

LUTHERAN 102

What does it mean to be Lutheran? What is our history? Theology? What does it mean to be Lutheran today?

Session 1: October 29 – Lutheran History and Theology

Session 2: November 5 – Modern Ecclesiology and How Lutheran Theology Can Save the World

SESSION 1 – Lutheran History & Theology

I. Who was Martin Luther & Why did he start the Reformation?

See Reformation Timeline

- 1493 – Martin Luther born
- 1505 – Luther Joins a monastery
 - He was going to be a lawyer, but in a moment of terror during a storm he promised God that if God saved him we would become a monk!
- 1507 – Luther ordained as a priest
 - During his first mass he struggled, barely made it through. He became overwhelmed by a sense of God’s vast holiness and his guilty sinfulness
- 1508 Luther assigned to Wittenberg
 - Where Johann Von Staupitz (fellow monk) told Luther he had a mistaken picture of Christ. He should view Jesus as a “savior and friend”, rather than a “severe and terrible judge”
- Somewhere between 1512-1519 – Luther had his “Tower Experience” where Romans transformed his understanding of justification (forgiveness, salvation) and everything changed
- 1517 – Martin Luther nails 95 Theses to the church door in Wittenberg
 - Primary goal was to correct the error of the church, mostly around indulgences
- 1520 – Luther excommunicated from the church
 - Hides at Warburg, protected by Frederick the Wise of Saxony
- 1521 – Famous “Diet of Worms” (Trial in the town of Worms) where he is officially condemned by Emperor Charles and goes into protective hiding for fear for his life. Much of this was at Wartburg Castle in Eisenach, Germany (Hence Wartburg Seminary!)
- 1522 – Luther’s translation of the NT was published
- Luther continued to write prolifically. “Lutheranism” spread, not only as a religious revolution, but a cultural revolution, as well. Dynamics of German language and identity propelled this movement. Much later (1529) Luther found many priests and Christians, not untethered from the structures of the Church, were very uneducated and did not know the scriptures. Hence he wrote, “The Small Catechism” as a teaching tool for Christians, and “The Large Catechism” as a tool for clergy.
- 1525 – Luther married Katherine (Katie), a nun. Luther could have earned massive income from his work, but refused to take payment. Katherine stepped up and became the breadwinner by running a farm, gardening, brewing beer, and taking in lodgers at their large home.
- 1530 – Augsburg Confession
 - (1532 Turks attack Vienna)
- 1546 – Luther dies

II. Reformation Theology

#1 most significant, above all else!!!

We are justified by the grace of God alone, through Christ as a gift. There is nothing whatsoever we can do to earn our salvation. It is already done for us. (Justification=being made righteous, with the righteousness of God) The prevailing view in the Roman Catholic Church was that we *participated* in this *process* of salvation. Yes, Jesus died for our salvation, but we still had a part to play, and therefore there was never assurance.

Romans 3:21-24

But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast.

Other Significant Theological Ideas

1. Theology of the Cross (as opposed to a Theology of Glory)

God is most clearly revealed to us in the suffering of Jesus on the cross. God is fully present in suffering. If we want to understand God, we don't look at power and glory and holiness, we look at Jesus. And where we see the fullness of God's character and love is on the Cross.

Heidelberg Disputation

19. That person does not deserve to be called a theologian who looks upon the invisible things of God as though they were clearly perceptible in those things which have actually happened.

20. He deserves to be called a theologian, however, who comprehends the visible and manifest things of God seen through suffering and the cross.

21. A theologian of glory calls evil good and good evil. A theologian of the cross calls a thing what it actually is.

2. The Person of Jesus Christ ("Hypostatic Union")

Formula of Concord

"The union between the divine and human natures in the person of Christ is a much different, higher, indescribable communion. Because of this union and communion of a human being and a human being is God. Nevertheless, through this union and communion neither the natures nor their characteristics are mixed together with the other, but each nature retains its own essence and characteristics.

In Christ there are and remain two distinct natures, unchanged and unmixed in their natural essences and characteristics.

"If it cannot be said that God died for us, but only a man, we are lost."

3. Understanding of Sin

The heart of sin as unbelief (in what God has done for us in Christ), rather than sin as moral, actionable failings.

Large Catechism

"To have a god is nothing else than to trust and believe in that one with your whole heart. As I have often said, it is the trust and faith of the heart alone that make both God and idols. If your faith and trust are right, then your God is the true one. Conversely, where your trust is false and wrong, there you do not have the true God. For these two belong together, faith and God. Anything on which your heart relies and depends, I say, that is really your God."

III. The Most Important Documents from the Reformation

- Small & Large Catechisms
- The Augsburg Confession (and Apology to the Augsburg Confession)
- The Freedom of a Christian
- Two Kinds of Righteousness
- Formula of Concord

A REFORMATION TIMELINE

Changing Worldviews

1450 – Gutenberg’s Printing Press

- 1455 Gutenberg’s Bible
- By 1500 over 100 locations throughout Europe had a printing press

1492 – Columbus is credited with arriving on a previously unknown continent across the ocean from Europe

1500 (ish) - Nicolaus Copernicus – (1473-1543) discovers that the Sun is at the center of the solar system, not the Earth.

Pre-Reformers

John Wycliffe, England, 1330-1384

Bible as sole authority, translated Bible into English. Died of natural causes, but in 1428 Pope officially pronounced him a heretic, they exhumed his bones and burned them at the stake.

John Hus, Bohemia, 1372-1415

Denounced abuses of the church. Imprisoned by the church in 1414, then burned at the stake as a heretic, died singing, “Jesus, son of the living God, have mercy on me.”

Girolamo Savonarola, Italy, 1452-1498

Tortured and executed.

State of the Church

Popes in late 1400’s bribed cardinals to be elected (p. 54)

1492 – Pope Alexander VI... most notorious pope of all time. “was a worldly and ruthless man, and at the time of his election was already the father of 8 children by at least 3 women.”

Luther’s Life & Work

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1507 – Luther ordained as a priest

1517 – Martin Luther nails 95 Theses to the church door in Wittenberg

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Resources

Small Catechism of Martin Luther

- p. 1160 in the ELW Hymnals
- mobile app for Android & iOS

