



Dear heavenly Father, we worship You this morning with our tithe and offerings. We pray for the courage to put You first in our lives. In the name of Jesus, amen.

JULY 17, 2021

When Martin Luther put God First

Martin Luther lost everything when he put God first. Even then, he didn't give up. What can we learn from Martin Luther today that will help us put God first in our own lives?

In the 16th century, the Roman Catholic Church led people to believe that they needed the church to reach Christ and receive salvation. Persecution was certain for anyone who challenged the authority of the church and especially the Pope. The Papacy had become the apocalyptic beast depicted in the Bible.

During this dark period of human history, Martin Luther was a devout Roman Catholic priest. While reading scripture, he realised that each person could connect with God directly, without a human mediator. Under the authority of the Bible, Luther challenged the authority of the most powerful person on the planet at the time, Pope Leo the Tenth.

Luther taught that salvation and, consequently, eternal life are not earned by good deeds but are received only as the free gift of God's grace through the believer's faith in Jesus Christ as redeemer from sin. His theology challenged the authority and office of the Pope by teaching that the Bible is the only source of divinely revealed

knowledge, and he opposed the exclusive concept of priesthood by considering all baptised Christians to be a holy priesthood.

He was excommunicated and persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church and the Roman Emperor. This did not stop him from putting God first and standing firm to his convictions. In his own words, Martin Luther wrote how he felt about this struggle in the famous hymn: "A Mighty Fortress"

That Word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth;

The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him Who with us sideth:

Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;
The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever.

Martin Luther put God first, even when it cost him everything. His courage inspires us today. Jesus gave up everything to redeem us and His love compels us to put His kingdom first in our own lives. As the deacons collect the tithe and offerings, we are challenged to put God first.