



SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 3 October 9, 2022
“The Reformation”

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we praise you for being our refuge and strength in times of trouble. We thank you for Martin Luther and all those who made the Reformation possible. And we thank you for the reformers of today. Lord, forgive us when we start to stray from your path like the 16th Century church and help us to recognize when we are in need of reform. Help us to see that we and the Church are in constant need of reform. We pray this in the powerful name of Jesus. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Romans 1:17 (NIV)

¹⁷For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

Psalms 46 (NIV)

*¹God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
²Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
³though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.
⁴There is a river whose streams make glad the city
of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.
⁵God is within her, she will not fall;
God will help her at break of day.
⁶Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.*

*⁷The Lord Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.
⁸Come and see what the Lord has done,
the desolations he has brought on the earth.
⁹He makes wars cease
to the ends of the earth.
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.
¹⁰He says, “Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth.”
¹¹The Lord Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress*

Revelation 3:14-19 (NIV)

*¹⁴“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:
These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. ¹⁵I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! ¹⁶So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. ¹⁸I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.
¹⁹Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent.*

INTRODUCTION

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“The Reformation”

On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther changed history forever. His hammer, nail and list of 95 beliefs rocked the most powerful empire of his day. What did he believe that was so explosive? How did Martin Luther ultimately change the way we think about God?

Martin Luther reformed the Church of the 16th century. The lesson we learn from this part of church history is that Christians and the Church are in constant need of reform. We have this tendency to stray from the path God has set out before us. It's what happened in the early church, it happened in the Renaissance period and it happens in our churches today. As Christians, we are called to repent and offer ourselves to Christ. As the church, we need to make sure we are welcoming and loving to all people. If that's not happening, reform is needed.

QUESTIONS

1. Did you learn anything new about the Reformation or Martin Luther from this week's message? Discuss.
2. After struggling with his faith, Luther discovered he could not earn salvation. Paul makes it clear in his letters, that salvation is given to us by God's grace and we receive through faith. What has helped you realize your need for God's redeeming love and grace?
3. One of Luther's projects that re-shaped the world was translating the Bible into German. Since God called all Christians to be priests, he believed they should be able to read the Bible for themselves. How will you deepen your understanding and application of the Bible in your own life?
4. Is there any part of your faith journey (e.g. worship, prayer, Bible reading, communion) that once mattered a lot, but now feels routine, or even abandoned?
5. A big reason Luther posted his 95 Theses in 1517 was the sale of "indulgences." The pope would "pardon" some or all of a person's time in purgatory (itself an extra-Biblical idea), and sell the pardons to finance various projects. When, or on what kinds of issues, should we honor and defer to leaders even if we disagree with them? When is it worth saying, like Luther later did, "Here I stand. I can do no other"?

FINAL APPLICATION

This week, take time to do some spiritual self-reflection and see what area of your life is in need of reform.