



# Martin Luther

THE EDUCATOR

November 9<sup>th</sup>

Today we explore Luther's life in the 1520s, during which time he really emerged as the leader of a movement, and began to take up that responsibility with his characteristic energy and determination.

Last week we left off with Luther leaving the Diet of Worms, being "kidnapped" by men sent by his protector, Frederick the Wise, and hustled into hiding in the Wartburg Castle, disguised (growing his monk's tonsure out and wearing a beard) as "Junker Georg," "Knight George."

Luther filled his time there writing many treatises and also (in his spare time, while he was resting!) translating the Old and New Testaments from their original Greek and Hebrew into German. In the process, Luther standardized the German language in the same way the King James Bible standardized English a century later. If we spoke German, we would spend some time today looking at the particular ways he translated certain things, but we don't!

Once he returned to Wittenberg, Luther took on a more active leadership role. Realizing that people were looking to him, he undertook a "visitation" of the churches in Saxony, the region around Wittenberg, and found the conditions deplorable. You can read an excerpt of his assessment from the Preface to the Small Catechism in today's worship folder.

So Luther wrote two Catechisms, Small and Large, for basic and more advanced study of what he called the Six Chief Parts of Christian Doctrine. Can you name them from memory?

One of the joys of perpetually studying the Small Catechism, which your pastors get to do each time we teach our Foundations Class, is discovering that Luther didn't just make this stuff up! In this study we'll explore some of the Bible passages that underlie his explanations of some of his Answers (Antwort) to his "What does this mean?" (Was ist das?) questions. Below we'll give some references for you to look up. Discuss how these passages were used by Luther to arrive at his answers.

First Commandment, "You shall have no other gods." What does this mean? "We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things." Biblical Foundations: Deuteronomy 10:12-13; Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Matthew 22:35-37; Proverbs 3:5-6; Psalm 20:7

Fifth Commandment, "You shall not murder." What does this mean? "We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and be of service to him in every bodily need." Biblical Foundations: Matthew 5:21-22; Luke 10:25-37

Second Article, "And in Jesus Christ, . . ." What does this mean? ". . . who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with his holy, precious blood, and innocent suffering and death . . ." Biblical Foundations: 1 Corinthians 6:20; Revelation 5:1-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19

I hope this little exercise helps you understand that the Small Catechism is not just Luther's ideas, but is solidly rooted in the Scriptures. You could do this with every piece of the Catechism—but not in one day!

## **Next Week: Luther on Vocation**

**Please Read:**

*The books of 1 Timothy & 1 Peter and Romans 13 & Ephesians 4-6*