

The Theology of Martin Luther

Personal Theology 101

Romans 1:16-17; Coast School of Theology; Coast Community Church; Earl Miles; 9-2-18

Simul Justus et Peccator (At the Same Time, Just and Sinner): Luther believed that Christians are, at the same time (or simultaneously), justified (saints) and sinners. – Romans 7:21-25

The Sufficiency of the Scripture: Luther emphasized the importance of the Bible and the doctrine of ‘Sola Scriptura’ (Scripture alone). (2 Timothy 3:16-17) *In this psalm David always says that he will speak, think, talk, hear, read, day and night constantly — but about nothing else than God’s Word and Commandments. For God wants to give you His Spirit only through the external Word. Let the man who would hear God speak, read Holy Scripture. - Luther*

Christ and Him Crucified: Luther believed that all of life should be viewed in light of and through the lens of the cross of Christ, as God’s revelation of Himself to us and the manifestation of power through weakness. - 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Theologians of the Cross vs Theologians of Glory: Luther saw all of humanity as falling into one of two categories (Philippians 3:7-11): (1) *Theologians of Glory* who trust in what they can see (outward appearance) and in their own righteousness before God; (2) *Theologians of the Cross* who trust in what is unseen (inward reality) and in a righteousness outside of themselves (ie, the righteousness of Christ).

The Bondage of the Will and Humble Reception of Grace: Luther believed that humanity is dead in sin and must be raised from the dead to experience eternal life. (Ephesians 2:1-9) *I condemn and reject as nothing but error all doctrines which exalt our “free will” as being directly opposed to this mediation and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. For since, apart from Christ, sin and death are our masters and the devil is our god and prince, there can be no strength or power, no wit or wisdom, by which we can fit or fashion ourselves for righteousness and life. On the contrary, blinded and captivated, we are bound to be the subjects of Satan and sin, doing and thinking what pleases him and is opposed to God and His commandments. (Luther) This truth was not meant to discourage but to encourage a cry to God for mercy. (Luke 18:13-14) We are beggars; this is true. - Luther*

Justification by Faith Alone: Luther believed that the gospel proclaimed that sinners are saved by faith alone without any merit or good works (Sola Fide). – Galatians 2:16

The Joyful Exchange of Double Imputation: Luther believed that our sins were imputed to Christ and His righteousness is imputed to us through faith. – 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 4:5-8 *Lord Jesus, You are my righteousness, I am your sin. You took on you what was mine; yet set on me what was yours. You became what you were not, that I might become what I was not. - Luther*

Alien Righteousness and Proper Righteousness: Luther believed that the righteousness that saves us is outside of us (alien righteousness = the righteousness of Christ). (Romans 4:2-5; 5:17-19) Luther also believed that those who are justified by faith alone will grow in obedience to the 10 commandments (ie, love), which he called proper righteousness. (1 John 2:3-6; Romans 13:8-10) *“We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone.” — Luther*

Priority of Preaching the Word: Luther believed that the preaching of the Word and the hearing of the Word preached was foundational and crucial to the Christian life. (2 Timothy 4:1-2) *You should not believe your conscience and your feelings more than the word which the Lord who receives sinners preaches to you. - Luther*

Priority of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper: Luther believed that submitting to baptism and receiving the Lord’s Supper, in faith, was foundational and crucial to the Christian life. – Mark 16:16; John 6:54

The Priesthood of All Believers: Luther believed that all believers could approach God confidently through Christ and pray for themselves and others. – Hebrew 4:14-16

Two Kingdoms: Luther believed God ruled the world through the church and through human governments, each respecting the sphere of the other. – Matthew 16:19; Romans 13:1-4

Lord of all and Servant of all: Luther believed that Christians were free from all the expectations of men and yet obligated to be a servant to all. (1 Corinthians 9:19) *A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to everyone. - Luther*

The Callings of the Believer: Luther believed that every legitimate work on earth was worthy of honor, should be done to the glory of God, and should be seen as a ‘mask of God.’ (Colossians 3:22-24) *All our work in the field, in the garden, in the city, in the home, in struggle, in government to what does it all amount before God except child's play, by means of which God is pleased to give his gifts in the field, at home, and everywhere? These are the masks of our Lord God, behind which he wants to be hidden and to do all things. - Luther*

The Life of Trial: Luther saw the Christian life as a spiritual battle between the flesh and the Spirit (the theologian of glory and the theologian of the cross in us) in which great ups and downs of soul were commonplace. (Psalm 119:67; Psalm 119:71) *I want you to know how to study theology in the right way. I have practiced this method myself. . . . Here you will find three rules. They are frequently proposed throughout Psalm [119] and run thus: oration, meditatio, tentatio [prayer, meditation, trial]. - Luther*