

I believed the Bible – *that Jesus is the one who takes away our sins*; however, my church began to sell indulgences. My church taught that our loved ones were suffering in purgatory, but we could help them, *we could get them into heaven by purchasing indulgences*. However, such teaching is *not in harmony with Jesus’ finished work!* Therefore, I wrote my 95 theses and nailed them to the door of the Wittenberg Castle Church on October 31, 1517. I wanted to discuss, *even debate*, the topic of indulgences. *I wanted people to know the saving truth!* I wanted to correct the errors within my church. Please understand that I *never wanted to †hurt my church or †split my church or †begin a new church!*

As copies of my 95 theses spread throughout Europe – *due to the somewhat recent invention of the printing press*, I thought my church would see the truth and work toward reform. However, in 1520 I was ordered by my church to recant – *to withdraw my 95 theses and many other Bible-based writings*. Since I refused, I was excommunicated. From my church’s perspective, I was no longer a Christian; however, *from the Bible*, God told me that I was fully forgiven *through faith in my Lord Jesus Christ!*

Over the years *God has enabled me to translate the Bible into German*, write my Small and Large Catechisms, write many others tracts and books, and preach and teach God’s Word to many people!

As I look back on my life, *it was very difficult and yet very wonderful!* Even though my life would have been easier if I would have kept quiet, I am so glad that God enabled me to stand firm on the Bible!

Here is my advice to you:

- Read and carefully think about God’s Word every day; know it well!
- Be sorry for your sins!
- Trust in Jesus for your entrance into heaven!
- Rejoice in Jesus’ finished work for your salvation!
- Then – *righteous in God’s sight and sure of heaven* – be at peace!

Conclusion

For more information about the important Bible-based teachings of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, ask the pastor for a free copy of Luther’s Small Catechism and / or the Augsburg Confession.

Connect and Benefit

Website: BethlehemLutheranChurchParma.com
Podcast: “Benefit from the Bible”
Facebook: “Bethlehem Lutheran Church Parma”
Location: 7500 State Road, Parma, Ohio 44134
(South of Pleasant Valley)
PH; EM: 440-845-2230; pastor@blc7500.com

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Martin Luther

Here Is a Brief Summary of My Life!



1483 – 1546

Introduction

Greetings! My name is Martin Luther. The year is 1546, and I am now 62 years old. My wife’s name is Katherine; we have been married for 19 years and God has blessed us with six children: Hans, Elizabeth, Magdalena, Martin, Paul, and Margaretha.

As I think about my life, God has blessed me in many ways:

- ⇒ God has made me sorry for my sins!
- ⇒ God has shown me the saving truth!
- ⇒ God has given me faith to trust in Jesus!
- ⇒ God has enabled me to write many tracts and books!
- ⇒ God has protected me from those who seek to end my life!

It all began 62 years ago when I was born in Eisleben, Germany on November 10, 1483. My parents were Hans and Margaretha; they were faithful Roman Catholics. The day after I was born, *on the Feast of St. Martin of Tours*, I was baptized and given the name Martin.

When I was seven years old, I entered Latin school. Then, *during the next ten years*, I attended two other schools in two other towns. When I was 17 I went to college at the University of Erfurt. Since I was hoping to become a lawyer, I studied Latin, logic, and philosophy.

During my years in high school and college, I sang in the church choir, understood all that was said in the church in Latin, and was impressed by the church – *by its stained glass windows, statues, saints, and masses*.

During my college years, many in Europe died from the Black Plague. Then, death struck close to home when the plague took the life of my best friend. Even though my

parents wanted me to become a lawyer, I kept wrestling with the question: Should I quit studying law and become a priest or a monk?

Then, two months later, I entered the Augustinian cloister in Erfurt. My future as a well-paid lawyer had been transformed into a life of poverty and scholarship. In the monastery I studied theology, worked hard, and begged for food and money.

Two years later, at the age of 24, I was ordained a priest. I wanted to serve God and help people, *but I was consumed with my own relationship with God*: I wanted God's love, but I knew I was a sinner who deserved God's punishment! No matter how hard I tried, *I could not satisfy God's righteous demands!*

In the middle of those struggles, I was sent on a trip to Rome. I was hoping the trip would eliminate my doubts; however, in Rome, I saw firsthand the great corruption that had overtaken my beloved church!

When I returned from Rome, *though I felt unprepared*, I was sent to a new university at Wittenberg to teach the Bible and philosophy. As I prepared my lectures, my focus shifted from myself to God's Word. Then, when studying the book of Romans, *God open my eyes to the saving truth!* For years I had been down on myself, *even angry with God*, because I could not make myself righteous, I could not measure up to His perfect standard.

Then, *in Romans 1:16-17*, God showed me this precious truth:

"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. ¹⁷ For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith [not by works] from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith.'" (NIV)

What does that mean?

- ⇒ The bad news is that no one can save himself; *no one can make himself righteous in God's sight!*
- ⇒ So the "gospel" is the good news of Jesus' saving work to make us righteous. *Jesus lived without sin; then He received our sin and God's punishment for our sin!*
- ⇒ Since we are helpless, *Jesus did everything necessary to remove our sins and make us righteous in God's sight!*
- ⇒ Then, through baptism and the Bible, *God the Holy Spirit is at work to give people the gift of faith to truth in Jesus alone as their Savior!*

God has done that same work in my life!

As I continued my studies and my lectures, the precious truth of God's Word kept pointing me more and more to Jesus, my Savior, *and His finished work of salvation!* However, *at the same time*, that precious truth was exposing the errors of my church!