Martin Luther's 95 Theses

18 Big Ideas for Kids

In 1517, a teacher and pastor named Martin Luther nailed a list of 95 ideas to a church door in Germany because he was worried that people were being tricked.

Word to know: A "pardon paper" (called an indulgence) was a paper people paid money for because they were told it would make God go easier on them for their sins.

1. When Jesus said "Repent," he meant that we should turn away from wrong things and back to God every single day of our lives. *(Thesis 1)*
2. Only God can truly forgive our sins, and the pope can only tell people that God has already forgiven them. *(Thesis 6)*
3. Some preachers said that as soon as your coin drops into the money box, a soul flies free from punishment, but that idea is man-made, not from God. *(Thesis 27)*
4. People who think an indulgence (pardon paper) they bought will get them into heaven are being fooled, and so are the teachers who told them that. *(Thesis 32)*
5. Anyone who is truly sorry for their sins and turns to God is completely forgiven, without having to buy anything at all. *(Thesis 36)*
6. Every true Christian gets to share in all of Jesus' good gifts, and God gives them for free, not for money. *(Thesis 37)*
7. Giving to poor people or helping someone in need is a much better thing to do than buying an indulgence. *(Thesis 43)*

8. When we do kind things out of love, our love grows and we become better people, but buying a pardon paper does not make us any better. *(Thesis 44)*

9. If you see someone who needs help and walk right past them so you can spend your money on an indulgence, it makes God angry, not happy. *(Thesis 45)*

10. People should use their money to take care of their own families first instead of wasting it on pardon papers. *(Thesis 46)*

11. If the pope knew how the pardon sellers were taking money from poor people, he should rather see his big new church burn down than build it that way. *(Thesis 50)*

12. Trusting a piece of paper to save you is useless, even if the pope himself promised that it would work. *(Thesis 52)*

13. It is wrong when a preacher spends more time talking about pardon papers than about God's Word, the Bible. *(Thesis 54)*

14. The real treasure of the church is not gold or money, but the good news of God's love and kindness to us. *(Thesis 62)*

15. An indulgence cannot take away even the tiniest sin, because only God can do that. *(Thesis 76)*

16. Since the pope was richer than the richest man around, why didn't he pay for his new church with his own money instead of the money of poor people? *(Thesis 86)*

17. Christians should try their very best to follow Jesus, especially when things get hard. *(Thesis 94)*

18. We can be sure we will get to heaven by following Jesus through hard times, not by pretending everything is easy and safe. *(Thesis 95)*