

The Ninety-Five Theses

The starting point of the Reformation

Introduction

Think of a situation when you looked forward to something, only to be very disappointed when you finally experienced it.

What was it?

What caused the disappointment?

Today's Objective: To appreciate how the context of the Ninety-Five Theses affects their content and our reception of them.

Before we get into the historical background of the 95 Theses, what do you know about this document?

Historical Background:

Abuses and false teachings in the church –

Voices speaking out –

St. Peter's Basilica –

Theses –

October 31, 1517 –



Major Players:

Martin Luther –

Johann Tetzel –

Pope Leo X -

Albrecht of Mainz –

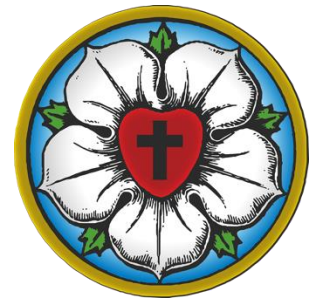
Frederick the Wise –

Fist to Five: How bothered are you by the concept that not everything you “know” about the posting of the 95 Theses may be accurate?

Each table will take a section of the 95 Theses. Look to these theses individually. As a group, discuss what you read.

What sounds right?

What doesn't sound right?



The 95 Theses do not hold confessional status. So, how are Lutherans to view them?

1. Throw them out, they aren't perfect.
2. Read them with an understanding of context, being appreciative of what they are.
3. Don't question them! It's Luther!

Read 1 John 4:1 and Acts 17:11. Based on these truths expressed in Scripture, how does Luther demonstrate a positive example for us?

Your ELCA friend tells you that the progression of Luther's theology justifies their rejection of Biblical authority. Talk to a partner to formulate a response.