

# Anabaptist History (Day 5) Erasmus, Luther and the Radical Reformation

by Dean Taylor

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*The sermon explores the Radical Reformation and its key figures, emphasizing the importance of personal reform and inner spirituality in living out one's faith.*

**Duration:** 1:28:24

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:24, Ephesians 2:8, James 2:18

**Topics:** "Church History", "Faith Action"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the stories of historical figures like Luther and the Anabaptists, emphasizing the reflection of ourselves in their heroic deeds and mistakes. It highlights the importance of keeping our focus on Jesus Christ to avoid messing things up even when God uses us. The sermon also touches on the significance of understanding salvation beyond just a mental concept and the need to align our faith with our actions, as well as the dangers of deviating from Christ's true intentions for the church.

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## Transcript

Today is a stories that begin to look at people, and they're great stories, particularly one of Luther. And in all these histories, again, my point is to be able to try to look at reflection of ourselves. We're going to be bringing up some wonderful heroic things that Luther did, and we're going to be looking at some other things he did at the end of his life.

And I'd like to do that not just with the Reformers, but also with the Anabaptists as well as we go on. Why? Because I want us to be able to look at ourselves and see that God can use us, and also that we can mess things up, even if God does use us, if we don't keep our focus on Jesus Christ. Morning, Esther.

I'll give you a paper here. Okay, so little preliminaries. If tomorrow you can have read chapter 3, we're going to be getting into the Anabaptists in particular.

Chapter 3, a cup in the cross, that's correct. Cup in the cross, chapter 3. And I will try to keep the fluids going so that my voice will not be too poor, but we'll see. Hey, very good.

Thank you, well praise the Lord. Well let's, before I pray here, I want to ask you a question. Next Monday will be our midterm exam, and what if I were to give you the answers to the exam? Would that be nice? I mean, you know, let's say it really counted.

As we look at some of these things today, and we look at, we consider ourselves before God on that final test day, the question that I want to bring to you is, what are the example, what are the questions that Jesus will ask us on the final exam? Does he say anything? Is there anything in scripture that Jesus particularly asked us, these are the things that I will require of you on that great day? Do you know of any? I'm asking you. Okay, what was that? Very good. Good, Jim.

Matthew chapter 25. And it's interesting, he quotes, Jim was just giving us Matthew 25, and in that passage Jesus says, this is what people who get my messages kind of look like. And he tells us that in that great day that he will separate the people as a sheep and the goats.

The goats are going to be people who did not have that reality in their life. Now I will bring out that those who did those things, who visited the sick, helped the poor, and those such things, they didn't know, they said, well, when did we visit you, Jesus? When did we feed you, when did we bring you in? And so it's not like they were doing these things on purpose to win their salvation. But if the message of Jesus is not central in your life, and no matter what kind of elaborate theologies you're going to get into, as we're going to see with Luther today, even a right theology of salvation can get you so far away that on judgment day you still will be separated the sheep and the goats, and these things aren't really making a difference in your life.

And a big caution to us, having a right theology about having a right theology still doesn't get you there. You know what I mean? We can sit and make fun of Luther and say, oh, the Anabaptists had this and that and all that, but still, if it is not real in our lives, it's still off. It's still just head knowledge.

So we're going to look at some of these things and ask God to reveal our hearts. Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we come to you in the name of Jesus Christ this morning, and we ask you, Lord, as we look into some of these lives in detail, that you would speak to us, show us ourselves in their lives, and encourage us.

Let us know, Lord, what you want in your church today. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Anybody ever heard Charles Hamilton preach? Oh, good. Most probably do. I really appreciate him, and does anybody remember his slogan that he continues to hit through all through the week? What is it? He'll be so proud.

Ideas have consequences. And that's a profound statement, isn't it? Ideas have consequences. We're going to see those today, and we're going to see them finding their way out, that you just think, well, I think this way and that way, but it does end up producing something.

It produces a people. It produces a heart. I have a quote here from John F. Kennedy as well.

He says this, a nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces, but also by the men it honors, the men it remembers. You know, as we go deeper into this Anabaptist history, it's very easy, I'll just tell you this as an editor of The Remnant and things like that, it's so easy just to grab these quick evangelical stories, and they're great, great stories, but some of the discipline of what we're going to be going into the next four weeks is so that we can understand these people better, and that hopefully our generation, your generation, can now begin to put these things into so people can hear the story, they can understand it, they can understand that some of these ideas do have consequences, and that when we go now to talk about something or write an article or something, it's going to take some of those people that can dig these

things out so it is in greater detail. All right, I just have two more little movements that I want to hit before we come to Luther, and one is these little groups of communities that try to live out the teachings of Jesus.

Now, sometimes these may seem a bit strange that I keep mentioning these little groups, Waldensians and groups like these, but here's the thing. If we were here together, and keep this in mind, and I'm going to wear it out, if we were to get the scriptures, and we were to draw up and use it just as a blueprint, the teachings of Jesus Christ, and have you have to be putting this into action, it comes out in many of these ways. If it's just an idea, it comes out in different ways than if we truly believe that Jesus meant these words.

These little groups like this, the Waldensians, these couple groups that we mentioned here, we may differ with them, but they are for people that I, what I appreciate about them, they are people that try to live out the teachings of Christ. I'm a first generation Anabaptist, first generation Christian in some ways, many ways, and I understand some of this the way, I think I do, I understand some of the ways that some of these people think. As we bring out some of these people here, why was he over here and why was he over there? There needs to be a desire in all of us to be able to have a true reality with Christ and to put it into practice.

As we go through these people and look at some of their lives that are kind of this way or that, I don't know, I can relate to it. I remember going to the cloister and there by my house, the Effort of Cloister, and granted, a lot of the things they did there was bizarre, but as everybody was laughing at the fact that they were sleeping on wooden pillows and all this kind of funny things, you know, as we were going around, I just had this something in my heart that went, you know, is really what we're doing, is anybody even trying anymore? Are we even trying? I mean, yeah, granted, the cloister was over the top, but I'm hoping that we can see within us that if we just keep repeating a white, vanilla, or you know what I mean, just a plain, mediocre Christianity, it's not going to produce some of these suppurative examples that we see through history. And so let's look at these things as examples of what we can do.

All right, getting on with it here. A group that influenced there in Holland, and also lots of the different European groups, was a group called the Bicards or the Beguines, and these were people that kind of like the Moravians did, they separated the men and the women into different houses, which you know, but they did this, it says here in the Mennonite Encyclopedia, they were influenced by the Abidjins' teaching and the Waldensians. Ludwig Keller, a historian from the 1800s, supposed that these groups were identical with the almshouses of the Waldensians, who erected similar houses of God besides their churches where persons not belonging to their brotherhood were given a living, they were helping the poor in that way.

In this way, the Waldensians did an enormous amount of social service. Very early, the name Bicard was applied to the apostles, they sent out who founded these almshouses, they applied that name to the apostles that they sent out who founded these almshouses and were the spiritual advisors of the poor. It is known, in fact, that where there was lots of Waldensians, there were lots of these.

The same heresies that were given to the Waldensians were charged to these people, and so it seems to be a people that picked up the spirit of the Waldensian, or were using the same source as the Waldensians, and were trying to put these things into practice. So think for a minute, with the Matthew 25 that Jim just gave us here. They thought that was important and made a separate little room or place where they would help the poor in their area.

In America, we kind of put our poor in far-off countries, but is it part of our thinking, does it even cross our mind when we begin to see, well, how could we do something to help them in that way? These people, it was obviously part of their thinking when they pondered on that great judgment day of Matthew 25. The next people and their influence they had were the Brethren of the Common Life. This had perhaps even more influence on the Anabaptists.

The Brethren of the Common Life was a religious brotherhood founded in Holland about the middle of the 14th century. Their purpose was to counteract the secularized life of the church by creating and promoting a truly pious Christian life shut away from worldly life, but actively engaged in earnest work for their fellow men, especially in education. They lived in community houses, men and women in separate buildings, but here's the difference from them and the other monastic vows, and it's an important difference.

I meant to have it underlined. They were not bound by a vow, and anyone could leave the community life at will. It was an important thing.

It was a free thing that they were able to do. Obedience, celibacy, and poverty, the three fundamental monastic rules, were also practiced by them. So they died out, but without a vow, voluntary renunciation of private possessions and community of good were, according to the Mennonite Encyclopedia here, were based on the example of the early Christian church, and a pledge to work was based on Bible passages like 1 Thessalonians 4.11. In those days, the monks and others would go in the streets and beg for money.

They felt, oh, this is wrong. The Bible says, study and be quiet, and do your own business and work with your own hands, have something to give. And so they thought the whole idea of begging was a wrong principle.

What distinguished them from the monastic orders which had, at times, degenerated was their genuine piety, their repudiation of the monastic vow, and their opposition to begging. In other respects, life in their houses was regulated with monastic strictness. The spirit of love, show and humility, obedience, community life, and chastity was to permeate and govern all the inmates.

That's a funny word. The day from three in the morning into night, night at night, was divided between work and spiritual exercises. Skipping a paragraph there.

In the center of mutual edification were the public meetings. They had, and this was new at their time, they'd have these meetings where they'd bring in the community, and they would begin to share. They were devotional addresses which were occasionally interrupted by questions and answers or alternated with longer conversations.

The idea of preaching to the public from a monastery was something that was new, something that they felt they needed this evangelizing of what they had. The special meetings were of two kind. One was intended for the common people and took place on Sunday and holidays when the doors of their houses were open to the public.

The others meant only for members and was held daily in connection with the common noon and evening meals. Harold S. Bender goes on to say the significance of the brotherhood of common life in pre-Reformation times was profound. Their genuinely pious, serious way of life as well as their instruction and their preaching were exceedingly fraught with blessing.

Their coalitions, that was their special meetings, attracted many. Although their influence in the transformation of the educational system was less inclusive and sweeping than has sometimes been assumed, it was nevertheless of lasting effect on the whole. It may be asserted that in many respects it prepared the way of the Reformation.

When the Reformation came into the country, the task of the brotherhood was fulfilled, according to this person. Its houses were gradually dissolved and ceased to exist. So they began to just bring in a deeper form of religion.

Someone that talked about the Bible, brought in the people, tried to put the words of Jesus into practice and something else, an inner life. I found this little journal entry from Capito. Capito was a Reformed preacher.

It was in Strasbourg. And this is a little incident where he came into a tavern or a house of something and he met one of these young monks, a part of this order. And there's an interesting little conversation because with him is also Balthasar Hubmeier, who became one of the Anabaptists for a while.

And so it's an interesting little quote, and I'll give to you this little script that he wrote in his diary. They laid this giant tongue that they ordered for food on the table, and it says, Humbeier scowled at Groot, the mentioning of the person who invented their order, or the tongue in both, and Hubmeier said, Who is qualified to read the Bible except he who is trained to do so? Obviously, this is why Humbeier was still a Catholic. That's why the church has forbidden Bibles in the common tongue.

If Groot had lived in Spain or Austria or any Habsburg land, Hubmeier said, he might have paid dearly for his audacity. In other words, these kind of things that he was teaching would have been blasphemy. Another one chimed in, Or if he had lived in the time other than the great schism, Zil said, and then he laughed with a pope in Rome and one in Abagon.

Both popes had bigger worries than with a Dutchman who was teaching the poor. And the young monk, the young monk, the young, not moke spunk, but the young monk spoke. I hate that dyslexia.

The young monk spoke and he said, My novice master said that the most important thing, so he kind of cut right through their little talk, in religion is to have a friendly relationship with Christ. To this end, he prays directly, almost casually at all times and season. In other words, he has just like this friendly relationship with Jesus, which was kind of foreign at the time, but prescribes rights and customs he often neglects, proclaiming them empty if the heart of the worshiper be not engaged.

And someone chimed in, Fabri nodded. Yes, that's the heart of the Devotio Moderna, the new devotion, the modern devotion. It was a new way of spirituality.

He goes on, true spirituality is within us, not in religious customs. For did not Jesus say the kingdom of heaven is within you? In the innermost depths of our hearts, we may hear the voice of God. These were radical things to say in the time, but people were beginning to take the words of Christ deep, not just on the outside and the inside.

Groot also said, this young monk goes on, that devout women who serve God in the privacy of their homes without taking monastic vows are just as religious as nuns in their convent. To love God and worship him in religion, not the taking of special vows. If one's goal is to live a religious life, then his life becomes religious in God's opinion and according to the judgment of conscience.

It all comes down to two things, love God and love man. Now, the pre-Anabaptist Hubmeier cries out, what? Said Hubmeier, shall we despise vows, confessions, sacraments, and 15 years of church doctrine? They even, someone else, they even helped lepers, Michael said, and had them bathe in special herb water and gave them clean beds. Someone in the nearby rowdy crew began to play his violins.

You can imagine the scene now. Somebody starts playing it. And Fabry changed to his orator voice.

Groot took plagues after visiting an infected and died when he had a little over 40 years. In other words, the man who invented their order died from taking care of people with the plague. Now, Capitola's heading back to his house.

Watch this introspection, it's beautiful. That night, the rain stopped. And walking with the others, I fell back for a while.

My shadow blackened reflection of the lamps in this area, the pools of water in the streets. And he says, how much of my life I spent in religious activity? Was I not a priest? Would I not soon have a doctorate in theology? Did I not speak constantly of the church and her laws? But did that compare to educating orphans and bathing lepers? Perhaps, I thought, what the church needs, what I need, is less religion and more Christ. Well said.

Well, just a little idea of some of the spirit that was coming up in the church at that time, in this area. And the maps, they show this area of all around Europe and up into Holland, where these little groups of people that were just, couldn't let this sacerdotal type of empty ritualism suffice, that emptiness in their heart, that they truly wanted a relationship with Jesus Christ. Yeah.

And up into the late 1400s, right into, Capitola would be early 1500s, even. And so, yeah, this was something that was grown in there. And during this time period, has anybody ever read Thomas Akimba's Imitation of Christ? It's a beautiful book.

Wesley read it, William Law read it. And some of these people that were just crying out for a deep relationship with Jesus, and it was coming out in their, it just couldn't be stopped. And they were having that.

And I believe, again, as part of the pilgrim church idea, that they were everywhere. Now, an important figure, Erasmus. Erasmus is a very important figure in coming into this age.

Stephen Russell, who usually teaches this class, even more, really attributes a lot to Erasmus. So I have to make sure that I cover Erasmus well. Erasmus was a very interesting fellow.

Erasmus was born on October 27th, 1466 in Rotterdam. He was the second illegitimate son of a priest and a widow. Now, that was common.

These priests, you would just, if you were a priest in those days, it was okay. You just had for yourself a few concubines. As long as you took care of the children, it was considered all normal and okay.

Erasmus was one of those, and Felix Mons was actually one of those. And here Erasmus, then still got a good education. And he was educated by, look who, the Brethren of the Common Life, who emphasized personal reform through Christian inwardness.

Though Erasmus later complained that they suppressed natural gifts by blows, reprimands, and severity. I guess he thought they were too strict. Erasmus is the epitome or the grandeur or whatever, the height of what's called a Christian humanist.

You can say that. He considered himself a Christian, but he also tried to argue his points with humanism. And to some degree, I don't mind at all.

In other words, he would make the arguments of Christ in something like, doesn't this make sense to the kings and to the people of his day? And I think in some way, we lose a little bit of this. Now, it's a big trap when we start to turn our Christianity into humanism, and not be a born-again person, but try to live these things out just in the flesh. I think maybe Erasmus tended towards that.

But nevertheless, to be able to explain this beautiful teaching of Christ, it makes sense to your friends at work, to your people, that Jesus' way does have a cure for humanity. Do you believe that? His way actually means is the way to cure humanity. All right.

So he started to write. In his Oration of Peace and Discord, Erasmus argued that going to war for temporal possessions is both wicked and foolish. And he suggested that a divided society is like a disease in the body that endangers the whole structure.

No one, much less a Christian, can maintain one's dignity while fighting, even though Augustine was arguing that you could. You just gotta have the right disposition when you're killing them. Holland was being torn apart by strife between the two noble families.

You know, I remember when I was in the army and the first day of the Persian Gulf War, the newspaper came out in the Stars and Stripes while I was in Germany. Front page, finally a day it's legal to kill. And they were just getting all these young men who had been zealous to run out.

And it really made me sick. I one time looked at, I tried to figure out what was it like to be in the people, the person who bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki? I wondered what was their feeling when they incinerated thousands of children and people and churches? And what was their feeling? I saw an interview once, you can find it on YouTube. The pilot is talking about it and they're interviewing him.

He said it was the most, what was his words? Wonderful, exhilarating experiences I've ever had. It's a glory to him. The whole concept of a soldier having the right attitude while you stab is ridiculous.

And one of my things in basic training, I stand there with, I have this in my book, but we're standing there with 500, you know, all men in their prime, young men in the buff, and you hold this M16 in your hand and you put this bayonet on top. And the drill sergeant stands up there and he starts to say a few cuss words and at you and all that type of thing to get you all excited. Expletives, if you would.

And then our thing that we're supposed to do is to take the M16 with the bayonet on top and to plunge it up in the sky like this, like you're stabbing something, and to say, kill, kill with cold blue steel. Kill, kill with cold blue steel. They made us chant that over and over again.

And I remember at the time, I thought I was a Christian. I thought it was something that, you know, but some reason I separated my Christian life, didn't really mean that Jesus, that I could actually stand in a field and scream, kill, kill with cold blue steel. The drill sergeant would say, what makes the grass grow? And we were all to chant, blood, blood, blood.

Blood makes the grass grow. And that's what goes on today. Still does.

And what's scary about it? I didn't think anything about it. Went to chapel, went to the chow hall afterwards, and we kind of thought of ourselves more as like kids playing army than real life. But it was real life, and those were real guns and real bayonets.

Anyway, this idea, Erasmus says, is ridiculous. And I agree with him. Erasmus disliked monastic life and seeking greater intellectual stimulation, he was ordained priest of a leading bishop.

He was ordained a, excuse me, became secretary of a leading bishop. He was getting leave to attend the University of Paris for four years where he taught himself Greek and studied the classic, but he did not finish his degree. Erasmus tutored some Englishmen in Latin in 1499, and one of them invited him to England for a year.

And there he met the humanist John Collet and Thomas More. Thomas More becomes a big figure in England who actually stood against the Reformation for the cause of Catholicism. And he began to study the early fathers of the church for a more real and alive theology.

I have that highlighted. In 1515 edition, he wrote a long discourse on why war, he quote, it was his title, is sweet only to those who have not tried it. Other people would say, war is sweet.

You know, they'd be saying, he said, war is sweet only to those who've never been to war. This is ridiculous, this is nonsense. Erasmus believed that war should be avoided by every possible way because nothing is more wicked, disastrous, destructive, loathsome, and unworthy of humans.

Erasmus noted that prince, lawyers, and theologians support war so much that it has become acceptable and respectable, and people are astonished when someone disapproves such crimes. He wonders how creatures made for peace can rush so madly into mutual slaughter. More than any other animal, humans were made for friendship because they depend on mutual aid and loving kindness.

Only humans shed tears and laugh, can use speech and reason and delight in serving all the devotion to God. Once again, he describes the tragedy and miseries caused by war, which spreads like a contagious disease to other countries. Its poisons, darts, and hellish contraptions must be the products of the infernal regions.

Well, so he argued that this was just nonsense even besides what Jesus said. Now, in 1516, a big thing happened. He published a new translation of the New Testament, and I have in Latin, you need to write in your margins there, it was not just Latin, it was Greek and Latin in a linear Bible, which was huge.

So it had both the Greek and the Latin Vulgate. Now, there had never been another version of the Bible for over 1,000 years. The Latin Vulgate was boss.

And now he had the Greek version right next to the Latin Vulgate showing your Latin Vulgate is wrong. It was very controversial. And then he also educated a Christian prince.

Later, he worked in sharp contrast to the people of the time. He talked about, advised monarchs to maintain peace through justice, limit taxes and luxuries, and convert monasteries into schools. So again, some of those talks of changing this idea of what the monasteries are.

Erasmus encouraged all men and women to read the Gospels and the writing of Paul. What, read the Bible? As Wingley does this, we'll see tomorrow or the next day, in Zurich, he says he makes all the priests go out and buy a New Testament. They didn't even have one.

It was something new to them. And so Erasmus was saying, I think all the priests should read the New Testament, especially the words of the Gospels and Paul. It was revolutionary, which is crazy.

Encouraged for Luther who, okay, and this paved the way for Luther who, as this writer here said, burst upon the scenes in 1517. Erasmus supported many of Luther's reforms, but he was always scared of fanaticism and intolerance. And he never truly, never backed Luther completely, but actually stayed in the Catholic Church.

He also talked against the peasant wars and wrote a work called Against War, which Erasmus wrote to persuade Pope Julius II not to make war on Venice. Erasmus refuted the six major arguments that had been used to rationalize a just war. He argues that even if war was sanctioned by the Old Testament, Jews were not Christian, and Jesus ordered Peter to put up his sword.

He brought up the whole concept that Jesus made a change. So he also brought this concept that Jesus is the interpreter of the Bible. The Old Testament looks to Jesus, the New Testament looks to Jesus, Jesus interprets, and he made a change here.

That was something revolutionary. People would quote the genocides of Exodus as much as they would the words of Christ, and he made Christ look more important in their eyes. Bender goes on, now in this section, Bender talks about many of his doctrines that he spoke of, but never quite went all the way, were very much in line with the Anabaptists.

His ideas on baptism, even, and communion, the Trinity, Trinity being the same. He designated the Bible as the sole source of Christian truth. The idea of bringing up the Bible as the sole source of Christian truth, and promoting the use of the Bible in the vernacular, in the regular language, and stressing that Christianity is essentially, watch this now, he stressed that Christianity is essentially, when it comes right down to it, by the grace of God, essentially a life of discipleship of Christ.

He expressed common Anabaptist demands by saying that. The five devotional books that he made to the educational world, in which he promoted a Christianity interpreted by the Sermon on the Mount. It was read in Anabaptist circles, especially after it was available in the Dutch translation in 1550.

He had a big influence on Hans Dink. We're gonna hear Hans Dink probably this week. Interesting, Hans Dink, of all the ones, is the most liberal, and even leaned towards universalism.

And he had an effect, an influence on Hans Dink. Erasmus, in his books there, wrote, again, the books against war, which were, also helped give the Anabaptists reasoning when they threw out to their accusers and stuff. But he did say this about the Anabaptists in one of his letters to a friend.

He said, the Anabaptists have flooded the Low Countries, just as the frogs and locusts flooded Egypt. A mad generation, doomed to die. They slipped in under the appearance of piety, but their end will be public robbery.

And what is like a miracle, although they teach absurdities, not to say impossibilities, and although they spread unlovely things, the populace is attracted as if by a fateful mood, or rather the impulse of an evil

spirit in this sect. I guess he never actually became an Anabaptist, as we can plainly see there. So, all right.

So I'm gonna tell you about Luther now, then we'll take a quick break after Luther. Luther, we're finally here. Luther, what a fellow, what a tremendous personality.

And there's many things about Luther you just can't help but say, wow, that was great. And there's many things you say about Luther, you just can't help but say, did you have to say that? Did you have to do that? And Luther was certainly one of those. Luther, Martin Luther.

He was born in Germany in 1483. And to give you an idea of his time, in that time, a quarter of all the children died by the age of five. That just was the way the world was.

And there was a plague that was before, the plague after, and they were always scared of those things. You have to understand that the church was the only real constant thing that they had in their society. He mentions that his home life was very hard.

He had a very demanding father and a very demanding mother, but particularly his father. He mentions that one time his father beat him so bad that he had run away until finally his father talked him into coming back and he came back. He says that one time his mother beat him so much for stealing a piece of fruit that it drew blood.

So as you can see, he had a rather strict childhood, at least according to him. His father wanted him to be a lawyer, and I do think he would have been an excellent lawyer. But he wanted to be a lawyer, so he agreed, and at the age of 18, he left home and went to college.

It was 1501, and he entered the University of Erfurt. Now, a little thing about the University of Erfurt, the town of Erfurt. The town of Erfurt was not that big of a commerce town, but it had lots of religious activities, lots of churches, lots of monasteries, and they would have church conventions, if you would, and lots of things that were going on.

It's kind of like, I don't know, living in Lancaster County if you're a minor or something, you know what I mean? Lots of things was the hub there. And while he was there, he took in the whole town life, and as a student, he became a musician, a good one, and greatly enjoyed that true sense of camaraderie that he had with his buddies, his fellow students, and fellow scholars, and he enjoyed that. He did good at school.

He quickly earned his bachelor degree. He earned his master's degree, and in 1505, he was ready to be, now to enter into his doctrinal training and receive his degree in law, and offer his career in law, but something happened. In the year 1505, the plague hit the area.

The plague hit Erfurt, and you gotta understand, to them, it wasn't just a disease. To them, it was a curse of God, and so people were feared, people would run, and you hear lots of the stories of people running this way and that to flee from this area, and three of his close friends, his buddies, his fellow students, died of the plague. It was devastating.

It was devastating. It made him really, he was very introspective as it was, and it made him grow even more introspective, but then something happened in that same year. On July 2nd, 1505, while returning on horseback from visiting his home, he was caught in a thunderstorm, and it says that a lightning bolt hit close to where he was, and it, I guess, threw him off the horse.

He was scared to death, almost killed him, and he thought surely now that judgment was coming after him, and he was going to die, so he cried out, to God, no, to Saint Anne, the mother of Mary, and he said to her, help, Saint Anne, I will become a monk. And so, he had a very sensitive conscience. He believed this was a vow.

If you save me, Saint Anne, I'll be a monk. He thought, well, she did. And so, he kept his promise and became a monk.

He told his dad, guess how dad felt. How do you think dad felt? Didn't like it. He said his dad was insane.

He was acting like a fool. He was desperate how terrible this would be, that his son would be a monk, but he felt it was a vow, and so he was gonna become a monk. Now, everything that Luther did, he did 110%.

So, if you're gonna join, if you're a Lutheran, you're gonna join a monastery, you're gonna join a cushy monastery, no. He ordered the strictest monastery he could find. The Augustinian Friary of Strict Observance was their name, and they had one of the hardest practices of being a monk, and he entered there, they would wear this camel-skinned shirts to help them be, they would whip themselves, which was actually common in this time.

St. Francis had himself carried through the streets, whipping himself. St. Ignatius of Loyola wrote an exercise for monks that he said you should, got to get contrition of sin, and if you don't, after fasting and thinking of your sin, thinking of your crucifixion, when you go through each of the days of Ignatius' exercise, he said, eventually you have to just start beating yourself with a whip. And this was part of some of these monastics that were trying to do to get that contrition of God.

Should have the Holy Spirit, because if the Holy Spirit comes, what does it do? It convicts the world of what? Sin, righteousness, and judgment. He needed the Holy Spirit. So did all these monks.

And, but they were trying to get that, and he couldn't get it. Of course, he went even further. They were supposed to not have blankets sometimes so they could sleep in the cold.

Well, Luther wanted to go out in the snow, and many times his own monk brothers had to come drag him in from freezing to death out in the snow, or he would have died out there. And so he's later said about that time in his life, if anyone could have gained heaven as a monk, then I would indeed have been among them. Luther described this period of his life as one of deep spiritual despair.

He said, I lost touch with Christ the Savior and Comforter, and made of him the jailer and hangman of my poor soul. He went on like this for another five years. Then another big thing happened.

In those days, pilgrimages was one way you could take care of some sins. It got out of days out of purgatory if you'd go on a pilgrimage or buying an indulgent. So he and a group of his brothers had started heading to Rome, which from his area in Northern East Germany to Rome took him two months on foot to get there.

So he walked there to Rome. When he first got to Rome, he was very impressed. And he writes about how wonderful it all was.

But then as he was there, he began to notice it a little deeper. He noticed all the pomp and all the excess and everything. One time he was about to give his mass and he was preaching a little sermon before his

mass, and he heard someone go on in the audience, ah, go on with it.

In other words, stop all this talking. Just do your mass thing and be done. And he commented on how cynical everybody was.

And I'll give this warning here, cut in. Don't be cynical. I heard someone once say you're as young as your dreams and as old as your cynicism.

If you find yourself getting cynical like these people in Rome were, you probably already stopped dreaming. And if you stop dreaming, ah, nothing works, that doesn't work, oh, it's a scary place. Luther saw that in Rome.

And so he thought this was terrible. He did finally make it to the crypt of the saints where 45,000 saints were supposed to be buried in this area, paid the money and went through there and to pay his homage to these different saints. And when he got to all that and saw all of Rome, he thought, so this is it.

Now, it was a time to be there. Michelangelo was actually at that time painting the Sistine Chapel. Raphael was painting the murals of the Vatican.

You couldn't have been at the Vatican at a more historic time. But he saw it as empty. And he went into despair and said, surely there's gotta be something more.

There's got to be something more. He went on like that, he went on that even longer. In 1511, he was then sent to Stau, he was sent to Wittenberg.

And here's an excellent thing that happened. They thought that the monks were looking, probably getting perturbed with Luther and saying, let's send him somewhere where he can pour himself into other people. And here, a very insightful leader he had, an abbot or whatever, Staupitz, his superior, concluded that Luther needed more work to distract him from his exercise of introspection and ordered him to pursue an academic career where he could pour himself into students.

Luther said, I can't do it, I can't teach. And he wrote him 15 reasons why he can't do this job. And the main of the reason was, it'll kill me.

Well, his very clever superior said, that's okay, God needs intelligent men in heaven as well. In other words, you're doing the job, get on with it. So he did, and he was right.

He began to pour himself into these studies and pour himself into the student like he would done in everything else. He started studying the Greek, he started studying the Hebrew, started studying the languages, the primary language of the scripture, and poured himself into the scriptures. And now think about it, it's never been done.

People hardly read the Bible. And now Luther was teaching the Bible to his students. And when he got to Roman, the Romans, he started talking about Paul, and he started thinking about these things, he realized, wait a minute, faith is something to be received of God.

I can't make it with all these whippings of myself and pilgrimages and indulgences and all these things. No, it's a faith in Christ. And he wrote in there that he said, I felt myself to be born again and entering into the gates of heaven.

It was a true revelation for him, an excellent revelation. He needed this. And I do think he genuinely had that wonderful experience.

It seems that he did. Well, seven years after the trip to Rome, Julius II, who had done all these things there in Vatican, had died, and now a much worse pope had taken his place. His name was Leo X. Leo X was a very wicked pope.

And some of the things he would do at his huge festivals and parties I could never even mention in this classroom. It was terrible things. And he was so extravagant, you see that little picture of his elephant.

He had pet elephants, he had things he would ride around, everything. And he ended up spending the Vatican's money in two years to such an extent that they were not allowed to any longer keep building the Vatican. They had to stop building the Vatican because he had spent all their money on parties.

So Pope Leo X started saying, well, we gotta do something. So he got everybody together and he said, well, okay, this whole indulgence thing, let's put it in overdrive. So they hired for themselves a marketer, a marketer.

So we need somebody who can, you know, let's get this guy in. So they got this guy in. And his name was Johann Tetzel.

And Johann Tetzel was a genius marketer. And he came up with little jingles that the people could hear. And here was one of his famous ones.

It even works in English. I'm sure it rhymed in German and in Latin. He said, as soon as a coin in the coffer rings, a soul from purgatory springs.

In those days, they figured everybody had to go to purgatory to work out all your different impure sins before you could get to heaven. But if you would do certain things, go on pilgrimages, pay a certain thing, and this is still in the church doctrine today, then you would get days and years out of purgatory. You could even get your loved ones out of purgatory.

Say you had a wicked husband who was really bad, but he died, well, you could just then pay millions of dollars to the church and he'd be taken out of purgatory. It was a nice deal. They were the Pope, infallible, what they bind and loose in heaven.

And so he began to come in, and this town of Wittenberg said, hey, we kinda like that idea. So they called Tetzel in, and he came into town and began to sell his indulgences, and people stopped going to Luther's sermons to go out and get Tetzel's indulgences. And anything could be forgiven.

Again, things were actually written on these indulgences that could be forgiven that, again, I couldn't mention in class. Terrible things. Luther saw that, and he was concerned.

Now, after having this conversion, after having these things that were happening, he saw what these people were running to this, he thought, this is serious. These people are trusting their soul in these little documents, and it's wrong. So I'm gonna do something about it.

Now, remember, he was in an academic town. There was a colleges there, and they would have debates like they would have in colleges. So there was a door in that town that they would frequently use for debating, like a bulletin board.

So he grabbed a piece of paper, or a few of them, grabbed his pen, and wrote 95 reasons why the selling of indulgences is wrong. The 95 theses. Went to the castle church door in Wittenberg and nailed it.

Now, it could have been just a debate. The next day, oh, look at Luther. He thinks this is wrong, and they could have had a good chuckle, but somebody saw it there, and true to his form, he had a lot of inflammatory things to say about the Pope.

He wrote that way. The common people loved it. Somebody took it, and took it to the printing press, and began to print them out, and the thing went viral.

It went viral. People started passing it. Look what Luther said.

Can you believe he said that? And it started going everywhere. Finally, you can imagine, it made it all the way to Rome. And when it made it to Rome, Rome wasn't happy at all.

They were furious at this, and said, okay, we're gonna call him in. So they began to write him. Leo began to write him, and his people would write him, and say, you must stop this.

You must recant from this. And Luther knew, had it gone to this point, he's crossed a line. Now, Luther was a man of serious conviction, as you saw.

He wasn't gonna back up. But he was in thin ice here. Each one of these next steps, I'm about to tell you, he could have lost his head easily.

So he said, no, I'm not backing up. So they actually sent a cardinal to Luther to try to talk him out. Now, you have your priest, you have your bishops, whoever, big area, then you have your archbishops, then you have your cardinals, who may one day be Pope.

That's who he sent to debate with Luther. Luther listened to him, and he wrote back a letter to the Pope, you would have done better to send a donkey playing a harp than send this man to discuss theology with me. Now, the way he wrote, the popular people loved this.

He became a rock star. He would be writing all these inflammatory things, and people would be printing, can you believe he said that? And it'd be going all over, and the common people were loving him more, and more, and more. Well, eventually, as you can imagine, they sent out an excommunication.

They said, that's enough, no more of this. Well, as all this happened, he was a genius, political genius, too, and he said, okay, I need to go one step further. The people love me.

And so he wrote a paper to the nobility, not to the theologians, but to the kings. The name of it was, To the Christian Nobility of the German Nations. And saying things like, our money, our German money is flying across the Alps, and brought in this patriotic German nationalism to these people to say, we must stand against the tyranny of the papacy.

Well, the nobility loved this, and it worked. And it was a bit of a, we don't talk about this sometimes in Reformation theology, but there was a bit of a political revolution going on in these words. He said words like, we must now attack not with words, but with steel.

He argued that German has a right, even a duty to rebel in this way. Now, for years, the nobility of German had wanted to have reasons not to support Rome. But now, they had a spiritual reason.

You could even be considered a spiritual giant to rebel. All right, so he knew that he was starting to get in trouble. Well, this one man who became a very important man in his life was Frederick the Wise.

Don't forget that name. You might wanna underline it. Frederick the Wise.

Frederick the Wise, and he was wise, loved it and took Luther and hid him in his castle. Well, while he was hiding in his castle, a very young man, who we're gonna hear about in Anabaptist history, who's only 19 years old, becomes king of the Holy Roman, and emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. His name was Charles V, 19 years old, brand new king.

And here's Luther, ouch. 19-year-old Charles V and Martin Luther. And he goes to visit Frederick the Wise.

While he visits Frederick the Wise, Frederick the Wise, to see about this heresy, he convinces Frederick the Wise to, won't you allow Luther a chance to debate? Give him a chance, give him a hearing. So he agreed. And so he said that he can come to my castle in Worms and we'll have a big debate.

On their way, so he went back and Luther. Now on this last page of your packet, you'll see I printed you this big picture. And I'm sorry, I should have, you can go through some of the stories here of Luther.

The letter had finally now came to Luther and the papal bull, as they called it, the excommunication, received him with a wax seal from the pope, you have been excommunicated, which means you will burn in hell forever, okay? And this is what he did, the big picture in the center. He took that and then of course with the crowd, threw it into the fire. Ouch, he had crossed a line here.

And then he made his way to Worms to his debate. Now when he went there, he was again a rock star. Everybody loved Luther.

The people had been getting this stuff. He would not only print the words, but he also put like little etchings that had shown like the pope in bad poses with demons around him and stuff, that he was the great antichrist and all that. So the common people loved him.

And they say that as he was heading his way to Worms, and many when he'd come through a town, the peasants would flock him. In his own town where he began to be at the college where he was, they just came out and the people just cheered him on. Yay, yay Luther.

And when he got to Frankfurt on the way down from, you up here. Oh Germany, you would. He was up here, he made his way through Frankfurt into Worms, which is right here.

When he went through Frankfurt, the people of the publishing houses just filled his cart with presents and everything. Finally he comes into town, into Worms, and he says that he is there between a multitude of people just cheering him on. And this is where Frederick, imagine how poor Charles V felt of all, now we're gonna have the debate there.

So as he went in there, he said people were cheering long live Luther. And one priest, even though he'd been excommunicated, he wrote ran down and venerated him like he was a saint. One guy wrote the Pope about the scene, he said Pope, nine out of 10 people are saying long live Luther.

But just so you don't get the wrong impression, the other 1% saying death to the Pope. So things were interesting. He goes in, and you can see the little picture there where he's going through, and here's one

of the pictures where people handing him gifts.

This is his life, going through his life there. And now we're coming down to the center bottom of the scene there, the Diet of Worms, called Diet, looks like diets, pronounced Diet, Diet of Worms, looks like worms. So while he's there, he doesn't know, a lot of the princes and lords of Germany are there, only one man that he knew was on his side, and that was Frederick the Wise, and he didn't even know for sure how he was gonna handle with all this pressure.

And Rome sent their people to discuss, and he threw all his books on the table, or had them, not thrown, but had them all on the table, and said things like, did you write these things? Yes, I did, and they called on him to recant. You think Luther recanted? Of course not. He didn't recant.

And as he said, he said these beautiful words like this, he said this, unless I am convicted by scripture and plain reason, I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other. My conscience is captive to the word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe.

God help me, amen. They continued the debate, they let him go for the day, they came back the next day, the debate goes on, and finally at the very end, the last thing he said, you need to know this quote, you need to know this quote, he said, after he finished everything, he said, here I stand, I can do no other, God help me, amen. And it was over, and they decided what was his fate.

He thought for sure, they're gonna send me over to Rome and I'll be burned, this is it, it happened to John Hus. Even though they promised him safe passage, they promised John Hus safe passage and they killed him, I'm sure he thought he was going to die. But apparently they needed a unanimous vote to be able to send him to Rome.

And one man, guess who, Frederick the Wise, voted not to send him, so he was free. On his way back to Frederick's castle, they realized that people were already trying to grab him, so they hid him away in another little castle that he had there. And there he spent the next two years of his life.

It was the name of the castle is Wartburg, Wartburg, he spent many years there. After all this excitement, after all this energy, now Luther is sitting in an old castle alone, this crazy visionary alone, and he gets depressed. He starts talking about his fighting with the devil and how he threw ink at the devil because he would actually see him and fight against him.

And in reeling with all this depression and all this thing, he had to do something to occupy his mind, so he spits out the Lutheran German Bible while he's there in exile. And, but while he's there, hiding in this castle, the Reformation goes on. And finally in 1522, he felt it safe to leave the castle and went back to Wittenberg, however, which is where the castle was where he knocked it, put the writing on the Wittenberg Castle Church door, and that's where his main place was.

However, when he got there, he discovered the peasants were taking his Reformation further than he had planned. And he wanted to go. Wittenberg was the first place the peasants revolted.

It was his hometown and the peasants revolted there. And they felt that Luther was on their side. But as we get back from the break, we're gonna realize that he wasn't.

All right, take a three minute break, we'll come right back. But hurry, because we have some interesting things to cover. Okay, I will head back.

Now, as he gets back, and you can imagine this leader, this visionary, this prophet, is now sitting in this prison, what seemed almost like a prison. But he wrote the entire Luther Bible during that time. But still, imagine how frustrating would it be.

Now all these guys that are quoting you are going all over Germany. And remember how viral his stuff went. The peasants were thinking, this is it.

Now, for a long time, they had this feudal system, which meant that the lords of your particular area owned a particular region and you could work there for that king, for that lord, for your food and for your substance living. But it got to the point where you were actually even owned by the king. You were owned by the lord, not the king, but the lord of that area.

And a lot of this oppression, and so when they heard Luther talking about freedom, when they talk about setting the captives free, they didn't just use this in their head. They thought, well, we're gonna have freedom from this tyranny that we have here in our area, in our way. So the peasants began to take this reformation further than Luther even wanted it to go.

And so the first place in 1522 that this began to happen was right there in Luther's hometown, or new hometown, of Wittenberg. Now, we're gonna talk about Thomas Müntzer. I have a stamp, I'll try to remember to bring tomorrow in a dollar.

Thomas Müntzer, when I was in East Germany, I have a little mark. Thomas Müntzer is a hero to the East German and to the Communists. Karl Marx and Engels spoke of Thomas Müntzer because they saw in this peasant revolt the preliminary, the pre-revolution that was happening in France, then finally happening under Karl Marx and all this.

It would liberate the working class people and take over the world. The Communists see Thomas Müntzer as their hero and bringing up these kind of reforms that they had in the area. And the people were very frustrated.

They were very oppressed and they wanted something done. So we're gonna talk about Thomas Müntzer and we'll see how Luther responded to all these people in a moment. Thomas Müntzer was a man born in Sulzburg in Harz Mountains in 1488 or 1489.

He received a good academic education and knew the classics and knew the Christian different writings. And in other words, he had a very good education. In 1519, he became the father confessor of a nunnery.

And so like he would be the one who heard the confessions of all the nuns. It was a high position. And it was about that time that he had become acquainted with Martin Luther.

He also became acquainted with a group of people called the Zickvow or Zickow Prophets. And these people were getting radical in this area. And they believed that the teachings of the Bible are secondary to the divine revelation that we receive.

Now, let me ask you. We believe that the Holy Spirit speaks to us, don't you? You believe that the Holy Spirit leads us and guides us. Where do you put that between the words of scripture and this inner feeling

that you have, this inner intuition that you have, this inner voice you have from God about things? Where do you put that? What has precedent to what? These early prophets said, the inner voice speaks louder than the literal word.

And so God could speak to you by divine revelation or divine things. And then you are supposed to act on that even greater than the word. Now, we probably wouldn't say that today.

Unfortunately, a lot of times we act that way today, don't we? Well, the Bible says this, but I feel, I don't think, those kind of things happen. And I believe we fall into this trap again and again. We're gonna see this when the Munzer debacle that happens that these people believe that God was speaking to them and telling them things.

Well, Thomas Munzer kind of got, excuse me, in the town of Munster. Let me get those things confused. Munster has nothing to do with Thomas Munzer except an ideology.

So Munzer, Thomas Munzer had this feeling of this inner voice and this spiritual, began to be sort of this spiritualist of believing that God could speak to them. He made a journey to Prague and Poland and where he drew up his Prague Manifesto. There he spoke to the nobles and spoke to the people in different ways and believed that he wanted to make up a new church.

He called it the Church of the Spirit or the Church of the Spirit of the Fear of God and really emphasized the Holy Spirit speaking particularly to him. And he believed that God does have special prophets that he pours out his revelations onto. And of course, he thought that he was one of those chief prophets.

He didn't get much of an audience there. So he finally came back to his area in East Germany there. Well, the two princes of Saxony now who are liking Luther's reforms and liking him were embarrassed by him.

And this is Frederick the Wise was one of them. And so they gave him a hearing. They said, okay, let's bring him in and hear what he has to say.

So he preached this famous sermon. Remember this great guy, Frederick the Wise and these other nobles, let's hear what he has to say. So he goes and stands before these kings and this is what he does.

He preached to them his famous Sermon on Daniel. In it, he claimed that the authorities were given the sword to eradicate the ungodly, but insisted that if they did not do their duty, the sword would be taken away from them. He quoted Daniel seven and given to the people.

So in other words, kings, this is your final warning. You either do something about the ungodliness that's going on here, the inequity, the things that are happening, or the people would do that. For the ungodly have no right to live except as the elect granted to them.

So he began to take these things further and further. But unrest in this area prompted Munster to flee that place and overnight over the walls and the different people, the popular going crazy and all these different things. And he finally arrived at Mühlhausen in Thuringia, which became actually a very big Anabaptist area and soon became preacher in the church there.

This city was to become a real misfortune to him for there he met another preacher and even greater revolutionary ideals. Soon the Mühlhausen city was overthrown. They took it like later they did with Munster.

The city was taken over and all these radicals had taken the town and said that they were gonna set up this place for the coming of Christ. Now, a lot of these early, very early Anabaptists and radical reformation people, now we're entering into what's called the radical reformation. A lot of these, excuse me, a lot of these really believe that Jesus Christ was coming.

And you really gotta cut him some slack. I mean, think about it. They finally had been revealed that the Pope was, they thought the Pope was the Antichrist and it did make sense when you read Revelation.

Luther had put those things together. That finally the scriptures were being found and to them it was kind of like, again, finding the Old Testament in the temple. And the Muslims were now coming to the church and coming up and invading all the way up into Austria, coming up and it seemed like, I mean, things were happening and a whole stage of world events were occurring.

And so these people really thought this is it. The end is happening. I mean, by 1527, to give you an idea, just riots of people ended up sacking Rome and completely taking it over.

I mean, things were in a chaotic state in this time. And so he thought, well, I'm the prophet. I'm going to do something about this.

At this time, he also met with the early Anabaptist, Hans Dink, who actually then later becomes one of the most in the early Anabaptists who were into the apocalyptic type of language. Hans Dink doesn't, we don't have records that he actually joined him, but at his final battle he was selling books there at least. So he was really, I don't know, it's kind of funny, but he was selling books at this battle.

I don't know, yeah. So he thought, a lot of people show up as a place to sell books. I don't know.

Maybe that's something about the Mennonite spirit there and there, you know, I don't know. So in February of 1525, Munster was back in Mühlhausen to which he, his rebel friend, had returned in December of 1524. At this point, Munster placed upon this rebellious peasant his last hope, the peasants, his last hope and chance of carrying out his apocalyptic program.

Between February and May of that year, it might be possible for Munster to return to the Mennonites. And he did. He returned to the Mennonites.

He wrote to the, from his little prison cell, or no, I guess he was out by now. He wrote to the kings and lords of that area. Any man, this is on page 18, bottom.

Any man against whom it can be proved that he is a maker of sedition is outside the law of God and the empire. So that the first who can slay him in doing right and well. So the first who can slay him is doing right and well.

For if a man is an open rebel, every man is his judge and executioner. Therefore let everyone who can smite, slay and stab secretly or openly, remembering that nothing can be more poisonous, hurtful and devilish than a rebel. A prince and a Lord must remember in this case that he is God's minister, that he sins greatly against God if he does not punish and protect.

If he can punish and does not, and does not, even though the punishment consists in the taking of life and the shedding of blood, then he is guilty of all the murder and all the evil which these fellows commit. Hear then, this is no time for sleeping, no place for patience or mercy. It is a time of the sword, not the day of

grace.

And just like the very words used for the Crusades, he says, the rulers have a good conscience and a just cause. Therefore, they can say to God with all assurance of heart, these peasants have deserved death many times over, therefore will I punish and smite as long as my heart beats. Thus it may be that one who kills in fighting or on the ruler's side may be a true martyr in the eyes of God.

Strange times these when the prince can win heaven with bloodshed better than other men with prayer. Therefore, dear Lord, stab, smite, slay, whoever you can. If you die in doing it well for you, a more blessed death can never be yours.

The crusade against the very peasants who cheered him on. So they took him up on it, as you can imagine. And as they took him up on it, a very fateful battle, one place after another, the peasants were being wiped out.

And the most tragic battles, the Battle of Frankenhausen, which followed after the fighting, they ended up not just leaving him there, but went on what they call a senseless massacre, which ended up killing thousands of people. It is thought that by the end, over 100,000 people died as peasants, one writing that I found during all this time. And so it was truly a lot of bloodshed in this time period.

Should Christians, Luther gave us some things to think of there. Should Christians do these types of things? Do we have causes? Do we enter in as kings and have victories like this in the name of God? Do we do evil, so to speak, so that good may come of it? Was Luther right, or was he wrong? Because at this point, he was either terribly right, as he said, or he was terribly wrong. And the spirit that he gave to the German nationalism is a spirit that I'm afraid has been a shadow over Germany for several centuries that followed him.

And it's a spirit in some of his teachings that I'm gonna think that we can see that even though he talked lots about the wonderful thing of salvation through faith in Christ, even a doctrine of salvation, if we don't come back and look at Christ, it's still not real. I'm afraid that's what he did. And so the reasoning, well, I'm saved because I have this mental understanding of faith.

It's not the reality of Christ, and it begins further and further off. And you begin to say ridiculous things that are far from the teachings of Jesus. And that's what he did.

I go there into some of these, the peasant war, just to give you a little bit from them. I'm just gonna kind of skip over these. I left you actually the 12 articles.

Now, building up to this, again, for years, the peasants were oppressed, and things were hard for them. Life was hard for them, and they didn't like the idea of being owned. So in other words, so if a king could even, or a lord could even say, well, I'm gonna trade these three families for that, and they were actually property to be owned.

They had to live there, and they still then had to have taxes, and things were oppressed on them further and further and further. And so, again, this happens over and over in history. The peasants finally say, enough, we're not doing this.

And that's what they did. And there was also, even the whole birth of Switzerland. Switzerland itself, and it comes kind of a difference in the spirit of Switzerland, still has a difference of what I think is true of

particularly Swiss Brethren Anabaptism, and Protestantism, even the whole idea of the Swiss way of life.

To them, life was shared in a village, the group of people that shared ideas, shared, they helped each other out with their possessions. They grew, and they knew each other, and they believed that you had kind of a center of your politics was local, was a local center. The Germans believed in having more of a hierarchy, more of a Holy Roman Empire, and they, so even when they call it the peasant revolts, it was a bit of a derogatory term.

A lot of them weren't peasants. Matter of fact, a good many of them were merchants, and workers, and things like that, who that whole class of people who were now making merchandise was hurting the feudal system, because they no longer needed to work on the ground. They could sell shoes, and actually do pretty well.

And so they were starting to rise up and be able to say, you know, we're not gonna be under these kings anymore. So this whole conflict between these people started to happen, and an unrest was there. So what do you do about it? And this is something that hits people who wanna put the teachings of Christ in a lot of ways.

And also, you would have to ask these questions. You think of the Central America in the 70s with the liberation theology. You know, our care for the poor, and our desire for the poor.

Do we get involved with revolutions? Do we get involved with these sort of revolutionary politics? I don't think we do, and I think it's a mistake. And I think that these early people who took this route was a huge mistake. But even some of the early Anabaptists were, early on, we can't prove it completely, but they were certainly in areas that seemed to have parts in this.

Some of the ones here I wrote, and I highlighted on page 11. Johannes Brotli, which we'll see becomes the pastor in Zolokon, we'll see this week. Wilhelm Rublin and Belsasar Hubmeier were people that were definitely involved in this peasant revolt before they were Anabaptists.

And so, eventually, these people got together. It wasn't just a mass of chaos. It was a revolution, a lot like American Revolution.

Enough, we're gonna do something. So they got together, and they wrote the 12 articles of the peasant revolt. Now, to pretend like this was a political thing, like Marx and Engels did, if you read these articles, we don't have time to read them right now, but if you read them, you'll see very plainly that they are filled with Reformation language.

It's the word of God that we will establish our communities over. The villages are ran by God's choosing, not by kings. We have the right, our people have the right to elect ourselves our own ministers who can only preach the word of God.

Lots of Luther's language was coming out, and they began to see these, and if you go through the 12 articles, you'll see it was the fruit of what the Reformation brought out. It said, here it is, and we're gonna do it, and we're gonna do it in real life. But, as we saw, it was very painfully knocked down.

So, I gave you the next few pages there on those 12 articles, yep. The peasants and the leaders of the peasants met together, and they got together, and they wrote out these 12 articles, and then they sent these to the lords and to the rulers of the area saying, we're not doing it your way anymore. They would

take over monasteries, and they would take over these castles and say, well, here's the way it is.

We're the people, you're just a few kings. You need us to fight your armies. We're not doing that.

We have the power, and this is the way it's gonna be. And, it was a time, it could have almost worked. It could have almost been a revolution like the French Revolution, but it didn't.

It got smashed down. And the later, earlier writings now come out, scholars selling out that even the areas that were most irritated by these people were some of the biggest places of Anabaptist revivals where people had responded, yep. What were the 12 of them? 12, the last one, the 12th article, which kinda concludes everything else, and the conclusion on page 15.

In the 12th place is a conclusion and final resolution that if any one or more of these articles here set forth should not be in agreement with the word of God, as we think they are, such article we will willingly receive from when it is proved really to be against the word of God by clear explanation of the scripture. And they go on with that idea. So, I mean, it was a Reformation revolution is what it was.

Don't call it anything else. It was obvious. When you read through these 12 articles, you'll see these weren't just a bunch of political guys.

They were guys that were awakened by the Reformation. Just on a word here, Andreas Karlstadt, you see on 15. He was the teacher there with Luther, actually was the guy who gave Luther his doctorate degree.

And so he went with Luther with all the different reforms. He became one of the leaders of what's called the Radical Reformation. And that's titled that way, that people went beyond Luther.

And while Luther was in prison, Karlstadt actually was the first to come into Wittenberg and to start offering communion in both elements, wine and the bread. He shouted, this is my body, when it was just whispered in Latin before that, and started to make those reforms even when Luther was still caught in that castle, and it frustrated Luther terribly. And he also said this, and this became a big difference with the Radical Reformers.

He said, Luther is right, we're saved by grace through faith, but that faith will necessarily work itself out in life. It will. Luther began to argue that it's the knowledge of this understanding of the atonement that it saves you, and whether you're a sinner or not, it doesn't really matter.

I'm gonna give you some quotes here to back that up. The Radical Reformers said no, it will work itself out in life. So when they would read John three, unless you are born again, you shall not inherit the kingdom of God, they saw the idea of born again not from something you just go and do, but a true transformed life of the Holy Spirit changing your life.

You are born again. You think differently, you act differently, you live differently, and there it is. I'm born again, not of man, not of the way the world thinks, but of God.

And this element of the Radical Reformation was something that greatly influenced, or greatly led into the Anabaptists, and this idea that faith, yes, we are saved by faith, but that faith must work itself out in reality. Luther wrote some big things against him. Another one I'll just mention, I gotta mention him, is Caspar Spankfeld.

And Spankfeld was also a Radical Reformer, never became an Anabaptist. Both Karlstadt and Spankfeld wrote against infant baptism, but never quite made the break and started to re-baptize adults. Spankfeld also came up with the whole idea that Jesus did not take Mary's flesh, but was created human in Mary.

He gave this to, he carried this on to other people and spread these teachings to Hoffman, to Mechler Hoffman, who then took that to Holland, and then that influenced Middle Simons, and we're gonna talk in particular about that when we get to Holland. But Spankfeld is the one, is attributed to this idea of the incarnation, and particularly this comes out in his fights with other Anabaptists who disagreed with him. The Swiss never accepted this.

The Swiss brother never accepted that view of the incarnation. The Swiss brother and the Hutterites never did. Now, just wrote against him, said he was terrible, and said you gotta take this back and took back over.

And Karlstadt then went and left the town and began teaching in different places and having little people around them, but never came to the popularity. He also sort of went with Thomas Munzer for a while, didn't go completely as far as Munzer did, but did work with him for a while, and of course, that put a bad stigma on Karlstadt's name. Spankfeld didn't do that.

Now, in this last few minutes, I would like to just bring up some of this idea then of Luther. Luther, again, as you can, I think he did some incredible things. But even a doctrine of salvation, even talking about saved by grace through faith, the words, where we're gonna see in this week the Anabaptists, early Anabaptists called these people who spoke these words scribes.

You write beautiful things, you speak beautiful things, but your life and the result of your teaching is terrible. Here's what Luther said about the Anabaptists. The Anabaptists set up a ministry and congregation of their own.

Key point, they're breaking away from the church to be a gathered of the faithful, which is also contrary to the command of God. For all this, it becomes clear that the secular authorities are bound to inflict corporal punishment, means to kill them, on the offenders. Also, when it is the case of only upholding some spiritual tenets, such as infant baptism, original sin, and unnecessary separation, then we conclude that the stubborn sectarians must be put to death.

He goes through, and even though he wrote this Bible, while he was in that castle, he wanted that Bible to go out with a commentary. Even though Luther said the Bible should be able to be easy to be read, and if you read it in its plain language, it should be easy to see. But he didn't trust you.

So he put a commentary before every book. To the book of Hebrews, he said, I think it's just, it's not completely a good book. It's scattered, it has some good nuggets, but some people messed it up, some scribes messed it up, so it shouldn't be taken completely literally.

And there's the quote I have there on page 18. To the book of James, we've heard that before. He said, this is an epistle of straw.

I can't believe we even call this the Bible. This is ridiculous. Obviously, this man speaks about works righteousness.

And that's a key point, because it shows that his understanding of salvation was something mental. And when James said, show me your faith by your works, ugh, Luther didn't like that. And so he called it an epistle of straw.

And I have the quotes down there. And it becomes something that, he says, I consider this not a writing of any apostle. My reasons are following.

First, flatly against St. Paul and all the rest of scripture, it ascribes righteousness to works and says that Abraham was justified by works and that he offered his son Isaac. It does not say that. It says that these are fruits of his faith, which is the difference that Luther, I don't believe, was able to understand.

And then, his quotes, he turned to the last page, and I'm gonna end with his quotes on the Jews. Last page, page 20. This is the way, and I do think that he was being, he would be one who would speak suppuratives, speak to the extreme, but nevertheless, even though I think he was speaking to the extreme here to his friend Melancthon, that nevertheless, I think it shows a problem in his theology.

He says in this letter, if you preach of mercy, do not preach an imaginary, but a true mercy. If the mercy is true, you must therefore bear the true, not an imaginary sin. God does not save those who are only imaginary sinners.

Be a sinner and let your sins be strong, where we hear the word sin boldly. But let your trust in Christ be stronger and rejoice in Christ, who is the victor over sin, death, and the world. We will commit sin while we are here, for this life is not a place where justice resides.

We, however, says Peter, are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth where justice will reign. Salvation is going to heaven. It suffices, I underline, it's enough, watch this.

It suffices that through God's glory, we have recognized the lamb. It's enough that you understand the lamb who takes away the sins of the world. So he says it suffices that you recognize the atonement, that the lamb that takes away the sin of the world.

No sin can separate us from him, even if we were to kill and commit adultery thousands of times each day. Do you think such an exalted lamb paid a small price for a meager sacrifice for our sins? Pray hard, for you're quite a sinner. Way off.

What did Jesus say? Why do you call me Lord and not do the things that I say? You call me Lord, Lord, and this plain thing, we can't get to Christ by just doing it on the outward. It must be by faith, by grace through faith. It's a beautiful thing, but if it's not looking like Jesus, it causes destruction.

And then let me finish with these quotes because I think that this nationalism, it's in the church today, it's what American evangelical Christianity is vexed with, and I'm afraid it can hurt the church and it hurts the Mennonite and Anabaptist world in any way. I have here the belt buckle of Hitler. It says Gott mit uns.

What does that mean? God with us. Where did he get that idea? Here was Luther's words about the Jews. In 1543, Luther penned a work entitled The Jews and Their Lives.

It was like just a few years before his death. He addressed the work to the German princes, urging them to take violent measures against the Jews. He wrote, what shall we Christians do with the rejected and condemned people, the Jews? We dare not tolerate their conduct.

Now that we are aware of their lying and blasphemy, if we do, we become sharers in their lies, cursing and blasphemy. I shall give you my sincere advice. First, set fire to their synagogues or their schools and bury in cover with dirt whatever will not burn so that no man will ever see a stone or cinder of them.

This is to be done in honor of our Lord and Christendom so that God may see that we are Christians. Second, I advise that the houses also be razed and destroyed. This will bring home to them the fact that they are not masters in our country as they boast.

Third, I advise that all their prayer books and the pneumatic writings be taken from them. Fourth, I advise that their rabbis be forbidden to teach on pain of loss of life and limb. Fifth, I advise that safe conduct on the highways be abolished completely for the Jews, for they have no business in the countryside since they are not lords, officials, tradesmen or the like.

Let them stay at home, for you must not and cannot protect them unless you wish to be participants in their abominations in the sight of God. Sixth, I advise that charging interest or prohibiting to them and that all cash and treasure of silver or gold be taken from them and put aside for safekeeping through usury. They have stolen and robbed from us all they possess.

Seventh, I recommend putting a flail, an ax, a hoe, a spade, a distaff or a spindle into the hand of the young strong Jews and Jewesses and letting them earn their bread in the sweat of their brow, for it is not fitting that they should let us accursed Gentiles toil in the sweat of our faces while they, the holy people, idle away their time behind the stoves, feasting and passing gas. And on the top of all, boasting blasphemy of their lordship over the Christians by means of our sweat, no, we should toss out these lazy rogues into the seats of their pants. Finally, let us emulate the common sense of other nations such as France, Spain and Bohemia and eject them forever out of our country.

Somewhere, something went wrong. We must come back every single time. Is what Jesus Christ had given to us, is the church representing what Christ wanted it to be? That's not what Christ wanted to establish.

God help us that we can put his words into practice. Let's pray. Dear heavenly father, again, we don't wanna say these words in condemnation of Luther or judgment of any of these.

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