



THE REFORMATION

OBSERVING 500 YEARS

Changes In The Church

Martin Luther began a movement that is now called the Reformation. But what was it Luther was given credit for reforming? Perhaps the most common quick answer to that question is the church. Although it's a common answer, is it accurate?

When Luther posted the 95 Theses in 1517 he was, inherently, challenging the authority of the Roman Catholic institution. Those Theses started him down a road that would challenge people's understanding of the church - both what it is and what it is not. Not long after he posted the 95 Theses, and throughout the rest of his lifetime, we can identify that what Luther was taught about the church, and what most people both then and now identified as the church, was not what Luther came to understand it to be. In other words, for Luther, the institution itself does not make the church. Instead, Luther echoed Scripture that "church" is constituted when the Word, Christ, is preached and the sacraments are administered. It is the preaching of Christ's forgiveness, the spreading of the Gospel, that makes the church; not the building, and not the institution itself.

And so the question 500 years ago, and today, is this: Did Luther set out to reform the words of Christ, or did he simply work at propagating those words? This unit, we will dig deeper into Luther's understanding of: What is the church, the education & role of a preacher, changes in worship, and who makes the decisions? To watch these videos, go to www.lutherhouseofstudy.org.

