

HEROES OF THE CHURCH: Martin Luther

I. Review: Martin Luther's Early Years Monastic Life and Conversion

A. Monastic Life and Conversion

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel...For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, 'The righteous shall live by faith.'" (Rom 1:16-17)

"Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness 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..."

II. Corruption in the Church

- A. The buying and selling of church offices
- B. Bishops/archbishops were not exercising spiritual leadership
- C. Priests paid bishops to violate celibacy vow
- D. Sacrament of Penance
 1. Penance = (Latin) Punishment. The late Medieval Roman Catholic theology believed that every sin required temporary punishment. (though Christ took eternal punishment for sins)
 2. Penance was defined as a sacrament in the Fourth Lateran Council (1215)
 3. Penance required three parts from the sinner: contrition, confession, satisfaction
 4. John Tetzel and the crass sale of indulgences – "As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs!"

III. Luther's 95 Theses

- A. Nailed on the door of Wittenberg Castle Church on October 31, 1517

Thesis 32 - All those who believe themselves certain of their own salvation by means of letters of indulgence, will be eternally damned, together with their teachers.

Thesis 53 - Those are enemies of Christ and the pope who forbid the word of God to be preached at all in some churches, in order that indulgences may be preached in others.

1. Written in Latin and intended for theological discussion only, but...
2. Translated and disseminated far and wide!
3. Luther became, in the words of the pope, the "wild boar in the vineyard".

IV. The Diet of Worms, April 1521

- A. In April 1521 the emperor called Luther to come and give an account of himself
- B. Luther was promised safe conduct for his trial on German soil
 1. Luther knew that death was possible.

"Since then Your majesty and your lordships desire a simply reply, I will answer without horns and without teeth. Unless I am persuaded by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear 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 and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen."

V. Luther and Marriage

- A. Luther not only effected a theological reformation, but he also effected a revolution in family life
- B. Luther was influential in the overhaul of the concept of marriage. Luther exalted family and marriage.
 - 1. Marriage to Katherine Von Bora, “the morning star of Wittenberg”

VI. Luther and children!

“They shall first learn to read the primer in which are found the alphabet, the Lord's prayer, the Creed, and other prayers. When they have learned this they shall be given Donatus and Cato... The schoolmaster is to expound one or two verses at a time, and the children are to repeat these at a later time, so that they thereby build up a vocabulary.”

- “Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors in Electoral Saxony”

VII. Luther Lived for the Glory of God

Luther remembered the man who led him to teach at the University (and so find Romans!):

“I recall that at the beginning of my cause Dr. Staupitz ... said to me: It pleases me that the doctrine which you preach ascribes the glory and everything to God alone and nothing to man; for to God (that is clearer than the sun) one cannot ascribe too much glory, goodness, etc. This word comforted and strengthened me greatly at the time. And it is true that the doctrine of the Gospel takes all glory, wisdom, righteousness, etc., from men and ascribes them to the Creator alone, who makes everything out of nothing.”

- What Luther Says, Vol. 3, p. 1374.