

The STORY

October 28– November 2 The Story 31 Week



WEEK 5b:
Lectionary

Moses – An Excursus for the Reformation

Prayer: Preserve Your Church, O Lord, and each of us as members of Christ's Body, that we may not surrender the true Gospel for any reason, but be kept in this faith and fear throughout the days of our earthly pilgrimage, until that day when we and all Your people shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ to receive the reward You have prepared for us and all who have loved His appearing; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.** (<https://www.lcms.org/worship/three-year-series-prayers>)

This Weeks Bible Readings Would Suggest:

Monday – Romans 3-4, Tues. Genesis 15; Wed. Deuteronomy 7; Thurs. Psalm 46; Fri. Deuteronomy 4; Sat. & Sun. Matthew 11:12–19 & Matthew 28

If Time Allows: Read the Augsburg Confession (*Read the Original Confession that explains what the Reformation writers believed:* <https://bookofconcord.org/augsburg-confession/>)

Reformation Introduction: Sola Scriptura. Sola Gratia. Sola Fide. Solus Christus. Latin. Ironic, isn't it? A movement that resulted in the liturgy and the Bible in our language (not Latin) is remembered by Latin phrases. By Scripture alone, by grace alone, by faith alone. Through Christ alone. Alone. Without your help. Without human tradition. Without anyone's assistance. God acts alone through Jesus. Scripture. Given by God. Through which we receive Christ. Grace. Given by God. Through which we receive Christ. Faith. Given by God. Through which we receive Christ. Through Christ alone. God gives us all these gifts because of Jesus' death and resurrection. All good gifts come from God and benefit all those who believe. Through Christ alone. (<https://lutheranreformation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/ref500-Kit-Bulletin-Insert-3.pdf>)

About the Protestant Reformation

More than 500 years ago, the Protestant Reformation brought the church's focus back to God's free gift of salvation in Jesus Christ. On Oct. 31, 1517, Martin Luther posted the 95 Theses — the "Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences" — to the church door in a small city called Wittenberg, Germany. This event ignited the Protestant Reformation, and thus the Lutheran church officially commemorates this important anniversary on Oct. 31. Read the 95 Theses here:

<https://www.luther.de/en/95thesen.html>

Daily Bible Study:

1. *Monday – Read Romans 3 & 4* – These verses helped kick off the Reformation. Luther originally understood that the righteousness of God was really about us living a righteous life. Luther's revelation was that Romans 3 is really about Jesus living the perfect righteous life in our place, in other words the righteousness of God is given to us by grace. "When St. Paul writes that we are justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law, he is contrasting two distinct approaches to God: through "faith" or through "deeds of the law." The wider context of Romans reveals what is unstated in that sentence, namely, the object of faith (i.e., what or whom we are trusting), which is Jesus Christ. American culture believes people are justified by faith, too, but the object of that faith is quite different. The object of that faith is oneself, and belief in oneself is the key to achieving a kind of secular "salvation," namely, realizing the American dream. To believe in what your heart is saying is to believe in yourself. According to

Scripture, why can't a person always believe what the heart is saying? See Gen. 6:5, Jer. 17:9 and Matt. 15:19. Does the same verdict hold true for the Christian's heart?" (LCMS Bible Study - Unjustifiable Faiths - Participant Guide) Pastor Alex Smith writes, "Paul experiences that some of the Jews seem to think that circumcision is what saves them, so it is their work. How does God make it clear that we are justified by faith and not by work? Consider Abraham.

2. Tuesday – Read Genesis 15. The Story skipped Genesis 15 because it is an unusual story of God's covenant (promise) to Abram followed by a smoking fire pot passing between several halved animals. Literally God "cut a deal" with Abram! Back in Abram's day to make a deal you would cut an animal in half and then walk between the two halves and say, "I will do that to you (cut you in half) if you do not keep your end of the bargain." Notice, that only God passes through the two halves while Abram sleeps. Thank God that God alone cuts the deal, because if Abram participated he would have to earn his salvation by works! By God alone promising to give His gifts to Abram, God shows Abram he is saved by grace alone. Also note that Abram is not circumcised yet, thus showing the work of circumcision does not save either. Have you ever thought, "I have not been good enough to be saved?" Or, have you thought "I am good enough by what you do!" How does God stop such thinking by this reading?
3. Wednesday - Read Deuteronomy 7 - List what you could own, achieve, or create that would make you great, lovable, or admirable? What does God say matters to Him in His people (7:7-8)? What is God's affection based upon? Deuteronomy 7:7-8 is sometimes called the Ephesians 2:8-9 of the Old Testament. How does Deut. 7:11-12 mirror Ephesians 2:10? Consider that if you keep the law that life will go better and you will be blessed! List ways the law makes life go better.
4. Thursday - Read Psalm 46 – This Psalm is the underpinnings of Martin Luther's hymn "A Mighty Fortress is Our God!" List all which would pull you away from God. How does this Psalm assure you God will deal with your list?
5. Friday - Read Deuteronomy 6. List ways God's people in the Old Testament were to share the Word of God with each other. Now consider ways the New Testament shares the Word, namely the Gospel of Jesus. Martin Luther writes in the Smalcald Articles about five ways the Gospel is visibly shared: "We will now return to the Gospel, which not merely in one way gives us counsel and aid against sin; for God is superabundantly rich [and liberal] in His grace [and goodness]. First, through the spoken Word by which the forgiveness of sins is preached [He commands to be preached] in the whole world; which is the peculiar office of the Gospel. Secondly, through Baptism. Thirdly, through the holy Sacrament of the Altar. Fourthly, through the power of the keys, and also through the mutual conversation and consolation of brethren, Matt. 18:20: Where two or three are gathered together, etc." (Source: <https://bookofconcord.org/smalcald-articles/iii/of-the-gospel/>) How can you use all five ways mentioned? Mutual Conversation and Consolation = Christians talking to Christians.
6. Saturday & Sunday – Read Matt. 28. At the time of the Reformation, for example, Anabaptists taught that a person must be able to profess his or her faith before being baptized. Luther noted that such a requirement makes the Sacrament dependent upon a person's profession of faith rather than on God's command and the promises connected to Baptism. He criticized that practice, saying that such a person "trusts in and builds on something of his own, namely, on a gift which he has from God, and not on God's Word alone. So another may build on and trust in his strength, wealth, power, wisdom, holiness, which are also gifts from God" (See AE 40:252). What is the difference between "faith in faith" and "faith in God"? <https://lutheranreformation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ref500-Bible-Study-4-Subjective-1-Participants-Guide-1.pdf>