

WBNP #1

Good Evening. A Puritan's Mind old time radio brings you "The Wild Boar News Podcast." Welcome. I'm Dr. Matthew McMahon.

The year, 1520. Martin Luther had attacked the doctrine and actions of the Roman Catholic Church, and Roman Pontiff. It was obvious that Rome could not allow Luther to go unanswered. Luther had not just attacked indulgences, or had a debate with their champion theologian - now he was tipping the Pope's hat and attacking the papacy. Voices from all over the country, and of Europe, pressed Rome to forcefully deal with Luther.

John Eck was already in the thrall of planning continual recourse against Luther for the sting of failure at the Leipsic Disputations where Luther demonstrated to be superior in intellect and argument. But also that Luther was now stretching his hand to his mother church, and attempting to overthrow its authority. Sylvester Mazzolini de Priero was active along side of Eck, and a supporter of him, believing that the papacy was the fifth kingdom prophesied about in the book of Daniel. He was convinced that the Pope was the ruler of the only true monarchy and that all others, including kings and princes, should bow to the Pope. For Luther, then, to attack this authority threw Eck and his associates into an outrage. It was now necessary to make distinctions on key doctrines that would forever divide Protestantism and Roman Catholicism.

Many desired to place their hands in the condemnation of Luther. Eck, Mazzolini, De Vio, and the Roman pontiff were predominant at this time. On June 15th at Sacred College the famous papal bull was drawn up against Luther. It consisted of condemning 41 propositions from Luther's works, and calling on the saints, and the Lord Himself, to vindicate them against the Wild Boar who had terrorized the mother Church.

I quote the Roman Pope, "Arise, O Lord!" said the Roman pontiff, speaking at this solemn moment as God's vicegerent and head of the Church, "arise, judge thy cause, and call to mind the opprobrium which madmen continually heap on

thee! Arise, O Peter; remember thy Holy Roman Church, mother of all churches, and queen of the faith! Arise, O Paul, for behold a new Porphyry attacks thy doctrines and the holy popes, our predecessors. Lastly, arise, ye assembly of saints, the holy Church of God, and intercede with the Almighty! There is a wild boar in the vineyard of the Lord."

The pope then pronounces a number of excommunications, maledictions, and interdicts, against Luther and his partisans, with orders to seize their persons and send them to Rome. We may easily conceive what would have become of these noble-minded confessors of the Gospel in the papal dungeons.

God, however, protected Luther.

"Martin Luther! yesterday you begged for a delay that has now expired. Assuredly it ought not to have been conceded, as every man, and especially you, who are so great and learned a doctor in the Holy Scriptures, should always be ready to answer any questions touching his faith.....Now, therefore, reply to the question put by his majesty, who has behaved to you with so much mildness. Will you defend your books as a whole, or are you ready to disavow some of them?"

After having said these words in Latin, the chancellor repeated them in German.

"Upon this, Dr. Martin Luther," says the Acts of Worms, "replied in the most submissive and humble manner. He did not bawl, or speak with violence; but with decency, mildness, suitability, and moderation, and yet with much joy and christian firmness."

"Most serene emperor! illustrious princes! gracious lords!" said Luther, turning his eyes on Charles and on the assembly, "I appear before you this day, in conformity with the order given me yesterday, and by God's mercies I conjure your majesty and your august highness to listen graciously to the defense of a cause which I am assured is just and true. If, through ignorance, I should transgress the usages and proprieties of courts, I entreat you to

pardon me; for I was not brought up on the palaces of kings, but in the seclusion of a convent."

"Yesterday, two questions were put to me on behalf of his imperial majesty: the first, if I was the author of the books whose titles were enumerated; the second, If I would retract or defend the doctrine I had taught in them. To the first question I then made answer, and I persevere in that reply.

"As for the second, I have written works on many different subjects. There are some in which I have treated of faith and good works, in a manner at once so pure, so simple, and so scriptural, that even my adversaries, far from finding anything to censure in them, allow that these works are useful, and worthy of being read by all pious men. The papal bull, however violent it may be, acknowledges this. If, therefore, I were to retract these, what should I do?.....Wretched man! Among all men, I alone should abandon truths that friends and enemies approve, and I should oppose what the whole world glories in confessing.....

"Secondly, I have written books against the papacy, in which I have attacked those who, by their false doctrine, their evil lives, or their scandalous example, afflict the christian world, and destroy both body and soul. The complaints of all who fear God are confirmatory of this. Is it not evident that the human doctrines and laws of the popes entangle, torment, and vex the consciences of believers, while the crying and perpetual extortions of Rome swallow up the wealth and the riches of Christendom, and especially of this illustrious nation?.....

"Were I to retract what I have said on this subject, what should I do but lend additional strength to this tyranny, and open the floodgates to a torrent of impiety? Overflowing with still greater fury than before, we should see these insolent men increase in number, behave more tyrannically, and domineer more and more. And not only the yoke that now weighs upon the christian people would be rendered heavier by my retraction, but it would become, so to speak, more legitimate, for by this very retraction it would have received the confirmation of your most serene majesty and of all the states of the holy empire. Gracious

God! I should thus become a vile cloak to cover and conceal every kind of malice and tyranny!.....

"Lastly, I have written books against individuals who desired to defend the Romish tyranny and to destroy the faith. I frankly confess that I may have attacked them with more acrimony than is becoming my ecclesiastical profession. I do not consider myself a saint; but I cannot disavow these writings, for by so doing I should sanction the impiety of my adversaries, and they would seize the opportunity of oppressing the people of God with still greater cruelty.

"Yet I am but a mere man, and not God; I shall therefore defend myself as Christ did. If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil (John 18:23), said he. How much more should I, who am but dust and ashes, and who may so easily go astray, desire every man to state his objections to my doctrine!

"For the reason, by the mercy of God, I conjure you, most serene emperor, and you, most illustrious princes, and all men of every degree, to prove from the writings of the prophets and apostles that I have erred. As soon as I am convinced of this, I will retract every error, and be the first to lay hold of my books and throw them into the fire.

"What I have just said plainly shows, I hope, that I have carefully weighed and considered the dangers to which I expose myself; but, far from being dismayed, I rejoice to see that the Gospel is now, as in former times, a cause of trouble and dissension. This is the character – this is the destiny of the Word of God. I came not to send peace on earth, but a sword, said Jesus Christ (Math. 10:34). God is wonderful and terrible in his counsels; beware lest, by presuming to quench dissensions, you should persecute the holy Word of God, and draw down upon yourselves a frightful deluge of insurmountable dangers, of present disasters, and eternal desolation.....you should fear lest the reign of this young and noble prince, on whom (under God) we build such lofty expectations, not only should begin, but continue and close, under the most gloomy auspices. I might quote many examples from the oracles of God," continued Luther, speaking with a noble courage in the presence of the greatest monarch of the world: "I might speak of the

Pharaohs, the kings of Babylon, and those of Israel, whose labors never more effectually contributed to their own destruction than when they sought by counsels, to all appearance most wise, to strengthen their dominion. God removeth mountains, and they know it not; which overturneth them in his anger (Job 9:5).

"If I say these things, it is not because I think that such great princes need my poor advice, but because I desire to render unto Germany what she has a right to expect from her children. Thus, commending myself to your august majesty and to your most serene highness, I humbly entreat you not to suffer the hatred of my enemies to pour out upon me an indignation that I have not merited."

Luther had pronounced these words in German with modesty, but with great warmth and firmness; f1213 he was ordered to repeat them in Latin. The emperor did not like the German tongue. The imposing assembly that surrounded the reformer, the noise, and his own emotion, had fatigued him. "I was in a great perspiration," said he, "heated by the tumult, standing in the midst of the princes." Frederick of Thun, privy councillor to the Elector of Saxony who was stationed by his master's orders at the side of the reformer, to watch over him that no violence might be employed against him, seeing the condition of the poor monk, said: "If you cannot repeat what you have said, that will do, doctor." But Luther, after a brief pause to take breath, began again, and repeated his speech in Latin with the same energy as at first. "This gave great pleasure to the Elector Frederick," says the reformer. When he had ceased speaking, the Chancellor of Treves, the orator of the diet, said indignantly: "You have not answered the question put to you. You were not summoned hither to call in question the decisions of councils. You are required to give a clear and precise answer. Will you, or will you not, retract?" Upon this Luther replied without much hesitation: "Since your most serene majesty and your high mightinesses require from me a clear, simple, and precise answer, I will give you one, f1215 and it is this: I cannot submit my faith either to the pope or to the councils, because it is clear as the day that they have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless therefore I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture, or by the clearest reasoning, — unless I am persuaded by means of the passages I have

quoted, – and unless they thus render my conscience bound by the Word of God, I cannot and I will not retract, for it is unsafe for a Christian to speak against his conscience." And then, looking round on this assembly before which he stood, and which held his life in its hands, he said: "HERE I STAND, I CAN DO NO OTHER; MAY GOD HELP ME? AMEN!" The Wild Boar News Podcast, constrained to obey the faith once delivered to the saints, impelled by the noblest necessity, the slave of Gospel belief, and under this slavery still supremely free, like the ship tossed by a violent tempest, and which, to save that which is more precious than itself, runs and is dashed upon the rocks, will continue to utter the same Gospel convictions of the first Reformed Wild Boar. Luther's sublime words still thrill our hearts at an interval of almost five centuries. Thus spoke a monk before the emperor and the mighty ones of the nation; and this feeble and despised man, alone, but relying on the grace of the Most High, appeared greater and mightier than them all. His words contain a power against which all these mighty rulers can do nothing. This is the weakness of God, which is stronger than man. Such a conviction in turn should aid us all in striving to fulfill the words of Christ in Matthew 22:37-39, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." "This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

And it is this spirit of conviction that the Wild Boar News Podcast will continue to relay the Gospel into the new millennium.

I'm Dr. Matthew McMahon, signing off.