

1 **THE FREEDOM OF A CHRISTIAN 1520**

Session 2
Synopsis of the Treatise
Theological and Psychological Background

2 **APPENDIX 4: SYNOPSIS OF "THE FREEDOM OF A CHRISTIAN" ELCA STUDY GUIDE**

- Martin Luther: *Freedom* "contains a summary of the whole Christian life.
- Faith is not something people can learn from books, cannot be acquired through practice or rehearsal like a skill or virtue.
- Faith is learned through tribulations.

3 **APPENDIX 4: SYNOPSIS OF "THE FREEDOM OF A CHRISTIAN" ELCA STUDY GUIDE (CONT)**

- Luther's love of paradox, in this case:
 - The Christian is completely free lord of all, subject to none.
 - The Christian is a completely dutiful servant of all, subject to all (*Freedom*, #10)

4 **APPENDIX 4: SYNOPSIS OF "THE FREEDOM OF A CHRISTIAN" ELCA STUDY GUIDE (CONT)**

- Another paradox: human beings consist of a spiritual nature and a bodily nature (*Freedom*, #11)
- Both natures represent the entire person and should not be confused with subordinate parts of the human being.
- Word of God has the power to touch human beings deep in their interior, spiritual nature.

5 **APPENDIX 4: SYNOPSIS OF "THE FREEDOM OF A CHRISTIAN" ELCA STUDY GUIDE (CONT)**

- Faith, therefore, is not about uncritical adherence to dogma or ritual.
- Faith is the union of the soul with the one who has given himself up in sacrificial love.
- It is this union that brings about our freedom (#15)

6 **APPENDIX 4: SYNOPSIS OF "THE FREEDOM OF A CHRISTIAN" ELCA STUDY GUIDE (CONT)**

- Three powers of faith:
 1. Allows a believer to be "swallowed up by the promises of God"
 2. Honors the one in whom it trusts with the most reverent and highest regard.
 3. It unites the believer with Christ.
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7 **APPENDIX 4: SYNOPSIS OF "THE FREEDOM OF A CHRISTIAN" ELCA STUDY GUIDE (CONT)**

- From such union, the believer also receives from Christ the responsibility of royalty ("kingship") and of the priesthood
- These things take place in the interior, spiritual nature of the believer, and only partially and imperfectly

8 **APPENDIX 4: SYNOPSIS OF "THE FREEDOM OF A CHRISTIAN" ELCA STUDY GUIDE (CONT)**

- Good works are not good or bad in themselves.
- Christians must do good works because their neighbors need them: "Indeed, more to the point, each person lives only for others and not for himself or herself." (#27)
- It is also Christian to care for the body.

9 **APPENDIX 4: SYNOPSIS OF "THE FREEDOM OF A CHRISTIAN" ELCA STUDY GUIDE (CONT)**

- In conclusion, the Christian is made free by faith, but true faith always bears fruits of genuine love.
- Luther: "Therefore, I will give myself as a kind of Christ to my neighbor, just as Christ offered

himself to me." (#29)

10 **SYNOPSIS (TIMOTHY J. WENGERT)**

- Luther was a child of the Renaissance.
- In the case of *Freedom* we can see the basic outline of his argument as it followed the rhetorical rules and conventions of his day.
- Cicero (106-43 BCE) and Quintilian (c 35-100) influence on rhetorical speeches

11 **SYNOPSIS (TIMOTHY J. WENGERT): EXORDIUM (1 OF 6)**

- Exordium (introduction or overview)
- Luther begins by talking about the nature of faith.
- Defined not as a virtue but as an experience of struggle and mercy

12 **SYNOPSIS (TIMOTHY J. WENGERT): THEMES AND/OR DIVISION OF THE TRACT (2 OF 6)**

- Overall theme was faith, but more specifically faith in the context of Christian freedom and servitude (divide into 2)
- 1st division: freedom of a Christian
- 2nd division: Christian servitude

13 **SYNOPSIS (TIMOTHY J. WENGERT): EXPOSITION OF THE THEME OR NARRATIO (3 OF 6)**

- Exposition of the theme, or the narration was the third rhetorical part of a speech.
- In Luther's exposition, the reader discovers Luther's actual subject: NOT to divide freedom and servitude but to explain how, given their relation to faith and their use by Paul, they cohere.

14 **SYNOPSIS (TIMOTHY J. WENGERT): CONFIRMATION OR PROOF OF THE THEME (4 OF 6)**

- There are several components to Luther's attempts to prove his claim that freedom and servitude cohere.
- Inner and outer human being
- 3 fruits of faith
- Joyous exchange between human sin and Christ's righteousness.
- Redefine priesthood and kingship

15 **SYNOPSIS (TIMOTHY J. WENGERT): ANSWER TO OBJECTIONS TO THE THEME (5 OF 6)**

- 1 • Luther cleverly uses his introduction of the 2nd theme (servitude) as a way to answer objections to his 1st theme (confutation—derision)
 - People would be lawless
 - License to sin
 - Series of examples from Scriptures and experience
- 2 • Running through this section of a criticism of Aristotelian ethics which dominated late medieval thinking: a person becomes virtuous (or righteous) by doing virtuous acts.
 - Faith FREELY produces good works and serves the neighbor.

16 **SYNOPSIS (TIMOTHY J. WENGERT): PERORATION OR CONCLUSION (6 OF 6)**

- Summary conclusion: should conclude the argument and appeal to the reader or listener
- Live in Christ through faith and their neighbors through love.

17 **SYNOPSIS (TIMOTHY J. WENGERT): APPENDIX**

- Luther added a lengthy appendix to address the misunderstanding that he is really supporting license and an abandonment of all good order among Christian.

- His basic advice: don't change ceremonies willy nilly.

18 **THEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- Document of reconciliation; Luther had not desire to divide the church or start a new denomination
- "Free the gospel so that it could continue to free humanity."
- Misappropriation of "good works"
- Christians must do good works, not to appease God or to earn merit in heaven but because our neighbors need them.
- Luther in the line of Isaiah the prophet.

19 **THEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND (CONT)**

- Theology should be connected to our daily life and not just an intellectual, scholarly exercise
- As said before, faith not something to be learned from books, nor a matter of accepting certain beliefs, but "from the debris of all pain and suffering, the flower of faith is born when touched by the light of the gospel."
- "Faith is not really faith until it is the only thing that sustains you."

20 **THEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND (CONT): LUTHER'S PARADOXES**

- Definition of paradox
- Saints and sinners at the same time
- God is absolutely hidden from us and yet fully revealed in the cross of Jesus Christ
- Humans are completely spiritual and completely embodied.
- Law and gospel and "cheap grace"
- Free and servants (*Freedom*)

21 **PSYCHOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- Luther was not an optimist when it came to people's capacity to be good and righteous.
- Two natures (not two parts, or a body/soul dualism"
- Exterior (how we relate to others) vs. interior (what's really going on inside)

22 **FOR NEXT WEEK: LUTHER'S EPISTLE TO LEO X, SUPREME PONTIFF**

- 1 • Paragraphs 1 – 17
- Pages 474 through 487