther, of course, ramps that up. He not only wanted the strictest monastic discipline he could find, he disciplines himself, including self-flagellation.”



Guilt and Punishment

- Where would you expect to find the most regimented way of life today?
- Describe a period in your life when you felt most controlled, confined and disciplined.
- What challenges did you face when you moved on to a more free and liberated stage in life?

Living in God's Presence

Dr. Mary Jane Haemig said,



“In Luther's time people didn't doubt that God was present. The question was, ‘What is God's attitude toward us?’ And the overwhelming impression that people had was that God was angry.”

- In today's culture how do people demonstrate whether they believe God exists or not?
- What difficulties does that raise when you try to share the message of salvation in Jesus Christ?

Many Bible passages remind us that God is constantly present, watching over us:

Read Genesis 28:16.

¹⁶Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.”

Read Psalm 46:1.

¹God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble

Read Matthew 28:20b.

²⁰(Jesus said) “Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

- From a Law point of view, what are the times you wish God wasn’t looking?
- From a Gospel point of view, what are the times you’re glad He is always there?
- How is your perception of God affected by the good events in your life? The bad ones?

During the dark hours on the cross, Jesus clung in faith to His Father’s love. This was in spite of the fact He was being forsaken by God at the time. When we go through tough circumstances, it may seem like God is angry, but because of Jesus’ sacrifice, God promises His love is steadfast and sure.

Read Romans 8:35-39.

³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

³⁶As it is written, “For Your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

³⁸For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers,

³⁹nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Terror at the Altar

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that in Holy Communion the bread and wine actually *turn into* the real flesh and blood of Jesus Christ.



Dr. Biermann described the first time Luther consecrated the elements in Holy Communion:

“When you said the Words (of Institution), you were holding the body of Christ. He was terrified to think that he, an ordinary human being could be holding God in his hands, and he was terror stricken. It was a very frightening moment for him, and he almost dropped the elements in his terror.”

In time, passages like 1 Corinthians 10:16 convinced Luther that Jesus’ body and blood are truly present in the bread and wine, but the bread and wine remain.¹

¹ Lutherans came to use the phrase “in, with, and under” to describe how the body and blood of Christ are joined to the bread and wine in Holy Communion. Against the Reformed idea that the bread and wine only represent the body and blood of Christ, Lutherans confess we receive the body and blood “in” and “with” the bread and wine. Against the Roman Catholic teaching that the bread and wine transforms into the body and blood so bread and wine are no longer present, Lutherans say the body and blood of Jesus are “with” and “under” the bread and wine.

Read 1 Corinthians 10:16.

¹⁶The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?

- When did you first realize the significance of Holy Communion?
- As your congregation serves Communion, which practices reinforce the reverence and holiness of the Lord's Supper to you?

Dr. Haemig spoke of the lasting effects of Luther's terror at his first Mass: "Martin remembered this. I've often wondered if it played into his later rethinking of what was going on in the Lord's Supper, because, of course, later on when Luther thought about the Lord's Supper and God's gift to us in that, the focus was on what God is doing, not on what the priest is doing."

When Luther wrote about the Sacrament in his *Large Catechism* (1529), he must have recalled his former terror: "We must never regard the Sacrament as a harmful thing from which we should flee, but as a pure, wholesome, soothing medicine which aids and quickens us in both soul and body. For where the soul is healed, the body has benefitted also" (*Large Catechism* V 68).

Read Matthew 26:26-28.

²⁶Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."

²⁷And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you,

²⁸for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For

Luther had high expectations he would find answers to his questions when he travelled to the holy city of Rome. In the video, Dr. Maier described it this way:



"Luther says that the moment he saw holy Rome in the distance he bowed down and kneeled in the roadway; so thrilled he was to see the 'City of God,' as it were, on earth."

- Thinking back to your youth, what was something you really looked forward to which you thought would change your life?
- Was it what you expected?
- What happened when you finally reached that milestone?

Dr. Schurb described Luther's bitter disappointment in these words: "But once he got into Rome and he was doing the various things a religious pilgrim would do in Rome, he got less and less enchanted with the city of Rome. In fact, later on he said, 'Boy, if there's a hell, Rome is built on it.'"



Rome and Romans—Martin Luther

A few years later, back in Germany, Luther was in the process of studying the original texts of the Bible, when God truly transformed his life of faith.

- Looking back, what events has God used to transform your faith life?
- Would you describe your coming to faith as being an extended process like Luther's or more like a transformative moment? Explain.

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank You for Your Word—the Holy Scriptures—which make us wise unto salvation. Fill us with a hunger for that Word, now and always. Amen.



Additional links and resources available at lhm.org/martin1

[Johann von Staupitz](#)

SESSION 3

Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, You enlightened Martin Luther through Your Word, then worked through Him to bring Your church out of darkness. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit so that as we share Your truth, You may set countless people free in Jesus Christ. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Watch the Video: Session 3

- What fact in the video did you find the most interesting?

LUTHER FACTS:

Penance: When St. Jerome translated the Greek New Testament into Latin (the Vulgate), he wrongly translated the Greek word “*metanoia*” into the Latin word for penance. When Jesus preached, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near” He wasn’t calling for people to make satisfaction for their sins, but to have a change of heart and turn from their sins toward the Gospel.

Purgatory

In the video Rev. Daniel Preus said,



“It was taught by the church that there were two consequences of sin: guilt and punishment. And the guilt, one could take care of by making a confession to a priest, but then came the second consequence and that was punishment. And that punishment had to take place either here in this life or in purgatory.”

By Luther’s time purgatory had become a well-established teaching in the church, which everyone took for granted. It was dreadful, terrifying, and one of those “facts of life” that Luther, growing up, never thought to question or challenge.

- Name some things that were considered well-established facts when you were young, which aren’t held to be true today. How did they shape your life?
- Describe something people today consider a “fact of life,” which would have been considered unthinkable 50 or even 20 years ago? How does it affect the way people live today?
- What accepted opinions of our culture prove challenging to the church, especially as it shares the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Purgatory made sense to sinners who were crushed by guilt. They knew they couldn't do enough good deeds in this lifetime to make up for all their wrongs. The trouble was this teaching kept them looking to themselves for the solution instead of looking to Jesus Christ and His full and free salvation.

When Jesus said, "It is finished" (see John 19:30), He wasn't talking about His life. He was using a Greek accounting term, which meant "paid in full." What was paid in full? The debt for all of our sins.

- How do Jesus' dying words, "It is finished," prove the doctrine of purgatory is untrue?

Similar to the ineffectual acts of satisfaction required by the pope, the writer to the Hebrews spoke about the ultimate futility of Old Testament sacrifices:

Read Hebrews 10:11-18.

¹¹And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

¹²But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God,

¹³waiting from that time until His enemies should be made a footstool for His feet.

¹⁴For by a single offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

¹⁵And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,

¹⁶"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put My laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,"

¹⁷then He adds, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more."

¹⁸Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

Indulgences

Purgatory was a heavy weight for believers—the idea of millions of years of suffering to purge away sins. The sale of plenary indulgences offered the perfect solution: complete and instant release from purgatory for their loved ones, possibly even for themselves.

Dr. Biermann pointed out the problem with that approach:



"You know, it's one thing to think about buying an indulgence for someone who is in purgatory and shortening their time there, and Luther had issues with that, but then someone had the brilliant idea, 'Well, why do I have to wait 'til I'm dead?' So now you could have a person who had the resources, who could buy an indulgence and have the guarantee of the church that his sins were forgiven no matter what he did. It's like a sin-free card."

Roman Catholics think it is unreasonable to believe the merits of Christ applied to the trusting sinner will remove all sin past, present and future because it abdicates responsibility for the sins the Christian commits after he is justified.

- Why is it dangerous to trust our reason over God's clear revealed promise of complete and free forgiveness?
- How could the idea that Jesus took away all our sins lead a Christian to treat God's grace as another "sin-free card"?

- How do you think these indulgences struck Luther, who had been taking such great pains to make himself right with God, through his own efforts?



Indulgences

Ninety-Five Theses

LUTHER FACTS:

Why did Luther choose October 31? No, it wasn't because of Halloween; it was because the next day, November 1, was All Saints' Day. On that day all church bells rang to remind people to pray for their loved ones, suffering in purgatory. Since the sale of indulgences was all about springing your loved ones from purgatory, it was the perfect time for Luther to post his Theses.

Dr. Schurb said,



“Luther not only preached against indulgences, he decided that he wanted to have a debate about them. So he did what any good academic would do at the time, he drew up a set of theses “on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences”: 95 statements or propositions for debate, written in Latin, which he posted on October 31, 1517. He was hoping to have a learned discussion. Of course, it didn't quite end there.”

- Why do you think Luther chose to respond through a “learned discussion” with scholarly theologians rather than appeal directly to the German masses?
- What lesson can we learn about how to deal with someone we disagree with?

Luther tried to clean up the indulgence mess from the inside, dealing with the hierarchy of the church. But as Dr. Schurb pointed out, his 95 Theses went viral, “But people got a hold of those theses and translated them from Latin into German, and pretty soon they were being published widely on Gutenberg's new printing press. And all of a sudden Luther is becoming quite the cause célèbre in Germany.”

- What possible advantages could you see coming out of the “viral” spreading of Luther's 95 Theses?
- What potential drawbacks could it have held for Luther?



The 95 Theses: Read them for yourself and find out how they went viral.

Many Lutherans think that Luther was fully “Lutheran” when he posted the 95 Theses on October 31, 1517. But, as Dr. Biermann pointed out, Martin Luther still had a long way to go:



“October 31, 1517, when the 95 Theses are posted, Luther is still a good Catholic, even though he’s starting to challenge and wonder about things. He’s still fully devoted to the church. He wanted to have some questions asked about the right practice ... He’s not trying to say, ‘Hey, it’s all about justification by grace through faith in Christ alone,’ that’s not there yet.”

When we’ve grown up thinking one way, we can be slow to adopt new and different ways.

- Describe a new technology or idea it took a while for you to wrap your mind around.
- Why did it take so long to sink in?
- How might that help us understand the reason it took time for the idea of justification by grace through faith in Christ alone to become fully formed in Luther’s mind?

LUTHER FACTS:

Three Solas of the Reformation: The Latin phrase *sola scriptura, sola gratia, sola fide* translates “Scripture alone, grace alone, faith alone.” It reflects Luther’s belief that the Bible trumps popes and church councils, that we are saved by God’s grace not our merits, and that we are saved through Holy Spirit-given faith—and not our good works. Though Luther taught these very things, he didn’t coin the phrase; it was compiled from various Lutheran writings included in the *Book of Concord*.

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank You for guiding Martin Luther to a fuller understanding of Your full and free salvation. Keep me from taking that wondrous gift for granted, and give me courage and love to share it wherever I go. Amen.



Additional links and resources available at lhm.org/martin1

[Pope Leo X](#)

[The Medici Family](#)

[St. Peter’s Basilica](#)

[The Roman Catholic Church in the Late Middle Ages](#)

[Heroes and Saints of the Reformation: Frederick the Wise \(1463-1525\)](#)

[Top 10 Religious Relics](#)

[From St. Peter’s Bones to Severed Heads: Christian Relics on Display](#)

[What a Difference a Half Millennium Makes!](#)

SESSION 4

Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, it is not always easy to find our path through life. Guide us by Your Spirit that we may accomplish the good works You have prepared for us in Your Son Jesus Christ. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Watch the Video: Session 4

- What event discussed in this video made the most impact on you and why?

Luther Changes His Approach

Dr. Haemig pointed this out in the video:



“For several years after the posting of the 95 Theses, Luther was publicly very respectful toward the Pope.”

But in time Luther saw the Pope and his representatives refused to consider the matter. He faced a huge decision—should he let the matter be, or change his tack—and his audience?

Since the matter involved God's Word and the salvation of countless souls, Luther could not let the matter go. When he could get no traction with church authorities, he decided to take his concerns to laypeople and political leaders like the Christian princes.



The Ongoing Conflict between Luther and the Pope and His Representatives

Imagine you are confronted with a bad policy at church, your workplace, or community. You go through the chain of command, the proper channels, but those in authority refuse to consider your suggestions or objections.

- What factors might lead you to conclude it's wisest to let the matter be?
- What factors would lead you to take the personal risk of being a whistle-blower?

In the book of Proverbs, God gives the following advice:

Read Proverbs 9:8-9.

⁸Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you.

⁹Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.

- In what way did the Pope and his officials show themselves to be scoffers rather than wise men?
- What reminder does this passage give when someone under your authority comes to you with a question or challenge?

LUTHER FACTS

Where did the name “Lutheran” come from? Throughout history, many movements were named by opponents. The Jews tried to insult the followers of Christ, by calling them “Christians.” Roman Catholic Church leaders began calling followers of Martin Luther, “Lutherans.” And just as early Christians considered it an honor to be named after Jesus Christ, Lutherans were honored to be named after Martin Luther.

Luther’s Theology of the Cross



Dr. Biermann said,

“In the Heidelberg Disputation, Luther starts to advance his teaching of the ‘theology of the cross.’ The idea that the cross challenges and undoes everything that makes sense to us, everything that seems reasonable to us.”



Luther’s Theology of the Cross

Luther warned that the Roman Catholic Church was practicing a “theology of glory,” claiming we can know God through creation as well as through special revelation as in the Bible. Thus if someone attained glory or power, they claimed it was proof of God’s favor.

- What grandiose promises have you heard from pastors and TV evangelists who embrace a theology of glory?

The basic premise of a glory theology is that when things are going well in your life God is happy with you, but if you’re struggling, then you did something wrong or your faith isn’t strong enough. Luther argued that God was hidden in suffering. He wrote, “It does one no good to recognize God in His glory and majesty unless one recognizes Him in the humility and shame of the cross.”

- In what ways does human reason find Jesus’ humiliating death on the cross senseless and even foolish?
- Why does human reason think we must work out our own salvation?

Dr. Biermann continues, “And now in the Heidelberg Disputation he’s getting to the point where he’s even challenging the idea somehow that we can earn our way into God’s forgiveness, or that our good works count before God ... It’s our brokenness which is our reality and our need for God’s forgiveness.”



[The Heidelberg Disputation](#)

In Psalm 51 King David finally owned up to his sin of adultery with Bathsheba and having her husband Uriah killed in battle. He goes on to ponder what it takes to become right with God.

Read Psalm 51:16-17.

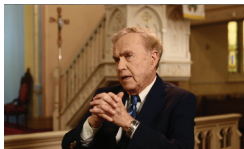
¹⁶You will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; You will not be pleased with a burnt offering. ¹⁷The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

The night Jesus was betrayed both Judas, who betrayed Him, and Peter, who denied Him, ran off with broken hearts. Judas turned inward and being overwhelmed with guilt killed himself. Jesus appeared to Peter and restored him.

- Give a modern day example of this “brokenness” David is speaking of.
- Why is it so hard for people to accept there is absolutely nothing we can do to earn heaven, but that Jesus did it all for us?

“Here I Stand”

Dr. Maier explains Luther’s thoughts as he came to the Diet (assembly) of Worms:



“So Luther thought maybe he was going to martyrdom ... It’s probably one of the most dramatic scenes that we find in all of the history of the second millennium A.D. We have not only the secular powers represented by his Imperial Majesty Charles V, and all the princes both Catholic and Lutheran in Germany, but also all the church people and their representatives as well.”

Luther was prepared to be martyred like John Hus before him.



[Read more about Luther’s excommunication and his appearance before the emperor at Worms.](#)



[Who was Hus?](#)

- What do you think made Luther willing to risk his life to stand on the Gospel of Christ, who was crucified for him?
- Describe ways the world is pressuring Christians to be silent and not take a stand.
- What are some social issues where you think it is necessary for the church to take a stand?

In his great hymn, *A Mighty Fortress is Our God*, Luther described things we might lose for standing on our faith:

“And take they our life, goods, fame, child, and wife”

Christians around the world face this risk every day. Many live in slavery, are imprisoned, tortured and executed for their faith. Christian parents watch their children dragged off and sold into slavery, or crucified before their eyes by radical Muslims.

- What things would you find most difficult to sacrifice for your faith?

The conclusion of Luther's final stanza explains why Christians are willing to take that stand and sacrifice all:

"Though these all be gone, our vict'ry has been won; the Kingdom ours remaineth."

Jesus said it this way,

Read Matthew 10:26, 28.

²⁶(Jesus said) "Have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be made known.

²⁸Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell."

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus, You took Your great stand before Pontius Pilate, and by Your suffering and death opened the kingdom of Heaven to all believers. Fill each of Your brothers and sisters with Your Holy Spirit that we may take our stand side by side in faith and love. Amen.



Additional links and resources available at lhm.org/martin1

[Johannes Tetzel](#)

[Johann Tetzel's Rebuttal against Luther's Sermon on Indulgences and Grace](#)

[Electoral Saxony](#)

[Treatise on Good Works](#)

[Treatise to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation](#)

[On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church](#)

[Concerning Christian Liberty](#)

[Luther's Tower Experience](#)

A Man Named MARTIN PART 1: THE MAN

SESSION 5

Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, You gave Martin Luther a shepherd's heart for Your people. Give us true love and concern for one another and for the whole world that we may boldly share Your Name everywhere we go. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Watch the Video: Session 5

God's Word Comes Out of Hiding

Living in secret in Frederick the Wise's Wartburg Castle was difficult for Luther. Like any good pastor, his heart was with his people, and he desired to be with them and serve them. Dr. Schurb quoted him as saying,



"Well, here I sit all lazy and full of food."

But, on the contrary, Luther didn't waste his time there. With the security of the castle and his new identity as Knight George, Luther translated the New Testament into German.



[Learn More About the Wartburg](#)



[Learn How We Got the Bible](#)

- Why do you think the Catholic Church felt it necessary to control and restrict access to the Scriptures?
- How did it serve Satan's purposes for the Catholic Church to forbid translating the Bible from Latin into other languages, on the threat of death?
- The Bible is readily available for us today. Why do you think so many Christians take it for granted and don't bother to read and study it?

Serving the Church

As Dr. Haemig pointed out, Luther not only translated the New Testament into German, he also reformed the Communion service.



“In the Late Medieval worship service the congregation was regarded as spectators; they listened to the liturgy of the Mass, sung probably by a choir ... they were spectators. Luther wanted them to be active. They participated in singing the liturgy, they sang the hymns, their listening to the sermon was regarded as an active listening because the Word of God was active upon them.”



[Luther Reforms the German Mass and Order of Divine Service](#)



[Luther and Music](#)

- Thinking through the services in your church, in what parts do you actively participate?
- Why is it important to join with others in worship rather than sit back and watch as a spectator?
- If you aren't comfortable singing along with the liturgy or hymns, how can you still participate during those times?

Unyielding Truth

Lutheran princes found themselves in a tough position going against the Pope and Emperor Charles V. They wanted to meet together and find common ground to present a united front. In Marburg, Luther met with Ulrich Zwingli, leader of the Reformation in Switzerland, in an attempt to put forth a united front. But when Zwingli denied Christ's body and blood were truly present in Holy Communion, Luther's conscience would not let him compromise.



[Learn More About Zwingli and Luther's Disagreement with Him](#)



Dr. Biermann pointed out,

“Luther admitted later he was seriously tempted, or he could be easily tempted to say, ‘Well, for the sake of unity, for the sake of putting a good solid front against the Pope let's do this, let's agree.’ But he just couldn't yield on the truth.”

- What earthly advantage would it have offered Luther, his congregations, and the German princes if he had reached full agreement with Zwingli?

Read Acts 4:19-21a; 5:27-29.

¹⁹But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge,

²⁰for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”

²¹And when they had further threatened them, they let them go

²⁷And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them,

²⁸saying, “We strictly charged you not to teach in this Name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this Man's blood upon us.”

²⁹But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men.”

- How did Luther’s refusal to compromise on Holy Communion show he was putting his trust in God rather than the protection of earthly rulers?
- Describe times we are tempted to compromise the truth out of fear.
- How does the example of God’s protection throughout Luther’s life give us confidence to fear, love and trust in God above all things?

LUTHER FACTS

Luther’s Doctoral Vow: Upon receiving his doctoral degree, Luther took the traditional vow of a university professor to faithfully teach and defend the Scriptures. In front of Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Worms, Zwingli at the Marburg Colloquy, and many other times during his life, Luther found this vow a tremendous source of encouragement. That is why he never viewed himself as a rebel, but a theologian remaining true to his vow.

We Are All Beggars

In parts two and three of this Martin Luther Bible study series, we will explore the lasting impact Martin Luther made on human history. Yet in all this he didn’t focus on his accomplishments. His humble, final written words reveal his ultimate perspective.

“We are only beggars (before God), it’s true.” Luther meant when we stand before Jesus Christ’s judgment seat we will all stand as beggars with nothing to offer. Everything depends on Jesus’ life, death and resurrection.

- If the Lord is willing, what things would you like to accomplish before you die?
- How does Luther’s emphasis on Jesus’ saving merits give us confidence for that great day?

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus, we are truly beggars, each of us an unworthy sinner. Wash away our sins in Your blood, and give us faith and strength to follow You as You lead us to our heavenly home. Amen.



Additional links and resources available at lhm.org/martin1

Text of the Edict of Worms

Problems in the Reformation

[Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt](#)

[Luther's Reaction to the Changes in Wittenberg](#)

[Knights' Revolt and Great Peasants' War](#)

[Thomas Muentzer](#)

[Attitudes Toward the Use of Force and Violence](#)

[Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants](#)

Christmas in the Land of Luther

Parish problems lead Luther to create the Small and Large Catechisms

[Visitations Begin in Saxony](#)

[The Saxon Visitations \(1528\): Insights for Contemporary Lutheran Church Life](#)

[Martin Luther's Small Catechism](#)

[Martin Luther's Large Catechism](#)

The Augsburg Confession and the Lutheran Princes

[Historical Context of the Augsburg Confession](#)

[Philip Melanchthon, Confessor of the Faith](#)

[Luther's Contribution to the Augsburg Confession](#)

[Charles V and the Lutheran Princes in Conflict](#)

[The Protest of the Princes](#)

Luther and the War Against the Turks

The Diet of Augsburg

The Schmalkaldic League

[The Schmalkaldic League](#)

[The Smalcald Articles of Martin Luther](#)

[Politics and Religion in the Smalcald League](#)

RESOURCES:

[Luther, the Reformer](#)

[Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther](#)

[What Luther Says](#), compiled by Ewald Plass

Luther's Decline and Death

[Luther's Life Part 1](#)

[Luther's Life Part 2](#)

[Luther's Last Battles](#)

[Martin Luther's Last Days and Final Thoughts](#)

[Luther's Last Written Words](#)

[How Dr. Martin Luther Died](#)

[Funeral Sermon by Justas Jonas](#)

[Funeral Sermon by Wittenberg Pastor Johann Bugenhagen](#)

[Funeral Sermon by Philip Melanchthon](#)

[What Would Luther Say?](#)

PRESENTERS



Dr. Joel Biermann

Joel Biermann is a professor in the Department of Systematic Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis since 2002. He teaches doctrinal theology with a special interest and emphasis on ethics and the correct role of the law in the life of the believer. Beyond seminary responsibilities, he serves at his home congregation, leading evangelism training, teaching Sunday morning Bible class, and creating material for small group Bible studies (“Help for the Hurried Life,” “Questions About”). He has appeared in a number of **Men’s NetWork** Bible studies. He is a frequent speaker at district and congregational gatherings and conferences, covering topics related to issues of discipleship and sanctification.



Dr. John Eckrich, MD

John Eckrich, an internist and gastroenterologist, has provided integrated health care to pastors, teachers, seminarians and their families for more than 35 years. In his St. Louis practice, he was astounded at the number of stress-related illnesses among Lutheran church workers. Responding to church worker burnout, in 1999 he found Grace Place Wellness, a preventive wellness ministry that positively impacts congregations, by encouraging church workers to lead the rich, full lives Jesus intends for His people. Dr. Eckrich and his colleagues have served Lutheran church workers, leaders and their families in hundreds of retreats across America and in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America.



Dr. Mary Jane Haemig

Mary Jane Haemig is professor of church history, and director of the Reformation Research Program at Luther Seminary (ELCA) in St. Paul, Minnesota. She specializes in Reformation studies, particularly the Lutheran Reformation. Her interests include preaching, catechesis, and prayer in that period. She teaches courses on Lutheran Confessional writings. She is associate editor and book review editor of *Lutheran Quarterly*, associate editor of the *Dictionary of Luther and the Lutheran Traditions*, and a member of the continuation committee for the International Luther Research Congress. She also earned her Doctor of Jurisprudence (J.D.) degree from Harvard Law School, and her Doctor of Theology (Th.D.) at Harvard Divinity School.



Dr. Robert Kolb

Robert Kolb is professor emeritus of systematic theology and director of the Institute for Mission Studies at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He co-edited the 2000 release of the *Book of Concord*, and he is the author of nearly 20 books and more than 100 articles on Luther and the 16th-century Reformation theologians. Since 1993 he has been a member of the Continuation Committee of the International Congress for Luther Research. Kolb has lectured at more than 40 educational institutions on five continents and at many ecclesiastical gatherings. He earned his M.Div. and S.T.M. from Concordia Seminary, and completed his Doctorate in History at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.



Dr. Paul L Maier

Paul Maier, professor emeritus of history, is the former Russell H. Seibert professor of Ancient History at Western Michigan University. A prolific author with more than five million books in print in 20 languages, he has also published 250-plus scholarly articles and reviews in academic journals. Lecturing widely, he appears on national radio, television, and in newspaper interviews, and has received numerous awards. He has also penned seven children’s books and hosted six video seminars dealing with Jesus, St. Paul, the early church, and current Christianity. He has appeared and contributed to a number of **Men’s NetWork** Bible studies. He completed his doctorate at the University of Basel, Switzerland, receiving his **Ph.D., summa cum laude**, in 1957.



Rev. Daniel Preus

Daniel Preus is third vice-president and a member of the Praesidium of the LCMS. Previously, he held directorships at Concordia Historical Institute and the Luther Academy, an organization devoted to promoting confessional Lutheran theology, both in St. Louis. He wrote *Why I Am a Lutheran*, which has been translated into six languages, and has penned articles for theological journals. He has served congregations in Hobart, Indiana; Truman, Minnesota; Oak Park, Illinois; Colorado Springs, Colorado; and St. Louis, Missouri. He completed his M.Div. at Concordia Theological Seminary in Springfield, Illinois, and holds a Master of Sacred Theology from Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana.



Dr. Ken R Schurb

Ken Schurb is pastor of Zion Lutheran Church, Moberly, Missouri. Previously, he’s served as a assistant professor of religion and philosophy at Concordia College, Ann Arbor, Michigan; special assistant to former Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod President Al Barry, and Missouri District vice president. He co-wrote a text in the LifeLight Bible Study Series and has written a book: *The Old Testament Collection: Preaching Christ in the Old Testament during the Church Year*. He also presents at conferences and workshops. He earned his M.Div. and S.T.M. at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana. His M.A. and Ph.D. degrees are in Early Modern European History, with a specialty in the Reformation, from Ohio State University.



Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz

Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz is Speaker for **The Lutheran Hour**. Previously, he was director of the Cross-Cultural Ministry Center and a professor of theology—both at Concordia University in Irvine, California. He’s served as executive director of Life’s Journey Ministries in Manhattan, New York, helped found Church For All Nations-LCMS, the first Lutheran mission start in New York City in more than 40 years; started a mission church in Dallas; served a large church in Tampa, Florida, and launched schools in a variety of cultural settings. He holds a bachelor’s degree in New Testament-Biblical Languages from Concordia University in Ann Arbor, Michigan; an M.Div. in Systematics-New Testament and an S.T.M in Systematics from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis.

THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

at the Time of Luther

The Holy Roman Empire, a loosely-joined union of smaller kingdoms, held power in western and central Europe between A.D. 962 and 1806. Ruled by a Holy Roman Emperor who oversaw local regions controlled by a variety of kings, dukes, and other officials, the Holy Roman Empire attempted to resurrect the Western empire of Rome. However, it was not holy, not Roman, and not an empire.

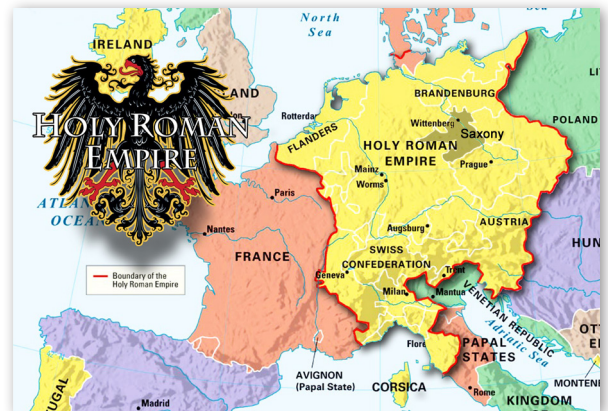
Many people confuse the Holy Roman Empire with the Roman Empire that existed during the New Testament period. Pope Leo III laid the foundation for the Holy Roman Empire in A.D. 800 when he crowned Charlemagne as emperor.

In 1512 the name “Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation” became the official title of the empire, which spanned central Europe between the kingdom of France to the west and the kingdoms of Hungary and Poland to the east. In the north it was bounded by the Baltic and North Seas and by the Danish kingdom; in the south, it reached to the Alps.

The emperor entered his position by election. Just as the cardinals, princes of the church, chose each new pope, so the leading princes of the empire, called electors, chose their emperor. The fundamental law of the empire limited the right to elect the emperor to seven leading princes: three ecclesiastical electors, the archbishops of Mainz, Trier, and Cologne; and four lay electors, the king of Bohemia, the duke of Saxony, the margrave of Brandenburg, and the count Palatinate of the Rhine.

At the end of the fifteenth century the empire entered a period of institutional growth and increased political importance. Foremost was its parliament, the Imperial Diet (Assembly). The diet emerged from medieval political struggles that obligated the emperor to consult with his leading princes on decisions affecting the empire. The diet became the most important site of communication, conflict, and negotiation between the emperor and the estates.

The emperor did not rule as an autocrat but was bound by the resolutions of the Imperial Diet. As was typical of early modern statecraft, the diets often passed resolutions that could not be enforced. The most memorable was the Edict of Worms of 1521 when the emperor Charles V declared Martin Luther an outlaw and anyone could kill him. Because Luther lived in Saxony, ruled by Frederick the Wise, Luther was protected from the Edict.



EMPEROR CHARLES V



The Seven Electors

LUTHER SITES IN GERMANY





Free booklet offer!

Learn more about Martin Luther with this companion booklet from Lutheran Hour Ministries.

The impact of Martin Luther as the driving force behind the Protestant Reformation is unrivaled. While others questioned Roman Catholic Church practice and dogma, Luther's persistent determination to find Scriptural truth—and pursue it to its most profound conclusions—was a Gospel breakthrough that has influenced the lives of Christians from his day to our own.

This booklet, written by Dr. Carol Geisler, reminds us that in the end, "We are all beggars," as Luther said. We come before God bankrupt, knowing God's forgiveness isn't earnable. It's freely given and available to all, without any merit or contribution on our part.

This booklet complements *A Man Named Martin—Part 1: The Man*. It's the first installment of a three-study series designed to honor the life and times of the German Reformer, his unparalleled contributions to the Christian church, and the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017.

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