

A Man Named Martin

- In the video, Dr. Schurb described Martin Luther's experiences as a monk: "Luther is now introduced to a monk's life which is a very regimented thing ... Luther, of course, ramps that up. He not only wanted the strictest monastic discipline he could find, he disciplines himself, including self-flagellation."
- Where would you expect to find the most regimented way of life today?
- Was Luther at peace in the monastery? Why not?
- What challenges did you face when you moved on to a more free and liberated stage in life?

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- Dr. Mary Jane Haemig said, “In Luther’s time people didn’t doubt that God was present. The question was, ‘What is God’s attitude toward us?’ And the overwhelming impression that people had was that God was angry.”
- In today’s culture how do people demonstrate whether they believe God exists or not? Is that god an angry god?
- What difficulties does that raise when you try to share the message of salvation in Jesus Christ?
- Many Bible passages remind us that God is constantly present, watching over us:

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- Genesis 28:16 - Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.”
- Psalm 46:1 - God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble
- Matthew 28:20 - (Jesus said) “Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
- From a Law point of view, what are the times you wish God wasn’t looking?
- From a Gospel point of view, what are the times you’re glad He is always there?
- How is your perception of God affected by the good events in your life? The bad ones?

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- During the dark hours on the cross, Jesus clung in faith to His Father's love. This was in spite of the fact He was being forsaken by God at the time. When we go through tough circumstances, it may seem like God is angry, but because of Jesus' sacrifice, God promises His love is steadfast and sure.
- Romans 8:35-39 - Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For Your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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- The Roman Catholic Church teaches that in Holy Communion the bread and wine actually turn into the real flesh and blood of Jesus Christ.
- Dr. Biermann described the first time Luther consecrated the elements in Holy Communion: “When you said the Words (of Institution), you were holding the body of Christ. He was terrified to think that he, an ordinary human being could be holding God in his hands, and he was terror stricken. It was a very frightening moment for him, and he almost dropped the elements in his terror.”
- In time, passages like 1 Corinthians 10:16 convinced Luther that Jesus’ body and blood are truly present in the bread and wine, but the bread and wine remain.

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- Lutherans came to use the phrase “in, with, and under” to describe how the body and blood of Christ are joined to the bread and wine in Holy Communion.
- Against the Reformed idea that the bread and wine only represent the body and blood of Christ, Lutherans confess we receive the body and blood “in” and “with” the bread and wine.
- Against the Roman Catholic teaching that the bread and wine transforms into the body and blood so bread and wine are no longer present, Lutherans say the body and blood of Jesus are “with” and “under” the bread and wine.

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- 1 Corinthians 10:16. The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?
- When did you first realize the significance of Holy Communion?
- When we celebrate Communion, is there anything that reinforces the reverence and holiness of the Lord's Supper to you?
- Dr. Haemig spoke of the lasting effects of Luther's terror at his first Mass: "Martin remembered this. I've often wondered if it played into his later rethinking of what was going on in the Lord's Supper, because, of course, later on when Luther thought about the Lord's Supper and God's gift to us in that, the focus was on what God is doing, not on what the priest is doing."

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- When Luther wrote about the Sacrament in his Large Catechism (1529), he must have recalled his former terror: “We must never regard the Sacrament as a harmful thing from which we should flee, but as a pure, wholesome, soothing medicine which aids and quickens us in both soul and body. For where the soul is healed, the body has benefitted also” (Large Catechism V 68)
- Matthew 26:26-28 - Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

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- Luther had high expectations he would find answers to his questions when he travelled to the holy city of Rome. In the video, Dr. Maier described it this way: “Luther says that the moment he saw holy Rome in the distance he bowed down and kneeled in the roadway; so thrilled he was to see the ‘City of God,’ as it were, on earth.”
- Thinking back to your youth, what was something you really looked forward to which you thought would change your life?
- Was it what you expected?
- What happened when you finally reached that milestone?

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- Dr. Schurb described Luther's bitter disappointment in these words: "But once he got into Rome and he was doing the various things a religious pilgrim would do in Rome, he got less and less enchanted with the city of Rome. In fact, later on he said, 'Boy, if there's a hell, Rome is built on it.'"
- A few years later, back in Germany, Luther was in the process of studying the original texts of the Bible, when God truly transformed his life of faith.
- Looking back, what events has God used to transform your faith life?
- Would you describe your coming to faith as being an extended process like Luther's or more like a transformative moment?