

These questions are for the October 25, 2026, message, "Justification by Faith Alone"
Please read the sermon passage (Romans 3:23-26) out loud.

Passage Outline

Justified by Faith

1. Question: How do we deal with our guilt?
 - A. Ignore, minimize, normalize, rationalize, or turn to superstition or false supports.
2. Martin Luther's guilt before a righteous God
 - A. Early life & law school
 - B. Thunderstorm decision
 - C. Monastery madness
 - D. Luther's obsessive attempt to earn his own righteousness
3. Romans 3:21-26
 - A. The definition of righteousness: compare the righteousness that a person earns for themselves by attempting to keep God's requirements and the righteousness that God gives to people who trust in Him.
 - B. Four questions about righteousness:
 - 1) Where do we find God's righteousness? (Rom. 3:21)
 - 2) Who can receive God's righteousness? (Rom. 3:22-23; see also chapters 2 and 3)
 - 3) How does one obtain God's righteousness? (Rom. 3:22-25)
 - 4) How did God righteously declare sinners righteous? (Rom. 3:25-26)
 - C. Luther receives God's righteousness
4. The Reformation & the 95 Theses
 - A. Indulgences
 - B. 95 Theses (A Disputation by Doctor Martin Luther on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences)
 - C. We are saved through Scripture alone, by grace alone, by faith alone, through Christ alone, for God's glory alone.
5. Application:
 - A. What do you think about God? Is He an angry, demanding, impossible-to-please God or a caring, giving, generous, loving God? God is the promise-giving God who loves to reach out to call people to trust in His promises.
 - B. How do you see yourself before God? Do you focus on your guilt, your failures, your inability to measure up, or do you see yourself as one fully forgiven, joyfully justified, resting in God's righteousness?

Life Group Discussion Questions

1. Based on #2, above: Martin Luther obsessed over his guilt and sought to earn his own righteousness by his own means. Is there a way that you can relate to Martin Luther's struggle with guilt? What did/does that look like for you? How did/do you find relief?
2. Based on #1, above: What are some negative ways that people in our world (or church) today seek to deal with their guilt on their own?
3. Based on #3, above: Christians have the wonderful truth that God declares them righteous and forgives their sins based on the atoning death of Jesus Christ on the cross in our place. What is a way that we can keep this truth in the forefront of our minds? What are some ways that truth could change how we live our daily lives?
4. Based on #5, above: What first comes to your mind when you think about God? Why? What first comes to your mind when you think about yourself? Is your first thought about God or yourself scriptural? What would it look like to correct this?
5. Based on #5: above: Consider Question and Answer 60 of the Heidelberg Catechism: How are you righteous before God? A. Only by true faith in Jesus Christ. Even though my conscience accuses me of having grievously sinned against all God's commandments, of never having kept any of them, and of still being inclined toward all evil, nevertheless, without any merit of my own, out of sheer grace, God grants and credits to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ, as if I had never sinned nor been a sinner, and as if I had been as perfectly obedient as Christ was obedient for me. All I need to do is accept this gift with a believing heart. What do you find most amazing about this answer? What most encourages your heart? What here leads you to worship?
6. Based on #5, above: What first comes to your mind when you think about God? Why? What first comes to your mind when you think about yourself? Is your first thought about God or yourself scriptural? What would it look like to correct this?
7. Based on #4, above: Why is it so important that we hold fast to the five solas—that we are saved through Scripture alone, by grace alone, by faith alone, through Christ alone, for God's glory alone?