

## *Lesson 3: The Reformation*

To “REFORM” something just means to put it back the way it was meant to be. Two words - “RE” and “FORM.” A “Reformation” is a movement to re-form something because it has lost its shape.

Martin Luther was the son of a miner. Luther’s father wanted Luther to become a lawyer and sent him to law school.

During this time, the church taught that you got to heaven by doing “works.” They also spent a lot of time teaching people to be afraid of God - that He was a strict judge who watched you every moment, waiting for you to mess up.

One day, while coming home from school, a thunder storm developed and when lightning struck near him - Luther cried to St. Anne, “save me and I will become a monk.” Since he did not die - he felt he had to become a monk.

A monk is a person who dedicates themselves to living for God all the time. They live in a monastery and spend hours every day in worship and the rest of the day either learning or serving.

The more Luther studied, the more he was afraid of God. Luther confessed (told God he was sorry) his sins for hours every day - and would often wake up in the middle of the night afraid he had forgotten to confess something and would wake up a priest to confess to. He fasted (went without food) sometimes for days and even beat himself with a stick trying to prove to God how sorry he was for his sins.

During this time, Luther had a professor named Johann von Staupitz. Staupitz worked very hard to convince Luther of God’s love. Finally, out of desperation, Staupitz pushed Luther to become a professor in hopes his studies would lead him to the Gospel. It was in his studies of the New Testament in the original language (Greek) - that Luther discovered God’s love.

His biggest discovery was a single word: penance. The church said the word meant you had to “do something” to be forgiven - but Luther found the word meant “change of heart.” Notice the difference? If you are trying to please God - one says you need to do something (a good work) and don’t need to say you’re sorry - the other says you need to change your heart and life to show you’re sorry.

After studying and struggling and talking to other professors, on October 31, 1517, Dr Martin Luther nailed 95 Theses on the church door in Wittenberg. The door was

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like a big bulletin board where people posted announcements. Luther's posting of the theses was a challenge to the church to debate these theological issues so he could be proved right or wrong based upon the Bible.

Some of the questions he asked were:

Who is the head of the church?

Who has the right to forgive sins?

Do you get into heaven by your works or by God' grace?

Do pastors have to be unmarried or can they have families?

Why does the Bible and worship have to be in Latin?

Can you really buy forgiveness?

And the church was never the same again.

### **Why do people protest? What do they expect to happen?**

Luther's protest grew when Johann Tetzel came to town promising forgiveness of sins for people (even dead people) if someone put money in a special offering to help build a church in Rome. These things were called "INDULGENCES." The Bible makes it clear - there is only one way to receive forgiveness - and that is through Jesus. Indulgences pushed Luther from thinking to action.

### **TERMS:**

**Faith:** A God given ability to trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins and eternal life.

**Grace:** God' Riches At Christ' Expense. An undeserved gift.

**Indulgence:** A guarantee of forgiveness (even if you weren't sorry) in exchange for money.

**Protestant:** Originally a negative term for people protesting against abuses in the Church. The term now refers to just about any church that isn't Catholic.

However, **LUTHERANS ARE NOT PROTESTANTS.** A Protestant is one who is still "protesting" (and therefore still considers themselves part of the Roman Catholic Church and is waiting for the Roman Catholic church to admit they are wrong.) The Lutheran Church isn't protesting anymore, we have become "our own" church, believing that what matters is the Bible and God's promise of eternal life in Jesus.

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While we desire to be “one” church, we cannot follow those we don’t agree with.

**Reformation:** The movement begun by Martin Luther in 1517 in Germany to return the church to the Bible as the primary authority over faith and life. It later spread all over the world.

The Lutheran Church was **the first Nondenominational church**. We aren’t a denomination - we are a Synod. Synods do not have one single person in charge - they trust in the community as a whole instead of just one person.

The Lutheran Church was not the first “non-Catholic” church - that was the Orthodox church which separated in 451 A.D. over some decisions made at a Council meeting.

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### **HOMEWORK**

Write out:

**Ephesians 2:8-9**

**Romans 5:1**

**Psalm 51:16-17**

**Read Ephesians 2:8, 9.** How does it say we are saved?

**Read Romans 8:26-39.** Answer the following questions:  
Who intercedes for us when we don't know what to pray for?

For "all things to work together for good" - what do we have to be?

What can "separate us from the Love of God?"

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**The Reformation** (you will need to Bing/Google these answers - make sure you find the right answer - which is not always the first answer you find)

What year was Martin Luther born?

What did his father want him to become when he grew up?

What happened that caused Martin Luther to change his mind and become a monk?

Where does the word “Lutheran” come from?

Who was Martin Luther’s mentor?

What year did the Reformation begin?

In what city did it begin?

How many “theses” did he post on the church door?

What was the name of the church?

Was Luther trying to start a brand new church body?

What was the primary issue that forced Luther to take his stand? (Ephesians 2:8-10)

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At what “Diet” did Luther make the famous speech, “here I stand...”

What was a “Diet?”

What invention by Gutenberg helped spread the message of the Reformation?

What is the Book of Concord?

What books are contained in the Book of Concord?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

What year was the Book of Concord written?