

The Reformation

PLAY 2:

Martin Luther - The First Protestant

Martin Luther speaks to a friend (a monk).

Characters:

Martin Luther

Friend



Friend: Hi Martin, my old friend, how are you?

Luther: Hello my friend. I am not so good actually.

Friend: What is the matter?

Luther: I love God and I believe in Jesus, but I feel that the Roman Catholic Church is really letting me down!

Friend: Why?

Luther: I confess my sins and do all sorts of things to make myself pure, but nothing works. I am not sure if God wants us to receive all these penances. I have even climbed up a long flight of steps on my hands and knees to punish myself for my sins! But I do not feel any purer!

Friend: What do you mean “purer”?

Luther: I mean that I do not feel forgiven. I think what I really need to do is to pray to God directly and just simply tell Him that I am sorry for my sins, and then He will forgive me!

Friend: Without any punishment? Without any penance?

Luther: Yes, without any penance – because He is a God of love.

Friend: But the Church teaches us that we have to confess to the priest?

Luther: I think that the Church is not always teaching us the right thing. I think that the Roman Catholic Church is getting in the way of people talking directly to God. For example, during mass, the priest talk to God on our behalf.

Friend: And we don't even know what he is saying, because he speaks in Latin!

Luther: Exactly! Most people do not even understand Latin nowadays – so they cannot read the Bible to find out about God for themselves.

Friend: I see what you mean. People just have to trust that what the priest reads and teaches are correct.

Luther: And you know what's also bothering me?

Friend: What?

Luther: Those indulgences! How can you pay to get forgiven and go to heaven? Surely you must really be sorry, and ask for forgiveness, not pay for forgiveness! What about the poor people who cannot buy indulgences?

Friend: Yes, I also think that's not right! It seems that Pope Leo X is only interested in building wonderful buildings and paying for beautiful paintings for the Vatican!

Luther: Yes. The Church wealth should probably belong to the local prince, and not to the Pope.

Friend: You mean it should belong to our local prince, here in Germany? To Frederick the Wise, of Saxony?

Luther: Yes, I don't think all the Church wealth should go to the Pope, in Italy! I think if the Church wealth belongs to the local rulers, then the people of the area can also benefit from the Church wealth.

Friend: I think Frederick the Wise will like your ideas, because he would like to increase his own power and be more independent from the Pope.

Luther: For sure! I think that only total faith in Jesus Christ can get people to heaven. Monks and nuns cannot get people to heaven, nor can indulgences. And I think that only accepting Jesus' sacrifice for your sins would allow you to become pure and go to heaven.

Friend: So, you think that people simply need to believe that Jesus died for their sins on a cross and ask Him to forgive them, and then they will become pure to go to heaven?

Luther: Yes, that's what I think. And one more thing: People should be able to talk directly to God, without priests and services in Latin getting in their way!

Friend: You mean everybody should be able to pray to God and be able to read the Bible for themselves?

Luther: Yes, that's what I think.

Friend: So what about priests and churches then?

Luther: They could still help the people, but they should teach people that total faith in Jesus is the most important thing.

Friend: Hmm. So what are you going to do about this? I have heard other people criticising the Roman Catholic Church as well, but they have been arrested and killed!

Luther: Well, I have made a list of 95 arguments against the Roman Catholic Church. I want people to know that not everything that the Church does is okay. I am going to nail these arguments to the Wittenberg Castle church door.

Friend: Are you crazy? You are going to get yourself killed!

Luther: No, don't worry. I am sure that the Roman Catholic Church would like to keep me quiet, but Frederick the Wise will protect me.

Friend: Yes, you can count on him. I am very excited now, because I can now see that the Church has been controlling us to believe just what they wanted. I am also going to protest against the way that the Roman Catholic Church teaches us to worship God.

Luther: Thank you for letting me talk to you – I feel so much better now. And I am sure that I am doing the right thing to nail this list on the church door!

☞ the end ☛

