

# Jesus Will Guard and Defend His Church

## Main Ideas

- The true church holds fast to the foundation of the apostles and prophets.
- Throughout history, Jesus has guarded the purity of His church.
- Martin Luther was an important leader in the Protestant Reformation.

## Memory Work

*Salvation is by grace alone,  
through faith alone, in Christ alone,  
on the authority of Scripture alone,  
for the glory of God alone.*  
(the Five Solas of the Reformation)

## Scripture for the Lesson

1. Ephesians 1:7
2. Romans 3:23-24
3. Ephesians 2:8-9
4. Matthew 7:15

## Curriculum Resources

- See Preparation:
  - Roman Catholic Church 1-3 (24A-24C)
  - Salvation is... 1-2 (24D-24E)
  - Ribbon 1-6 (24F-24K)
- Parent Page for Lesson 24 (for each student)

## Other Supplies

- See Preparation:
  - Adult volunteer
  - Treat for the entire class
  - Wide Ribbon (approximately 6 feet long)
  - Marker
  - Paper
- Whiteboard and markers
- Church Template (from previous lessons)
- Tape

## Preparation

- **Adult volunteer with treat for class**—Plan ahead of time to have an adult volunteer visit your class and give you a treat that you can share with the whole class.
- **Roman Catholic Church 1-3**—Cut out the Roman 1-3 pieces and tape them together side by side to read:  
**Sinner → Roman Catholic Church → Salvation**
- **Salvation is... 1-2**—Cut out the Salvation is... 1-2 pieces and tape them together to read:  
**Salvation is by grace alone,  
through faith alone,  
in Christ alone,  
on the authority of Scripture alone,  
for the glory of God alone.**
- **Ribbon**—Write out the following names, in order, on the ribbon: *Athanasius, Augustine, Wycliffe, Luther, Knox, Calvin, Owen, Warfield, Spurgeon, Machen*. Or, you could cut out the **Ribbon 1-6** visuals and tape them together to form a long visual.

- **Whiteboard and markers**—Before class, write the following on the whiteboard, and then cover each line with a piece of paper, so that you can reveal the lines one by one, as explained during the lesson.

**When: October 31, 1517**

**Where: Wittenberg, Germany**

**Who: Martin Luther**

**What: Nailed “95 Theses” to the door of a church**

**Why:**

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## Materials for Optional Activities

### 1. Reformation Hymn

- Prepare to teach the “Reformation Hymn” (Kauflin/Anderson), available for free download at [worshipmatters.com](http://worshipmatters.com).

### 2. Five Solas Review Game

- Whiteboard and markers

### 3. I Will Build My Church Buttons

- For each student
- I Will Build My Church Buttons
  - Supplies to work on button requirements

## Large Group Lesson

Adult volunteer,  
treat, whiteboard  
and markers

(Have the **adult** come and bring you the **treat**. Make sure that he states very clearly that the treat is a *gift from him and is to be shared with the entire class* at the end of the lesson. After he leaves, state the following.)

*That was wonderful of [Mr./Mrs./Miss last name] to do. But I have an idea.*

(Begin to quickly write the following on the **whiteboard**)

**\$1.00 = yes**

**\$0.50 = maybe**

**\$0.00 = no**

*This treat now belongs to me since I am your teacher. I have decided I will offer the treat for sale. Every student who wants a piece must pay me one dollar. Everyone who pays one dollar will be sure get a treat at the end of class. If you pay me 50 cents, you might get a treat. If you don't pay me anything—no treat at all!*

- ❓ *Would the adult who gave the treat be pleased with my idea? Why not?* (Allow a few brief responses.)

(Point out that the adult gave the treat as a gift. A gift does not cost anything. The treat was meant to be given to every student in the class, without cost. It would not be right for you to use the gift for your own gain. That was not the gift-giver's intention.)

(Explain that this illustration can help us to understand an important event in history. Tell the students that you have written some clues. Reveal each line from the **whiteboard** in the following order.)

**When: October 31, 1517**

**Where: Wittenberg Germany**

**Who: Martin Luther**

**What: Nailed “95 Theses” to the door of a church**

**Why:**

(Explain that Martin Luther was a professor of biblical studies at the University in Wittenberg in the country of Germany. The “95 Theses” refer to 95 statements that he wrote on paper. He nailed these to the door of a Roman Catholic Church.)

*At the beginning of his paper, he gave the reason for these 95 statements. Here is what he said:*

*“Out of love for the truth and from desire to elucidate (explain) it, the Reverend Father Martin Luther...intends to defend the following statements and to dispute on them in that place.”*

- Martin Luther wrote his 95 statements because he wanted to defend the truth of the Bible.
- He believed that the Roman Catholic Church, of which he was a member, was not standing on the foundation of the apostles and prophets and was not representing the true gospel of Jesus.

Tape, Roman Catholic Church visual, Church Template, whiteboard

(Lightly **tape** the **Roman Catholic Church** visual over "The Foundation" section of the **Church Template**. Explain that the Roman Catholic Church had decided that it was the only true church of Jesus. It said that a person could only be saved through that church. And it taught that its leader, the pope, was the one perfect interpreter of what the Bible said and meant. So if a sinner wanted to be saved and go to heaven, he had to do what the Roman Catholic Church said.)

*The Roman Catholic Church said that in order for a person to have his sins forgiven he needed to buy something called “indulgences.” Does anyone know what these were?*

(Point again to the writing on the **whiteboard**.)

**\$1.00 = yes**

**\$0.50 = maybe**

**\$0.00 = no**

*The Roman Catholic Church told people that indulgences were needed to “buy” forgiveness of sin.*

*So, let’s say that you had done something really bad, like stealing from your neighbor. The only way you could receive forgiveness and maybe hope to earn salvation was to buy indulgences from the Roman Catholic Church and also do certain works, such as pray a certain prayer so many times a day for a week. The worse your sin, the more expensive the indulgence, and the more works you had to do. You needed to keep on doing this over and over so that, in the end, you might earn your way to salvation.*

? *Is there anything wrong with this? What?* (Allow a few responses.)

(Divide the class in three groups and assign each one of the following to look up –**Ephesians 1:7**, **Romans 3:23-24**, and **Ephesians 2:8-9**. Choose a student from each group to read the verse/s.)

***Ephesians 1:7–In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,***

? *Who is the “him” at the beginning of the verse?* [Jesus] *What did He do to “purchase” our redemption?* [He died on the cross.] *Does it say, “God’s people will maybe have redemption?”* [No, we have redemption.]

*When Jesus died on the cross, He paid the “full price” or penalty for the sin of His people. Redemption is complete in Jesus.*

? *What word, at the end of the verse, means that this forgiveness is a free gift from God?* [grace] *He forgave His people according to the riches of His grace.*

***Romans 3:23-24—for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,<sup>24</sup> and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,***

? *Sinners are justified and made right with God by His...?* [by His grace as a gift] *Through the redemption that is in who?* [Jesus]

***Ephesians 2:8-9—For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,<sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.***

? *Can a person buy forgiveness and earn salvation? Why not?* [Salvation is by grace. It is a free gift from God.] *And what is the only way that a sinner can receive this gift?* [through faith in Jesus, trusting in Jesus alone]

Tape, Salvation is... visual, Church Template

(Explain that as Martin Luther read and studied the Bible, the Holy Spirit gave him understanding of what forgiveness really is and how sinners are truly saved. **Tape** the **Salvation is...** visual directly below the **Church Template**.)

**Salvation is by grace alone,  
through faith alone,  
in Christ alone,  
on the authority of Scripture alone,  
for the glory of God alone.**

*Salvation is a free gift from God and cannot be earned.*

*Salvation cannot be received through trusting in your works, or even in a church.*

*The Bible is the final authority in saying what salvation is and how it is received—not the pope or the Roman Catholic Church. And because salvation is the free gift of God—from Him and through Him—all the boasting belongs to Him, for His glory!*

Roman Catholic Church visual, Church Template

(In coming to understand this, Luther realized that the Roman Catholic Church was not what it claimed to be. It was not built on the truth of God’s Word, and it was not showing people the way of salvation. Remove the **Roman Catholic Church** visual from the **Church Template**.)

Luther he knew that he could not keep silent. So Luther wrote his 95 statements challenging the false teaching of the Roman Catholic Church and defending the truth of the Bible. Martin Luther was one of the leaders of something called the “Protestant Reformation.” It was an important turning point in the history of the church and the world because, for hundreds of years, the Roman Catholic Church had been considered the one true church. It was very powerful.)

*Do you think that the Roman Catholic Church was happy about this? No. The leaders of the Roman Catholic Church were furious at Luther, and they excommunicated him from the church, and he went into exile—leaving Wittenberg. Do you think that stopped Luther, even when his life was in danger? No.*

(Read these words that Luther wrote from the familiar hymn, *A Mighty Fortress*.)

*Let goods and kindred go,  
This mortal life also-  
The body they may kill;  
God’s truth abideth still:  
His kingdom is forever.*

(Point out that, from the early church onward, there have been threats to the purity of the church. There have been false teachers and false churches that have claimed to speak and represent God’s truth. But they are actually imposters leading people astray. Jesus warned His disciples about this.)

***Matthew 7:15—“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”***

*This warning came true very early in the church. The apostles had to guard Jesus’ church from many false teachers. They had to guard the truth that had been given to them by Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, the truth of the Bible, and the message of salvation.*

*And the true church of Jesus, in every generation since that time, is to guard and defend that sure foundation.*

Ribbon or Ribbon  
1-6 visual, tape

(Display the **Ribbon (or the Ribbon 1-6 visual)** and **tape** each end securely on the wall. Explain that this ribbon represents about 2,000 years of church history. From the time of the early church in Jerusalem, there have been people who have tried to creep in and destroy the true church of Jesus. But Jesus alone is the builder of His church, and He will make sure that the true church continues to stand upon the truth of the Bible.)

*So, throughout church history, Jesus has brought forth men to guard and defend the truth—men like...(quickly read the names written on the ribbon: Athanasius, Augustine, Wycliffe, Luther, Knox, Calvin, Owen, Warfield, Spurgeon and Machen) and thousands of other pastors and shepherds.*

*These men were not apostles. They did not add anything to the New Testament. Rather, they helped to protect Jesus’ church by defending the truth of the Bible. Especially the truth that... (have the students recite with you)*

**Salvation is by grace alone,  
through faith alone,**



**in Christ alone,  
on the authority of Scripture alone,  
for the glory of God alone.**

*This is the truth that the one, true church is built upon. It is unshakable and unchanging truth. Jesus is the almighty builder and defender of His church. He will make sure that His church will stand sure and firm forever.*

## Small Group Application

Choose one or more of the following suggestions for interacting with the students during this time.

- **Workbook**—Have the students look up Romans 3:23-24 and Ephesians 2:8-9 and write in the missing words. On the next page, look at the picture clues next to each blank line. Each picture stands for one of the following words: Grace, Faith, Christ, Scripture, Glory. Write the correct word before its corresponding picture. *Why is it important to understand the truth about how a person is saved? If you try to get saved a different way than what God says, will it work? Why not? Why might a person want to believe that they must do some kind of works in order to earn salvation? [gives them a reason to boast] Do you ever act as if you are trying to earn salvation or as if you deserve salvation? Point out that there still is a Roman Catholic Church today. Although it no longer forbids people from reading the Bible in their own language, its leaders still believe it is the only true church and that salvation is by faith AND by doing certain works to be righteous. What must be the final authority about what is the truth—the leaders of a certain church or the Bible? In what ways does our church emphasize the authority of the Bible?*
- **Jesus Wants His Church to Carefully Guard the Truth in Each Generation**—Read the qualifications for overseers in Titus 1:9, “He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.” *Why would this be an important qualification for the leaders of local churches? What does “rebuke” mean? [call them out and warn them; the pastors and elders must be able to identify false teaching and also correct it—explain why it is wrong] How did Martin Luther rebuke the Roman Catholic Church? Was this an easy thing to do? Why not? Do you think it is easy to guard and defend God’s truth today? Why might defending the truth be unpopular? If possible, give an example of a biblical truth that has been addressed and defended by the leadership of your church.*
- **Every Christian Should Be Equipped with the Truth of God’s Word**—Remind the students that Jesus wants the pastors of the church to do something very important. Read Ephesians 4:12-14. The pastors are, “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,<sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,<sup>14</sup> so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.” Emphasize that the leaders of the local church are to faithfully teach the members God’s Word so that we are equipped to know truth from error, not being deceived by false teaching. Point out that one of the things the Roman Catholic Church did during the time of Luther was keep the Bible out of the hands of ordinary people.
- **The Protestant Reformation Was a Very Important Time in Church History and Is Still Important Today**—Review the statement that the class recited together: “Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, on the authority of Scripture alone, for the glory of God alone.” Point out that these

phrases are called the five “solos” or slogans of the reformation. (Explain that “sola” is Latin for “alone.”) Martin Luther and many others established new “Protestant” churches to set themselves apart from the Roman Catholic Church. The term “reformation” simply means to be changed back to its true form. In other words, Luther and others returned the church to its foundation of the apostles and prophets as taught in the Bible. *How have we as a church benefited from the Protestant Reformation? Why is it still important to remember the five “solos”? How can these serve as important reminders to the church?*

## Optional Activities

### 1. Reformation Hymn

- Teach the students the “Reformation Hymn” (Kauflin/Anderson), which is about the reformation. It is available for free download at [worshipmatters.com](http://worshipmatters.com).

### 2. Five Solas Review Game

- On a whiteboard, write:  
 Salvation is by grace alone,  
 through faith alone,  
 in Christ alone,  
 on the authority of Scripture alone,  
 for the glory of God alone.
- One at a time, call on a student to come and erase a word. Recite the solas again. Repeat this process until all the words have been erased.

### 3. I Will Build My Church Buttons

- Give the students the opportunity to work on the requirements to earn the I Will Build My Church Buttons, helping when needed.

## Send Home

- Parent Page for Lesson 24 (for each student)