



Opening Prayer: “Dear God and Father, we thank you for your infinite goodness and love to us. You do continually keep us in your word, in faith, and in prayer. By this we know how to walk before you in humility and in fear. By this we are not proud of our own wisdom, righteousness, skill and strength, but glory along in your power. You are strong when we are weak, and through our weakness you win daily and gain the victory. We pray for you to so nurture us that we may be to you as beautiful pleasure gardens so that many people may enjoy our fruits and be attracted through us to all godliness. Write into our hearts, by your Holy Spirit, whatever is abundantly found in Scripture. Let us constantly keep it in mind, and permit it to become far more precious to us than our own life and all else that we cherish on earth. Help us to live and act accordingly. To you be praise and thanks in eternity. Amen.



“For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery....For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another.” Galatians 5:1, 13

What are words, images, theology, historical events which come to mind when you hear Martin Luther’s name mentioned?

### ***The Freedom of a Christian***

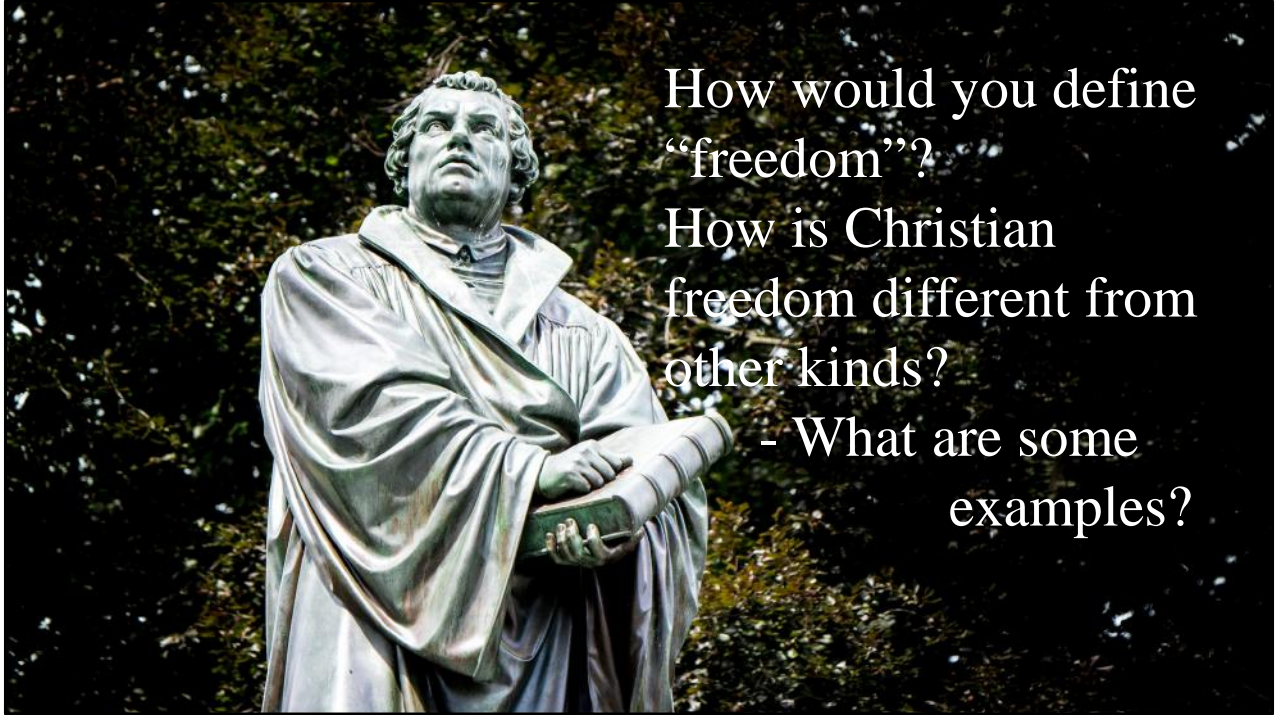
*A Christian is an utterly free person, lord of all, subject to none.*

*A Christian is an utterly dutiful person, servant of all, subject to all*

What caught your interest when you saw the announcement of this class and topic?

What do you hope/desire to gain in your participation in this class?

1. Freedom of a Christian: A final attempt for conversation and reconciliation with Pope Leo
2. 1517 – Posting of the 95 Statements for Conversation on the Wittenberg Church Doors
  - Corruption of the Grace of God through Christ; Indulgences, Good Works
  - Corruption of Church leaders
  - Control of the Scriptures
  - Power of the Roman Curia
3. 1520 July: Pope Leo issues Papal Bull Exsurge Domini, 60 days to recant
  - August, To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation
  - October, The Babylonian Captivity of the Church
4. 1520 November, The Freedom of a Christian



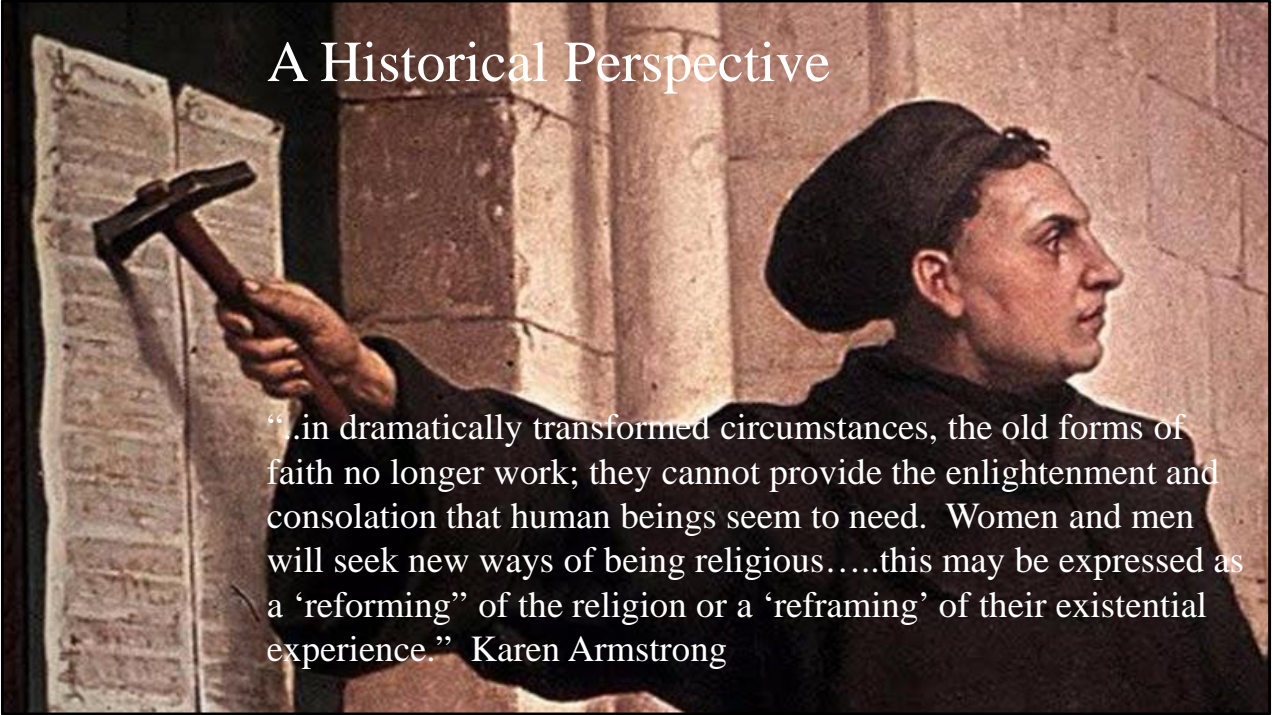
How would you define  
“freedom”?

How is Christian  
freedom different from  
other kinds?

- What are some  
examples?

1. Freedom; to not be bound or in bondage, to not be subject or under the control of another, liberty, independence
2. Christian Freedom; to meet God on account of Jesus Christ (no intermediary)
  - Freed from; sin, death and the devil
  - Freed for; service, obedience, love
3. Examples of Christian Freedom within worship
  - The Eucharist
  - Confession
  - Prayer
  - Proclamation
  - Baptismal Font
  - Cross
  - Sharing the Peace

## A Historical Perspective



“...in dramatically transformed circumstances, the old forms of faith no longer work; they cannot provide the enlightenment and consolation that human beings seem to need. Women and men will seek new ways of being religious....this may be expressed as a ‘reforming’ of the religion or a ‘reframing’ of their existential experience.” Karen Armstrong

- The European world had been undergoing enormous change leading up to the time of Luther and the Reformation
- As a restlessness amongst the masses and landed rulers against Roman Control and the Papal authority began to rise, Rome began to exert ever greater influence in presence and edict in an attempt to maintain control
- The huge losses of the Crusades both in human lives and in wealth/resources, as well as a “winding down” rather than a clear and decisive victory gave rise to the questioning of Roman wisdom and direction
- There was a growing sense of self-awareness and awareness of others amongst the populace as more and more people moved into villages and towns, PEOPLE TALKED and LISTENED to one another – the exchange of ideas and the questioning of rules



#### Political Changes

- 1225: Magna Carta, Individual rights and freedoms
- 1480: Restlessness of the Princes/Rulers in Germany under Rome's direction
- 1492: Final Muslim state in Spain defeated at Granada
- 1492: Columbus reaching the Americas
- 1492: Spanish expulsion, conversion or death of Jews
- 1502: Spanish expulsion, conversion or death of Muslims

#### Social Changes

- 1225: Magna Carta, Individual rights and freedoms
- 1347: Plague reaches Europe, in 7 years 1/3 of the population dies
- 1400: Expansion of towns and cities, commerce and trade

#### Technological Changes

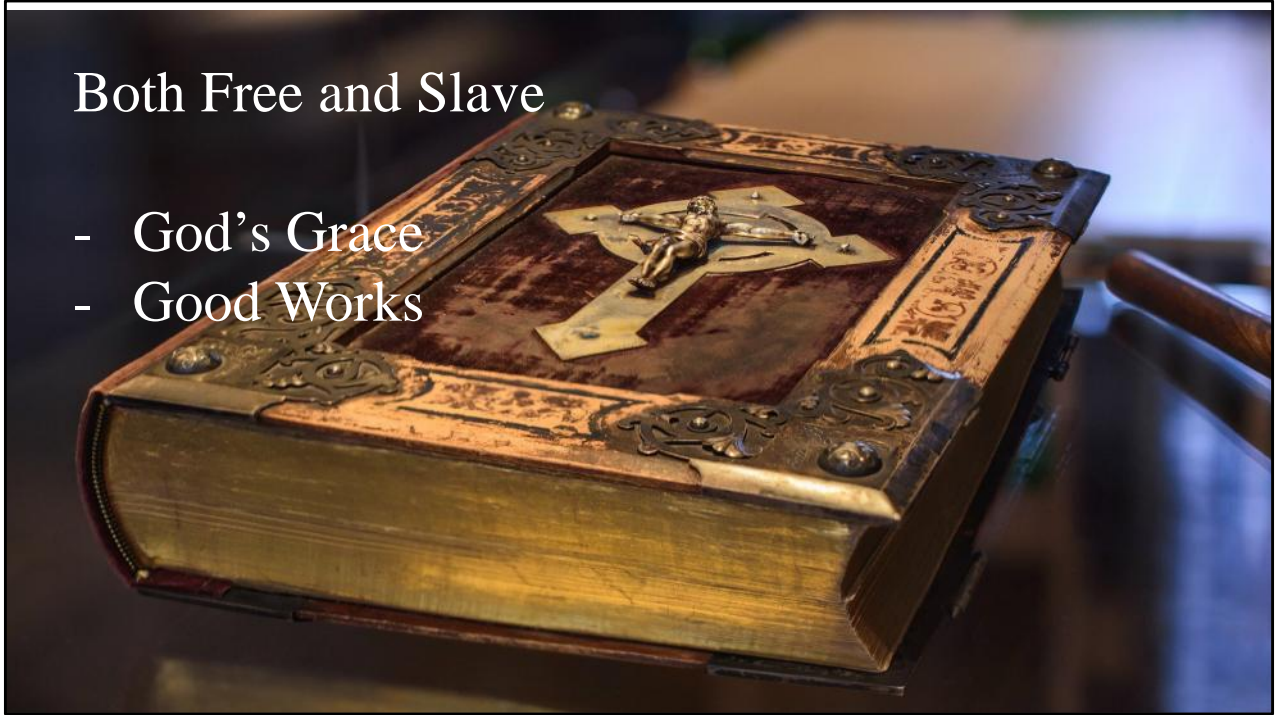
- 1300: Wheeled plow, cereal crop rotations, nutrition improvements
- 1436: John Gutenberg invents the movable-type printing press
- 1455: Gutenberg Bible is printed

#### Religious Changes

- 1095: Practice of "Indulgences" established, work based, Crusades
- 1200: Indulgences of wealth in place of acts
- 1481: Spanish Inquisition begins against Jews, Muslims and "heretics"
- 1484: Papal Bull condemns "witchcraft," Inquisitors sent to Germany
- 1513-1514: Press to increase indulgences, Albert of Brandenburg

## Both Free and Slave

- God's Grace
- Good Works



1. For Luther the model of Christian Freedom is Jesus Christ
  - Though free and Lord of all because he was the Son of God, he became a servant of all, even to giving up his life
2. Faith as a ever-growing gift of God is liberation to both soul of a person “saved by grace through faith” (the inner person), and a liberation to the outward life of a person in love and serve to others
3. God's grace kindles good works through the seeds of faith, it is not that good works earn God's grace
  - Christians do not live in themselves, but in Christ and their neighbor, or else they are not Christian. They live in Christ through faith and in the neighbor through love. Through faith they are caught up beyond themselves into God; likewise through love they fall down beneath themselves into the neighbor – remaining nevertheless always in God and God's love (Freedom 32)



*Verbum Domini Manet in  
Aeternum*

“The Word of the Lord Endures  
Forever”

Reading Assignments:

- “A Note on Freedom” web-link
- Appendix 4: “Synopsis of The Freedom of a Christian” web-link
- “The Freedom of a Christian” web-link

Closing Prayer



## Bibliography

1. The Theology of Martin Luther. Paul Althaus, Fortress Press.
2. The Battle of God, A History of Fundamentalism. Karen Armstrong, Ballentine Books.
3. The Case for God. Karen Armstrong, Ballentine Books.
4. Luther, An Introduction to His Thoughts. Gerhard Ebeling, Fortress Press.
5. Martin Luther. Martin Marty, Penguin Press.