

God Reimagined: The Biblical Foundation of Luther's Reformation
Living the Message 2023-2024
February 2024 Study Guide

February: *God Hidden and Revealed:* Theology of the Cross with Pastor Lose
[Click here to watch the video.](#) Or vimeo.com/905374976

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

Luther believed God is “predictably unpredictable,” regularly showing up where we least expect God to be—in the anguish of the cross and in the ordinary, even mundane elements of water, bread, and wine of the sacraments—in order to overturn our preconceived notions of a God of power, and surprise us with the love, mercy, and grace of the God we see revealed in Jesus Christ.

Questions

1. What was one of your takeaways from Pastor Lose's presentation? A first thought or question?
2. Luther reportedly once responded to a question about what God looks like by saying, “When I think of God, I think of a man hanging on a tree.” How does the cross shape your sense of who God is, what God does, and how God regards us?
3. When difference does it make to call the cross a message, rather than a mechanism?
4. How is God “hidden” in nature? Where is it easy to see God present in nature and our lives in the world? Where is it difficult? How is God revealed in Jesus and in the promises of the sacraments? What difference does it make when you think of the sacraments revealing not just God, but the God who is completely “for you”?
5. Read through 1 CORINTHIANS 1:18—2:2, ROMANS 8:14-16
 - a. How do you now understand Paul when he says that the message of the cross is “foolishness” and a “stumbling block”? How does the cross “trip us up”?
 - b. The cross, as an instrument of torture, humiliation, and execution, was about the last way anyone would have expected God to work for the salvation of the

world. What does this “foolish” choice tell us about God? What does it tell us about us?

- c. What does it mean to you to be an “heir of God and co-heir with Christ?” What are we inheriting? How might we describe this to someone else? What would it be like to imagine that in Baptism God declares us to be “heirs and co-heirs”? How might we emphasize that in our baptismal service?

Deeper Dive with Pastor Ruud

Matthew 5:1-10 *The Beatitudes*

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

‘Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

‘Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

‘Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

‘Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

‘Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

‘Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

How does the theology of the cross shine through the Beatitudes?

Where has God met you in your weakness... in your lowliness... in your vulnerability?

Closing Prayer

Dear God, we are often tempted to think of you in terms of the world and in terms we can understand—power, might, justice, judgment. But rather than come in strength you came in weakness, and rather than come in power you came in vulnerability, in order to reveal to us the depth of your love. Surprise us once again. Amen.

Next Month

Visible Words: Sacraments with Pastor Ruud

Tuesday, March 5, 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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