

Workshop 2

The Wild Boar of Wittenberg: Martin Luther

Gerald L. Priest, Ph.D.
 Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary

Introduction

Luther: the “stubborn prophet”

The Renaissance was instructive. It was a handmaid to the Reformation.

The Reformation was redemptive. It was a spiritual revival.

Luther’s Significant Protestant Contributions

1. **Scripture alone** (*Sola scriptura*)—the insistence that the Bible was the supreme authority over the Church.

The Bible (not the Church) answers the question of how to be saved.

Includes the *Perspicuity of Scripture*: Understandable/self-explanatory.

2. **Faith alone** (*Sola fides*)—the forensic doctrine of justification by grace through faith.

Faith (not baptism) is the *instrumental* means of salvation.

Justification is not something *achieved* but simply *received* by faith.

3. **Righteous and a sinner at the same time** (*Semper justus et peccator simul*).

Man's predisposition: rebellion.
 God's provision: righteousness.
 Justification is to declare (not make) righteous.

4. **Theology of the cross vs. theology of glory** (*Theologia crucis vs. theologia gloriae*).

Glory speaks of mysticism and moralism; the cross speaks of humiliation and wisdom.

5. **Priesthood of the believer** (*Sacerdotium commune fidelium*).

A universal (not an elite) priesthood which is responsible before God for mutual sharing and caring.

Luther's Problematic Views on the Sacraments

1. "This is my body" — the doctrine of **consubstantiation**.
2. Infant faith — based on consensus and conjecture not exegesis.

Recommended Reading List

- Althaus, Paul. *The Theology of Martin Luther*. Translated by Robert C. Schultz. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966. The standard treatment of Luther's doctrine. Very insightful.
- Bainton, Roland. *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1950. One of the finest most readable biographies of Luther ever penned. Its many editions attest to its timeless value.
- George, Timothy. *Theology of the Reformers*. Nashville: Broadman, 1988. The best single overview treating the theology of the major reformers.
- McGrath, Alister E. *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*. Third edition. Cambridge: University Press, 2005. Well-researched and reasoned. Very helpful treatment of Luther's "discovery" of righteousness contra the Finnish "theosis" school.
- Oberman, Heiko A. *Luther: Man Between God and the Devil*. Translated by Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart. New York: Doubleday: Image Books, 1992. Somewhat tainted by Barthianism, but thoroughly engaging while remaining scholarly.
- Sproul, R. C. and Nichols, Stephen J. *The Legacy of Luther*. Sanford, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2016. A well-written anthology by various evangelical Reformation scholars on the life, thought, and practical contributions of Luther.
- Watson, Philip Watson. *Let God Be God!* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970. Excellent interpretation of Luther's spiritual experiences.