

## Courage from Convictions

Martin Luther (1483 – 1546) was a German friar, Catholic priest, professor of theology and influential figure of the 16<sup>th</sup> century movement in Christianity, known later as the Protestant Reformation.

*Wikipedia* asserts that he “strongly disputed the claim that freedom from God’s punishment for sin could be purchased with money. He confronted indulgent salesman Johann Tetzel, a Dominican friar, with his *Ninety-Five Theses* in 1517. His refusal to retract all of his writings at the demand of Pope Leo X in 1520 and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Worms in 1521 resulted in his excommunication by the Pope and condemnation as an outlaw by the Emperor.”



Luther taught that salvation and subsequently eternity in heaven are not earned by good deeds but received only as a free gift of God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ as redeemer from sin and subsequently eternity in Hell. His theology challenged the authority of the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church by teaching that the Bible is the only source of divinely revealed knowledge from God.

Interestingly, according to *Wikipedia*, “those who identify with Luther’s teachings are called Lutherans, even though Luther insisted on *Christian* as the only acceptable name for individuals who professed Christ.”

The aforementioned Diet of Worms, Germany (a diet was a formal, deliberative assembly), was called by the Holy Roman Empire, with Emperor Charles V presiding. Its purpose was to address Martin Luther and the effects of the Protestant Reformation. When Luther stood before his accusers on April 18, 1521, he epitomized courage.

“My conscience is captive to the Word of God,” he declared. “I cannot and will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. I cannot do otherwise; here I stand; may God help me. Amen.”

Luther’s courage and resolve were like those of Daniel, who found himself captive in Babylon. As a teenager, Daniel was put on “a fast track” to become a scholar in Nebuchadnezzar’s court. When given Babylonian food to eat, he took a stand. The food violated Israel’s dietary standards and had probably been offered to idols before being served. Fortunately, he suggested an alternative diet that increased his health and his reputation for wisdom.

(more)

When your convictions are challenged, suggest a creative alternative. But before you do, make sure you have the courage to back it up – in case the answer is no.

If you are going to have courage, you must first have a conscience nurtured by conviction.

*Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you (Deuteronomy 31:6).*

– Beecher Hunter