

### Lesson 18

(This lesson is based on The Story of Christianity by Justo Gonzalez and Roland Bainton's Here I Stand.)

#### Overview of Martin Luther's Basic Theology:

- Justification by Faith – Romans 1.16-17
- The Word of God...
  - Luther believed that the Bible was authoritative for a couple of reasons...
    - because we meet Jesus Christ, God incarnate, the WORD, in the Bible
    - because it gives us the Gospel
  - Catholics believed that the Church had authority over the Bible, but Luther protested that because the Bible gives us the gospel more clearly than either the church, tradition, or the pope that the Scriptures held authority over the church!
- Theology of the Cross vs. Theology of Glory – John 12.37-41
- Law / Gospel
- The Church and the Sacraments
  - Luther was not an “individualist”.
  - For Luther, “priesthood of the believer” didn’t so much mean that we could all approach God on our own for ourselves, but that we could serve one another as a collection of priests.
  - Luther believed that infant baptism emphasizes that God was always the initiator of grace.
  - And, although Luther rejected the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation as too Aristotelian, he believed that Christ’s body was “in, with, under, around, and behind” the bread and wine of communion.
- Two Kingdoms

#### October 31, 1517 – The 95 Theses

- The sale of indulgences by John Tetzel...
- Luther’s approach of humility and boldness...
- **Highlights from the 95 Theses:**
  1. When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, “Repent” (Mt 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.
  2. This word cannot be understood as referring to the sacrament of penance, that is, confession and satisfaction, as administered by the clergy.
  3. Yet it does not mean solely inner repentance; such inner repentance is worthless unless it produces various outward mortification of the flesh.
  27. They preach only human doctrines who say that as soon as the money clinks into the money chest, the soul flies out of purgatory.
  41. Papal indulgences must be preached with caution, lest people erroneously think that they are preferable to other good works of love.
  43. Christians are to be taught that he who gives to the poor or lends to the needy does a better deed than he who buys indulgences.
  52. It is vain to trust in salvation by indulgence letters, even though the indulgence commissary, or even the pope, were to offer his soul as security.

## The Catholic Reaction to the 95 Theses

- Immediate reaction to silence Luther – The bishop of Mainz forwarded the 95 Theses to Rome, and a veritable firestorm is released.
  - **October 31, 1517** – Posting of the 95 Theses
  - **April 1518** – There was a disputation at Heidelberg, and Luther feared for his life, but he went anyway. His comment was, “I went on foot, and returned in a wagon.”
  - **August 7, 1518** – the Pope calls Luther to come to Rome to be put on trial.
  - This would have been the end of Luther. He was willing to obey, and would have gone, but first he appealed to Frederick the Wise for protection. He knew that by rights he should be tried in Germany. Frederick was favorable to this and wanted Luther to stay.
  - **September / October 1518** – Instead of going to Rome, Luther goes to have an interview with Cajetan, a Papal representative sent to silence Luther. Luther won’t shut up but does flee back to Wittenberg.
  - **November 28, 1518** – Luther appeals to a general council. This ultimately leads to that famous scene at Worms. Luther’s books were spread out before him and he was asked if he recognized them and was the author. Yes, he was. Would he recant of what he had written? Luther asked for time to consider so that he might answer wisely. He was granted one day. The next day, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 1521, Luther made his famous stand, “Since then your Majesty and your lordships desire a simple reply, I will answer without horns and without teeth. Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain 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 I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Go help me. Amen. Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise.”
  - Luther was spirited away to Wartburg castle for hiding, there he wrote and began his translation of the Bible.
- **Long term results – reformation!**
  - This reformation led to mass confusion to be honest.
  - There was a war.
  - Nuns and monks ran away and got married.
  - Some of his followers became fanatical and did some pretty awful and wild things.
  - The strength of the Catholic Church in Europe was basically broken at this point.
  - Marriage was once again looked upon as spiritual.
  - The bondage of deception was beginning to be broken.
  - Mass became “The Lord’s Supper”.
  - Salvation by grace, through faith, in Christ began to be preached with greater clarity than it had been preached in centuries.
  - Can you imagine it? Churches receiving, as if they were missionaries, monks or priests who had come under the influence of these “new” ideas and preaching the Gospel of grace! What glorious days those must have been in those churches with many people being set free from their bondage.