

“Reformation 500th Anniversary Bible Study”

Lesson 3 “FAITH ALONE” 10-1-17

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:

Matt 8:9-13

Matt 9:2,29,30

Matt 15:28

Mark 11:22-24

Luke 7:48-50

Acts 3:16

Acts 26:15-18

Rom 1:17

Rom 3:21-31

Rom 5:1,2

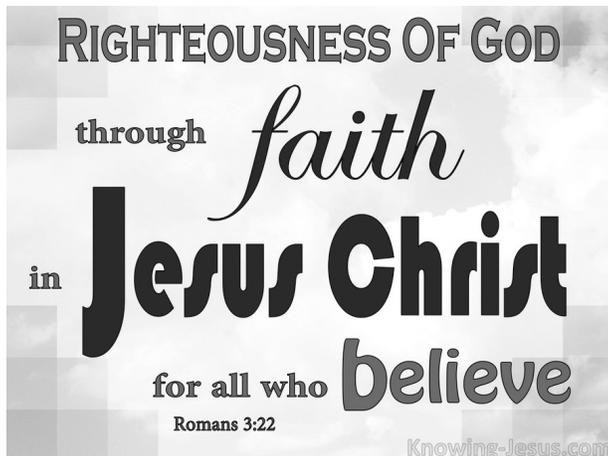
Rom 10:17

2 Cor 5:6-9

Gal 2:16

Gal 3:7-14

Eph 2:8-10



1 Tim 1:5

2 Tim 3:14-17

Heb 10:22

Heb ch. 11

James 2:17-26

1 Pet 1:5-9

Jude 1:20

Rev 14:12

The Definition of Faith:

Πίστις (Greek) = pistis = faith

“The conviction of the truth, belief; In the NT of a conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it relating to God. The conviction that God exists and is the creator and ruler of all things, the provider and bestower of eternal salvation through Christ. Relating to Christ it is a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through whom we obtain eternal salvation in the kingdom of God.”

WHAT IS JUSTIFYING FAITH? APOLOGY OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION ART. 4

⁴⁸ Our opponents imagine that faith is only historical knowledge and teach that it can exist with mortal sin. And so they say nothing about faith by which, as Paul says so often, men are justified, because those who are accounted righteous before God do not live in mortal sin. The faith that justifies, however, is no mere historical knowledge, but the firm acceptance of God's offer promising forgiveness of sins and justification. To avoid the impression that it is merely knowledge, we add that to have faith means to want and to accept the promised offer of forgiveness of sins and justification.

⁴⁹ It is easy to determine the difference between this faith and the righteousness of the law. Faith is that worship which receives God's offered blessing; the righteousness of the law is that worship which offers God our own merits. It is by faith that God wants to be worshiped, namely, that we receive from him what he promises and offers.

⁵⁰ Paul clearly shows that faith does not simply mean historical knowledge but is a firm acceptance of the promise (Rom. 4:16): "That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may be guaranteed." For he says that only faith can accept the promise. He therefore correlates and connects promise and faith.

⁵¹ It will be easy to determine what faith is if we pay attention to the article of the Creed on the forgiveness of sins. So it is not enough to believe that Christ was born, suffered, and was raised unless we add this article, the purpose of the history, "the forgiveness of sins." The rest must be integrated with this article, namely, that for Christ's sake and not because of our own merits the forgiveness of sins is bestowed upon us.

⁵² For why did Christ have to be offered for our sins if our merits make satisfaction for them?

⁵³ In speaking of justifying faith, therefore, we must remember that these three elements always belong together: the promise itself, the fact that the promise is free, and the merits of Christ as the price and propitiation. The promise is accepted by faith; the fact that it is free excludes our merits and shows that the blessing is offered only by mercy; the merits of Christ are the price because there must be a certain propitiation for our sins.

⁵⁴ Scripture contains many pleas for mercy, and the holy Fathers often say that we are saved by mercy.

⁵⁵ And so at every mention of mercy we must remember that this requires faith, which accepts the promise of mercy. Similarly, at every mention of faith we are also thinking of its object, the promised mercy.

⁵⁶ For faith does not justify or save because it is a good work in itself, but only because it accepts the promised mercy.

⁵⁷ This service and worship is especially praised throughout the prophets and the Psalms. Even though the law does not teach the free forgiveness of sins, the patriarchs knew the promise of the Christ, that for his sake God intended to forgive sins. As they understood that the Christ would be the price for our sins, they knew that our works could not pay so high a price. Therefore they received free mercy and the forgiveness of sins by faith, just as the saints in the New Testament.

⁵⁸ The frequent references to mercy and faith in the Psalms and the prophets belong here; for example, "If thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, Lord, who shall stand?" (Ps. 130:3). Here the psalmist confesses his sins, but he does not lay claim to any merit of his own. He adds, "There is forgiveness with thee" (v. 4). Here he comforts himself with his trust in God's mercy. He quotes the promise: "My soul waits for his word, my soul hopes in the Lord," that is, because thou has promised the forgiveness of sins I am sustained by thy promise.

⁵⁹ Therefore the patriarchs, too, were justified not by the law but by the promise and faith. It is strange that our opponents make so little of faith when they see it praised everywhere as the foremost kind of worship, as in Ps. 50:15: "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me."

⁶⁰ This is how God wants to be known and worshiped, that we accept his blessings and receive them because of his mercy rather than because of our own merits. This is the greatest consolation in all afflictions, and our opponents take it away when they despise and disparage faith and teach men to deal with God only by works and merits.¹

¹ Tappert, T. G. (Ed.). (1959). *The Book of Concord the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. (pp. 113–115). Philadelphia: Mühlenberg Press.