

JUST ASK LUTHER...

Q&A's

1. **What country did you live in?**
(Germany)
2. **How old would you be if you were living today?**
(I was born at 11:00 p.m. on November 10, 1483. So, I guess that would make me 520 years old if I were alive in 2003)
3. **When you were little, did you ever think you ever want to grow up to be a famous guy in history ?**
(Not really. That was mostly God's idea. I just really liked to read and study things, so I went to school to become a lawyer and later I became a teacher in a university. But, one stormy night I had a talk with God that changed all that! I made a promise to God that if God would save me from the lightening, I would become a monk. (That's like one of your pastor's today, only a monk mostly studies and prays.)
It was while I was studying the Bible that I learned about some things that I just had to bring before the leaders of the Catholic Church. But, I had no idea that the things I said would lay the groundwork for a whole new church! In fact, most of the protestant churches today started with some of my ideas!
Listen to the word "protestant"-- What word do you hear in it? (Protest) They were called protestant because they each found a reason to protest the way things were in the old Catholic church. Now, don't get me wrong , there are a lot of good things about the Catholic church - but they got a little off track when they thought they had the power to make people pay for the forgiveness of their sins. That's when I just had to say something- because people just had to know that forgiveness comes as a free gift from God! Well, I guess people were pretty relieved to hear that and so the word spread and new churches began and well, I guess the rest is history!
4. **Did you really want them to put your on name on all the churches?**
(No. It was actually leaders within the Catholic Church who did disagreed with my point of view that referred to my thoughts and the growing number of people who did agree with them as Lutheran. It is my hope that people will think about God's free gift of love and forgiveness when they hear the word Lutheran and not me!)
5. **Did people really have to pay the church to know their sins were forgiven?**
(Yes. The church gave people the impression that they needed to pay to have their sins forgiven. It was the only means of salvation they knew. /In fact, there was a monk named Tetzel who went around collecting money from people. The more money they would give, the more secure they would be. Many of the beautiful cathedrals still standing in Europe today were built with the money that was collected. This was one of my greatest concerns, because I found passages in the Bible - in the Book of Romans - that said that there's nothing WE can do to be saved. It said that God's grace comes free. It's a gift! So, I started telling some of the leaders, what I thought -n- that's when everything began to "hit" the fan!
6. **Do you know when you were baptized?**
(Yes. I was one day old when I was baptized.)

7. Were you ever married?

(Yes, but not at first. When I was a monk I wasn't allowed to couldn't get married. But, after the Catholic Church dismissed me, I met a woman named Katherine Von Bora. She had been working in the Catholic Church as a nun. When she decided to leave the church, we decided to get married. She was a great homemaker and mother to our 6 children.)

8. Did you ever write a book or anything?

(Yes! I wrote things that I thought would help people understand the Bible, worship and other fundamentals of faith. I translated the Bible from Latin - which only the Pastors or priests could understand- to German, which everyone could understand. I also thought it would be nice if people could understand what the priests or pastors were saying in our worship services, so I translated the services, songs and sermons into German. I also wrote a little book to help parents teach the faith to their children at home. In fact, I think you still use it today--It's called the Small Catechism. It has some important lessons of faith, like the Lord's Prayer and the 10 Commandments and I added some comments to help families understand what they mean. All together, I think I wrote 30 hymns, 3000 sermons, 2600 letters and 5000 "table talks.")

9. What kind of music did you listen to?

(We didn't have radios or CD players like you do, but we did have guitars and people sang a lot of songs in our local pubs and restaurants. In fact, I wrote the words to a song I've heard you still sing today that was written to the tune of an old drinking song. Have you ever heard of "A Mighty Fortress?" (Grab a hymnal and sing a few lines) I just wanted people to learn about their faith in ways that were familiar to them.)

10. Are you related to Martin Luther King Jr?

(No, but I think we might have been friends if we had lived in the same lifetimes. He was committed to making sure African Americans had the same freedoms as other Americans in the 1950s. And, I was committed to making sure that all God's people could enjoy the freedoms that come along with knowing God's unconditional love and forgiveness.)

11. Were you brought up in the Lutheran Church?

(No. I grew up in the Catholic Church and I didn't ever intend to leave it. I just wanted to change some things. But, the leaders told me that if I didn't honor the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church, they would kick me out of it. I just had a feeling that I needed to stand strong on this and so, I nailed all my concerns to a church door in Wittenberg. It was called the 95 Theses. The printing press had just been invented and so my list really got around. I didn't even realize that I was laying the groundwork for a new church and, I can hardly believe they named it after me!! I guess, a lot of people just decided that what I was saying was true - I mean it all came from the Bible - and so they started telling others about what I had to say. Since then, the church has grown and now you have close to 64 million Lutherans in the world.)

12. Did you live during Bible times?

(No. I lived several hundred years after Jesus walked the earth. But, I still believe that Jesus was born as a baby and grew up to die for our sins and give us the opportunity to go to heaven someday. I created a crest or a symbol to state what I believe. In fact, I think you'll have the opportunity to make one! It has colors and designs that represent things that I have found vital to my faith in God, the Father, Our Creator, Jesus, God's Son, Our Savior and the Holy Spirit, God's on-going presence in our lives today.