

Sola Fide - Faith Alone

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Date: 01 October 2017

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[0 : 0 0] Well, if we could, this evening, with the Lord's guidance and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read, Paul's letter to the Romans, and if we read at chapter 5, Romans chapter 5, and if we just read again at verse 1, for Paul says, therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And so we'll continue in our study this evening of the five principles of the Reformation, and these five principles which emerged during the 16th century, they're more commonly known to us as the Reformation Solas.

And the Reformation Solas, they were five Latin phrases which summarized the theological convictions of the Reformers. And they emphasized to us, you could say, the foundation of true biblical Christianity.

And we mentioned last week what these five Reformation Solas are. And as I mentioned last Lord's Day, the reason I'd like us to consider these five Reformation Solas is because this month is Reformation month.

The 31st of October, this month, it will mark 500 years since the beginning of the Reformation. Because it was on the 31st of October, 1517, that the Reformer Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany.

[2 : 0 2] And those 95 Theses, they highlighted specific perversions of the truth that were being taught and promoted by a corrupt Roman Catholic Church.

And as we know, Luther stand against the heresies which plagued the church of Rome. It was a catalyst for the Protestant Reformation to spread across Europe.

And by presenting 95 of these theses, it's clear that Luther had quite a few issues with the Roman Catholic Church, that he wrote 95 of them.

But what gave Martin Luther the greatest concern was one which he had personally. Because the personal concern which plagued Martin Luther was that he didn't have peace with God.

He didn't have peace with God. For years, Luther had this personal struggle, this spiritual struggle with assurance. And Luther again and again, he questioned, How can I be right with God?

[3 : 0 7] How can I have a right relationship with God? How can I have this right standing with God? And in order to try and have peace with God, Luther sought to follow the penitential system of the Roman Catholic Church, he followed it to the letter.

He did everything that was asked of him. And with all his might, he excelled in all his works of righteousness. He excelled in his submission to all the monastic rules and disciplines of the church.

But he still didn't have peace with God. He didn't have that peace and assurance he was seeking. That was until Luther discovered Paul's epistle to the Romans.

And it was there that Luther learned about the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Because when Luther read the words of Romans chapter 1, verse 17, when he read the words, The righteous shall live by faith.

Luther's entire understanding of salvation was transformed. Because with those few words, Luther discovered that you can be a sinner. And you can be righteous in God's sight at one and the same time.

[4 : 26] And when Luther laid hold of these words, he received what he was desperately seeking. He was seeking the assurance of his salvation and peace with God.

And with that, Luther realized that a sinner is made righteous before God, not by their good works, not by their acts of penance, not by their monetary gifts.

No, he says, A sinner is made righteous in God's sight by sola fide, faith alone. A sinner is made righteous in God's sight by faith alone.

And that's the Reformation sola I'd like us to look at this evening. Sola fide, faith alone. And I'd like us to look at this Reformation principle under three headings.

Three simple headings. A personal problem, a personal pronouncement, and a personal peace. A personal problem, a personal pronouncement, and a personal peace.

[5 : 32] So, if we look first of all at a personal problem. A personal problem. Read again at verse 1 of chapter 5. Paul says, Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, in this verse, Paul is confirming to us, as we said, the doctrine of justification by faith alone. And he's issuing to us, in this verse, a definitive statement regarding all that he has just said in chapters 1 to 4.

That's why the chapter begins with the word, Therefore. He's continuing the thought from the previous chapters. Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And so we have to see that this is Paul's conclusion to all that he has been explaining since chapter 1. Because since chapter 1, Paul has been emphasizing how we can be made righteous with God.

He's emphasizing how a sinner can stand righteous before God. And from the outset of his letter, Paul has said that mankind has this personal problem.

[6 : 39] And our personal problem is that we're all sinners. We're all ungodly. We're all unrighteous in God's sight. And we're all under the righteous judgment of God.

Paul says in chapter 1 at verse, 18, The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

And Paul explains that because of our sin and our ungodliness and our unrighteousness, because of all that, he says, we are condemned under the righteous judgment of God.

He's saying, we deserve God's wrath and hell for living rebelliously against a holy God. But we have to see that the purpose of Paul's letter is not to condemn the unrighteous.

That's not why Paul is writing this letter to the Romans. No, the purpose of Paul's letter is to present to us the beauty of the gospel and tell us the wonderful truth that the unrighteous can be made righteous by faith.

[7 : 48] The sinner can be made a saint by faith alone. And you know, Paul wants us to come to his letter asking the same questions that Luther was asking.

He wants us to come asking, how can I be made righteous in God's sight? How can I avoid the condemnation and hell that my sin deserves? How can I have that peace with God?

How can I have assurance of my salvation? How can God accept a sinner like me? And you know, as we were saying, what's remarkable is that when Luther read Paul's letter to the Romans, he was asking the same questions.

And like he did for Luther, Paul addresses the personal problem that mankind has. Because Luther's desire was to be made righteous before God.

And similarly, as sinners, we want to be made righteous before God. Is that not true of all of us tonight? We want to avoid God's righteous judgment against our sin.

[8 : 55] We want to be made righteous in God's sight and be accepted by him. We want to avert the wrath of God away from ourselves and seek terms of peace. But you know, as Paul draws attention to all this, he indicates that our personal problem is that we often want to be accepted by God on our terms.

We want terms of peace according to our terms of peace. peace. Because, my friend, is it not true that our personal problem is that we think that God will accept us maybe because of who we are?

We think that God will accept us maybe because of our upbringing. And Paul actually says, he says in chapter 3, that the Jews thought the same. The Jews thought that they were righteous in God's sight because of their parents.

They were the people of Israel. They were God's chosen people. They were the elect nation. And they thought that they had a good standing with God because they bore the covenant sign of circumcision.

But Paul says, no one is righteous. No, not one. Therefore, he asks, what advantage does the Jew actually have?

[10 : 11] And what value is circumcision? Paul says, it's completely worthless. It's worthless without faith. And you know, sadly, we can think the same.

We can think that we have a right footing with God, maybe because of our upbringing. We're brought up in the Christian home and we have Christian parents and we have family worship and we went to church and Sunday school all our lives and we learned the catechism and we memorized the Bible and we kept the Sabbath and we were baptized as children.

But what Paul is saying to us is that without faith, it's worthless. It's worthless in the sight of God. Without faith, it's of no benefit to us at all.

But you know, our personal problem is that we not only think that God will accept us because of our upbringing, we sometimes think that God will accept us because we're a good person and we have the ability to earn this right standing with God.

And whether we do it outwardly or even in the privacy of our own heart, you know, we boast about how good we are and how much we do for God. And that's the heart of the problem, isn't it?

[11 : 26] The problem of the heart. That we convince ourselves that we need to work for our justification and we want to do something, even as Christians, we want to do something that will contribute to our peace treaty with God.

We want to be the good person and keep the law and be an upstanding member in society and be a good witness so that God will accept us because of who we are. But you know, Paul, he cuts through all that pride and boasting and that foolish thinking and he reminds us of where we are actually at with God.

Because he says at the end of chapter 3, he says, all have sinned. All have sinned and they have all come short of the glory of God. And so we have no standing, no footing to even climb one rung on the ladder.

And if that's the case, says Paul, then we have nothing to boast about. We have absolutely nothing to boast. All our boasting, all our good thoughts that we think of ourselves, it's null and void.

It's null and void. And you know, throughout these opening chapters in Romans, Paul repeatedly emphasizes how we are not justified. He says, we're not justified by keeping the law.

[12 : 45] We're not justified by works. We're not justified by our upbringing. We're not justified by being a good person. We're not justified by doing our best. We're not justified by our church attendance.

We're not justified by our Bible reading. We're not justified by our prayer life. We're not justified even by our baptism. We're not justified by anything we do.

Paul keeps telling us here that what we do, it has no bearing on our justification. Paul is telling us that what we do not have to do, we do not have to be this certain type of person in order to be justified.

Our personal problem is that we keep thinking that we need to do something, or be something, in order for God to accept us. Even as Christians we think like that.

But what Paul is showing us is that we don't. And you know, that's why God's gracious offer of salvation is often so hard for us to accept.

[13 : 55] Because he's so gracious. So gracious that we don't actually have to do anything. We think that we have to do something, but we don't. It's not about what we do.

It's all about what God has done for us in and through Jesus Christ. And what God has done for us is that he has made a personal pronouncement.

He has made a personal pronouncement to the sinner. That you are not guilty. And that's what I'd like us to consider secondly. So we've considered this personal problem that we all have.

We all think that we need to do something in order to earn God's favour. But secondly, we see a personal pronouncement. A personal pronouncement. And if you go back to the beginning of chapter 4, Paul asks there, in verse 2, He says, For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about.

But not before God. For what does the scripture say? Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness. So as Paul continues his explanation of how a hell-deserving sinner could be made righteous in God's sight, he brings us all the way back to the book of Genesis.

[15 : 15] And he gives to us the illustration of faithful Abraham. And you know, just for clarification, sometimes we might be tempted to think that those in the Old Testament are saved by their works.

And those in the New Testament, they were saved by their faith. We think that those before Jesus, they were saved by all the sacrifices. And that we are only saved by trusting in Jesus.

But that's not the case. Those in the Old Testament were saved exactly the same way as those in the New Testament. Saved by faith alone. Because if they weren't, if those in the Old Testament were saved by their works of righteousness or their sacrifices, then they would have something to boast about.

And this is why Paul says in verse 2, if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about. But not before God. Because what does the scripture say?

Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness. And he's quoting Genesis 15 there. And Paul, he's throwing your attention to the fact that Abraham wasn't saved by his works of righteousness.

[16 : 21] He was saved by faith alone. Abraham's faith, it was accounted to him as righteousness. But you know, when we consider the centuries leading up to the Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church, they had translated the word righteous or justified as due penance or to make righteous.

And they taught that a sinner is justified, not by faith alone, but by doing acts of faith. And by doing these acts of faith, a sinner is made more and more righteous.

And the more acts of faith that a sinner does, the more righteous in God's sight that they become. It's like this bucket where they're constantly pouring their acts of faith or righteousness into it.

And they were, the more acts of faith they did, the more righteous they became. And so for Roman Catholicism, justification is all about an increase of righteousness in which the sinner is made more and more righteous by acts of faith, by doing, paying indulgences or doing charitable deeds or taking part in all the sacraments, the sacraments of baptism or mass or penance.

But what's frightening is that even if you did all these acts of faith, this is what's frightening for Roman Catholics.

[17 : 47] Even if you do all these acts of faith, you are never really sure if God will forgive you for all your sin. Because a sinner is only forgiven on the day of judgment if they were completely righteous in God's sight.

And as you can see, this is where Martin Luther had the greatest problem. This is why he lived in fear. He lived in fear and worry that he was going to burn in hell, that God was going to stand before him on the day of judgment and say, depart from me into the everlasting fire, prepare for the devil and his angels.

He lived in fear that he hadn't done enough to earn his salvation. He lived in fear that he hadn't confessed to the priest his every sin. And he was terrified that he hadn't prayed enough to the Pope or to Mary or to the saints.

And he kept asking, what if I'm not righteous enough? What if I haven't paid for enough indulgences? What if I haven't been to mass enough times in my life? What if I haven't confessed all my sins before I die?

Then what hope do I have of forgiveness? What hope do I have of attaining peace with God? And it's because of this fear of not being forgiven and not having peace with God that Luther began to diligently search the scriptures for answers.

[19 : 16] He began to search for answers and it was through searching the scriptures that Luther ended up in the letter of Romans. At Romans 1 verse 17, the righteous shall live by faith.

And as a scholar of original languages, Luther realized that Paul never for one moment meant that we are made righteous with God by our acts of faith.

He realized it was the complete opposite. Because what Luther discovered was that the word justify, it's a legal word, it's the language of the courtroom in the sense of a verdict being pronounced in a court of law.

And so by understanding that righteousness is not something you do but something you are, Luther discovered that there is life through faith in Jesus Christ.

The righteous shall live by faith. And so when Luther had faith in Jesus Christ, he knew that when he stood before God's divine law, he was pronounced not guilty.

[20 : 32] He was justified. He was righteous in God's sight. He knew there and then that the case was dismissed. He was free to go. And Luther came to realize that he's free in Christ.

Free in Christ because his legal status in relation to God's law is that he's justified by faith. He is personally pronounced as righteous in God's sight because of his faith in Jesus Christ.

And you know that's what Paul is explaining to us here with the illustration of Abraham. He says that Abraham was righteous. He was a righteous man, righteous before God, not because he kept the commandments, not because he was circumcised, not because he performed acts of faith, not because he upheld the covenant.

No, Paul tells us here that Abraham's faith, it was counted to him for righteousness. Abraham's faith was counted to him for righteousness.

And we have to be clear, Abraham's faith wasn't accounted to him as righteousness because his faith was strong. Abraham's faith was accounted to him as righteousness because of the object of his faith.

[21 : 52] The object of his faith, and the object of Abraham's faith was the same object of our faith, Jesus Christ. Abraham looked by faith to what Jesus would do.

on the cross. We look by faith to what Jesus has done on the cross. But Jesus, he's still the object of our faith, and Jesus is the reason, the only reason why we are accounted as righteous in God's sight.

Because his righteousness, and this is what Paul is saying, his righteousness is the basis for our righteousness. Abraham's faith was accounted to him for righteousness.

And this word accounted or counted, it's key to understanding how we are made righteous before God. Because as we said, Paul's use of the language of the courtroom, he uses the language of the courtroom in order to describe the act of justification, where we're pronounced, personally pronounced, not guilty.

and we're personally pronounced as righteous in God's sight, because like Abraham, our faith is accounted to us as righteousness.

[23 : 11] And with this, Paul not only uses the language of the courtroom, he also uses the language of banking, where our sins, they are accounted, they are credited to the bank of Jesus Christ.

Our bank account is emptied of sin. When we have faith in Jesus, our bank account is empty of sin, the sin that condemns us under God's holy law, and that it's all taken and credited, accounted into the bank account of Jesus Christ.

And by faith, the righteousness of Christ, the righteousness in the bank account of Jesus, it's credited to our bankrupt account. And the reformers said that we are justified when the righteousness of Christ is imputed to our account.

That's what they call it. They call it imputation, imputed to our account. Christ's righteousness goes into our bank account. And the reformers, they stressed imputed righteousness because Roman Catholicism was stressing infused righteousness.

because infused righteousness taught that a sinner is gradually made righteous by their faith in Jesus and their acts of faith.

[24 : 35] But that often left the reformers with the same question. How do we know when we have done enough acts of faith to make ourselves righteous before God? And of course we don't. God. But that's not the teaching of the Bible.

Because Paul makes clear Abraham's faith was accounted to him. It was credited to him. It was imputed to him as righteousness. My friend, when Jesus Christ is the object of our faith, we are justified before a holy God.

Because when Jesus Christ became man, he fulfilled the righteous requirements of the law. He perfectly upheld and obeyed the moral law. He loved God with all his heart, mind, soul and strength and his neighbour as himself.

But more than that, in the obedience of Jesus, he kept the covenant for us. He endured the curse due to our sin on the cross. He endured all our anathemas.

He endured the hell that we deserve. And he had all our guilt, all our shame, all our wrongdoing, all our sin imputed to him. He made it his own.

[25 : 44] He took it upon himself. And because he became sin for us, all our righteousness, all his righteousness is ours. All his righteousness is ours.

It's imputed to us. And you know, that's the teaching of Paul in 2 Corinthians 5. He says, this is Calvary's great transaction. The greatest transaction.

You want a bank transaction? He says, this is it. He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

My friend, this is the glory of the gospel. That when we are justified, we are made righteous only by the righteousness of Christ, imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

faith alone. And if you're a Christian tonight, if your faith is in Jesus Christ alone, you know, you are as justified today as you will be on the day of judgment.

[26 : 58] You are as righteous as Jesus is, who sits at the right hand of God the Father. God. You are as righteous today as you will be when you are in glory in heaven.

That's because you are clothed in his righteousness, the righteousness of Christ. You know, the wonder of this personal proclamation of being made righteous, declared righteous, is that it never changes.

Our legal status with God, it never changes. it doesn't depend upon how often we sin or how we feel in ourselves or how weak we feel our faith is.

It doesn't depend upon us. It only depends upon what Jesus has done. My friend, our justification, it's not a matter of doing. It's never a matter of doing.

It's a matter of receiving. And in order to be justified, in order to be made righteous, as righteous as Jesus himself, we have to receive and we have to rest upon Jesus by faith alone.

[28 : 11] We have to rest upon Jesus for our salvation. Faith means trusting in the cross of Christ. And that's how we experience that personal peace.

The personal peace which Paul is speaking of here. And that's what I'd like us to consider lastly. We're looking at sola fide, faith alone, and we've seen that there's a personal problem.

We all want to do something to make ourselves righteous before God. But this reformation principle, it emphasizes that it's God who has done something to make us righteous. He's made a personal pronouncement in declaring us righteous through faith in Jesus Christ.

And it's when we have faith in Christ, when we have this personal pronouncement made, we are brought to experience that personal peace with God.

So a personal peace. Look again at chapter 5 at verse 1. He says, therefore since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[29 : 23] And you know, in his conclusion to the doctrine of justification, Paul highlights in this verse that when we are justified by faith, we will have peace with God. We will experience that personal peace with God that we so desperately need.

And as we said, this is what caused Luther to discover the beauty of justification. Because Luther, he didn't have peace with God. He didn't have assurance of his salvation.

He wanted peace with God and he was seeking it desperately. He didn't have assurance but he was earnestly searching for it. And for years, Luther had searched for peace and he had searched for assurance in himself.

He searched for peace and assurance in all his works, in all his efforts, in all his moral rectification, trying to live a good life and be the good person, trying to do the right thing, trying to be the best person he could be, always hoping, always praying that God would just accept him.

But what Luther came to discover was that the answer to his search for peace and assurance, it came from outside of himself. The object of his faith had to be Jesus Christ and not himself.

[30 : 47] And you know, that's the difference between being saved and being lost. that's the difference between someone who's a Christian and someone who's not. The object of our faith is the difference.

Because my friend, the reason, maybe if I can say this, the reason you're not a Christian tonight is maybe because you are the object of your faith.

You're the object of your faith. Your personal problem is that you're putting your own ability ability, your faith in your own ability to save yourself. You might not think you are, but if you're not putting your faith in Jesus Christ, then your faith is in self or it's in something that you love yourself.

Not that you love yourself, but that you love yourself. The thing that you're clinging to. When your faith is not in Jesus, it's in something else.

And you know, it's no wonder you don't have peace with God because your peace, it only comes through faith in Jesus Christ. So what is faith in Jesus Christ?

[32 : 05] What does believing in Jesus really mean? Or, how do I become a Christian? faith in faith? Well, there are two elements to having saving faith in Jesus Christ.

And the first is belief or assent. It's an intellectual commitment where you believe the truth of the Bible. Now, I know that most, if not all of you, you believe the truth of the Bible.

And so in order to determine whether or not you believe in Jesus Christ, in order to determine if you have this intellectual commitment to Jesus, I want you to answer the following questions in your mind.

You can answer them out loud if you want, but answer them in your mind. Do you believe that what you're hearing from God's word is the truth? Do you believe that God is the creator of the heavens and the earth?

Do you believe in the existence of sin? Do you believe that you're a sinner? Do you believe that Jesus is the only savior of sinners? Do you believe that Jesus was conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary?

[33 : 22] Do you believe that Jesus lived without sin? Do you believe that Jesus died upon the cross at Calvary in place of sinners by taking their sin upon himself?

Do you believe that Jesus rose from the dead? Do you believe that Jesus ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of his father and await the day where he will come again to judge the world?

If you have answered yes in your mind to every one of these questions, then there's no doubt you believe. You have intellectual assent.

You have intellectual commitment to the truths of the Bible. But as I said, there are two elements for having saving faith in Jesus Christ. The first is belief or assent.

It's intellectual commitment. The second is trust. Personal trust in Jesus. It's a personal commitment to Jesus Christ.

[34 : 29] And this element, it's not intellectual. intellectual. It's not of the head. It's of the heart. It's a personal trust in God as your father and Jesus Christ as your savior.

And as we said, saving faith, it looks outside of self. It looks away from self. It looks away from our own ability to save ourselves.

Saving faith trusts in Jesus Christ for our salvation. And the Bible says that when we trust in Jesus Christ for our salvation, we not only believe in our head, but we also believe in our heart.

And that belief in our heart, it causes us to come seeking Jesus. It causes us to turn from our sin to Jesus Christ.

It causes us to look away from self and look to Jesus Christ. My friend, saving faith, you could say, is directional because it moves towards Jesus.

[35 : 33] Saving faith is active. It's not static. It's mobile. It's not stationary. Saving faith is faith in, faith into, faith upon, faith towards Jesus.

My friend, saving faith trusts in Jesus. Saving faith casts everything into his hand. Saving faith rests upon his forgiveness.

Saving faith leans upon all his promises. My friend, saving faith, yes, it begins with intellect. It begins with the belief that in light of everything I know about Jesus, and everything I read about Jesus, and everything I hear about Jesus, I believe that this Jesus is trustworthy.

And because he is trustworthy, I know that I need to look outside of myself for my salvation. I know that I need to let go of self and trust in him alone.

Because I know that he's a good shepherd. I know that he's a faithful savior. I know that he's a great physician. And I know that he's willing to forgive me if I come to him.

[36 : 49] But I have to make this Jesus personal to me. By trusting in him wholeheartedly. I have to trust in Jesus as my shepherd.

I have to trust in Jesus as my faithful savior. I have to trust in Jesus as my great physician. I have to trust that Jesus is able and willing, more than willing, to forgive all my sin.

I have to trust in Jesus with all my heart. All my heart. Are you doing that, my friend?

Are you trusting in Jesus with all your heart? You may have intellectual commitment towards Jesus, but are you trusting in Jesus with all your heart?

And you might say to me, well, it's not as easy as that. It's not easy to trust Jesus with all my heart. But you only say that, my friend, because you can't let go of self.

[38 : 02] You're holding on to self. You've got to let go of self and lean and rest and receive and trust in Jesus.

And you know, I have to remind you that intellectual commitment to Jesus Christ, it's not enough. Intellectual assent, intellectual belief in Jesus is not enough.

And I say that because there are many people who have woken up in hell and they only had intellectual assent. sin. There are many people who went to hell even though they knew that Jesus was the savior of sinners.

But they went to hell because they didn't make Jesus their savior. They didn't take it to themselves because they were still holding on to self.

they didn't trust Jesus with all their heart. And my friend, you need to have this personal trust, this personal commitment to Jesus Christ.

[39 : 20] And that's why I'm saying it's personal because I can't make you do it. There are times and there are moments where I'd love to be able to save you myself, but I know I would do a rubbish job of it.

you have to come to Jesus yourself. You have to let go of self. And you have to trust in Jesus with all your heart.

Because it's only when you have that personal trust in Jesus that you will experience that personal peace, which Paul is speaking of here. That peace with God.

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. My friend, let go of self.

Just cling to Jesus. Trust in him. Trust, as Solomon says in Proverbs, trust in the Lord with all your heart. Lean not upon your own understanding.

[40 : 25] Don't lean upon your intellect, he's saying. Do not lean upon your own understanding, but in all your ways, acknowledge him, for he shall direct your path. Trust in him.

Trust in him and him alone. My friend, this reformation principle of sola fide, it's reminding us this evening that Jesus is a personal saviour.

He's a saviour who speaks to us personally and deals with us personally. because he shows us that we all have this personal problem. We all want to do something to make ourselves righteous, but it's God who has done something to make us righteous.

He's made a personal pronouncement by declaring us righteous through the death of his own son. And so the only thing we can do in order to experience this personal peace with God is to trust Jesus Christ with all our heart.

it's to trust him as our personal saviour. So my friend, trust him. Trust him with your life.

[41 : 36] Trust him with your death. Trust him with your eternal destiny. Well my friend, may Paul's statement be true of all of us.

Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Sola fide, faith alone.

May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks to thee for a reminder in thy word this evening that we have to say with a hymn writer that nothing in my hands I bring, but simply to thy cross I cling, that there is nothing we can present to thee, there is no boast we can make, no standing we can offer, but Lord to come empty handed and cling to Jesus, knowing that he is the one who was made sin for us, and that by trusting in him, by resting upon him, that we will receive that precious peace, the perfect peace that thou alone canst give.

O Lord, bless thy truth to us, we pray, implanted in our heart, and help us to leave this place changed and transformed, that each and every one of us would hear that voice, saying that we are not guilty, but we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

Cleanse us then, we pray, bind us together, and go before us for Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. We shall conclude by singing the words of Psalm 118.

[43 : 24] Psalm 118. We're singing verse 15, page 398, from verse 15 down to the verse marked 21. And the reason we're singing this psalm is because this was Martin Luther's favorite psalm.

And when we sing it in light of what we know about Martin Luther, it makes a lot more sense. In fact, Luther had the words of verse 17.

It said that he had them on a plaque in his study. I shall not die, but live, and shall the works of God discover. And what he had discovered was that he was made righteous in God's sight, through faith, faith alone.

And so we're singing Psalm 118 from verse 15. In dwellings of the righteous is heard the melody of joy and health. The Lord's right hand doth ever valiantly. The right hand of the mighty Lord exalted is on high.

The right hand of the mighty Lord doth ever valiantly. Down to the verse mark 21. To God's praise. praise. Amen. In dwellings of the righteous is heard the melody of joy and death.

[44 : 55] praise. The Lord's right hand, the pepper, the heavenly.

The right hand of the mighty Lord, exalted is on high.

The right hand of the mighty Lord, doth ever vivantly.

I shall not die, but live and shall the hearts of God discover.

The Lord hath me chastised so, but not to death give no one.

[46 : 16] For set ye open unto me the gates of righteousness.

Then will I enter into them, and I, the Lord who blest.

There exist the gates of God by it. The church shall enter in.

Here will I praise for the meekers, and hast my safety been.

Amen. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen.