

A Man Named Martin

- 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.

A Man Named Martin

- In the video Rev. Daniel Preus said, “It was taught by the church that there were two consequences of sin: guilt and punishment. And the guilt, one could take care of by making a confession to a priest, but then came the second consequence and that was punishment. And that punishment had to take place either here in this life or in purgatory.”
- By Luther’s time purgatory had become a well-established teaching in the church, which everyone took for granted. It was dreadful, terrifying, and one of those “facts of life” that Luther, growing up, never thought to question or challenge.

A Man Named Martin

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

A Man Named Martin

- Purgatory made sense to sinners who were crushed by guilt. They knew they couldn't do enough good deeds in this lifetime to make up for all their wrongs. The trouble was this teaching kept them looking to themselves for the solution instead of looking to Jesus Christ and His full and free salvation.
- When Jesus said, "It is finished" (see John 19:30), He wasn't talking about His life. He was using a Greek accounting term, which meant "paid in full." What was paid in full? The debt for all of our sins.
- How do Jesus' dying words, "It is finished," prove the doctrine of purgatory is untrue?

A Man Named Martin

- Similarly Hebrews 10:11-18 says - And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until His enemies should be made a footstool for His feet. For by a single offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put My laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,” then He adds, “I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.” Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

A Man Named Martin

- Purgatory was a heavy weight for believers—the idea of millions of years of suffering to purge away sins. The sale of plenary indulgences offered the perfect solution: complete and instant release from purgatory for their loved ones, possibly even for themselves.
- Dr. Biermann pointed out the problem with that approach: “You know, it’s one thing to think about buying an indulgence for someone who is in purgatory and shortening their time there, and Luther had issues with that, but then someone had the brilliant idea, ‘Well, why do I have to wait ‘til I’m dead?’ So now you could have a person who had the resources, who could buy an indulgence and have the guarantee of the church that his sins were forgiven no matter what he did. It’s like a sin-free card.”

A Man Named Martin

- Roman Catholics think it is unreasonable to believe the merits of Christ applied to the trusting sinner will remove all sin past, present and future because it abdicates responsibility for the sins the Christian commits after he is justified.
- Why is it dangerous to trust our reason over God's clear revealed promise of complete and free forgiveness?
- How could the idea that Jesus took away all our sins lead a Christian to treat God's grace as another "sin-free card"?
- How do you think these indulgences struck Luther, who had been taking such great pains to make himself right with God, through his own efforts?

A Man Named Martin

- 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.
- Since the sale of indulgences was all about releasing your loved ones from purgatory, it was the perfect time for Luther to post his Theses.

A Man Named Martin

- Dr. Schurb said, “Luther not only preached against indulgences, he decided that he wanted to have a debate about them. So he did what any good academic would do at the time, he drew up a set of theses “on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences”: 95 statements or propositions for debate, written in Latin, which he posted on October 31, 1517. He was hoping to have a learned discussion. Of course, it didn’t quite end there.”
- Why do you think Luther chose to respond through a “learned discussion” with scholarly theologians rather than appeal directly to the German masses?
- What lesson can we learn about how to deal with someone we disagree with?

A Man Named Martin

- Luther tried to clean up the indulgence mess from the inside, dealing with the hierarchy of the church. But as Dr. Schurb pointed out, his 95 Theses went viral, “But people got a hold of those theses and translated them from Latin into German, and pretty soon they were being published widely on Gutenberg’s new printing press. And all of a sudden Luther is becoming quite the cause célèbre in Germany.”
- What possible advantages could you see coming out of the “viral” spreading of Luther’s 95 Theses?
- What potential drawbacks could it have held for Luther?

A Man Named Martin

- Many Lutherans think that Luther was fully “Lutheran” when he posted the 95 Theses on October 31, 1517.
- But, as Dr. Biermann pointed out, Martin Luther still had a long way to go: “October 31, 1517, when the 95 Theses are posted, Luther is still a good Catholic, even though he’s starting to challenge and wonder about things. He’s still fully devoted to the church. He wanted to have some questions asked about the right practice ... He’s not trying to say, ‘Hey, it’s all about justification by grace through faith in Christ alone,’ that’s not there yet.”

A Man Named Martin

- When we've grown up thinking one way, we can be slow to adopt new and different ways.
- Describe a new technology or idea it took a while for you to wrap your mind around.
- Why did it take so long to sink in?
- 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?

A Man Named Martin

- Three Solas of the Reformation: The Latin phrase sola scriptura, sola gratia, 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.