



1521^{AD}

KEY DATES IN THE LUTHERAN REFORMATION

Joshua 1:1-9 2 Timothy 3:1-13 John 15:18-27

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1521 was the point of no return for Martin Luther and the Lutheran Reformers. **1521** was the year of the final break between Martin Luther and the Roman Catholic Church¹. It all came down to one moment when Martin Luther was standing before the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and the Roman Catholic officials in the German city of Worms. It was **April 18, 1521**, and Martin Luther was on trial as a heretic.

A few months earlier, Pope Leo the 10th had issued an official document that condemned Luther and his teachings². That led to him being summoned before the Emperor to either *renounce or affirm* his teachings. The German prince of Luther's homeland arranged safe passage for him. The day before, on April 17, 1521, Luther was called before the Emperor. On the table before him were 25 of his writings, including the 95 Theses, and the Freedom of the Christian. He was ordered to either *renounce or affirm* his teachings. **THERE WOULD BE NO DISCUSSION. THERE WAS NO MIDDLE GROUND.** Luther was forced into a corner: *renounce his teachings or affirm them*. Since Luther was prepared for a discussion, *and not an ultimatum*, he requested some time to prepare a *proper answer*, and so the Emperor gave him 24 hours.

The next day, April 18, 1521, at 4pm, Luther again stood before the Emperor Charles V and made his reply. **Martin Luther refused to renounce the truth of Holy Scripture.** He confessed his faith with these well-known words:

*"I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted,
and my conscience is captive to the Word of God.
I cannot and will not recant anything,
since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience.
Here I stand, I can do no other, so help me God, amen!"*

¹ This is the year of the Diet of Worms. Wikipedia has a nice overview.

² This was the Papal Bull Exsurge Domine ("Rise up, O Lord") of June, 1520. Luther would go on to burn this Bull publicly on December 10, 1520 indicating that the Roman Catholic Pope had no authority over him. Ironically, he burned it in the city dump, noting that the Papal Bull, as well as the false teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, reeked as much as the dump. This signaled Luther's official break with the Roman Catholic Church, and foreshadowed his excommunication and trial at the Diet of Worms.

The Emperor was furious, the Roman Catholic Bishops recoiled, and plans were immediately set in place to arrest Luther and burn him at the stake as a heretic³. As Luther was leaving the city, his German prince pretended to kidnap him and he hid Luther at the Wartburg Castle for his protection⁴.

*Here I stand,
I can do no other, so help me God, amen!"*

How could Luther make such a bold confession of faith before the most powerful man in his world, knowing that it would cost him his life? The only way that Luther could make such a confession was by the power of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in him.

Luther had discovered the long forgotten Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in Holy Scriptures. He learned that he was justified by faith without works, He was righteous because of Christ and not his own good deeds, prayers, worship, or money. Luther learned from Scripture that salvation is by *Christ alone, faith alone, and grace alone!* The risen Lord Jesus Christ had declared Luther “**NOT GUILTY!**” of his sins; the Holy Spirit filled Luther with faith and conviction; and Luther trusted the Lord’s promise of the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting.

*The Gospel Good News
creates a zeal, confidence, and boldness within us.*

We see this same thing in the lives of the Apostles as well. After they realize that Jesus is risen from the dead, and were given the Holy Spirit, they too have a *zeal, confidence, and boldness* as they preach the gospel and risk their lives. We see it in the book of Acts in our Bibles. The Apostle James is almost immediately martyred; tradition says that all the Apostles, except John, would preach the gospel and end up being martyred for the Faith.

³ Soon after this, the Emperor issued the Edict of Worms which branded Luther as a heretic and fugitive. There was a large reward for his capture; and the warning that if anyone “by words or by deeds, received, defended, sustained, or favored” Luther that they too would be treated as a fugitive and heretic. It also said, “we command . . . that henceforth no one shall dare to buy, sell, read, preserve, copy, print, or cause to be copied or printed, any books of the aforesaid Martin Luther . . . since they are foul, harmful, suspected, and published by a notorious and stiff-necked heretic.” Martin Luther escaped capture, but several of his supporters were later rounded up and burned at the stake by Roman Catholic authorities.

⁴ This fascinating time in Luther’s life is summarized well in this brief article:
<https://lutheranreformation.org/history/luthers-time-wartburg/>

The Gospel Good News creates a *zeal, confidence, and boldness* in your life also. You too have the assurance that your sins are forgiven; you are *declared righteous* in God's eyes: “**NOT GUILTY!**” of your sins. You are filled with the Holy Spirit and given faith and conviction⁵. Jesus has promised you the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting.

Like the Apostles, you believe the words and promises of Jesus; like Martin Luther, you can take your stand on the Word of God regardless of the consequences.

- † It's OK to speak publicly about Jesus
- † It's OK to love your neighbor enough to talk to them about sin, death, judgment, and the grace of God in Jesus Christ.
- † It's OK take your stand on the Word of God even if you lose friends, and the whole world is against you.
- † It's OK to be hated, persecuted, ridiculed, and excluded because of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Word.

Jesus Himself was slandered and persecuted; as were His Apostles; and so was Martin Luther. **Jesus even told us to expect this!**

Jesus said, "If the world hates you, know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. John 15:18-19

Jesus said, "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Matthew 5:11-12

Because of your faith in Christ, your trust in the Word of God, and your hope of the resurrection of the dead, the world is going to hate you! You have a completely different world view than they do. You believe in godly morals, values, ethics, and lifestyles. You care enough for other people to warn them of the dangers of rebellion against God and immorality against their neighbor. You love your neighbor enough to tell them about the Lord Jesus Christ and His work is salvation. These

⁵ These are true realities in your life; they are all gifts given to you in Holy Baptism and nurtured through the Word of God and the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Even if you do not always feel like you have these things, you do. They are gifts that God has already given to you and they remain with you!

things cause the world to hate you: your Light is shining into their darkness, but they love the darkness and their anger will burn against you.

*Your life and your words shine the light of Christ
into people's dark lives and expose their sinful hearts.*

The goal of our lives as God's people is not ease, comfort, and popularity. **THE GOAL OF OUR LIVES IS FAITHFULNESS TO CHRIST AND HIS WORD... NO MATTER WHAT!** At times, that faithfulness means that we must speak the truth in love, regardless of the consequences. That's where Martin Luther found himself in **1521**. Faithfulness to Christ is a light that shines in this dark world: it is the light of your words and your actions. *In this world, the Light of Christ gets persecuted. In the next, it gets rewarded!*

For us, who live 500 years after Martin Luther, it is getting more and more intense. The world is *changing quickly*; we have seen things change in the last five years that have *never been seen* in history the world. The world's rebellion and immorality is *off the charts*. The world no longer asks that you tolerate its immorality, but now it demands that you support and encourage it. Persecution of the Christian faith is growing, and it will get more intense. *Now is the time to realize that and prepare yourself for it.*

The *power* to stand firm in your faith is Christ and His Word. The crucified and risen Christ promises to be with you; He sends the Holy Spirit to strengthen and uplift you; He strengthens you with His Word; He feeds you in His Supper; and He promises you the Resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting! There is no persecution that can change these things! The Resurrection takes the sting and the fear out of persecution.

On April 18, **1521**, Luther did not think he would live to see another day. In the past, men in his position would be quickly condemned and burned at the stake. But the Lord had different plans. The Gospel would be proclaimed, and brought back to the forefront of the Holy Christian Church.

Like Martin Luther and the Reformers in **1521**; you too can be bold in your faith in **2022** and say:

*Here I stand,
I can do no other,
so help me God,
AMEN!*

KEY DATES IN THE LUTHERAN REFORMATION
1517AD 95 Theses: the beginning of the Lutheran Reformation
1521AD The Diet of Worms
1530AD The Augsburg Confession
1546AD † Martin Luther
1580AD The Book of Concord
1847AD The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod
1974AD Trinity Lutheran Church Litchfield Park, Arizona

LORD GOD, we thank You for Your apostles, who gave their lives proclaim the truth of Your Holy Word.

We praise you for Martin Luther and the Reformers, who stood firm on your Word and promises.

Help us to be bold and courageous in our lives; and to stand on your word and promises in our day and age. Send us your Holy Spirit so that we may be lights that shine in this dark world.

And Lord, if and when we are persecuted, give us the strength to remain faithful to you at all times and in all things.

Give us the boldness and the courage that comes with the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!

In Jesus name, amen!

Joshua 1:1-9

After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, 2 "Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. 3 Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses. 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your territory. 5 No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. 6 Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

2 Timothy 3:1-13

But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. 2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, 4 treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. 6 For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, 7 always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. 8 Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. 9 But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men. 10 You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, 11 my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra--which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. 12 Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, 13 while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

John 15:18-27

[Jesus said], "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. 21 But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. 22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. 23 Whoever hates me hates my Father also. 24 If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. 25 But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: 'They hated me without a cause.' 26 "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. 27 And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.