

“Saved by Grace through Faith! Now What?”

10-27-13

The world in 1517 was in complete disarray! Nations were fighting against each other. The church was focused on rules and regulations, rather than on Jesus Christ! The people were in desperate need and no one was doing anything about it!

There was so much confusion on what God said because the only way the people would know is by what they were told by the priests. God was seen as an angry God and the only way to receive any blessing from Him was to make sure works were done that pleased Him!

Into this time came Martin Luther who felt that what was being said about God and His demands for people were exactly what He was taught at the University and Monastery. Bibles were few, far between, and very expensive. They were even written in a language the people couldn't understand so they had to rely on what they were told.

Open to Romans 3. As Luther began to search the Scriptures, he came across God's Words, which tore apart everything he'd been taught and was tearing the people to shreds! Look at verses 21-24, *“But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”*

As Luther read this passage, it came clear that the Christian life needed to be based on Three Solas or Three Alones. Faith Alone. Grace Alone. Scripture Alone. Faith brings us into the family of God. Grace is the undeserved gift we receive freely from God. Scripture exposes the power and majesty of God and we see how in His love for us gives us salvation.

In salvation God is the actor, we are the recipients. Through what He has done for us by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer and die in our place, wins salvation. It's faith that receives God's Gift. Because of what Jesus has done, we are justified. To justify describes what happens when someone believes in Christ as their Savior. God declares us to be not guilty. He declares us to be righteous. He cancels the guilt of our sin and credits righteousness to us!

Christ's work shows God punishes sin and graciously forgives sinners. We sin each and every day. We turn away from God and try to go our own way because our human nature wants control! Because we all are like this, no one deserves salvation!

Look at verses 27-28, *“Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.”* It only happens because God's glorious grace saves! Faith isn't man's contribution or decision, but a gift of God! Ephesians 2:8-9, *“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”*

We've been truly blessed by God! He sees our weaknesses and has a solution. He sent His One and Only Son to take our punishment for our sins, even though He was perfect. This gift of God was promised since the Garden of Eden. God knew our failures even back then. That's why Scripture talks about us being born in sin!

Martin Luther was fighting the church about works. The church was laying out many things individuals had to do to be saved. That's not what Luther read in Romans. What caused the most difficulty for him was the buying of forgiveness. All a person had to do was buy a piece of paper stating their sins were forgiven. You could buy this forgiveness of sins for a week, a month or a year depending on how much money you wanted to spend.

Open to James 2. So we have faith in Jesus Christ, that's good! But is that enough? Is having faith, all that God's asks of us as His children? No, He wants more of us! He's called us to be His ambassadors to the world around us! We can't stop with believing! The same faith we have for believing, must be active! Works are actions done in response to God's gifts! Faith can't be separated from works.

Look at verses 14-17, *"What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."*

Works show Jesus Christ to the world! We can't sit back and see the world around us lost and just ignore it! Will it mean that we might be uncomfortable and despised? Yes, it might. We've just finished a series that told us very clearly, God is right there beside us and we will get through it!

You're not in this alone! You each are part of a body. Together, we are the body of Christ, and all parts must function together! We're in this together! Each of us has a responsibility to action, especially to not only care for each other but also the people we meet outside this building.

God wants a Reformation for YOU! God loves you! God loves you the way you are, but He loves you too much to leave you that way! He frees you by His grace! Live your faith with conviction in action!