

As this month marks the 500th Anniversary of publication of Luther's "95 Theses," we look at key texts which were instrumental in awakening Luther's insight regarding "Justification by grace through faith," the cornerstone of Reformation theology. You are encouraged to read not only the verses provided, but their surrounding context verses.

Ephesians 2.4-9: *Why would God do such an un-imaginable thing as bestow forgiveness on us and save us? What is God's ultimate goal in doing this?*

Galatians 3.11: *What does 'righteous' mean here? What does 'shall live' mean?*

Romans 3.20-24: *What is it to be 'justified'? What does Paul mean in saying 'through the Law comes knowledge of sin?'*
What is different so that Paul says 'But now' . . . ?

Romans 3.25-29: *How is Christ the 'expiation' for sin? What does human faith have to do with the 'expiation' event? To what is Paul referring in his question in v. 27 about 'our boasting'?*
What does 'justification by faith' refer to—"faith" in what?

Romans 1.16-17: *Do Paul's words here "fit" any of us?*

2 Tim 3.16: *How does this text confirm Luther's conviction that even though we are justified by faith, every believer must avail him/herself of the Scriptures as "daily bread" for faith?*

I Peter 2.4-5: *Peter first refers to Christ as the 'living stone.' Then the text uses the same metaphor for us with "action words:" 'Come,' 'be built,' 'offer.'* *Since Scripture has established that we are not saved by good works, why are these actions important, and what are they meant to accomplish?*
How do these verses inform Luther's radical view of "priesthood"? Who are the "priests" of the Church in Luther's theology? Why?

Matthew 11.29-30: *A "yoke" enables the bearer to carry a heavier load than might otherwise be readily borne. How do these verses relate to our Lutheran understanding of "living by grace through faith?"*

Habakkuk 2.4: *Is the Old Testament as "wrath of God"-filled as many believe? Or is the OT itself a message of divine grace? Why might Luther find the OT a validating source for his theological discernments?*

John 10.27-28: *When Jesus uses the word 'hear,' what does the context tell us about what He Meant? How is "hearing" proven according to these words of Jesus?*
Who is the Giver in verse 28?

Philippians 2.12-13: *If works do not save us, then what does this mean?*

Hebrews 12.5-11: *What do these verses teach us about the meaning of "living" by faith'?*