

A Man Named Martin

- The following is taken from the discussion guide for *A Man Named Martin*, if anyone would care for the guide or printed PowerPoint let me know.
- Like all of us, Martin Luther was molded by the world into which he was born. As he grew he found strict discipline and fear wherever he turned—at home, at school, and in church.
- In the video, Dr. Paul Maier noted, “In one morning (Luther) was caned or disciplined somehow 15 times for not having prepared his Latin lesson correctly.”
- Dr. Joel Biermann recalled an incident when Luther’s parents disciplined him for stealing a nut: “Luther said, ‘The blood flowed’ from the punishment he got.”

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- Describe the world in which you grew up. Was it harsh like Luther's world?
- What was discipline like in your home, school and church? And How did your experiences mold you into the person you are today?
- Did your experiences with your earthly father color your view of God the Father? Why would they?
- Dr. Robert Kolb pointed out in the video, Hans Luther saw amazing potential in his second son:

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- “He had dreams of moving his son into the bureaucracy where there was more money, more security, more power, and he had a vision for the Luther family that was on the move, upward and onward.”
- What ambitions did your parents have for you?
- Describe the influence your parents had on your career path. How much pressure did they exert?
- How did God make use of Hans’ ambitions to equip Luther for the Reformation?
- Can God use someone’s motives that are other than holy for His purposes? Can you think of any experiences from your own life?

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- In Luther's day the church taught how you must be saved. In the video, Dr. Ken Schurb described that message the church conveyed: "Do what is in you, and God will not refuse you grace. At least, do the best you can."
- Of course, no one is perfect. So when you messed up, Dr. Biermann described the next steps to take: "I would meet the priest one on one and I would confess to him. He gives me some kind of satisfaction to perform, something that needs to be done to show that I have a truly penitent heart ... What if I don't do enough penance? What if I don't quite cover all the sin? The answer is some time in purgatory ... you're the one earning the forgiveness; you're the one paying the price; you're the one accomplishing it, so the onus is on you to make sure it gets done."

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- I believe the classic Lutheran/Protestant understanding of Roman Catholic justification by “works” is a caricature at best.
- One thing I hope to accomplish in this series is a better understanding of what Rome really teaches. I still don’t believe it’s biblical nor do we agree with it but if we are going to disagree we should at least know the points on which we really disagree.
- Why would that be important? How does it look when you disagree with someone and it’s obvious you don’t know all the facts?
- We will discuss the theology in a later section where our study develops it a little more.

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- 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?
- If anyone ever had a claim to religious righteousness, the apostle Paul was that person. In Philippians 3:4-6 he lists the works he had undertaken before meeting Jesus Christ.
- They are the accomplishments he might have boasted about before but—like Luther—once he got to know the real Jesus, everything changed.

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- Philippians 3:7-9. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the Law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.
- Why does Paul consider his accomplishments in the flesh “loss” and “rubbish” instead of something he can add to Jesus’ merits?
- 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?

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- At the University of Erfurt Luther earned his bachelor's and master's degrees and was beginning his doctoral studies in law. But tragic events shifted his focus from the here to the hereafter. In the video, Dr. Maier explained, "A friend of his named Alexis died, and Luther wondered, 'What if I were Alexis?' Two of his colleagues in Erfurt died of the plague at the time, 'What if it was I?' Luther said."
- In Luther's time there was an ever-present concern about death. With modern medicine we get sick, take medicine, and get better. We just don't think about death too often - it wasn't that way 500 years ago.
- Describe how and when you first came to realize your mortality.
- Have you had a close brush with death? Can you share that experience?

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- 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?
- What sorts of things make you think about what waits for us beyond this life?