

# A MAN NAMED MARTIN

## PART 1: THE MAN

Session 1

Sept. 17

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

### **Luther's World**

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

### **A Father's Dreams**

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

### **Turning away God's Wrath**

1. 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?
2. How did this Roman Catholic system of penance leave people uncertain they'd make it to heaven?

### **Read Philippians 3: 7-9**

1. Why does Paul consider his accomplishments in the flesh "loss" and "rubbish" instead of something he can add to Jesus' merits?
2. 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**

1. Describe how and when you first came to realize your mortality.
2. Have you had a close brush with death? Can you share that experience?
3. 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?
4. What sorts of things make you think about what waits for us beyond this life?

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

### **Life in a Monastery**

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

### **Living in God's Presence**

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

### **Read Genesis 28:16, Psalm 46:1, & Matthew 28:20b.**

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

### **Read Romans 8: 35-39**

### **Terror at the Altar**

**Read 1 Corinthians 10:16**

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

**Read Matthew 26:26-28**

**I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For - High Expectations**

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

**I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For - Unexpected Revelations**

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

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

### *LUTHER FACT: Penance*

**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**

1. 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?
2. 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?
3. What accepted opinions of our culture prove challenging to the church, especially as it shares the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

### **Read Hebrews 10:11 - 18**

### **Indulgences**

1. Why is it dangerous to trust our reason over God's clear revealed promise of complete and free forgiveness?
2. How could the idea that Jesus took away all our sins lead a Christian to treat God's grace as another "sin-free card"?
3. How do you think these indulgence struck Luther, who had been taking such great pains to make himself right with God, through his own efforts?

## Ninety-Five Theses

### *LUTHER FACT: Why October 31?*

**Why did Luther choose October 31?** It wasn't because of Halloween, but 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. It was the perfect time for Luther to post his Theses.

1. Why do you think Luther chose to respond through a "learned discussion" with scholarly theologians rather than appeal directly to the German masses?
2. What lesson can we learn about how to deal with someone we disagree with?
3. What possible advantages could you see coming out of the "viral" spreading of Luther's 94 Theses?
4. What potential drawbacks could it have held for Luther?
5. Describe a new technology or idea it took a while for you to wrap your mind around.
6. Why did it take so long to sink in?
7. 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 FACT: Three Solas of the Reformation*

**Three Solas of the Reformation:** The Latin phrase *sola scripture, sola gratis, 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*.

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

### **Luther Changes His Approach**

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

### **Read Proverbs 9: 8 - 9**

#### **Indulgences**

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

*LUTHER FACT: Where did the name "Lutheran" come from?*

**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**

1. What grandiose promises have you heard from pastors and TV evangelists who embrace a theology of glory?
2. In what ways does human reason find Jesus' humiliating death on the cross senseless and even foolish?

3. Why does human reason think we must work out our own salvation?

**Read Psalm 51:16 - 17**

1. Give a modern day example of this “brokenness” David is speaking of.
2. 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**

1. What do you think made Luther willing to risk his life to stand on the Gospel of Christ, who was crucified for him?
2. Describe ways the world is pressuring Christians to be silent and not take a stand.
3. What things would you find most difficult to sacrifice for your faith?

**Read Matthew 10: 26, 28**



Having watched the video, what would you like to know more about?  
(The Lutheran Hour would like your input on this question at [lhmmen@lhm.org](mailto:lhmmen@lhm.org))

### **God's Word Come out of Hiding**

1. Why do you think the Catholic Church felt it necessary to control and restrict access to the Scriptures?
2. 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?
3. 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**

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

### **Unyielding 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**

1. 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?

2. Describe times we are tempted to compromise the truth out of fear.
3. How does the example of God's protection throughout Luther's life give us confidence to fear, love, and trust 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**

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