

A Man Named Martin

- Living in secret in Frederick the Wise's Wartburg Castle was difficult for Luther. Like any good pastor, his heart was with his people, and he desired to be with them and serve them. Dr. Schurb quoted him as saying, "Well, here I sit all lazy and full of food."
- But, on the contrary, Luther didn't waste his time there. With the security of the castle and his new identity as Knight George, Luther translated the New Testament into German.
- Why do you think the Catholic Church felt it necessary to control and restrict access to the Scriptures?

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- 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?
- 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?
- As Dr. Haemig pointed out, Luther not only translated the New Testament into German, he also reformed the Communion service.

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- “In the Late Medieval worship service the congregation was regarded as spectators; they listened to the liturgy of the Mass, sung probably by a choir ... they were spectators.
- Luther wanted them to be active. They participated in singing the liturgy, they sang the hymns, their listening to the sermon was regarded as an active listening because the Word of God was active upon them.”
- Thinking through the services in your church, in what parts do you actively participate?
- Why is it important to join with others in worship rather than sit back and watch as a spectator?

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- Lutheran princes found themselves in a tough position going against the Pope and Emperor Charles V. They wanted to meet together and find common ground to present a united front. In Marburg, Luther met with Ulrich Zwingli, leader of the Reformation in Switzerland, in an attempt to put forth a united front. But when Zwingli denied Christ's body and blood were truly present in Holy Communion, Luther's conscience would not let him compromise.
- Dr. Biermann pointed out, "Luther admitted later he was seriously tempted, or he could be easily tempted to say, 'Well, for the sake of unity, for the sake of putting a good solid front against the Pope let's do this, let's agree.' But he just couldn't yield on the truth."

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- What earthly advantage would it have offered Luther, his congregations, and the German princes if he had reached full agreement with Zwingli?
- Acts 4:19-21a; 5:27-29 - But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.” And when they had further threatened them, they let them goAnd when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, saying, “We strictly charged you not to teach in this Name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this Man’s blood upon us.” But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men.”

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- 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?
- Describe times we are tempted to compromise the truth out of fear.
- How does the example of God's protection throughout Luther's life give us confidence to fear, love and trust in God above all things?

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- In parts two and three of this Martin Luther Bible study series, we will explore the lasting impact Martin Luther made on human history. Yet in all this he didn't focus on his accomplishments. His humble, final written words reveal his ultimate perspective.
- “We are only beggars (before God), it's true.” Luther meant when we stand before Jesus Christ's judgment seat we will all stand as beggars with nothing to offer. Everything depends on Jesus' life, death and resurrection.
- If the Lord is willing, what things would you like to accomplish before you die?
- How does Luther's emphasis on Jesus' saving merits give us confidence for that great day?