

God Reimagined: The Biblical Foundation of Luther's Reformation
Living the Message 2023-2024
October 2024 Study Guide for Participants and Facilitators

October: *The God You Didn't Expect: Justification by Faith* with Pastor Lose
[Click here to watch the video.](#)

Opening Prayer

Dear God, we gather together with questions, hope, and dreams. Some of these we can name; some are hard to put into words. But we trust you know our needs, and will use this time of study and conversations to help meet them. Bless our time together as we listen to and learn from each other, you servant Martin Luther, and your word, that we may grow in our relationship with you and our relationships with each other. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Focus Statement

The heart of Martin Luther's theology is that God accepts us, loves us, forgives us as a free gift of grace. This conviction is often summarized by saying that we are "justified by grace through faith" and promises that there is nothing we have to do to earn God's love and nothing we can do that would forfeit God's love. This promise both frees us *from* worrying about our relationship with God and frees us *for* joyful service of our neighbor and world.

Questions

1. What was one of your takeaways from Pastor Lose's presentation? A first thought or question?
2. Before taking this class, did you have much of an idea of what Martin Luther's concern was? That is, did you know he worried about whether God was merciful? Does that concern resonate with you? Do you worry about whether God is primarily loving or judging, merciful or judgmental? What difference does it make hearing about Luther's discovery that God always comes to us in love?
3. What are the ways in which we try to justify ourselves today? If not by works and to earn God's grace, then how and toward what end?

4. What do you think of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's assessment that "self-justification and judging go together, just as justification by grace and serving others goes together"? Where have you seen insecurity lead to judgment, in your own life and in the world? Where have you experienced the grace of God's promise to justify you as a gift set you free to serve those around you?
5. We may share Luther's concern – is God merciful? – as our primary question or we may not. If not, what questions do we bring, what needs do we have, and how does the loving, gracious God Luther discovers help us address these?
6. From the parable Pastor Lose read (Luke 18:10-14), do you sometimes identify with the Tax Collector, the Pharisee... or even Aaron Rodgers sometimes?

Deeper Dive with Pastor Ruud on Romans 3:21-26

1. What do you notice from this scripture? What stands out to you?
2. What is the "righteousness of God" that Paul says is "apart from law"? That is, how does God justify us and declare us as acceptable and beloved?
3. How does God "show his righteousness" by forgiving us? To put it another way, how is God's essential character revealed by forgiving us?

Closing Prayer

Dear God, you come among us to offer us your grace, love, acceptance, and forgiveness as free gifts. Yet sometimes this is hard for us to believe and accept. Move our hearts, as you moved the heart of our brother Martin Luther, to see in Jesus the sign and promise of your unconditional grace. Guide us in our reading, listening, and speaking, so that when we hear and discuss Martin's insight about your grace, we might realize anew just how much you love us. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Next Month

God's Two Words: Law & Gospel with Pastor Ruud

Tuesday, November 7, 6:30-7:30pm at the **West Campus Rehearsal Hall**

If you have any questions, please contact Katie Stevenson, Coordinator of Adult Education:
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