

Theme: The Gospel tells us we are accepted before God because of Christ's righteousness and atoning work alone, apart from any works or merits of our own, and that His righteousness is received by faith alone, apart from any efforts on our part.

I. Intro - The Reformation Begins and Expands

- A. October 31, 1517 - Luther 95 theses; just discussion
- B. The ideas become gradually clearer - 5 sola's
- C. It becomes clear to alter one is to shatter all
- D. The central principle became justification by faith alone
- E. What is justification? How is faith involved? Works?

II. The Nexus of Salvation

- A. Salvation is by grace alone - we stand in grace
Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have gained access by faith **into this grace in which we now stand**. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Romans 5:1-2
 - 1. Salvation is by grace alone - not grace plus our efforts
 - 2. Grace is God's gracious kindness to us and is the foundation for salvation
- B. God's grace is offered to us in Christ alone
Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, **we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have gained access** by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Romans 5:1-2

- 1. Our peace with God and our access to grace are through Christ alone
 - 2. God's grace is offered to us in Christ alone
 - 3. We do not get access to God based on the works or merits of anyone other than Jesus - not our works, nor those of saints who have gone before
- C. We receive Christ's work by faith
Therefore, since **we have been justified through faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have **gained access by faith** into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Romans 5:1-2
 - 1. We are justified through faith; gain access by faith
 - 2. Faith is not the ground of our salvation; that is God's grace given to us in Christ
 - 3. Faith is the instrument by which we receive God's grace offered to us through the work of Christ
 - D. Medieval teaching about grace, Christ, justification, faith
 - 1. Grace was a substance infused into us to help us contribute to our salvation - grace was necessary but not sufficient
 - 2. Christ had merits to give us, but saints and Mary also had merits to give us - not Christ alone
 - 3. Justification was a process where we actually became righteous, and our good works were part of our being accepted by God.
 - 4. Faith was necessary - but it was not sufficient apart from our own good works

5. Trent - justification by faith alone is anathema!

III. Understanding Justification By Faith Alone

A. Justification - declared righteous

Therefore, since **we have been justified** through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, Romans 5:1

1. Justification - a legal term - declared righteous
2. Justification - a one time declaration by God (aorist to speak of past action, not present or future tense)
3. Justified in the past, peace in the present
4. Question 38: What is justification? - Justification is the gracious act of God in which He declares that we are totally righteous, as if we had never sinned and as if we had positively obeyed all of God's law perfectly.
 - a. Justification - God declares we are totally righteous
 - b. Just as if we had never sinned
 - c. Just as if we had positively obeyed God's law perfectly

B. Justification - Christ's righteousness credited to us

What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ⁹ and be found in him, **not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.** Philippians 3:8–9

1. This is not our righteousness from our works

2. Righteousness from God given to us

3. We are given this righteousness by faith alone - we know all else is rubbish

C. Justification by faith ALONE

Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation.⁵ However, **to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.**⁶ David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of **the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:**⁷ "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.⁸ Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him." Romans 4:4–8

1. Same points as Philippians 3:8-9
2. Imputation - God' credits Christ's righteousness to us
3. Does not work; apart from works - faith ALONE
4. Credited/imputed righteousness - Christ's righteousness is given to us

D. Why justification must be by faith alone

1. In justification we are given the perfect righteousness of Christ
2. Consequently, we can not add to the righteousness we have already been given
3. Our works - even our best works - are always tainted with sin and thus only dilute and contaminate the perfect righteousness that has been given to us from Christ

4. To say our works add in any way to our justification is to deny that Christ's work is sufficient
5. Faith is not only necessary - it is sufficient!

IV. The Need For Sola Fide Today

A. Current polls (Lifeway/Ligonier; Pew Research)

1. Lifeway/Ligonier - An individual must contribute his/her own effort for personal salvation - 71 % agreed
2. Pew Research 2017 poll on Reformation beliefs
 - a. Both good deeds and faith in God are needed to get into heaven - 52% of Protestants agreed (even worse in Europe)
 - b. Only 30% of Protestants agree with both Sola Scriptura and Sola Fide - and 36% believe neither!

B. The current state of American beliefs about the Gospel

1. Justification by faith alone is not an optional add on - it is the very Gospel itself.
2. This is the Gospel - and most American Protestants do not even believe it now
3. Most Protestants today have beliefs that are much closer to the key beliefs that the Reformers accurately condemned as unbiblical and another Gospel
4. We need a modern Reformation to restore the Gospel - even to Protestant churches

C. Why sola fide is of utmost importance

1. Sola fide is the Gospel - without it we are lost

2. Sola fide is God's remedy for objective and subjective guilt
 - a. Our objective guilt is removed and we are given Christ's actual righteousness
 - b. Our subjective guilt is dealt with as we realize our standing before God is not based on our performance, but rather on Christ's righteousness
3. Sola fide - the article on which the church stands or falls
 - a. Luther said this - and he was right
 - b. Do not go to a church that does not regularly proclaim the Gospel - you do not need practical tips for living; you need the Gospel!

V. Applying the Word

A. Do I understand and believe the Gospel?

1. The Gospel tells us we are accepted before God because of Christ's righteousness and atoning work alone, apart from any works or merits of our own, and that His righteousness is received by faith alone, apart from any efforts on our part.
2. Do I believe this?
3. Embrace Christ today!

B. The Table of Salvation

1. This Table is a visual representation of the Gospel
 - a. Table is set & we are invited by grace alone
 - b. Table represents Christ sacrifice for our sins - which is sufficient for our salvation

- c. We come to the Table and eat by faith - our works have no place

2. Come and feast by faith

Sola Fide - Justified Through Faith Alone

Romans 5:1-2

October 22, 2017

Communion

Romans 15:13

Teaching keywords: Justification; faith

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Romans 5:1-2