Foundations
History: Heroes of the Faith

Martin Luther

Timeline of Martin Luther's Life

1483	Born November 10 in Eisleben, Germany
1501	Studies Law at University of Erfurt
1505	Abandons Pursuit of Law Career After Surviving Storm on July 2 Joins Augustinian Cloister at Erfurt on July 17
1507	Leads First Catholic Mass on May 2
1512	Earns Doctorate of Theology from Wittenberg on October 19
1517	Nails 95 Theses to Doors of Castle Church in Wittenberg on October 31
1518	Defends Himself in Augsburg Against Charges of Heresy
1520	Burns Papal Bull in Wittenberg
1521	Excommunicated at Diet of Worms "Kidnapped" to Wartburg Castle Translates New Testament into German from Greek in 10 Weeks
1522	Begins Reforms in Wittenberg
1525	Marries Katharina von Bora First Protestant Service Held December 25
1530	Writes The Augsburg Confession with Philipp Melanchthon
1533	Publishes "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"
1546	Dies February 18 in Eisleben at age 62 Buried at Castle Church in Wittenberg

Lessons from Martin Luther's Life

1. **The Importance of Courage:** Martin Luther and His Convictions
    - *"Unless I am convicted by Scriptures . . . I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand."*

    - *[The preacher] should not be silent or mumble, but testify without being frightened or bashful. He should speak out candidly without regarding or sparing anyone, let it strike whomever or whatever it will. . . . He should not hold a leaf in front of his mouth.*

    - *Even if all the devils, the world, our neighbors, and our own people are hostile to us, revile and slander us, hurt and torment us, we should regard this as no different from applying a shovelful of manure to the vine to fertilize it, cutting away the useless wild branches, or removing a little of the excessive and hampering foliage.*

2. **The Importance of Perseverance:** Martin Luther and Suffering

    - *"Living, even dying and being damned, make a theologian, not understanding, reading, or speculating."*

- *“A religion that gives nothing, costs nothing, and suffers nothing, is worth nothing.”*

- *“Whoever does not know God hidden in suffering does not know God at all.”*

- *“If only a man could see his God in such a light of love . . . how happy, how calm, how safe he would be! He would then truly have a God from whom he would know with certainty that all his fortunes—whatever they might be—had come to him and were still coming to him under the guidance of God’s most gracious will.”*

3. **The Importance of Scripture:** Martin Luther and the Power of the Word

    - *“I simply taught, preached, and wrote God’s Word; otherwise I did nothing. And while I slept … the Word so greatly weakened the papacy that no prince or emperor ever inflicted such losses upon it. I did nothing; the Word did everything.”*

    - *"The Bible is a remarkable fountain: The more one draws and drinks of it, the more it stimulates thirst."*

    - *“The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold of me.”*

4. **The Importance of Clarity**: Martin Luther and the Heart of the Gospel

    - *"We need to hear the gospel every day, because we forget it every day."*

    - *"We are pronounced righteous and are saved solely by faith in Christ, and without works."*

    - *"One way is to believe about God, as I do when I believe that what is said about God is true; just as I do when I believe what is said about the Turk, the devil or hell. This faith is knowledge or observation rather than faith. The other way is to believe in God, as I do when I not only believe that what is said about Him is true, but put my trust in Him, surrender myself to Him, and make bold to deal with Him, believing without doubt that He will be to me and do to me what is said of Him."*

5. **The Importance of Grace:** Martin Luther and His Sin

- *“So when the devil throws your sins in your face and declares that you deserve death and hell, tell him this: "I admit that I deserve death and hell, what of it? For I know One who suffered and made satisfaction on my behalf. His name is Jesus Christ, Son of God, and where He is there I shall be also!”*

- *“Either sin is with you, lying on your shoulders, or it is lying on Christ, the Lamb of God. Now if it is lying on your back, you are lost; but if it is resting on Christ, you are free, and you will be saved. Now choose what you want.”*

- *The law works fear and wrath; grace works*

6. **The Importance of Dependence**: Martin Luther and Prayer

    - *"To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing."*

    - *I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer."*

    - *Pray and let God worry.*

    - *"As is the business of tailors to make clothes and cobblers to make shoes, so it is the business of Christians to pray."*

    - *"The less I pray, the harder it gets; the more I pray, the better it goes."*