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Sunday, October 15, 2017  
Did You Know?

## Martin Luther

If someone were to ask who should be included in the list of the top ten most important Christians in the 2000 years of its history, except those that are recorded in the Bible like the Apostle Paul, Martin Luther would be very close to the top of the list. Others that would probably make it onto that list would be the likes of John Calvin, St. Augustine, John Wycliffe, John Bunyan, Anselm and Thomas Aquinas.

The reason Luther is so important is because he launched what is considered to be one of the most significant spiritual and cultural revolutions in the Western world called the Reformation. That previous sentence is not an understatement. The reason there are Korean, Chinese, African, Canadian and many other ethnic Christians, can be traced back to the Reformation. From the Reformation came a re-discovery of the essential truths of the Christian faith -- what is known as the Five Solas: Scripture alone, grace alone, faith alone, in Christ alone, and for the glory of God alone. From the Reformation was also birthed TULIP, the five points of Calvinism, or also known as the Doctrines of Grace. TULIP is the Biblical and, specifically, Reformed understanding of salvation. It stands for Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace and the Perseverance of the Saints. We at City on a Hill hold these truths tightly to our chests. You can listen to sermons on TULIP in our 2015 archives found online.

The Reformation was launched on October 31, 1517 when Martin Luther, a Catholic monk and theology professor, posted 95 theses onto the wooden doors of the church in Wittenberg, Germany. He did this because he became very concerned with the heretical practice of the Roman Catholic church called *indulgences*. Indulgences were monetary offerings that were paid to the church to remove or reduce the satisfactions required of sinners as part of the sacrament of penance. In doing this, Luther was not trying to be a revolutionary; he merely wanted to have a discussion about this and other theological and ecclesiological issues.

How did Luther come to this point? First, it was through his conversion. This is when he first came to truly understand the Gospel. Up to this point, he tried with all his might to please God by his own righteousness, but it wasn't until reading Romans 1:16-17 that he came to understand that the way to be saved is through an 'alien righteousness', that is a righteousness that is outside of himself, namely Christ's that becomes imputed to us. Secondly, the reading of the Scriptures, not in the common Latin of the day, but in the original Hebrew and Greek forged his understanding of the Gospel. It was the doctrine of Sola Scriptura (Scripture alone) that sealed his convictions. He came to believe that the Bible alone, not popes or councils, was invariably true and reliable.

We should thank God for Martin Luther, for his conversion, for his courage, and for the Reformation that God launched through him.

Soli Deo Gloria  
*Pastor Peter*