

The
Acts
of the Apostles



**A HEALTHY CHURCH IS
MARKED BY BIBLICAL
COMMITMENTS
AND THE FRUIT OF
THOSE COMMITMENTS**

INTRODUCTION

- After Peter's sermon at Pentecost, many came to be saved, and the church in Jerusalem was created.
- We learn what God expects from His Church, as well the general fruit we can expect from us.
- While coming to the temple to pray, Peter performs a healing and immediately preaches the Gospel.
- In his actions and words, we are given a picture of what effective witnessing entails.

**A HEALTHY CHURCH IS
CONTINUALLY DEVOTED
TO BIBLICAL TEACHING
AND WORSHIP THROUGH
PRAYER AND MEALS**

ACTS 2:42-47

FELLOWSHIP (42-43)

- Luke begins by saying “they devoted themselves” to various things.
- The term “they” refers to Peter and the disciples, the 120 other followers of Christ who had been praying and waiting on the Spirit’s arrival, and the diverse group of Jews who had recently received the Gospel message at Pentecost (Acts 1:15; 2:5, 14, 41).

FELLOWSHIP (42-43)

- After Peter testified concerning Christ's life, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension, some of the unbelieving Jews listening were "cut to the heart."
- They asked in godly sorrow how they should respond to this Gospel message.
- Peter told them to repent, be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit (verses 2:37–38).

FELLOWSHIP (42-43)

- Also in verse 42, Luke not only tells us who “they” are, but what they are doing.
- These believers are not passive, but rather, Luke tells us that they “devote themselves” to various commitments.
- The word devote, in the original language, is not a one-time verb, but a continuous one.

ECONOMIC (44-45)

- By obeying the apostle's teaching, which was also the teaching of Jesus, the Church was mimicking the most generous man in the world.
- Just as Jesus would share all that He had in common with them, namely His status before the Father and record of righteousness, so they would share "all things in common" with one another.

ECONOMIC (44-45)

- As the apostles taught them of the radical generosity of Christ, and they experienced it for themselves, this generosity could not help but overflow into the lives of others.
- They were “selling their possessions” and “distributing the proceeds” to whoever had a need.

WORSHIP (46-47)

- These new believers did not simply write checks to one another and go on their way.
- Instead, they were unified “together” on a “day by day” basis, whether that was going to the temple together, engaging in the Lord’s supper together in a private home, praying together, or meal-sharing together.

WORSHIP (46-47)

- The text shows us that as this infant church praises God, they end up “having favor with all the people” in their surrounding community.
- While having favor with a surrounding community is an incredible gift, verse 47 also reveals that God “added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

WORSHIP (46-47)

- When a healthy church is committed to the right things, God grants not only favor, but fruit.
- This verse leads us to examine our own witness in the world.
- These believers were not seeking favor and fruit as their foremost goal, but instead favor and fruit were tangible results of their foremost goals.

**CHRIST'S POWER IS
MADE PRESENT
THROUGH THE WITNESS
OF OUR DEEDS AND
WORDS**

ACTS 3:1-26

HEALING (1-10)

- We see the results of Peter's miraculous deed. First, we note that the man immediately started walking.
- Next, we see that the beggar responded by "leaping and praising God" and also entering the temple so he had access to Jewish prayer times.
- Third, we observe that the Jews were witnesses to this man's healing. They saw him fully changed, walking, and praising God, being "filled with wonder and amazement at what happened to him."

PETER'S MESSAGE

- A healed man is present as living evidence of Jesus' healing power, clutching to the apostles in front of everyone, and there is also a crowd gathered who has witnessed the healing of this man.
- No one can argue what had happened. All they need now is interpretation.
- Where did this healing come from? How did this happen?

PETER'S MESSAGE

- The crowd is standing in amazement, staring at the apostles as if they are the source of this miracle, but Peter wants all the eyes off of the apostles and on Jesus (verse 12).
- To do this, he points instead to faith in the name of Jesus (verse 16).
- Peter sees this spectacle caused by a deed and uses it as an opportunity to share the Gospel in word.

PETER'S MESSAGE

- In this final part of Peter's message, he chooses his words carefully to accomplish three main goals.
- Peter weaves together three important parts of effective witnessing:
- He contextualizes his message, he highlights the need for repentance, and he offers the hope of forgiveness found in Jesus.

PETER'S MESSAGE

- First, he contextualizes the message, crafting his speech specifically for a Jewish audience, making sure to use words and phrases that make sense to the Jewish people.
- For example, in verse 13, Peter starts with a common Judaic formula: “The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers.”

PETER'S MESSAGE

- Opening with the common ground they share, Peter continues to reference the Hebrew Scriptures, mentioning the prophets (v. 18), Moses (v. 22), Samuel (v. 24) and Abraham (v. 25).
- Jesus drew similar common ground before calling a person to a difficult task. In His teaching among fishermen, He spoke of fish (Matthew 4:19) and in His conversation with the woman at the well, He spoke of water (John 4).

PETER'S MESSAGE

- Second, Peter also highlights the need for repentance.
- Though he reaches out to those he is addressing by seeking common ground, he does not shy away from declaring the difficult reality of their sin.
- He may be a fellow Jew, but he has repented and trusted in Christ as the Messiah.
- Peter's audience has not yet come to this conclusion, therefore, they are still worlds apart.

PETER'S MESSAGE

- Peter is very clear about the darkness of their position before God. If they do not follow Jesus, they will be cut off in an inheritance as his eternal people.
- The blessings that God promises Abraham cannot be received without first demonstrating repentance and “turning . . . from your wicked ways.”
- These verses challenge us not only to build bridges with nonbelievers, but make sure we do not shy away from confronting guilt before offering hope.

PETER'S MESSAGE

- Third, Peter also offers them the hope of forgiveness found in Jesus, an alternative to their bleak situation.
- He invites them to repent so that their sin can be “wiped out” and “times of refreshing” could come upon them (verse 19).
- Peter wants them to trust in Christ while they still have a chance to experience the times of restoration that He is bringing upon the earth (verse 21).

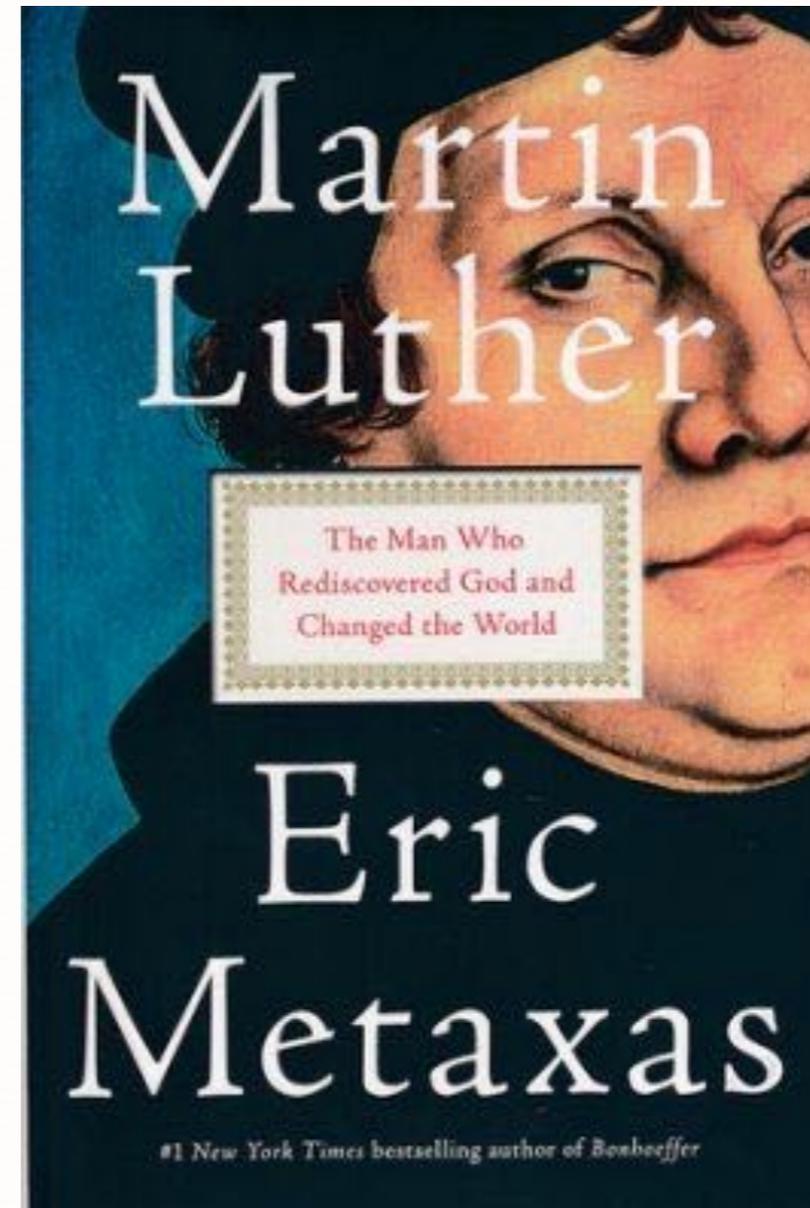
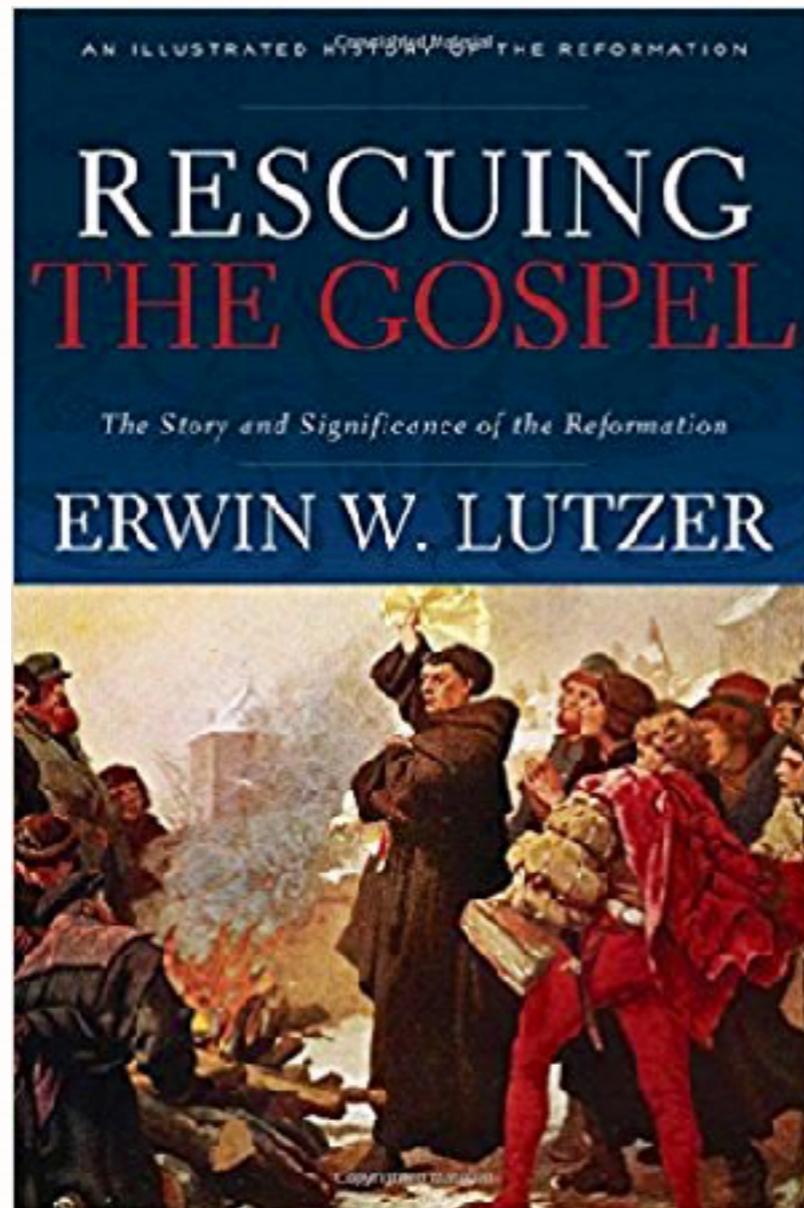
CONCLUSION

- The effective Christian witness is comprised of both deed and word together. This is a principle that started not with Peter, but with the Savior he follows.
- Some of us are more gifted in speaking the Gospel, and leave the good deeds to others. Others of us are more comfortable loving people in deed.
- Peter's ministry teaches us that both are required in an effective witness, regardless of our gifting or comfort levels.

HISTORY LESSON:

MARTIN LUTHER

MARTIN LUTHER



EARLY YEARS



- Martin Luther was born in Eisleben, Saxony (now Germany), part of the Holy Roman Empire, to parents Hans and Margareta.
- Luther's father was a prosperous businessman, and when Luther was young, his father moved the family of 10 to Mansfeld.

EARLY YEARS

- At age five, Luther began his education at a local school where he learned reading, writing and Latin.
- At 13, Luther began to attend a school run by the Brethren of the Common Life in Magdeburg.
- The Brethren's teachings focused on personal piety, and while there Luther developed an early interest in monastic life.

ENTERS MONASTERY

- His father wanted him to become a lawyer. So he withdrew him from the school in Magdeburg and sent him to new school in Eisenach.
- Then, in 1501, Luther enrolled at the University of Erfurt, the premiere university in Germany.
- He studied the typical curriculum of the day: arithmetic, astronomy, geometry and philosophy and he attained a Master's degree from the school in 1505.

ENTERS MONASTERY

- In July of that year, Luther got caught in a violent thunderstorm, in which a bolt of lightning nearly struck him down.
- He considered the incident a sign from God and vowed to become a monk if he survived the storm.
- The storm subsided, Luther emerged unscathed and, true to his promise, Luther turned his back on his study and entered an Augustinian monastery.

ENTERS MONASTERY

- Luther began to live the spartan and rigorous life of a monk but did not abandon his studies.
- Between 1507 and 1510, Luther studied at the University of Erfurt and at a university in Wittenberg.
- In 1512, Luther received his doctorate and became a professor of biblical studies. Over the next 5 years Luther's theological studies would lead him to insights that would put him at odds with the Pope.

QUESTIONS CHURCH

- In early 16th-century Europe, Luther was one of a number of theologians who were beginning to question some of the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.
- Around this time that translations of original texts became available: the Bible and Augustine's writing, that emphasized the primacy of the Bible rather than Church officials as the ultimate religious authority.

QUESTIONS CHURCH

- Augustine believed that humans could not reach salvation by their own acts, but that only God could bestow salvation by his divine grace.
- In the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church taught that salvation was possible through good works (works of righteousness) that pleased God.
- Luther began to accept these two beliefs (primacy of the Bible and salvation by grace)

QUESTIONS CHURCH

- During this time, the Catholic Church had a practice of granting “indulgences” to provide absolution to sinners.
- This became increasingly corrupt. In fact, indulgence-selling had been banned in Germany, but the practice continued unabated.
- In 1517, a friar named Johann Tetzel began to sell indulgences in Germany to raise funds to renovate St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome.

95 THESES

- Luther objected to the corrupt practice of selling indulgences and wrote out his 95 Theses, which were a list of questions and propositions for debate.
- Luther more likely hung the document on the door of the church to announce the ensuing academic discussion around it that he was organizing.
- Melanchthon later said Luther posted these on October 31, 1517.

95 THESES

- The 95 Theses were reprinted and became the foundation of the Protestant Reformation.
- They were written in a humble and academic tone, questioning rather than accusing.
- The first two of the theses contained his idea that God intended believers to seek repentance and that faith alone would lead to salvation.

95 THESES

- The Three Solas

- Sola Scriptura (“Scripture alone”): The Bible alone is our highest authority.
- Sola Fide (“faith alone”): We are saved through faith alone in Jesus Christ.
- Sola Gratia (“grace alone”): We are saved by the grace of God alone.

HERETIC

- On November 9, 1518 the pope condemned Luther's writings as conflicting with the teachings of the Church.
- A year later a series of commissions were convened to examine Luther's teachings. The first papal commission found them to be heretical, but the second commission stated that Luther's writings were just "scandalous and offensive to pious ears."

HERETIC

- In July 1520, Pope Leo X issued a papal bull (public decree) that concluded that Luther's propositions were heretical.
- He gave Luther 120 days to recant in Rome. Luther refused to recant.
- On January 3, 1521 Pope Leo excommunicated Martin Luther from the Catholic Church.

HERETIC

- On April 17, 1521 Luther appeared before the Diet of Worms in Germany.
- Refusing again to recant, Luther concluded his testimony with the statement: “Here I stand. God help me. I can do no other.”
- Luther was “kidnapped” and hidden in the town of Eisenach for the next year, where he began work on the translation of the New Testament into German.

LATER YEARS

- Luther returned to Wittenberg in 1521, where the reform movement initiated by his writings had grown beyond his influence.
- Luther had previously written against the Church's adherence to clerical celibacy.
- In 1525 he married Katherine of Bora, a former nun. They had a number of children.
- Luther died on February 18, 1546.

SIGNIFICANCE

- Martin Luther is one of the most influential figures in Western history.
- His teachings (Bible is the ultimate source of religious authority, salvation through faith) became the core of Protestantism.
- He was also controversial for views he held later in life (pronounced the pope the Antichrist, advocated for the expulsion of Jews from the empire, and condoned polygamy based on the Old Testament).

MARTIN LUTHER

