

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

April – *Semper Simul*: Sinner & Saint with Pastor Lose

[Click here to watch the video.](#) Or vimeo.com/920589355

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

One of the hallmarks of Luther's theology is his realism. That is, he takes both the human condition and God's response to our condition very seriously. When it comes to humanity, he knows that we are capable of wonderful things and awful things, that at times we excel and grow while at others we disappoint. Yet God loves and accepts us anyway and entirely. But – and here is where Luther is most realistic – Luther never imagines that somehow becoming a Christian changes who we fundamentally are as human beings. We continue to be fallen sinners. But we are now forgiven sinners. This belief that we continue to be 100% fallen and sinful and 100% forgiven and redeemed is captured in the Latin expression *simul iustus et peccator* -- “simultaneously justified (forgiven) and sinful.” Luther himself, and most unfortunately, is a powerful example of his own theology as in addition to his tremendous legacy of emphasizing God's grace, advocating for the sanctity of all callings (not just “religious” ones), and more, he also has a legacy of harsh, even hateful writings about his Jewish neighbors. These are worth putting into context to understand them better, but nothing excuses language and writings that deserve to be condemned. We are therefore called not only to condemn his worst statements, but also to learn from them that we remain always dependent on God's grace and are called to witness to the love we have experienced in Christ, look for God at work among all people, and leave ultimate responsibility for salvation to God.

Questions

1. What was one of your takeaways from the presentation? A new thought or idea?
2. Luther's theology is that our worthiness is rooted not in what we *do*, but rather in who we *are*: God's children. How does this help you to look at things more realistically than a theology that measures one's embrace of the faith based on progress and improvement?

3. *Simultaneously justified and sinner*: when we realize we aren't constantly improving but are nevertheless still beloved of God, how does this help us understand, cope with, and get the most out of our lives in the world?
4. Were Luther's writings about our Jewish neighbors new to you? In light of this month's topic, does it help to know Luther was a living example of his own theology: we are all sinner and saint?
5. What would be your "elevator speech" (a pitch in the time it takes you to ride an elevator) about what you find most helpful in Luther's theology? What are some highlights that have helped you grow in your faith?

Deeper Dive – Romans 7:7-15

Background: Paul is explaining his theology to a church he did not found. He wants to explain a) why the law (Mosaic law, but law in general) matters, but b) why it doesn't save. And he's wrestling with the peculiar, even paradoxical reality that the presence of the law seems to draw out or amplify our sin. "Don't do it!" And suddenly we want to do it! "The good I would I do not. The evil I would not, that is what I do!" Every one of us has had this experience!

Read [Romans 7:7-15](#)

Does Paul's experience and assertion resonate with your experience of life? How does it make you feel? Sad, honest, hopeful?

Closing Prayer

Dear God, none of us is perfect, and when we let down others, or are ourselves let down by others, it can be difficult, even painful. Let us recognize that we all fall short and all are in need of your grace, which you give us freely. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Next Month – Final Session of the Series

Walls Optional: The Church with Pastor Lose

Tuesday, May 7, 6:30-7:30pm at the Mpls Campus, Room 207

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