

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

December: An Ambidextrous God: Two Kingdoms with Pastor Lose

[Click here to watch the video.](https://vimeo.com/889628217) Or <https://vimeo.com/889628217>

Opening Prayer

Dear God, bless each one who comes to this study. Open our ears, hearts, and minds so that we may come to know you more deeply through studying about the life and theology of your servant, Martin. In Jesus name, Amen.

Focus Statement

Martin Luther believed that God was involved in all aspects of our lives, in what we might call the sacred dimensions—where we normally expect God to be involved—as well as in what we might call the secular dimensions of government, the family, and institutions. Luther's "ambidextrous God" works through the "left hand" of government and family and the "right hand" of the church to create, support, and promote the best possible lives for all of God's people.

Questions

1. What was one of your takeaways from Pastor Lose's presentation? A first thought or question?
2. What is your reaction to Luther's belief that God is at work in the world through institutions?
3. Think about or list and discuss which institutions it is easy to see God at work... and which institutions it is harder to see God at work. What do the two lists have in common? What separates them? Do some appear on both lists? Why?
4. How does Luther's theology help you imagine where God is at work in the world and how you might participate in that work? What are its limitations?
5. What is the church's role in both supporting and critiquing government and our social institutions? How can it do this effectively, without alienating some people or overstepping its authority?

Deeper Dive with Pastor Ruud

Read and discuss Romans 13:1-10:

13Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. ²Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgement. ³For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval; ⁴for it is God's servant for your good. But if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer. ⁵Therefore one must be subject, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience. ⁶For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, busy with this very thing. ⁷Pay to all what is due to them—taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honour to whom honour is due.

8 Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet'; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' ¹⁰Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

1. What stands out to you or makes an impression as you read the passage from Romans? What seems to be at stake for Paul in his instructions to “be subject to the governing authorities” (13:1)?
2. Should we pray for our leaders regularly? Why? Must we agree with our political leaders in order to pray for them or “be subject” to them?

Closing Prayer

Dear God, you desire only good for all of your children and are grieved when we hurt ourselves and each other through sin. Help us grow in our appreciation of just how much you love us and how you work through the institutions of our lives to promote our well-being and help us take care of each other. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Next Month

Called for Good: Vocation with Pastor Ruud

Tuesday, January 2, 6:30-7:30pm at the Mpls Campus in Room 207

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