



“For all the promises of God find their Yes in Him. That is why it is through Him that we utter our Amen to God for His glory” 1 Corinthians 1:20.

God’s answer to our spiritual prayer is always “Yes” in Christ Jesus our Savior! God gives to us the forgiveness of sins in The Gospel which we receive through faith, a gift of God’s grace in Christ. Therefore, even when we are troubled by our sin and the devil accuses us, we cannot rely on ourselves through our emotions, actions or thoughts but are assured through what God has given us in Christ.

The month of October concludes with the celebration of The Reformation on the 31st as we praise God for the return to His Word in all of its truth and purity. The doctrine of justification by faith was restored to prominence within the church because it is the central doctrine of the Sacred Scriptures. Luther and the Reformers struggled to restore God’s Word as the only rule of faith and life on which we rely for the revelation of Christ our Savior; the way the truth and the life (John 14:6).

Justification is that **“God declares sinners righteous for Christ’s sake; that is, our sins have been imputed or charged to Christ, the Savior, and Christ’s righteousness has been imputed or credited to us”** (Q. 206, 2017 Catechism, CPH. *Quoted in the September newsletter*). Christ fully and completely pays for our sins on the cross without any work or worthiness of ours in any way. This is God’s grace that we are justified by God’s love and mercy through Christ and our sins are forgiven. Because we are justified by God’s grace, our sins are forgiven and we are assured that through the blood of Jesus, which He shed for us, we are made God’s own in our Baptism.

Once we are justified before God and have received His forgiveness, the devil, the sinful world and our own sinful flesh still war against us trying to drive us to doubt God’s promises and the forgiveness we have been given. However, we are assured through the merit and worthiness of Christ, His work of salvation on the cross, that our sins are forgiven and we belong to God’s kingdom by pure grace and mercy in Christ.

When Jesus was on the cross and He had received the sour wine given to Him, He said **“It is finished” (John 19:30)**, the work of redemption was complete. Nothing more is necessary from us to secure salvation for Christ has done everything necessary for our forgiveness, life and salvation. The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all of our sin and we are made members of God’s kingdom.

God’s promises are always “Yes” for us in Christ as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1:20 which teaches that we belong to God and our sins are forgiven in the spoken Word, Holy Baptism, Absolution and The Lord’s Supper. **“The words and promises of Christ are sure and certain, no matter how badly I (we) have fallen short of righteousness. This Gospel is more than simple information; it actually delivers to us the forgiveness of sins, and eternal life in Jesus” (Q. 209 C, 2017 Catechism, CPH)**. As stated in last month’s newsletter, the Bible is not simply a “rule-book” nor is it simply a guide to Jesus. Rather, the Bible, God’s Sacred Word, gives Jesus to us whom we need for our salvation. This gives us the most comforting assurance that our sins are forgiven and we will receive eternal life in heaven with Christ. Moreover, we **“firmly cling to this teaching because it is the most important Christian teaching, the center of our faith which distinguishes Christianity from all other religions that teach salvation by works. This teaching gives the repentant sinner great comfort and glorifies God for His grace given in Christ (Q. 210 2017 Catechism, CPH)**.

As we celebrate God’s gifts to us in October with the Reformation celebration, we praise God for His great love for us in Christ . Even when our doubts assail us and fears seem to overwhelm, we are assured that nothing can sever God’s love for us in Christ; for by grace we are saved! (Ephesians 2:8-9)

**By grace to timid hearts that tremble,
In tribulation’s furnace tried-
By grace, despite all fear and trouble,
The Father’s heart is open wide.
Where could I help and strength secure
If grace were not my anchor sure? TLH 373: 6**

In Christ, Pastor Ahrendt