

“Reformation 500th Anniversary Bible Study”

Lesson 1 “GRACE ALONE” 9-17-17

Trinity Lutheran Church Norman, OK. Pastor David Nehrenz

A 6 Week Study –

From Sept. 17 to Oct. 22 –**Grace, Christ, Faith, Scripture, Justification, Sacraments**
along with brief clips from LCMS President Rev. Matt Harrison’s walking tour of Luther sites.

The Scripture Texts:

John 1:14-17

Romans 1:1-7

Romans 3:21-28

Romans 5:1,2

2 Cor 13:14;

Eph 2:4-10

2 Tim 1:8-11

Titus 2:11-14

Titus 3:4-7

Heb 4:16

1 Pet 5:6-11

Rev 22:21

The Definition of Grace:

Χάρις = charis = grace

“Good will, loving-kindness, favor, undeserved love.

The merciful kindness by which God, exerting his holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ, grants them salvation, keeps, strengthens, increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection, and kindles them to the exercise of the Christian virtues”

Grace alone:

Joel D. Otto

Grace is one of those big, beautiful Bible words. As with all big, beautiful Bible words, while it is an immensely comforting concept, it has also been misunderstood and misapplied throughout history. Roman Catholicism has traditionally taught that grace is a quality that God injects into people so that they can obey his will and earn his blessings. Others try to limit the power of grace, teaching that grace can only get a person so far; we have to apply ourselves to doing acts of love or making the right decision for Jesus to finish the job.

Grace, however, is a quality in God. In fact, it defines who the true God is and what he does. Throughout the Old Testament, when God’s characteristics are listed, grace is usually near the top of the list. For example, when God revealed himself to Moses on Mount Sinai, he declared, “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness” (Exodus 34:6). The standard catechism definition of grace is “God’s undeserved love.”

Yet grace is deeper than that. It is the love that moves God to act for those who cannot act for themselves and need his loving action. God acts in grace simply because God wants to act in grace. That is who God is and what God does. Martin Luther defined grace this way: “Grace means the favor by which God accepts us, forgiving sins and justifying freely through Christ” (Luther’s Works Vol. 12, p. 376).

True Lutherans confess that it is by grace alone that we have been rescued from the curse and condemnation of sin (Romans 3:23,24). It is by grace alone that we have been given new life as one of God’s children (Ephesians 2:4,5). It is by grace alone that we have been given the gift of eternal life (John 3:16).

The Formula of Concord states this clearly and precisely. “We unanimously believe, teach, and confess the following about the righteousness of faith before God. . . . A poor sinful person is justified before God, that is, absolved and declared free and exempt from all his sins and from the sentence of well-deserved condemnation, and is adopted into sonship and inheritance of eternal life, without any merit or worth of his own. This happens without any preceding, present, or subsequent works, out of pure grace, because of the sole merit, complete obedience, bitter suffering, death, and resurrection of our Lord Christ alone” (III:9).

This is what makes grace such a big, beautiful, comforting Bible word. Our forgiveness, our right standing before God, and our eternal home in heaven are certain and secure entirely “out of pure grace.” That pure grace is centered in Jesus’ completed work for us. Grace alone means that our salvation, from beginning to end, is accomplished. True Lutherans understand this, proclaim it, confess it, and find comfort and confidence in grace alone.”

<https://wels.net/what-it-means-to-be-truly-lutheran-grace-alone/>

