

Reformation

Lesson 2

The Story

The church was very angry with what Martin Luther had written and preached. The church accused Martin Luther of preaching false doctrine. They asked him to change his teaching. After not being able to convince Martin Luther he was wrong, the Pope excommunicated Martin Luther from the church in 1520. Excommunication meant Martin Luther was no longer a member of the church and according to the church he could not be saved from his sins.

Emperor Charles V, ruler over much of Europe, ordered a meeting called a Diet to discuss Martin Luther's teaching. In April of 1521 the meeting was held in Worms, Germany. At the Diet, the church representatives told Martin Luther to take back, recant, everything he preached, taught, and wrote or he would become an outlaw, a criminal. Martin Luther prayed to God for help and said that he could not take back what he taught because it was what the Bible said. Because Martin Luther said this, the church said that anyone could kill Martin Luther, and they would not be arrested. God was still watching over Martin Luther. Some friends of Martin Luther kidnapped him and took him to a castle called the Wartburg. Here Martin Luther was hidden away safe from his enemies. Martin Luther used this time to write. He translated the New Testament into German so the people could read the Bible for themselves instead of having the church tell them what to believe. Now people could see that forgiveness of sins came only by believing that Jesus died for their sins.

About a year later Martin Luther returned to Wittenberg. He still preached that the only way a person is saved is by believing that Jesus died on the cross to forgive sins. Martin Luther started writing more books and many hymns. He wrote

the Large and Small Catechisms for fathers to teach God's Word to their children. He also wrote the famous hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." Martin Luther got married to Katherina von Bora and had six children. Then on February 18, 1546 Martin Luther died in the same city where he was born, Eisleben. God blessed Martin Luther throughout his life. God also used Martin Luther to keep the teachings of the Bible correct and alive. The church was teaching many things that were against God's Word, but God caused a Reformation, a changing from what the church taught to what God taught in the Bible.

God's Word says that all people are saved because Jesus came and lived a perfect life for us, died on the cross, and rose again from the dead. Because of this, the sins of the whole world are taken away. When people believe in Jesus as their Savior, God does not see their sins, but God sees Jesus' perfection. We call this teaching justification by faith. God declares the whole world not guilty because of what Jesus has done. Faith in Jesus gives forgiveness of sins and salvation. God used Martin Luther to teach this Bible teaching to the people (Romans 3:19-28).

God also used Martin Luther to write the Bible in the German language so people could read it for themselves. God wants people to read the Bible so they can learn about Jesus themselves. People do not need the church to tell them what God's Word says. They can learn about the forgiveness God gives through Jesus on their own as it is written in the Bible.

We thank the Lord that He used Martin Luther to show from God's Word that we are



saved only through Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection. Forgiveness is a free gift given to us because God loves us. We cannot be saved by doing good works on our own.

God used Martin Luther to show people from the Bible that sins are forgiven and they are saved only because God loved everyone so much that He sent Jesus to die on the cross. Sins are not forgiven because people do good works.

Passages

“Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Romans 3:20, 24-25

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

“For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’” Romans 1:17

What the Story Tells Us

Luther's life changed dramatically after the Diet of Worms in front of Charles V. He went from a free man to an outlaw who could be killed because of his stand on God's Word. Write a paragraph explaining how you would feel if you were Luther.

Hymn TLH -Hymn 262 v. 1

A mighty Fortress is our God,
A trusty Shield and Weapon;
He helps us free from every need
That hath us now o'ertaken,
The old evil Foe
Now means deadly woe;
Deep guile and great might
Are his dread arms in fight;
On earth is not his equal. Amen.

Prayer

Dear Father in heaven,
We sin every day and have not lived up to the perfection You demand in Your holy law. Forgive us of this. Ease the guilt and shame that comes with our sin by giving us the words of peace found only in Your Word. Remind us never to try to satisfy our sins by the works we do ourselves. Let us trust only in You for forgiveness and salvation.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

What God Tells Us

You may never have to witness your faith in Jesus and His Word in front of emperors, kings, or princes, but there will be times in your life where trouble may come, fear may weaken your faith, and you may have to stand up for the truth. Read the following passages. Write a paragraph explaining how these passages can give you comfort and strength through your troubling times.

Psalm 23:4

Psalm 46:1

Matthew 10:32

I Corinthians 16:13

II Timothy 1:7

Your Turn .

Luther wrote many books, letters, and hymns that helped preach the Word of God in its truth and purity. We use many of these writings today, especially his hymns. Look in *The Lutheran Hymnal* and find the hymns that Luther wrote. He wrote a total of 24 of them. List them next to the numbers below.

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| 1. | 11. | 21. |
| 2. | 12. | 22. |
| 3. | 13. | 23. |
| 4. | 14. | 24. |
| 5. | 15. | |
| 6. | 16. | |
| 7. | 17. | |
| 8. | 18. | |
| 9. | 19. | |
| 10. | 20. | |