

History of the Reformation

Theology of Martin Luther

- Background – Catholic Teachings
 - Church (Pope) determines scriptures, therefore stand above them to say what they mean
 - Only God is righteous, therefore, although Jesus died for sins, man still had to “pay” for his concupiscence (desire to sin) and the subsequent acting upon that desire
 - A man can pay for his sins by doing penance
 - Doing good works and gaining indulgence
 - Contributing \$ is a good work
 - Praying to saints, going on pilgrimages, praying the rosary, joining a monastery are all good works
 - Problem –
 - It satisfied those whose concept was
 - “just tell me what to do and let me be done with it”
 - Penance did not give peace to a soul seeking the righteousness of God
- Things to remember
 - Luther’s Theology was not a full “Reformation Theology” from the beginning
 - It “cooked” in Luther’s mind for several years before the 95 Theses
 - Even with the writing of the Augsburg Confession (1530), Luther was still trying to demonstrate that he was only trying to reclaim what the early church had believed
 - And that over the centuries, Roman Catholic theology had distorted those teachings
 - It is unfair to judge Luther based on Protestant theology which matured over the next 500 years.
 - Nevertheless, it’s amazing how much Luther’s theology in the early 16th century is very similar to what is believed today.
- The 5 Sola’s of the Reformation
 - Man is saved
 - With the Scriptures alone
 - By grace alone
 - Through faith alone
 - In and through Christ alone
 - To the glory of God alone
 - Luther did not articulate the 5 Sola’s of the Reformation
 - But they are a helpful summary to understand the recovery of the Gospel
 - Each Sola speaks to an abuse which was a part of Rome’s Christianity
- Sola Fide
 - “The just shall live by faith”
 - "This one and firm rock, which we call the doctrine of justification," insisted Luther, "is the chief article of the whole Christian doctrine, which comprehends the understanding of all godliness."
 - Not by works which merit righteousness
 - Luther came to understand justification as being entirely the work of God.
 - Against the teaching of his day that the believers are made righteous through the infusion of Gods grace into the soul,

- Luther asserted that Christians receive that righteousness entirely from outside themselves
 - righteousness not only comes from Christ, it actually *is* the righteousness of Christ,
 - and remains outside of us but is merely imputed to us through faith
 - rather than infused into us.
- Sola Scriptura
 - If Rome were wrong about justification by faith, it was because they were following the decisions of past popes and not the scripture itself.
 - To reform the church, one must return to God’s Word as the sole authority
 - “He who does not accept the doctrine of the Church of Rome and pontif of Rome as an infallible rule of faith, from which the Holy Scriptures, too, draw their strength and authority, is a heretic”

. . .Sylvester Prierias, (response to the 95 theses)
 - “In this psalm David always says that he will speak, think, talk, hear, read, day and night constantly—but about nothing else than God’s Word and Commandments. For God wants to give you his Spirit only through the external Word.”

1539, Luther commenting on Psalm 119
 - “Let the man who would hear God speak, read Holy Scripture.”. . . Luther 1545
 - Only the Scriptures are “breathed by God” (2 Tim 3:16-17)
 - The writers of Scripture are “carried along by the Spirit of God” (2 Pet 1:20-21)
- Solo Christo (Solus Christus)
 - Belief is in Christ alone
 - Christ alone is the object of our faith
 - Only Christ can satisfy the justice of God through obedience to the law
 - Only Christ can pay the price of our sins.
 - Belief is through Christ alone
 - “For there is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim 2:5)
 - Priests are not necessary to be the intermediaries between God and man
 - Luther – “Jesus Christ is the great Center and Circumference of the Bible”
- Sola Gratia
 - Man can only do spiritually what the Spirit enables him to do
 - “for by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God” (Eph 2:8)
 - Sola Gratia, not Gratia Sola
 - It is only by faith that forgiveness of sins is apprehended, and that, for nothing. And because through faith the Holy Ghost is received, hearts are renewed and endowed with new affections, so as to be able to bring forth good works. . . .Augsburg Conf (XX)
 - *Coram Deo*
 - “God has surely promised His grace to the humbled: that is, to those who mourn over and despair of themselves. But a man cannot be thoroughly humbled till he realizes that his salvation is utterly beyond his own powers, counsels, efforts, will and works, and depends absolutely on the will, counsel, pleasure and work of Another — God alone”

Bondage of the Will (1525)

- The Church
 - The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered.
 - And to the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Augsburg Confession (Art VII)
 - The Church is not an organization, headed hierarchically by one person
 - The Church is the Body of Christ, for whom He died (Eph 5:25)

- Law and Grace
 - One of the great distinctions of Luther was between Law and Grace
 - "Hence, whoever knows well this art of distinguishing between Law and Gospel, him place at the head and call him a doctor of Holy Scripture."
 .Luther, Table Talk
 - Three Uses of the Law
 - Civil – to restrain all men
 - Pedagogical – to confront sin and point us to Christ
 - Didactic – for believers, it is the way of righteousness, yet without the power to condemn
 - Reformed emphasis is on the didactic (3rd use of the law)
 - Note: Calvin switches 1st and 2nd uses
 - Luther – the function of the law is to point us to Christ (2nd use)

- Patrick's Places (1528)
 - Patrick Hamilton - 1528
 - The Law saith,
 Pay thy debt.
 Thou art a sinner desperate.
 And thou shalt die.
 - The Gospel saith,
 Christ hath paid it.
 Thy sins are forgiven thee.
 Be of good comfort, thou shalt be saved.
 - The Law saith,
 Make amends for thy sin.
 The Father of Heaven is wrath with thee.
 Where is thy righteousness, goodness, and satisfaction?
 Thou art bound and obliged unto me, to the devil, and to hell.
 - The Gospel saith,
 Christ hath made it for thee.
 Christ hath pacified him with his blood.
 Christ is thy righteousness, thy goodness, and satisfaction.
 Christ hath delivered thee from them all.

- God's Sovereignty
 - 1524 – Erasmus – *De libero arbitrio* (On Free Will)
 - All humans possessed free will and the doctrine of predestination was not in accord with the teachings of the Bible
 - Repentance, baptism, conversion depend on the existence of free will
 - God's grace assists men to choose between good and evil
 - 1525 – Luther – *De Servo Arbitrio* (On the Bondage of the Will)
 - Sin incapacitates man from working out his own salvation
 - Completely incapable of bringing themselves to God
 - God must redeem a person (the entire person, including the will)
 - Therefore, salvation is simply the product of God unilaterally changing a person's heart and turning them to good ends
 - Luther considered this book to be one of the few which should be preserved for posterity

- Universal Priesthood of all Believers
 - Luther did not use the exact phrase
 - That the pope or bishop anoints, makes tonsures, ordains, consecrates, or dresses differently from the laity, may make a hypocrite or an idolatrous oil-painted icon, but it in no way makes a Christian or spiritual human being. In fact, we are all consecrated priests through Baptism . . . To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation (1520)
 - “You are a royal priesthood and a priestly kingdom” (1 Pet 2:9)
 - God is equally accessible to all the faithful, and every Christian has equal potential to minister for God.

- Luther and the Sacraments
 - Baptism
 - “it is necessary to salvation and that through Baptism is offered the grace of God, and that children are to be baptized who, being offered to God through Baptism are received into God's grace. Augsburg Confession (Art IX)
 - The Eucharist
 - the Body and Blood of Christ are truly present, and are distributed 2] to those who eat the Supper of the Lord; and they reject those that teach otherwise . . . Augsburg Confession (Art X)
 - The Sacraments
 - that the Sacraments were ordained, not only to be marks of profession among men, but rather to be signs and testimonies of the will of God toward us, instituted to awaken and confirm faith in those who use them. Wherefore we must so use the Sacraments that faith be added to believe the promises which are offered and set forth through the Sacraments

- Marburg Colloquy
 - Luther insists on the “Real Presence”
 - Zwingli – No presence – the Lord's Supper is done “in remembrance of Me”
 - Calvin – later melded the two together

- Martin Bucer wrote a list of 15 points of “Protestant agreement”
 - The 15th point, they agreed that the Lord’s Supper was important and should never be neglected, BUT
 - They could only “agree to disagree” on the presence of Christ in the Supper
- Luther wrote his wife,
 - we are “of one opinion in almost everything ... at the Lord’s Supper, however, they will allow bread to be only physically and Christ to be only spiritually present ... I suppose God has blinded them.”
- Summary
 - 5 Sola’s
 - Because of the Scriptures alone, man is saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in and through Christ alone, to the glory of God alone
 - The Church’s One Foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord
 - Understanding the difference between Law and Gospel is essential
 - Luther – the primary use of the Law is to drive both sinners and saints to Christ
 - Reformed – the primary use of the Law is to teach believers how they are to live
 - God is Sovereign
 - The Sacraments are a means of grace
 - Baptism and the Eucharist are real channels through which God gives grace to His People