

Reformation Matters 2017 - Talk 1: Martin Luther

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Date: 26 July 2017

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- [0 : 0 0] And Luther's world was a very strange world, very different from ours. This is what happened on the night of Luther's wedding.
- He went to bed with his wife, Katie, and of course the pastor came in to witness the consummation of the marriage. It was assumed that the pastor would do that.
- That was part of the pastor's responsibility. Not just in Luther's day, but for hundreds of years before that. The importance of establishing that it was a true marriage and consummated, and especially if one of the partners was of noble blood.
- Because then establishing the lines of descendants was important for other reasons. Luther's world was a very strange world.
- I'm very glad that I don't have to train my students at Ridley for that kind of pastoral ministry. But we need to remember this because his world was not easily compared to ours.
- [1 : 0 9] His was a late medieval world. And in lots of ways we find it very difficult to imagine ourselves being part of it.
- It was in the church, the lowest of the low points. The late medieval world, the Catholic Church was very corrupt.
- Now it's not always that the church was as corrupt as it was at that time, but it was a particular low point. The popes enjoyed the fact that their sons were becoming popes after them.
- The Borgia papacy at the end of the 15th, beginning of the 16th century was particularly morally corrupt.
- As well, in Luther's day, in the late medieval world, it was assumed that the church should be graded according to its holiness.
- [2 : 1 0] Some were more holy and some were less holy. In fact, it got so far as to assume that only the clergy were the church. Lay people were observers of the church, but they weren't members of the church.
- The lay people were too unholy. And can you believe it or not, it was actually believed that the clergy were holy. And indeed, the monks were holier still.
- The church that Luther lived in was a church that graded holiness, so only the clergy were regarded as being the good oil.
- Consequently, when you as a lay person received communion, you only received the bread. Not the bread and the wine. Because you were being reminded of the fact that actually, you didn't quite make the grade.
- Only the clergy took the bread and the wine. And indeed, in church buildings, the difference between the holy and the not so holy was really clear.
- [3 : 2 2] Because the holy people sat behind a screen and the others, well, the lay people didn't sit. You just stood. There were no pews in churches in those days.

You stood on the other side of the screen. And if you could get a glimpse of the holy things, all power to you. This was a church where it was assumed the church would work with the government, the prince or the town council, whatever it might have been, that you would work with the governing authorities to secure godly living in your territory.

Of course, that's a vastly different assumption from us today, where we're assuming more and more in Australia, for example, that the government is not on the side of the church.

And in fact, we have to get used to the fact that our life will in some ways be cross-grained. We'll work against the life of our community in lots of ways. But in Luther's day, in the early and the late medieval period, it was just assumed that the church and the society would work together.

In fact, it was inconceivable. You just couldn't believe that the church would in any sense be independent of the society, of the state in which you found yourself.

[4 : 44] The medieval church believed it was much better to experience tyranny in society, where the rulers kept everyone under their control, than being released from the rule of the governing authority, whether it be a prince or a town council, which could lead to anarchy.

They chose for tyranny, because at least that way you knew what was up and what was down. You knew that you were probably going to get your crops in on time and be able to feed your family.

Anarchy, separating out the church from the state, was regarded as the most horrendous, horrendous concept. Because then you could potentially have an unstable society where church was fighting against the state, the prince, the town council.

No, the assumption in Luther's day was that the church with the governing authorities would work together as one to provide for the common good, the common welfare.

It was assumed in Luther's day that the whole point of Christian faith, the point at which you experienced the benefits, came through confessing your sins to a priest.

[6 : 06] Listen to these words from Mark's Gospel, and just pretend that I'm actually saying them in Latin. I was actually going to bring a Latin version and read it, but I thought that would be way too cute.

Now, this is Mark 1.15. Now, after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the Gospel of God and saying, the time is fulfilled. You can probably almost finish the sentence, right?

The time's fulfilled. The kingdom of God is near. Do penance and believe the Gospel. For in the Latin version of Mark's Gospel, two words were used to translate the word that we think of as repent.

The two words were do and penance. So people would say, wow, Jesus believed that the whole point of his coming, the time is up, the kingdom of God is at hand, do penance and believe the Gospel.

The whole point of the Christian life is to confess your sins to the priest and to receive from him instructions about how you might do penance, how you might deal with the temporal penalty for your sins.

[7 : 19] Now, it was assumed that God forgave sins. That's pretty clear in the Bible, right? But the medieval church believed that God might forgive the guilt of your sin, but there was still a human penalty that you had to incur.

Or just think of it like this. Imagine you're a young kid and you kick a footy through your neighbour's front window. I suspect there are some people in the room who might have done it.

The neighbour comes out and says, look, it's okay, it's okay, these things happen, you're forgiven. In one sense, the crime has been dealt with, the relationship with your neighbour has been restored, but your neighbour also says, but if you could save up in your pocket money and give me 20 bucks towards the repairs, I'll take it.

There might be a relationship restored, but still a penalty to be paid. And the medieval church just assumed that God would forgive your sins, that your guilt would be removed, but there was still a penalty you had to pay, and you went to the priest, and the priest described what that penalty was, and the priest would say, you need to do 100 Hail Marys, or you need to do a pilgrimage to Rome, or you need to pay a certain amount of money into this indulgence tin.

For the medieval church said, you as a human being, can pay a sum of money and have the penalty for your sins, not the guilt of your sins, but the penalty of your sins dealt with, if your sin incurred a certain number of years in purgatory, well then you could reduce the number of years in purgatory by paying a sum of money called an indulgence to the Pope.

[9 : 19] And if you were particularly wealthy, you could pay perhaps a lot of money in indulgences, and not only pay off the temporal penalty for your sin, but perhaps the temporal penalty for someone else's sin, perhaps someone who'd already died and was in purgatory.

You could reduce the number of years they would have to spend in purgatory, and kind of speed up, give them an express lane checkout to get finally into heaven. So this was just assumed in Luther's world, that there would be consolation, you'd receive some comfort from the church, if you could pay a penalty, and have certain consequences of your sin removed, either in this life or in the next.

Consequently, in Luther's day, the church was more like a bank where spiritual exchanges were made, you would pay a certain kind of amount of money, and the church would release you or someone else from a certain number of years in purgatory.

The church was more like a bank of merits where you put in and they gave out. Grace was, if I can use the technical language, commodified.

Grace wasn't anymore experiencing the personal presence of the Lord. Grace was involved in exchanges that involved particular sums of money, or particular pilgrimages, or particular pious practices.

[11 : 08] And that could be exchanged. You could have a lot of merit on your side, and you could cash it in and get someone else to check out the merit that you yourself had earned. Grace was no longer a personal experience of the Lord.

Grace was more like a cash value exchange. The church in Luther's day was a vastly different kind of experience from ours.

Not only his church, but his society was a vastly different kind of society. For in Luther's community, the chief exchange was not cash for goods and services, day by day, but the chief exchange in a feudal society was you gave to someone your loyalty, and they paid you back with protection.

That's what feudal societies were about. They weren't cash-based societies. They were the exchange of service or loyalty in response for protection or care.

And you as a peasant would give your loyalty to the Lord, the Lord of the manor, and the Lord of the manor would respond by giving you protection from marauding armies, or would give you protection from the elements in as far as he could secure grain in the barn to tide you through.

[12 : 38] Now, Luther's world was a very strange world. It was very different from ours. And I make the point, because we easily read or hear about the Reformation story, or the Luther story in particular, which is what I'm going to be dealing with a bit more tonight, and kind of take some easy lessons direct from him to me.

But the danger of that is that we miss lots of the complexity, but also some of the benefit of reading history, where if we understand their world better, the lessons we can draw become more impacting for good on us.

So this is my first point. I've just tried to sketch a little bit of Luther's world. It was a world of church corruption. It was a world in which the church cooperated with the prince or the town council, the governing authority.

It was inconceivable that the church would work independently. It was a world in which holiness was categorized or graded, some more, some less.

It was a world in which you received consolation through doing penance, as apparently in Mark 1.15, Jesus told us to do.

[14 : 07] And it was a world in which grace was commodified. A very different world from ours. So into this world, Martin Luder, actually his name was originally spelled L-U-D-E-R.

Martin Luder was born 1483, the late medieval times. He grew up in a family that was upwardly mobile, as far as you could be in that world, because his father had been a miner and he'd progressed so that he was no longer working in the mine.

Now he owned the mine. And his father had high hopes for his son and he wanted his son to study the law. That's Martin.

Though Luther's early life wasn't particularly happy, his parents were quite grim. And talked a lot about the impending wrath of God and how he should be terrified by God and would sing to him before he went to bed at night songs that reminded him of the terrors of God should he die in the night, which is probably really great child psychology.

But it meant that Luther grew up with a very sub-Christian view of God.

[15 : 46] He did go to university in Erfurt, which is a city in more or less central Germany. But in the course of his undergraduate studies, before he started studying the law, he grew more and more dissatisfied with his studies.

He didn't really want to be a lawyer, but his old man was kind of breathing down his neck. But he also had a very dissatisfying understanding of who God is for us in Jesus Christ.

So one time he went home to visit his father. This was when he was a university student aged. And they had a big row. And on the way back from visiting his father in a town called Mansfeld, he finds himself in the middle of an electrical storm.

And he's so terrified by this visitation of the wrath of the Lord, he bends to his knees in the middle of the storm and cries out, St. Anna, save me.

If you save me from this storm, I will become a monk. And the storm passed. He got back to his university digs kind of wet but safe.

[17 : 05] And so within a couple of days he's knocked on the monastery door, the strictest monastery he could find, and asked to become a novice, to begin the training of a monk.

Now, it's all very odd that is, it doesn't seem that he'd wanted to become a monk before. He didn't seem like he was the kind of guy who was right to become a monk.

We think, actually, that this is his way of avoiding his old man's pressure to become a lawyer. And that if he enters the monastery, he's saying, God, he's saying, God, he's saying, Dad, I'm sorry, God called me to something higher.

I've become a monk. Which he did. His father was not particularly happy about this little exchange, this little encounter, though he came round to the idea not long afterwards.

He'd been in the monastery a couple of years and he became a priest, he was ordained, and his father turned up at the ordination party afterwards and brought with him 25 guests and a big sack of gold, partly to show Martin that he was happy with him after all and partly to show everyone else that he was a pretty important man and not to meddle with him.

[18 : 29] So Luther has entered the monastery, though it wasn't a very satisfying time for him. He did quite well. He progressed in a career quite quickly and was given responsibility for other monasteries, but in his heart of hearts he was still most dissatisfied with the way God hated him.

He literally believed in the terrors of the Lord and had not much space in his heart for the love of the Lord or the grace of the Lord.

He entered the monastery and actually never seen a Bible. Though in the monastery he does and he begins to read it. In fact, his father superior, the abbot of the monastery, who effectively becomes Luther's mentor, his name was Stolpitz, says to him, I think the only recipe, the only solution for a man of your tender conscience is I think you need to read the Bible.

And Luther complied and started reading the Bible voraciously. Of course, as a monk, you heard the Bible read in your chapel services and he went to chapel seven times a day, every couple of hours.

The monks had a prayer service that involved Bible readings. But now Luther was pondering it for himself in his own time.

[20 : 08] In fact, he does a doctorate in the Bible which kind of meant a doctorate in the Old Testament because most of the Bible is Old Testament, right? And so if you're doing a doctorate in the Bible in his day at least, that meant you did a doctorate in the storyline of the Bible, you did a doctorate in the Old Testament.

In receiving this advice from Stalpitz, his abbot, he's kind of discovered Christ alone.

He's realised that the whole of the scriptures are held together by their testimony to Christ himself, that Christ is the major theme of the Bible, that Christ alone was what held the Bible together.

So in those years as a monk, he's begun thinking fresh thoughts about what the church is, or what the Bible's about, or what Christian life is about.

He's realised that the church should be about Christ, it's his church, not the Pope's, that Christian living is about receiving consolation from Christ, which he did in reading the scriptures, not just about getting consolation from the priest.

[21 : 46] He's realised that Christ himself is the theme of the scriptures. But there are other people before Luther who'd held fast to this great principle that Christ is the big theme of the Bible.

It's just that Luther hadn't heard it. Christ alone, and we're talking about the years probably 1513 or 1514.

But while he's now teaching at the University of Wittenberg, not too far away from where he himself studied, he's given the opportunity to lecture on Galatians and Romans and Genesis and the Psalms.

he's not only given the opportunity to lecture on those books of the Bible to students at his university, but he's also given the opportunity to read the works of St.

Augustine, who in the early church was the great preacher of freedom, the great preacher of grace. Ironically, I don't know if any of you folk know St.

[23 : 02] Vincent's Hospital here in Melbourne, but the ward where you put prisoners who need to have a hospitalised kind of time, is called St. Augustine's ward, which, you know, St.

Augustine is the great preacher of freedom, which prisoners at that moment in St. Vincent's do not get. The other cool thing is that the urology ward, I think, is still St. Rock's, which doesn't even bear thinking about.

In this period, Luther is starting to read St. Augustine, the great preacher of freedom, from the early church. And if you know Augustine's story, you'd know that he was a sex addict long before there was Bill Clinton or Tiger Woods.

And St. Augustine realised that only God was powerful enough to free him from the lifestyle choices he'd made, which were so destructive.

So, Luther has discovered Christ alone, but in the course of reading Galatians, Romans, Genesis, and the Psalms, and giving lectures on them, reading St.

[24 : 10] Augustine, he realises as well that actually grace alone is the theme of the Christian's obedience.

That is, we need to obey the Lord, but actually it's God's grace that enables us to be freed. It's God's grace that enables us to live in a way that honours him.

That our salvation is not by works, but it's a gift of grace, according to Romans chapter 3.

But he doesn't make a big thing of this. He's come to these conclusions, he's understood justification in a new way, he's come to understand that it's grace which is the heart of a Christian's experience.

but nonetheless doesn't seem to be making a big deal of it. Until on the 31st of October 1517, so that's 500 years ago this year, Luther nails 95 theses, that just means 95 sentences, on a piece of paper to the door of the castle church in Wittenberg.

[25 : 31] Wittenberg was a tiny town, only a couple of thousand people, just four streets, looked like a hashtag, two long ones and two short ones, crossing them. And he nailed the 95 theses to the door of the castle church, largely because that's what academics did, you didn't have online Moodle sites or something to post reading matter for your students, you just put it on the public place so that when students walked up and down the street they could do their tute reading before they came to the tute.

So he nailed these theses to the door of the castle church, though there might have been a bit more going on for Luther at that moment, one because the very same day he sent a copy of them, not to students but to his bishop, so that was always going to get him into trouble, and also he posts the 95 theses to the door of the castle church on the 31st of October.

Now is that ringing bells for you? We would celebrate, or perhaps not me personally, I suspect not many people here either, celebrate Halloween on the 31st of October.

That's because the 1st of November is All Saints Day, and the 2nd of November is All Souls Day. The 1st of November, All Saints Day, is when you pray to the saints and ask them to help you.

The day after All Souls Day, the 2nd November is the day when you actually particularly pray that your friends who were in purgatory, those souls who weren't yet in heaven, might escape more quickly through purgatory to heaven.

[27 : 03] So Luther nailing the 95 Theses to the door of the castle church the 31st of October 1517 is not chance. Yes, okay, he might be giving a student some true reading, but he's doing something more than that.

He's provoking the church to think about penance and repentance and grace and what the church is for and what Christ means to you and me, to our soul.

Before he nails the 95 Theses of the door of the castle church, he's already begun his discoveries, he's rethinking what theology, what Christian life, what the church is for.

But now with this pretty provocative act, he's going public and indeed within a few weeks it went viral. If I don't know that he would use that language particularly, but it was published, republished, republished so that up and down Germany within weeks of that day people were reading and talking about his 95 sentences, his 95 theses.

He was really saying you don't have to get into God's good books by buying merits. You don't have to get into God's good books by doing particular pious works.

[28 : 34] You don't have to crawl on your knees up the steps of St. Peter's Church in Rome. You don't have to walk to Compostela in Spain and show that you're really committed as a Christian.

No, our experience of God should be one not of merits doing things to get a reduction on the penalties you need to pay. No, Christian life is about God offering his grace freely through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Christian faith is a gift from God. God, it's a donation, it's not a demand. That Christian faith involves a deep and personal appropriation of the gifts God wants to give that doesn't need the mediation of the papal church.

He's discovered Christ alone that God can and wants to console him not terrify him.

He's discovered grace alone that God's salvation come to us not by purchasing merit but through a free gift.

[29 : 50] thereby he's also discovered that when in Mark's gospel chapter 1 verse 15 the Latin version of the Bible said the time is fulfilled the kingdom of God's at hand do penance and believe the gospel.

Luther's discovered in the Greek version that it really says the time is fulfilled the kingdom of God's at hand repent and believe the gospel.

Something that does not involve the mediation of the papal church. Well Luther's become a celebrity and kind of he liked it.

He liked making the grand gesture the big statement he liked rattling the cage and he realised that the experience he had of the church or of the monastery even in his earlier years was not satisfying and the reason being of course that it didn't actually reflect the priorities the design of the scriptures.

So lots of people want a piece of him and a number of debates are organised to test him to put him on the spot to make him sweat a bit and perhaps even to make him change his mind.

[31 : 08] After all the 95 theses were conversation starters they were just single sentences that were designed to provoke a bigger debate. Well he's called to a debate with one of the Pope's representatives in Heidelberg a very significant German university.

The Pope's representative his name was Cayetan and in that debate Luther wipes the floor. He manages to kind of wrong foot Cayetan and Cayetan is arguing one thing and Luther steps aside not kind of literally but in terms of his argument and he had Cayetan on the back foot and Luther came away looking pretty darn good.

He basically said that Christian faith is not about reasoning your way to God but that human Christian experience is about placing faith in God's prior promises.

It's not a matter of thinking hard and assenting agreeing to ticking the boxes on all these Christian doctrines. No, the Christian faith or Christian experience is about placing faith in promises not through human reason ticking doctrinal boxes.

he basically said that the way the universities had taught Christian faith for a few hundred years was wrong headed. In this debate with Cayetan he realizes that not only is salvation by grace alone it's through faith alone.

[32 : 58] that the Christian experiences God not through the use of reason but through the exercise of faith.

The trust involves the heart not in the first instance the mind. well now the universities were angry at him.

He'd already had the Pope angry he'd already kind of destabilized things in his monastery but now the universities were very agitated by the way he so kind of cavalierly dismissed the syllabus that they were teaching.

consequently he's called to another debate this time in Leipzig not with an Italian whom he could so easily wipe the floor of but now he's being given as his debating partner a German a local German he couldn't play the I'm the German I'm superior to the Italian trick he'd played that but now there was a more even playing field and in this debate he does really poorly in fact he comes in a bit over confident you know those kind of guys and he himself is quite humiliated he's trapped by his debate partner whose name was Eck Eck makes Luther say the Pope can err can make mistakes and he makes

Luther say and councils of the church can also make mistakes that neither the Pope nor a council a meeting of bishops deciding doctrine are always going to be right so Luther has to say if the Pope can't be your final arbiter of truth and meetings of synods councils of the church can't be the final arbiter of truth he has to say it's scripture alone that's the final arbiter of truth and of course though he was backed into a corner made to say something he didn't intend to say that day nonetheless he'd said it and he was forced back onto the Bible as his only authority which was scandalous because in Luther's world you had to keep church and state together you preferred tyranny over anarchy right you you preferred stability built on a hierarchy rather than that very dangerous world where everyone can have their own opinion with an open

[35 : 52] Bible in their hands so this is 1519 these last six years for Luther have been tumultuous and finally in this year he argues publicly for scripture alone as the great arbiter of Christian truth Christ alone 1513 grace alone 1516 faith alone 1518 scripture alone 1519 he's knocked off all the great medieval authorities he's argued that priests don't really have any power in asking for penance he's spoken against the great doctrine of purgatory or temporal penalties for sins on which the church had more and more built its life as it commodified grace and taught grace as a not as a personal relationship with the

Lord but as a transaction you did via the church hierarchy he'd argued against human reason being the way you find the Lord but faith instead and he'd spoken against the councils of the church and against the Pope himself Christ alone grace alone faith alone and scripture alone now this is too much for the Pope in Rome and so he threatens Luther with excommunication Luther does not recant in fact Luther does something kind of more serious he takes the letter the ball the papal ball that the Pope had said please Mr Luther change your mind and Luther burnt it outside of the city walls and along with it he burnt a copy of the canon law the internal administrative books that helped the church think about its own processes its own internal laws he refused to recant and so was called before the emperor in 1521 now the emperor was quite a young man he was only 19 when he called

Luther before him he was probably the most powerful man on the planet because the the German emperor was also the king of Spain and the king of Spain ran lots of South America so this young relatively young man of about 19 is probably the most important or most powerful man on the planet in 1521 Luther appears before him and he the emperor asks him to recant and Luther has already burnt the papal ball and the canon law and it's taken 10 weeks to walk to warms where he had to appear before the emperor and when the emperor asked him to recount he said can I just have one more day I'm just feeling like I'm not ready yet to say my mind although he said his mind repeatedly in dramatic moments for the previous few years the emperor is a bit wrong footed by this and actually that's what

Luther wanted because Luther always argued best when the other guy was a bit unsteady on his feet theologically the emperor goes I suppose so I thought you might have thought about it by now but if you want another day that's fine he comes back the next day literally only had 24 hours and he said dear emperor I thank you so much for the opportunity of kind of recanting I put my things I've written into three piles so you can see the emperor going oh my goodness what's going on with this and Luther says in the first pile I've written things that you'd agree with I've written about the apostles creed or the nicene creed or the importance of the sacraments surely emperor you wouldn't want me to repent or recant that because if I did that which you agree with you're also saying that you're heretic the emperor oh no of course not you can have the first pile that's fine so then Luther moves on to the second pile and says as for the second pile the room is kind of waiting to hear his response as to the second pile

I do not recant I do not change my mind those are the documents where I've argued effectively Christ alone grace alone faith alone and scripture alone and of those I will not recant the writing is now on the wall and so he flips things in that third pile I was a bit rude to you there I'm really sorry about that I over argued my case there and I was a bit nasty to my opponents so he then does recant the harshness of the documents in the third pile but that was a pretty meager recantation to say I shouldn't have sworn at you sorry about that and so there was uproar in the room and Luther's quickly taken away and sets off back to

[41 : 40] Saxony to his home where his prince who'd given him protection was waiting for him just so happened you probably know the story on the way he was kidnapped in the middle of the night in a dark forest in central Germany and was taken to a castle called the Wartburg and there in the castle he was given protection when he was kidnapped he didn't know who was kidnapping he didn't mind just being a robber a bandit but actually it was his own prince taking him to this castle where he would have protection and he could live anonymously at least for the time being there was a great cost for Luther in prosecuting this particular theological agenda Christ alone grace alone faith alone and scripture alone but in each of these instances what Luther is really doing is showing that he has discovered a personal relationship with the

Lord and in that personal relationship with the Lord he's trying to set up a fence a theological fence to protect it that Christ alone the church should not get in the way of his relationship with Christ that by grace alone the church should not get in the way of his relationship with Christ by demanding certain works by faith alone he's saying all I need is the scriptures and the promises of God in which I can place my trust by scripture alone I do not acknowledge the authority of the pope or the councils over my life he was really saying I have now a consoling peace bringing satisfying relationship with the Lord and I will not give that up he's discovered in a fresh way heart religion he's discovered in a fresh way what it means that

God has given to us the gift of salvation or if you want to use more technical language that we're justified by grace through faith and this not of our own works so for Luther the great breakthrough I think was in one sense theologically what justification means but perhaps even behind that that as an individual you can know the Lord yourself directly personally with great personal blessing and comfort to boot but having said all that Christ alone grace alone faith alone and scripture alone it needs to be added that Luther himself was almost never alone by that

I mean very quickly did other people come to agree with him in his insights and though of course appearing before the emperor and saying to the emperor I will not recant here I stand I can do nothing else so help me amen was a lonely moment presumably as he's staring down the most powerful man in the world nonetheless he was surrounded by friends colleagues admirers haters sometimes as well and found himself for the remainder of his days not alone but in great company with others in fact the monastery where he lived he turned into a mini discipleship school not so mini actually and he had lots of students live in the building with him he married in 1525 so four years after he met the emperor he married a runaway nun named

Katie who was well their marriage at first wasn't a greatly loving marriage but he came to adore her and serve her very generously in fact in his day it was not presumed that you as a man make out your will to your wife in fact you'd make it out to another male relative but he loved her so dearly that he made out his will to her so that she was the executor of it after he died and in that happy marriage and in that communal learning environment the monastery he was able to train up hundreds and hundreds of leaders to send out to other parts of Germany and indeed to other parts of the European world as well he'd discovered his great breakthrough breakthrough he himself was not alone though his best days were behind him his later life is pretty grumpy his later life was full of physical ailments and he was particularly annoyed that the young guys new kids on the block were now the great celebrities and he was no longer the centre of attention for all around Europe others had sprung up to teach these kinds of ideas it's just that Luther himself was now more like the bishop who just wrote letters encouraging clergy in their jobs rather than the guy who set the agenda who forced the pace of reform he died as it turned out in the very same town that he was born by accident he'd been invited to resolve a conflict between some distant relatives and he'd ridden down to this town called

[47 : 59] Iceland it was a cold February day he'd preached some sermons in the church ordained a couple of young men although he wasn't a bishop so he was doing something quite irregular and he took ill took to bed and I think he was about 62 63 and died there in a town where he was born away from his dear wife and extended friendship circle in Wittenberg but his last dying words were we're all beggars this is true friends this talk might have stimulated other questions in your mind that I haven't been able to answer what I've really tried to do is show that Luther didn't just wake up one morning and go oh I get this all now it didn't come to him like an apocalyptic in breaking in his dream in the night it was a gradual development step by step that saw him not just thinking about doctrine though he did do that but saw him thinking about how his own personal experience of the

Lord could best be defended and described and indeed if you ask me what not just Luther's life was about but what the Reformation was about I'd say it's that great movement in the 16th century to present the gospel again to lay people in the churches who had themselves been denied access to the gospel but through Luther's great insights had again been encouraged to own the gospel in their own heart and know the peace and the joy that comes through believing and the gospel are even thinking about how that is happening here in and that it's about if you don't have and heal God andimir away and ■ are over them and you can use defense and hopefully because