

School of Ministry

Week 2 – Reformation Church Hist. - Luther

Review of Week 1

Which of these symbols best expresses the medieval idea of...

Caesaro-papalism

Monasticism

Mysticism

Scholasticism

The 'Old Way' of Salvation

The 'New Way' of Salvation

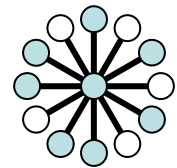
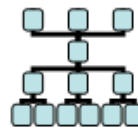
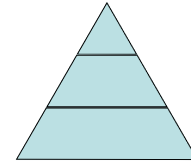
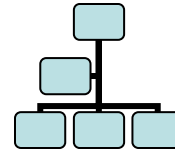
Monarchical-papalism

The Conciliar Movement

The Holy Roman Empire

Humanism

Penance



Luther's Story

- Martin Luther was born: 10th Nov 1483 – Eisleben, Germany (to a copper miner)
- 1501 – Uni of Erfurt (Arts and Law) – studied scholastic philosophy (William Ockham's 'New Way') – graduated 1502 (30th in the class - age 19). Received his Masters of Arts at Erfurt 1505 (2nd in class).
- Entered Augustinian Monastery (17th July 1505) after fright with lightning where he vowed to St Anne to become a monk if he was saved.¹
- Took monastery vows (1506), ordained (April 3rd 1507) and gained Doctorate of Theology (Oct 19th 1512) and embarked on a lecturing career – Professor of Sacred Theology and Uni of Wittenberg (a position he held for the rest of his life)
- Married Katharine von Bara on June 13th 1525.
- Luther had a pastor's heart ², a critical academic mind, a love for languages, was incredibly diligent, and suffered greatly for his theological convictions.
- Died 18th Feb 1546 (age 62) – buried under the pulpit where he had preached so much.
- Some say that, next to Jesus, Luther was the most significant religious figure in history.

¹ Later he said his choice was a flagrant sin – 'not worth a farthing...but how much good the merciful Lord has allowed to come out of it!' – see J. Piper, *The Legacy of Sovereign Joy*, Illinois; Crossway Books, 2000, 84.

² "Luther was one of the greatest preachers in the history of Christendom...Between 1510 and 1546 Luther preached approximately 3000 sermons. Frequently he preached several times a week, often two or more times a day' For example, he preached 117 sermons in Wittenberg in 1522 and 137 sermons the next year. In 1528 he preached almost 200 times (the year his 8 month old daughter Elizabeth died), and from 1529 we have 121 sermons... the average ...was one sermon every two and a half days' - see J. Piper, *The Legacy of Sovereign Joy*, 87.

Luther's Journey: A New View of Salvation

1. How can I be acceptable to God?
Medieval Answer: "Do your best"
2. How can I *know* I'm acceptable to God?
Medieval Answer: "Try harder"

Reflection: What answer are you most likely to get if you ask someone on the street how you get to heaven?

Medieval View: **If... Then...**
i.e. Salvation is conditional on human effort.

PROBLEM: I'm not like God!

Luther's efforts at self-salvation in the monastery:
"I tortured myself with prayers, fasting, vigils, and freezing; the frost alone might have killed me"
(LW 24:24)

Staupitz's advice in confession:
"God is not angry with you, but you are angry with God" (LW 54:15)

Luther's reflection on that advice:
"Though I lived as a monk without reproach, I felt that I was a sinner before God with an extremely disturbed conscience... I hated the righteous God who punishes sinners" (LW 34:336)

Luther's lecturing (Psalms, Romans, Galatians, Hebrews)
"Therefore, we must be taught a righteousness that comes from the outside and is foreign" (LW: 25:136) i.e. he rediscovered salvation by grace!

Biblical View: **Because... Therefore**
i.e. Seen in Romans 1:17. Not conditional, but rather a promise.
Our works are a response to grace not the cause of it.

1. I am acceptable because of God's action in Christ, not my deeds.

"not what the sinner achieves, but what the sinner receives" (Lindberg)

2. I *know* I'm acceptable because God has promised and is trustworthy.

"Faith is not a paltry and petty matter...; but it is a heartfelt confidence in God through Christ that Christ's suffering and death pertain to you and should belong to you." (LW 22:369)

Reflection: Does the "monster of uncertainty" pop up now and then? Where should it lead me?

Luther's Spark: The Indulgence Controversy

The Indulgence Background

Not just *absolution* but *satisfaction* for sin.
An exchange rate of money for penance begins
Tetzel sells indulgences next-door to Luther

The 95 Theses (1517): Luther repudiates indulgences.

The Disputations (1518-19)

Heidelberg: Luther sets forth his theology to his order.
Augsburg: Clashes with Cardinal Cajetan, is ordered to recant.
Leipzig: Debates with Eck and says that the Pope & church can err

The Bulls & Treatises (1520)

Exsurge Domine: a call to recant – Luther later burns the document.
A Treatise on Good Works – Luther clarifies justification by faith.
Address to the German Nobility – Luther ‘pulls down’ the three walls – of
papal supremacy over princes, the papal role as sole interpreter of
scripture, and the sole papal right of calling a council.
The Babylonian Captivity of the Church – sacraments as Promise & Sign.
Freedom of a Christian – The Christian is Lord of All and Servant of All
Decet Romanum Pontificem: Luther excommunicated

Definition: “Indulgence”

a fine paid by a repentant sinner granting remission of sin and supposedly reducing time spent in purgatory.

Luther's Moment: The Diet of Worms

The Lead-Up: Emperor Charles calls Luther before Parliament in Worms

The Characters: Aleander (the Pope's representative); Frederick (Luther's patron – the Elector of Saxony), Charles V (Emperor), Luther (duh!)

The Questions: Are these your books? Will you recant?

The Answer: Yes & No

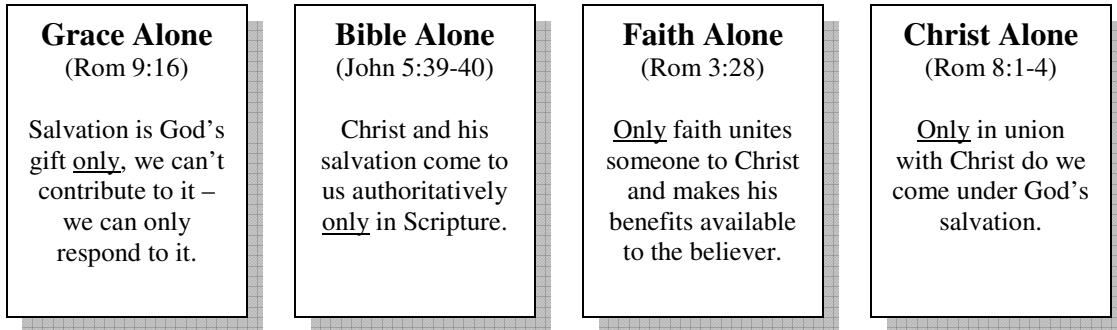
“Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason... I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. I cannot do otherwise, here I stand, may God help me. Amen” (LW 32:112-13)

The Result: Edict of Worms – Luther to be arrested and his books burnt

The Aftermath: Luther goes into hiding

Reflection: What do you find inspiring or encouraging about Luther's stand at Worms?

Luther's Theology: 4 Alones



1. A Theology of the Cross

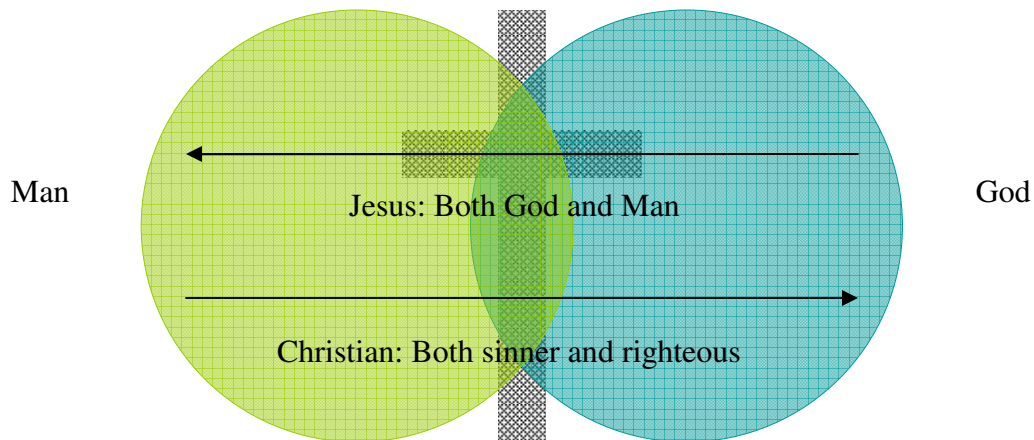
Not a Theology of Glory (i.e. revelation through God's self-sacrifice and suffering, not through a natural theology of God's glory revealed in creation like the scholastics)

2. Justification by Faith

Imputation, not Impartation (i.e. A forensic righteousness in God's eyes, not an infused righteousness essential to our nature like the scholastics)

3. Both Sinner and Righteous

"always a sinner, always a penitent, always righteous" (LW 25:434).



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Primary Sources (Lindberg)

Pope Leo X: “Exsurge Domine” (June 15, 1520)

“We herewith condemn... by virtue of this decree... the same Martin, his assenters, patrons, followers, and supporters, and demand and command that they be considered to be such by all Christian believers, both male and female... In addition, we forbid all Christian believers under no circumstances to read, express, preach, praise, or print the writings of the same Martin... so that his memory may be completely obliterated from the fellowship of Christian believers... Yes, they are to burn them... And in order to increase the disgrace of the same Martin and those in accord with him..., they, under every penalty of the law, are personally to seize Luther, his assenters, patrons, followers, and supporters, and at our request to hold him captive and send them to us...”

Luther: To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation (August 18, 1520)

“The Romanists have very cleverly built three walls around themselves. Hitherto they have protected themselves by these walls in such a way that no one has been able to reform them. As a result, the whole of Christendom has fallen abominably.

In the first place... they have made decrees and declared that the temporal power had no jurisdiction over them, but that on the contrary, the spiritual power is above the temporal. In the second place, when the attempt is made to reprove them with the Scriptures, they raise the objection that only the pope may interpret the Scriptures. In the third place, if threatened with a council, their story is that no one may summon a council but the pope...

...there is no true, basic difference between laymen and priests, princes and bishops, between religious and secular, except for the sake of office and work, but not for the sake of status...

They cannot produce a single letter [of Scripture] to maintain that the interpretation of Scripture or the confirmation of its interpretation belongs to the pope alone...

When the pope acts contrary to the Scriptures, it is our duty to stand by the Scriptures, to reprove him and to constrain him, according to the word of Christ, Matthew 18[:15-17]...”

Luther: The Babylonian Captivity of the Church (October 6, 1520)

“To begin with, I must deny that there are seven sacraments, and for the present maintain that there are but three: baptism, penance [later dropped as a sacrament], and the bread. All three have been subjected to a miserable captivity by the Roman curia, and the church has been robbed of all her liberty...

The sacraments do not belong to the priests, but to all men. The priests are not lords, but servants in duty bound to administer both kinds to those who desire them, as often as they desire them...

[Re communion] The third captivity of this sacrament is by far the most wicked abuse of all, in consequence of which there is no opinion more generally held or more firmly believed in the church today than this, that the mass is a good work and a sacrifice...

Let this stand, therefore, as our first and infallible proposition – the mass or Sacrament of the Altar is Christ's testament, which he left behind him at his death to be distributed among his believers...

A testament as everyone knows, is a promise made by one about to die, in which he designates his bequest and appoints his heirs. A testament, therefore, involves first, the death of the testator, and second, the promise of an inheritance and the naming of the heir...

[Re baptism] Thus it is not baptism that justifies or benefits anyone, but it is faith in that word of promise to which baptism is added. This faith justifies and fulfills that which baptism signifies...”

Luther: The Freedom of a Christian (November, 1520)

“To make the way smoother for the unlearned – for only them do I serve – I shall set down the following two propositions concerning the freedom and the bondage of the spirit: A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all. These two thesis seem to contradict each other. If, however, they should be found to fit together they would serve our purpose beautifully...

[Re the inner man] It is clear, then, that a Christian has all that he needs in faith and needs no works to justify him; and if he has no need of works, he has no need of the law; and if he has no need of the law, surely he is free from the law...

Let us now turn to the second part, the outer man. Here we shall answer all those who [were] offended by the word “faith” and by all that has been said, now ask, “If faith does all things and is alone sufficient unto righteousness, why then are good works commanded?”... This is the place to assert that which was said above, namely, that a Christian is the servant of all and made subject to all. Insofar as he is free he does no works, but insofar as he is a servant he does all kinds of works...”

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Further Research (*if willing*) that will help exam preparation

Show how the Lutheran reformation developed from the problems that characterized the Medieval Church.

What are six important theological points that come from the Diet of Worms (1521)?

Watch the Luther DVD (easy option, but very helpful!)

Go through all the Luther Primary sources and answer the questions of 'What is the issue?' and 'How does Luther answer it?'

Further Reading (*if eager!*)

Bainton, R.H., *Here I Stand – A Life of Martin Luther*. Nashville: Festival Books, 1978.

Ozment, S., *The Age of Reform 1250-1550*. New Haven: Yale Uni Press, 1980. Chapters 6-8

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- Piper, J., *The Legacy of Sovereign Joy – God's Triumphant Grace in the Lives of Augustine, Luther, and Calvin*. Illinois, Crossway Books, 2000.