

# St. Paul Lutheran Church

## Sunday Morning Bible Class

### Formula of Concord Series

#### Article 3 – The Righteousness of Faith before God

##### *The Question at Issue:*

- A) Man is justified before God and saved solely by faith, so that Christ is our righteousness.
- B) Man is justified in God's sight because God lives in us, infuses us with his grace, and thereby hides our sin from his sight.

##### *Why It Matters*

- 1) This question goes to the very heart of the Christian faith. To err here is tantamount to unbelief.

**Galatians 1:8** But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

- 2) We must fully understand this Biblical doctrine if we are to understand and refute the Roman Catholic and Reformed errors concerning justification, grace, and faith.

*Does "justify" mean a) make righteous, or b) declare righteous  
Is grace something that resides in a) God, or b) man.*

*Are we saved by faith or by grace through faith?*

*Are we saved by grace through faith alone, or by grace through faith and the fruits of faith?*

##### *What the Bible Teaches*

<sup>NKJ</sup> **Romans 3:21-24** But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, <sup>22</sup> even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

<sup>NKJ</sup> **Romans 5:19** For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

<sup>NKJ</sup> **Romans 4:5** But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.

<sup>NKJ</sup> **Galatians 2:16** "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

<sup>NKJ</sup> **Ephesians 2:8-9** For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

<sup>NKJ</sup> **Titus 3:5** not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

- 1) Our righteousness was earned in full by the God-man Jesus according to the perfect obedience he rendered to his Heavenly Father. No righteousness comes from us; all was earned by Christ and credited to us.
- 2) God forgives our sins purely by his grace, without any preceding, present, or subsequent work, merit, or worthiness, and reckons to us the righteousness of Christ's obedience.
- 3) Spirit-worked faith is the only means and instrument whereby we accept Christ, and for Christ's sake this faith is regarded as righteousness.
- 4) Saving faith is not a mere knowledge of Bible stories or historic facts, but a special gift of God whereby we recognize Christ as our Redeemer and trust in him and his obedience for the forgiveness of our sins.
- 5) "Justify" means "to declare not guilty" or "to pronounce free from sin."
- 6) God's Word speaks in exclusive terms when it separates Christ's merit from our own works, using terms like "without merit," "without the law," "without works," and "not by works."
- 7) Though contrition precedes justification and good works follow after it, they have no part and play no role in our justification. This is not to say that saving faith can coexist or co-persist with a wicked intention to continue in sin.
- 8) Faith alone saves, but faith is never alone.

### ***What the Bible Rejects***

- 1) That justification means "to be made righteous" in God's sight because Christ's goodness has been "infused" into us, making us "good" in God's sight.
- 2) The idea that faith does not look alone to Christ's obedience, but also to his presence in our hearts, which covers our sins from God's sight.
- 3) The notion that saving faith can exist in a heart that does not truly repent of sin, but rather gives itself over to continued sinning.
- 4) Any notion that only divine gifts dwell in the Christian, rather than God himself.
- 5) The idea that we, in effect, save ourselves by making our decision for Christ and thereby bringing ourselves to faith.
- 6) The error that love and renewal (revival) play any role in our justification – in addition to faith.
- 7) The false teaching that faith does not justify without good works, in such a way that good works are necessary for righteousness and that unless they are present a person cannot be justified.