



Small Group Study Guide for October 30, 2022

Our Savior Lutheran Church and School

Theme: *Sola Scriptura* was a pillar of the Lutheran Reformation, and Martin Luther translated the Bible into the language of the people so they could access the Word of God. That brought about a revival of faith that renewed the covenant with God's people and inspires us today.

Getting Started: (sharing with each other)

1. There are a number of English translations of the Bible these days. What version do you use the most, and what versions have you read in the past?

2. What is the most difficult and challenging part of reading the Bible for you?

In the Word: Read Romans 3:19-28

3. Paul is building an argument from Scripture through the book of Romans that we are saved by the grace of God through faith, and not by the works of the Law. We do works of love out of response to God's redemptive work in our lives. He begins by saying that "through the law we become conscious of sin." What do you think are the most challenging 'rules' in the Bible that people have the most difficult time with today?

4. Martin Luther zeroed in on the phrase in verse 21, "the righteousness of God." Look carefully at verses 21-22. Is this "righteousness" something that we ourselves do? Where does it come from?

5. Verse 23 says that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. How does this statement remove any attempts to justify ourselves or earn God's favor?

6. Paul says we receive the gifts of Christ's sacrifice of atonement "by faith" in verse 25. Faith is like the hand that receives the gift. Faith is not a "work" that we do, but rather a way that we receive the gifts of salvation. What does Paul say about faith in **Ephesians 9:8-9**?

Putting it all Together (what we should believe or do as disciples)

7. What Martin Luther read in Romans 3 unlocked for him the entire message of the Bible. Everything became something about what Jesus has done for us. Every story of the Old Testament pointed to Christ. Every teaching of the New Testament unpacked the redeeming work of Christ in our lives. Have you read the Bible this way? How do you find Christ and know Him better as you read through the Bible?

Check out these examples and see how they might point us to Jesus, as Luther saw it.

Genesis 22:1-19

1 Samuel 17

Psalms 23

1 Corinthians 13

8. Luther put his life on the line for the sake of the Gospel and the Word of God. We are thankful that we live in a country with religious freedom, and we do not need to risk our lives (although Christians in some parts of the world do, and give their lives for Christ). But there are sacrifices we make, and things we give up because we are Jesus followers. What are the sacrifices we make or where might we experience risk for being a Christian in today's world?
9. "The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing" says Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:18. There are many aspects of the Christian faith that are considered "foolishness" by today's standards. Perhaps the most foolish of all is the radical forgiveness that God shows sinners. Why is forgiveness and grace seen as such foolishness in today's world?
10. As the Christian Church, we point people to Jesus our Savior, and the Scriptures as the Word of God. How do we keep the grace of God, and the radical forgiveness of Christ at the center of what we do as a church and school?

Take prayer requests from your group.

Prayer: Thank God for the gift of His holy Word, and ask that He keep us steadfast in His word. As disciples of Jesus, may the Holy Spirit keep us centered on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. May we proclaim it loud and clear. Ask God to strengthen our commitment and devotion to Him, even when it gets difficult.

Next Week: All Saints Sunday includes the commemoration of the faithful departed in our roll call of victory. We remember those who have died in the past year and now reign with Christ in glory. You may want to invite any friends or family who would be blessed by this special and meaningful service.