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Our Family Tree – Lutheranism

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### **Romans 3:21-24 (NLT)**

*But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. <sup>22</sup>We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. <sup>23</sup>For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. <sup>24</sup>Yet God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.*

### **1 Peter 2:4-5 (NLT)**

*You are coming to Christ, who is the living cornerstone of God's temple. He was rejected by people, but he was chosen by God for great honor. <sup>5</sup>And you are his holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God.*

### **Background**

- In 1507, Martin Luther was ordained a priest in the Roman Catholic Church.
- He was deeply troubled by the corruption and immorality he saw in the church.
- It was perhaps the darkest period the Catholic Church had ever experienced.

### **From the perspective of the Roman Catholic Church**

“Gradually a regrettable worldliness manifested itself in many high ecclesiastics. Their chief object – to guide man to his eternal goal – claimed too seldom their attention...Many bishops and abbots bore themselves as secular rulers rather than as servants of the Church. Many...ecclesiastics were chiefly concerned with their income and how to increase it. Luxury prevailed widely among the higher clergy...The scientific and ascetic training of the clergy left much to be desired, the moral standard of many being very low, and the practice of celibacy not everywhere observed...As to the Christian people itself...ignorance, superstition, religious indifference, and immorality were rife...From the fourteenth century the demand for ‘reform of head and members’...had been voiced with ever-increasing energy by serious and discerning men.” – Catholic Encyclopedia, “The Reformation”

### **Martin Luther's Struggle**

- Luther was raised in the Catholic Church that taught him that Jesus was a strict judge and was constantly condemning him.
- He was overcome with guilt and felt he could never please God.
- Some years later, he came to the realization, which became a hallmark of the Reformation, that human beings are justified or made right with God not by our works, but by God's work in Jesus Christ.

### **Romans 3:22-24 (NLT)**

*We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. <sup>23</sup>For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. <sup>24</sup>Yet God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty of our sins.*

- Selling indulgences to finance the building of St. Peter's Cathedral.

### **Martin Luther's Response**

- On October 31, 1517, he nailed to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany, 95 statements or "theses" condemning the corruption in the church.

### **Three Hallmarks of the Protestant Reformation**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
All Christians are called to be in ministry by using their God-given spiritual gifts to build up the church and expand the kingdom of God. Ministry is not simply the domain of the clergy.

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
The Bible is the final authority in defining the faith and practice of Christians. Christians are to read and study God's Word with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
We are made right with God by faith, not by works. We cannot earn our salvation. It is a free gift of God. Our only task is to accept it.

"In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society on Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Martin Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter to nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for my salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."  
-John Wesley, May 24, 1738