

Luther - the Man Who Would Not Bend

by Ian Paisley

Martin Luther's life and legacy serve as a powerful example of standing for truth and faith in the face of persecution and criticism.

Duration: 29:39

Scripture: Acts 26:13-25

Topics: "Christian Perseverance", "Joyful Obedience"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of rejoicing in the Lord. He encourages believers to approach their tasks with tears, compassion, reference, argument, prayer, hope, and praise. The preacher highlights the audacity and dedication of Martin Luther, who fearlessly stood against his enemies and defended the Word of God. Despite facing opposition, Luther found joy in his walk with God and was a loving father to his son. The sermon concludes with an invitation for non-believers to become Christians and join the army of King Jesus.

Transcript

You'll find an authorized version of Holy Scripture before you in the pure picket up. Turn to the New Testament, to the page 168 in the New Testament, and you'll find there the twenty-sixth chapter of Acts. I want to read a few verses from this chapter.

We're reading from verse thirteen of Acts chapter twenty-six. At midday, O King, I saw in the way a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the bridge.

And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. But rise and stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee, delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sin and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision, but showed first unto them of Damascus and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and do works meet for repentance.

For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple and went about to kill me. Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both the small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come, that Christ should suffer and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead and should show light unto the people and to the Gentiles. Ending our lesson at verse twenty-three, and God will stamp it with his own seal of approval.

The book of the Acts, at the chapter twenty-six, verses twenty-two and twenty-three. Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both the small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come, that Christ should suffer and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead and should show light unto the people and to the Gentiles. This weekend we remember the great Protestant Reformation and what took place in those Reformation times.

There are many dates in the Reformation of the sixteenth century, but the happenings in the small town of Wittenberg in Germany on that day seems best to be marked as the real birthday of the greatest movement in Christianity since the day of Pentecost. Europe was beginning at that time in its history to free itself from the incarceration in a period which has been rightly called by the historians the Dark Ages. The supremacy of darkness from the people and by the people had taken the people of Europe into the blackness of utter superstition, damnable idolatry, and the curse of an immoral priesthood.

Outbreaks of that vile uncleanness were common in Rome and from Rome across all of Europe in those dark centuries. That same uncleanness has been highlighted only this week in the heart-rending exposures of child abuse and hellish sodomy in the Roman Catholic system. The Bible describes that system as the beast, and it is evident that the beast has not been destroyed.

It breeds in all generations and brings forth its evil spawn. There is, of course, a dividing line, and that line came at the great Protestant revolution. Martin Luther, in many senses, was the greatest of all the reformers.

There's no soul amongst the galaxy of the great Reformation fathers is loftier, brighter, braver, and yet more tender than the German reformer. God chooses the weak things, but he never chooses weaklings. God's sovereignty in the choice of Luther as a special instrument in the great work of the Reformation is a demonstration of the free grace of Almighty God.

I want tonight to bring before you some of the characteristics of Martin Luther, the great, and first of all, I must say that one of his great characteristics was publicity of his testimony to the salvation of God. Martin Luther didn't go to heaven by a back door or by the back stairway. He went openly and publicly before the whole of Europe.

And the whole of Europe knew about his deliverance from the dark cell of the Augustinian monastery of which he was a member, from the dark condemnation of Romanism, which promises man life, but gives them death. They noticed it all. Like Paul, Martin Luther was always declaring his personal testimony to the fact that God had saved his soul from hell and death and judgment, not by priests, not by masses, not by the Pope, but by the free grace of Jesus Christ and the shedding of his blood at the place called Calvary.

And his whole being was put to the task of publicly declaring his personal testimony to the saving and keeping power of the Lord Jesus Christ. There was no hiding of a sight. There was no apology for his

language.

There was no idea that he could walk with Rome and walk with Christ. There was no idea that he could be at peace with Christ and not be at war with the Pope. Martin Luther, by the grace of God, was changed from a slave of Romanism to be a great soldier of the Redeemer, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

And the first characteristic in his life was the publicity of his testimony for God and for righteousness. His second characteristic was his invincibility of his dedication to God. Martin Luther declared that he was wholeheartedly and altogether the slave of Christ.

A slave has no mind of his own. A slave has no will of his own. A slave has no thoughts of his own.

A slave has no place in society of his own. A slave is tied hand and foot to his master. And Martin Luther became the slave of Christ.

He walked where Christ ordered him to walk. He talked about what Christ ordered him to talk. He contended for which Christ, for the things Christ ordered him to contend.

And he became the most hated man of Europe. It is interesting to note, as we read history, the awful and appalling caricatures that the press of his day said about Martin Luther. I find myself greatly encouraged, for I look like a saint, even with the press's comment that Martin Luther, he was painted as a devil from hell.

Why? Why? Why? Because he was invincible in his dedication to God. Of course he was a hated man. Anyone that loves truth will be hated.

Anyone that stands for truth will be hated. Anyone that swears allegiance to Christ will hear Christ saying, they hated me before they hated. What was it that brought him through? He had the experience of Moses.

What was it said of Moses? He endured as seeing him who is invisible. Luther had seen the Savior. And that look had transformed his life.

So his characteristic was publicity of his testimony for God, invincibility of his dedication to God, thirdly, the infallibility of the word of God. Martin Luther rejected the word of the Pope. His final appeal on every occasion was God's holy.

But fourthly, he had another characteristic, and that was his activity in the service of God. Luther never said, let God do his own work. I'm not able to do it.

Luther worked and worked and worked. And as he worked, God worked with him. And he entered into partnership with that great partner, that great builder.

You know, there are those today that tell us if God is going to do a work, then we should leave it to God to do. Christians should not work. But when I read my Bible, I hear the words, work for the night is coming when no man.

Someone came to Luther one day and said to him, you have a lot of work to do. You haven't time to pray. Just start working.

I will start to pray more because I have more work to do. I need to pray more. What a difference between that philosophy and the philosophy of the Christian church in this hour in which we live.

Luther worked by prayer, by mouth, by preaching. He taxed his strength many times. And many times he was sick.

But God in his great goodness provided for him and blessed him and made him a blessing. Yes, the publicity of his testimony for God, the invincibility of his dedication to God, the infallibility of the word of God, his activity in the service of God. But there was something else.

His tenacity in supplication to God. He believed in prayer. Now he said, I never have a day I don't pray for three hours.

And he said, when the work gets more, I pray longer. So if I have more work to do, I always throw in another hour. Or he said, and put it in the record, the man that prays well will work well.

It's time the church learned that. And we all learned that. He said, what prayers we have must be watered with our tears.

He said, if defeat comes, we deserve it. For if we lived in the victory of Christ, no devil in hell could defeat us. If darkness comes, we have imported us because God has called us to walk in the light.

How dare we walk in the darkness? If we are in a state of misery and we're ruined, it's our own fault. We should be in the state of rejoicing. When I have much to do, I will do it with tears, with compassion, with reference, with argument, with prayer, with hope, and with praise.

No wonder this man filled the gap. No wonder this man did the job God called him to do. No wonder this man prevailed both with God and with men.

But something more. He not only had this publicity for his testimony, he not only manifested the invincibility of his dedication, the infallibility of the Word of God, the activity of his service for God, the tenacity of his supplication to God, but he demonstrated an audacity to the enemies of God. I would not dare to utter half the things that Luther uttered in his preaching if you would beat me out of this building.

Someone said to Luther one day, why do you speak such ruff? He said, have you never read the scripture, answer a fool according to his folly? I'm only answering these fools in the language their dumb heads can understand. And he was right. People got the message.

There was no one asking Martin Luther to explain himself. No one asked him to make it clearer. No one asked him could he not help them to understand it more.

It was as plain in the language, the common vulgar language of the German people as they could hear it. He respected no one or nobody. His only respect was to the members of the blessed Trinity of God and to those that are washed in the blood of the Lamb.

He was fought by one of the Dukes of Germany, Duke George. Duke George said, you go to worms to the tribunal where we're going to try you and hang you. We'll kill you.

He stood and stroked his beard and he said, I will be in worms though it is raining, Duke George. I'll be there. And then another critic said, If you go to worms, we will have the devil there and the devil will inspire

the Romanists to kill you.

He said, I don't care if there's as many devils in worms as there are Sleuths. I will be there. And he was there.

And they reeled upon him. But the reeling did nothing to alter it. Instead across Europe the word of Luther was heard and recorded and revealed and printed.

Here I stand. I can do naught else. God helping me.

In his little history he says, they didn't kill me. They didn't arrest me. They just dismissed me.

God can make a man's enemies to be at peace with him when that man is really at peace with his God. The audacity. Sometime go to a library and ask for some of the writings of Luther.

Now you will not get them in the full baseness of the way he spoke them. But you'll get some inkling of the kind of man Martin Luther was. He didn't believe in compromise.

He didn't believe in breaking the commandments. He didn't believe in being nice to anyone who wasn't nice to God. He believed in the truth.

And the truth had set him free. But not only are we amazed at his audacity in the face of the enemies of God, but we're amazed at the felicity of his walk with God in his own home. There was no better father than Martin Luther.

His enemies admitted that. They said, this man, so full of care, so full of trouble, the world all against him, the church cursing him. He's anathematized, he's threatened with every weapon that Rome knows.

And yet he sits in his home. He holds his baby son, Johnny, in his hands, and he entertains him. And while the whole world outside is cracking and calling for his demise, there's a smiling daddy in the home with a child upon his knee and telling the child, you know who your daddy is? He is supposed to be a very wicked.

A bad man. And the child, he said, smiled. And he said, this face of my smiling baby boy cleansed away all the horrid looks of 10,000 horrid men and women and devils.

The felicity. God brings a happiness to the soul of a man that walks with God. It is a happiness that cannot be disturbed.

And one last thing is noticed by all who have studied Luther, is his generosity, his gifts to the servants of God and to all who were poor and impoverished. He used to go out in the morning, and he would gather up a lot of things from his wife's larder. And she said, who are those for? He says, those are for the poor.

I'll meet along the way. And she said, you can't do that. And he said, who are you? Didn't you promise to obey me when you were married? You tried to obey the Pope when you were a nun, and you couldn't do it, but you've obeyed me, and I'm taking these.

And along the streets he would go, and he would meet the poor, and he would feed them. And one day, when he had nothing to give, he just took off his own coat and gave it to a poor man. And he said, take that coat.

I'll miss it, but I'll not miss it as much as you'll miss it. He was a man who knew the generosity of a believer, for had he not met the most generous of all people, even Jesus Christ, who though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich. What a man.

What a message. What a history. What a record he left behind.

And someday you will see him shining around the throne of God as one of the great stars of the history of Greece. And you'll remember that Martin Luther gave you the religious liberty that you're enjoying tonight in this house of God by listening to the pure, unspoiled, unstained word of the living God that abides forever. If you're not a Christian, become a Christian tonight.

Enlist in the army of King Jesus. Stand up for Jesus as a good soldier of Christ. And may we all know what it is to raise the banner high for the Lord and to do good in the good pleasure of God for Jerusalem and to see the hand of God made bare in reparation power and reparation blessing for his own name's sake.

Let's bow our heads in prayer. Father in heaven, we thank thee for the memory of Martin Luther. We thank thee for all he did as a good soldier.

Lord, make us good soldiers of Christ. Lord Jesus, I want to play my part in this battle. I want to be true and honorable and clean and kind and prayerful and careful, a winner of souls, a preacher of the gospel, a winner of the loss to Christ.

Help me to be that. Bless all these people. Stir within our hearts a desire to be like Christ, which is very far better.

And we pray for the lost ones, that they may be gathered into the fold and family of Christ this night. And to thy great name shall all the blessings be. And the people of God said, Amen.

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