

BY FAITH ALONE

Romans 1:16-17

Awareness

Before listening, reflect:

- What is faith? How does faith relate to salvation?
- Do you ever feel guilty or wonder if you're truly forgiven? What causes you to feel this way?

Unless we are vigilant, small lies can creep in and pervert our faith and practice. That's exactly what Martin Luther encountered with the Church of his day and it led him to post his now famous 95 Theses on the door of Castle Church in Wittenburg, Germany. The Church of his time had not outright declared that a person's works saved them or that donating enough money to the Church could get a person to heaven, but that's exactly where the logic behind their practices led. Join us to as we study the passage in Romans that relieved Martin Luther of his anguish and convinced him it was pertinent to challenge the misleading practices of the Church so that all believers could know the great truth of the gospel: the only way we receive salvation is through our faith in Jesus Christ, which is itself a gift from God.

Listen: [By Faith Alone](#)

Reflection

After listening, consider:

- For Luther, the knowledge that his salvation came through faith and was not based on his works was transformational. Read the following quote from Martin Luther: *"This is that mystery which is rich in divine grace to sinners: wherein by a wonderful exchange our sins are no longer ours but Christ's, and the righteousness of Christ not Christ's but ours. He has emptied himself of his righteousness that he might clothe us with it and fill us with it; and he has taken our evils upon himself that he might deliver us from them"* (Werke, 608). Do you ever think of God's grace as an exchange of his righteousness for our sin? What thoughts or emotions does this description of grace stir in you?
- Contemplate how faith relates to and sustains your relationship with God. What does it mean that God has freely given you the gift of faith? How often do you thank him for this gift and it's saving power?
- Do you think the church's current attitude toward sinners and repentance reflects God's attitude? Or do you think it reflects works righteousness or an expectation that we must do something first to receive forgiveness? If so, where do you think the misunderstanding lies in the Church and what might need to change?
- In segment 2, host Dave Bast discusses a question and answer from the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), a document first used in 1563 as a teaching tool in German churches to help Reformed believers understand the biblical basis for their beliefs. Read and consider the following question and answer from the Heidelberg Catechism:

[Q & A 61](#)

Q. Why do you say that
through faith alone
you are righteous?

A. Not because I please God
by the worthiness of my faith.
It is because only Christ's satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness
make me righteous before God,¹
and because I can accept this righteousness and make it mine
in no other way
than through faith.²

¹ [1 Cor. 1:30-31](#)

² [Rom. 10:10](#); [1 John 5:10-12](#)

Why are documents and statements like this useful for keeping our faith in alignment with what scripture teaches? What are some of their drawbacks?

Related Passages

- **Habakkuk 2:4**
- **Galatians 2:15-21**
- **Romans 3:21-28**
- **Philippians 3:8-11**

Conclusion

Spend some time evaluating your faith. Think about what your daily words and actions communicate about what you believe. Do your words and actions reflect a belief in salvation through faith alone or might you be relying on something in addition to faith? Do you need to ask God for the gift of faith or to strengthen or grow your faith? Say a prayer of thankfulness for God's good and free gift of faith.

<https://groundworkonline.com/episodes/by-faith-alone>

Printed on April 18, 2024