

"Faith and Grace"

Study Guide

500TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REFORMATION | ROMANS 1:16-17; 3:20-24; EPHESIANS 2:8-10 |
OCTOBER 28/29, 2017 | PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

"For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith.'" (Romans 1:17)

The Reformation—Basic Background

Key issues

Key figures

Two contextual factors

Two Cautions about the Reformation

A caution about division

A caution about heroes

The Message of Faith and Grace Today

Faith: Our Response to the Gospel Revealing God's Righteousness (Romans 1:16-17)

Faith and Grace: The Reception of Justification with God through Redemption in Jesus Christ (Romans 3:21-24)

Grace: (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Three Responses to Faith and Grace

1. Respond with Faith
2. Treasure God's Grace
3. Praise the Triune God

1. This weekend we focus in on the message of faith and grace through Jesus Christ on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. This weekend marks 500 years since the time that a monk named Martin Luther nailed his *Ninety-Five Theses* to the door of Wittenberg Cathedral, sparking reforms within the church that lead to modern-day Protestantism. We will explore three key passages in the writings of the Apostle Paul about faith and grace that fueled the Reformation. Begin your study in prayer, asking God to speak to you, and then continue with the study.
2. Read Romans 1:16-17 aloud and consider these questions:
 - What is the 'gospel' according to the Apostle Paul here?
 - What does it mean that the Gospel reveals God's righteousness?
 - In saying that righteousness is "by faith from first to last" Paul references Habakkuk 2:4. What does this verse tell us?
3. Now read Romans 3:20-24 aloud and reflect on these questions:
 - What is the purpose of the law according to verse 20?
 - What new thing does Paul say has happened now in verses 21-22?
 - What do you think 'faith,' 'grace' and 'righteousness' mean in these verses?
4. Finally, let's read Ephesians 2:1-10 aloud, and then consider the following questions:
 - What has God done for us through Christ Jesus according to verses 4-7?
 - How has this work happened on our behalf according to verse 8?
 - What is our part in it according to verses 9-10?
5. The themes of faith and grace are central to our faith as disciples of Jesus Christ. What is one thing that God is speaking to you through this study? If you are on your own, write it down and pray about it. If you are in a small group, take time to discuss this with one another before praying together.

Further Reflection

Study the Apostle Paul's Epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians in order to understand the powerful message of faith and grace through Jesus Christ.

Read Martin Luther's Ninety-Five Theses online: www.luther.de/en/95thesen.html

Read a book related to the Reformation:

- Roland Bainton's excellent book *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther*.
- Diarmaid MacCulloch's award-winning *The Reformation: A History*.
- Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers*.
- Mark Noll, *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*.