

The History of the Reformation...



HOW
CHRIST
RESTORED
THE GOSPEL
TO HIS
CHURCH

Rome and Romans Martin Luther

In order to properly understand the importance of Luther's journey to Rome in the winter of 1510, it is important to understand something of the place and standing of indulgences in medieval Catholicism. I bring that up even though indulgences were not, in fact, the reason Luther went to Rome. At the time, Luther was an up and coming young priest in his order and he accepted the Catholic Church's teaching regarding indulgences without reservations of any kind. His opposition to indulgences would come later and when it finally did come it was really only directed toward those scandalous abusers of the practice like Tetzl.

No it would be later, much later in fact, before Luther would finally call into question the sacrament of penance and the whole concept of indulgences.

You see when Luther visited Rome in the winter of 1510, he longed to obtain for himself and for those he loved just about any and every indulgence he could.

Still that is not the principal reason he went.

Actually, when Luther went to Rome in 1510, it wasn't because of indulgences ...it was rather because he was sent. He was sent as one of two representatives for his monastical order, the Order of the Augustinian Hermits. He was sent along with another monk to represent one side of a conflict over how the Order of the Augustinian Hermits ought to be organized and governed. Now the details of that conflict aren't very important. Besides, Luther wasn't even the principal representative or leader on the trip. He was the junior partner...in fact, he was simply a traveling partner...the Augustinians required monks travel in pairs. But that was all right with Luther. His secondary role allowed him a good deal of free time to see and to explore the glories of Rome.

Now when Luther visited Rome in the winter of 1510, he wasn't really interested in any of the great archaeological sites tourists want to see today. He wasn't really interested in the Roman Forum or even the Pantheon. No, when Luther visited Rome in the winter of 1510, he was only interested in the great ecclesiastical sites. That is, he was only interested in seeing for himself those religious shrines and holy places that provided opportunities to do works of penance and to gain indulgences. That is why, of course, I mentioned the fact that to understand the importance of Luther's trip you have to understand something of the nature and place of penance and indulgences in medieval Catholicism. You see...many...most of the religious shrines and holy places in Rome had indulgences attached to them. When a person visited such a shrine and listened to a mass...made confession and received communion, they were eligible to obtain whatever indulgence was attached to the place. The indulgence they received then reduced the amount of time or temporal punishment that person or whatever person they designated in their place would receive in purgatory. As a result, Luther's journey to Rome, more or less, took on the nature of a quest...a pilgrimage...meaning that Luther

was striving to obtain as many indulgences as he could. So, Luther wanted to see everything. Of course, what actually happened was that he saw and learned a great many things that disappointed him. But before I talk about that, I think I ought to take just a minute or two and put into your mind something of the difficulty of Luther's journey to Rome.

The trip from Erfurt to Rome is six hundred and thirty-four miles by air. But, of course, Luther did not take the trip by air. Nor did he travel by coach or wagon or even by mule. No, Luther walked...he walked the whole long way. Just so you can get a sense of the kind of distance we are talking about...the trip from Erfurt to Rome is just about exactly the same distance as a trip from Arlington to Denver.

Of course the walk in his day would have actually been a lot longer than six hundred and thirty-four miles and the principal reason for the additional mileage was that Luther would not have been able to walk in a straight line from Erfurt to Rome. There was a small obstacle in his way...a small geological obstacle otherwise known as the Swiss Alps¹.

Now during their trip, Luther and his companion would have walked from one major city or town to the next. In that regard they would have been fortunate. Larger towns had monasteries and since they were monks, they would have been permitted and even welcomed to stay in any number of monasteries along the way and that would have been important because it would have resolved the problem of food and shelter for them. Of course, they would not have always been able to make it from one monastery to the next in a day's journey and would have had to sometimes manage for themselves.

Now, I mentioned the Alps a moment ago but I ought to add that in Luther's day, travelers did not especially enjoy scenic trips through the mountains like we do today. That would have been especially true in winter. The travel would have been dangerous and it was grueling. The Septimer Pass heading down to Milan was lined with a number, perhaps hundreds, of crosses where travelers had been killed along the way.² Many of the wilder spots in the Alps were so terrifying they were given names of places from hell.³ Still, the two monks made it in one piece.

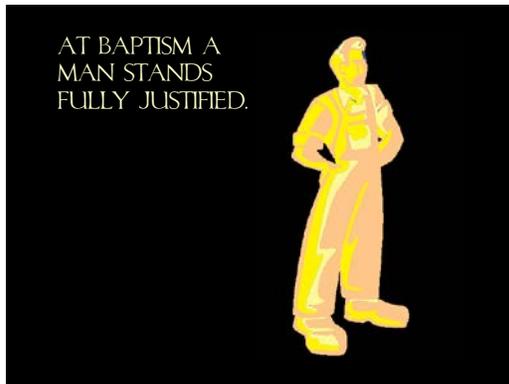
Right before the two men reached Rome, Luther had to be hospitalized for a stomach ailment. Still, the two men managed to make it to Rome in just a little over a month, which if you think about it was really not bad at all. That meant that they averaged about twenty to twenty-five miles a day.

Now I bring that up, not because I want you to become experts on travel in medieval times but rather because I want you to understand something of the personal sacrifice involved when pilgrims traveled in Luther's day. It was a terrifying undertaking and it was exhausting. It was dangerous and the danger was not just related to thieves and robbers but to disease, and to difficult geography and to inclement weather. Now that raises the question, **"Why would anyone purposely want to go through that kind of journey?"**

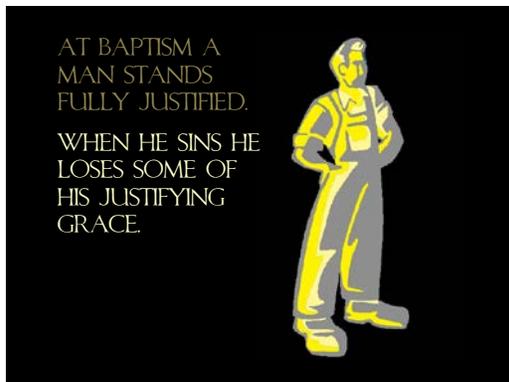
The answer is that the medieval Catholic believed the spiritual rewards associated with such a trip were great. Individuals could, by making a pilgrimage, do works of penance that that would restore the baptismal grace they had lost in committing sin. They could also obtain indulgences, indulgences which helped do away the debt of temporal punishment...owed for sin.

Now the reason that happened...the reason penance and indulgences were important...was because medieval Catholics viewed justification like this.

They believed that at baptism a person received the grace of baptism and that a person was restored to a state of innocence.

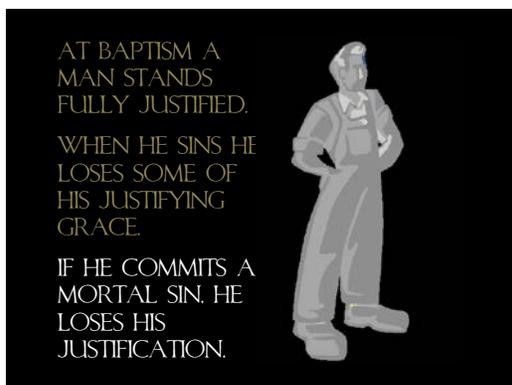


They also believed that after that whenever a person sinned a measure of that justifying grace was lost.

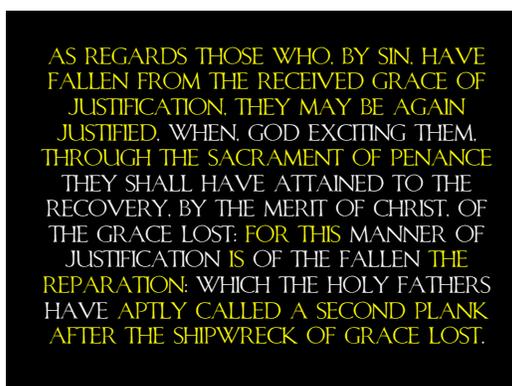


Over a period of time, a person committing a measure of sin lost more and more of their justifying grace. It is almost as if they viewed grace as a substance that **“leaked out”** when a person sinned...something like water out of a bathtub. Now

if a person committed a mortal sin...all of the grace they had received in their baptism was lost.



The question then became and this was a very important question...what does a person do to restore themselves to the state of grace they had before. The answer was they were to do works of penance. The Council of Trent put it this way...



As regards those who, by sin, have fallen from the received grace of Justification, they may be again justified, when, God exciting them, through the sacrament of Penance they shall have attained to the recovery, by the merit of Christ, of the grace lost: for this manner of Justification is of the fallen the reparation: which the holy Fathers have aptly called a second plank after the shipwreck of grace lost.⁴

Now to state that as plainly as I can, the Catholic Church taught that when a person sinned they lost the grace that they had first obtained in their baptism. It also taught that a person could restore themselves to a state of grace by doing works of penance. Penance then was a sacrament in that it was the vehicle through which God's grace was received, or perhaps it would be better to say received all over again. God's grace was first obtained in baptism and then if lost reattained through penance.

Now I am spending some time here because I want to distinguish in your minds the difference between doing works of penance and procuring an indulgence. Penance had to do with justification. That is penance removed the penalty of eternal punishment.

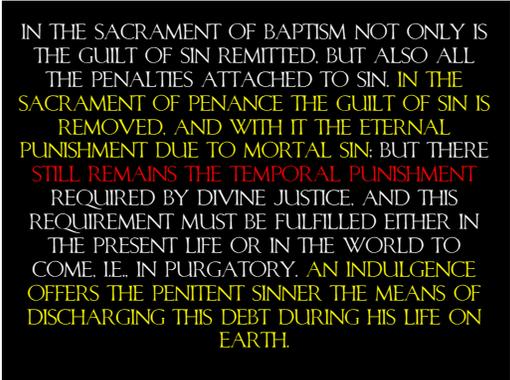
Indulgences, on the other hand, removed the penalty of temporal sin.

Now that is hard for a good Protestant to grasp. We do not separate the two ideas. We believe that Jesus' death redeemed us from the temporal and eternal punishment of our sin. Although, we do freely acknowledge that God does sometimes chasten us temporally for our sin. Still, that is not how good medieval Catholics looked at it. They believed that sin had to be paid for both eternally and temporally. They believed that baptism and penance removed the eternal punishment for sin. But they believed that purgatory removed the temporal punishment of sin. That is, a fully justified person might not go straight into heaven until the temporal punishment of their sins was obtained.

That is what indulgences did. They sped up or in some cases removed the temporal punishment of sin in purgatory. Now that is not always what people heard. Sometimes on account of their ignorance or on account of the unscrupulous

nature of the person hawking indulgences people heard, **“Commit whatsoever sin you desire and obtain forgiveness for it.”** But that was never the official position of the church. Still that happened and it happened, I think, a good deal more than the modern church is willing to admit.

Now in case you think I am being unfair in my explanation of the difference between **“penances”** and **“indulgences”** let me read to you a quote from the on-line Catholic Encyclopedia.



IN THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM NOT ONLY IS THE GUILT OF SIN REMITTED, BUT ALSO ALL THE PENALTIES ATTACHED TO SIN. IN THE SACRAMENT OF Penance THE GUILT OF SIN IS REMOVED, AND WITH IT THE ETERNAL PUNISHMENT DUE TO MORTAL SIN; BUT THERE STILL REMAINS THE TEMPORAL PUNISHMENT REQUIRED BY DIVINE JUSTICE, AND THIS REQUIREMENT MUST BE FULFILLED EITHER IN THE PRESENT LIFE OR IN THE WORLD TO COME, I.E. IN PURGATORY. AN INDULGENCE OFFERS THE PENITENT SINNER THE MEANS OF DISCHARGING THIS DEBT DURING HIS LIFE ON EARTH.

In the Sacrament of Baptism not only is the guilt of sin remitted, but also all the penalties attached to sin. In the Sacrament of Penance the guilt of sin is removed, and with it the eternal punishment due to mortal sin; but there still remains the temporal punishment required by Divine justice, and this requirement must be fulfilled either in the present life or in the world to come, i.e., in Purgatory. An indulgence offers the penitent sinner the means of discharging this debt during his life on earth.⁵

Now you can see, I think, why Luther’s trip to Rome was important for Luther.

Listen to what Richard Friedenthal writes:

The city of Rome was the goal of every devout pilgrim. To go there guaranteed a large indulgence. To have seen the holy places was for many the most ardent

desire and the greatest experience of their lives. Such must have been the attitude of the young Father Luther.⁶

When Luther first gained sight of the City of Rome he fell to the ground and shouted out, **“Holy Rome, I salute thee!”**⁷

There were all kinds of opportunities to obtain indulgences in Rome but not only was it possible to obtain an indulgence, it was possible to obtain a plenary indulgence, which meant that not just a part but the whole of temporal punishment could be discharged simply by visiting a shrine and listening to mass while there and making confession and receiving communion.

It was common for pilgrims to not only obtain an indulgence for themselves but also for their family members. This was especially true for priests...who sought for themselves the right to say mass in any shrine they could for saying the Mass for themselves gained them additional merit. Luther was to say later and you have to understand the way Luther was to get this, **“Oh! how I regret that my father and mother are still alive! What pleasure I should have in delivering them from the fire of purgatory by my masses, my prayers, and by so many other admirable works!”**⁸

Anyway, Luther visited all of the shrines...that is, all of the important ones...including the seven major churches of Rome. We don't have anything like a daily log of his travels but we know enough to know that he hit all of the major spots. Luther was terrified at the lack of spirituality and decorum manifested by the Italian priests. He disliked them immensely and they returned the favor...thinking of him as lumbering, German oaf.

In one of the places where Luther was permitted to say Mass, one of the priests...the priest superintending the visitors who were performing the ceremony kept whispering, "**Passa, passa, passa...**" which is Italian for "**Hurry it up...get a move on.**" It irritated Luther immensely. But the Italians were used to visiting priests and the long lines of priests wanting to say Mass caused them to want to keep things moving. Richard Marius writes:

Roman priests like Christian priests everywhere at the time were paid to say masses for the souls of the dead. They sped along, Luther said, as if doing a trick...⁹

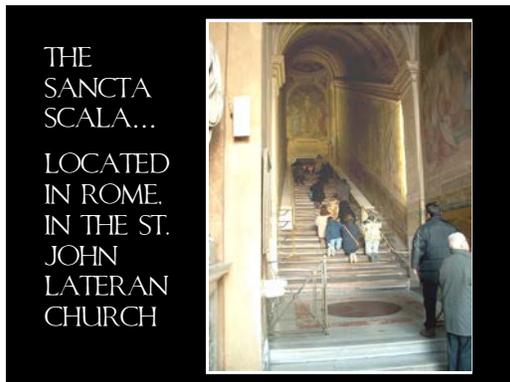
Luther, of course, was outraged that they lacked the same sense of reverence toward the Mass that he had come to know and love in Germany. He actually said their actions made him want to vomit. On the other hand, they were annoyed that he was such an idealist.

In another place, Luther recounted that one of the priests next to him had completed seven masses while he was still working on his first. The priest turned and spoke sharply to him saying, "**Hurry up and send the Son back to His mother.**"¹⁰

And in another place, when Luther was eating supper with a group of Italian priests he heard them brag openly about substituting in the Mass at the place where they were supposed to consecrate the bread these words, "**Panis es, et panis manebis; vinum es, et vinum manebis.**" Now, for a good Catholic such would have been blasphemous. What they were saying was, "**Bread thou art and bread thou wilt remain.**" The Luther added that the priests went ahead and offered the bread up for the adoration of the common people laughing all the while at their ignorance and superstition. It infuriated Luther. He later wrote,

I was a thoughtful and pious young monk. Such language grieved me bitterly. If 'tis thus they speak at Rome, freely and publicly at the dinner table, *wondered* I to myself, what would it be if... all — pope, cardinals, and courtiers — thus repeat the mass!¹¹

But the behavior of the priests was really just a reflection of the lawlessness of the times. Many of the churches surrounding Rome were very difficult to get to because of bands of marauders that often swooped down on pilgrims robbing them of their money and offerings. In fact, while Luther was in Rome the situation had gotten so bad that the Pope had begun to send out a nightly patrol of three hundred horsemen to patrol the city. If they found anyone out on the roads they were punished. If they were armed they were immediately hung or thrown into the Tiber River.¹²



Now the most famous incident of Luther's stay in Rome occurred as he climbed the Sancta Scala in one of pilgrimages.¹³

It was one of the most important shrines in all of Rome. It was staircase and it was believed to be the very staircase Christ ascended and descended in His appearance before Pilate.

Now does any question come to mind with me saying that?

It should. Jesus ascended and descended the steps up to Pilate, if there were any steps, not in Rome but in Jerusalem and Jerusalem is 1,428 miles to the east. So the question that ought to come to your mind is, **“Just how did a very large marble staircase wind up 1,428 miles away from where it was first installed?”** The answer to that question has been different in different ages. In Luther’s day, it was believed to have been magically transported from Jerusalem to Rome by angels. In our day, the faithful say St. Helen, who happened to be Constantine’s mother paid to have it removed and reinstalled in Rome.

Anyway, the *Sancta Scala* was enclosed in a small chapel just outside the church of St. John the Lateran. Pilgrims came from everywhere to climb the staircase on their knees and to kiss the steps and to pray an **“Our Father.”** Each step gained for the faithful pilgrim and indulgence of 9 years...that is, it removed nine years from a person’s stay in purgatory. There were certain steps that had crosses carved into them and each of those counted double. If a person climbed the whole staircase, and who could not climb the whole thing once there, procured for themselves or someone they loved a plenary indulgence, which meant a complete indulgence or release from all of the temporal punishment of sin to be suffered in Purgatory. Luther climbed the steps, all twenty-eight steps on his knees, kissing each step as he went and saying the necessary **“Our Father”** not for himself but for the benefit of his deceased grandfather.¹⁴

When he got to the top and turned and looked back down his son Paul later wrote that Luther said to himself, **“The just shall live by faith.”** But I have to tell you I don’t think that is what he said at all. I don’t think he had come to that conclusion

yet. In fact, I think he was still about five years away from his breakthrough understanding of the gospel. Besides, Luther himself says later that he stood up looked back down the staircase and said to himself, **“Who can know if these things are so?”**¹⁵

Now that was, I think, a remarkable conclusion for medieval Catholic monk to draw.

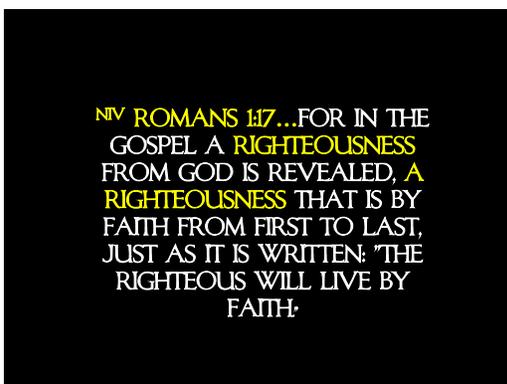
Luther had come to Rome with an innocence and naiveté and he was going back home to Erfurt a **better, wiser, sadder man**. Later he would say, He came to Rome with garlic and left with onions...which I think amounts to about the same thing. Now, I don't want you to get the wrong idea. Luther was not yet a reformer...but the Lord had planted seeds of disillusion in his mind. He was no Protestant...he was still in every way a Catholic...but the Lord had started a rumbling deep down in his soul and the Lord intended that disillusionment to grow until Luther was altogether miserable. It would be necessary for the Lord to hollow Luther out completely before he would be able to receive and hold the truth of the doctrine of justification for himself. And Rome had helped to push that process along. Luther was no longer quite so naive but he still believed in the medieval Catholic Church. He still believed that all that was needed was a strong reforming Pope to come in a sweep all the unbelief and unbelievers and put an end to all the abuses. But alas, that was not what was going to happen. The pope of the future, Leo X, was exactly the opposite of what Luther hoped for. The abuses were going to get worse and then the gospel was going to break in on Luther and subsequently on the whole world.

Still Luther could not yet see it coming. Still, he was hopeful that things might be made right.

A month after he and his traveling companion had arrived in Rome, they set off again across the Alps and back to Erfurt. When Luther arrived he was transferred almost immediately to Wittenberg, which a very small town in comparison to Erfurt. He was transferred, I think, because Von Staupitz wanted Luther's talent near him and he himself had been transferred to Wittenberg to take the theological chair at the new university. Luther was able to finish his doctorate work there and on October 18-19, 1512 he graduated as a Doctor of Holy Scripture.

Within the year, Von Staupitz switched him from teaching philosophy to teaching the Bible. Luther started first with the Psalms and then followed the Psalms with Paul's Epistle to the Romans. After that, he began to teach Galatians. Somewhere, during the Epistle to the Romans he came to his understanding of the gospel.

Now, the conflict for Luther and the breakthrough for Luther came in the word "righteousness" as it is used in Romans 1:17.



NIV ROMANS 1:17...FOR IN THE
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^{NIV} **Romans 1:17**...For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "**The righteous will live by faith.**"

Now what Luther struggled to understand was what Paul meant by the righteousness of God. You see, the way scholars understood it in that day was that it was the righteousness God demanded and from an introspective, slightly neurotic monk, the righteousness God demanded was a terrifying thing. Later Luther would say this:

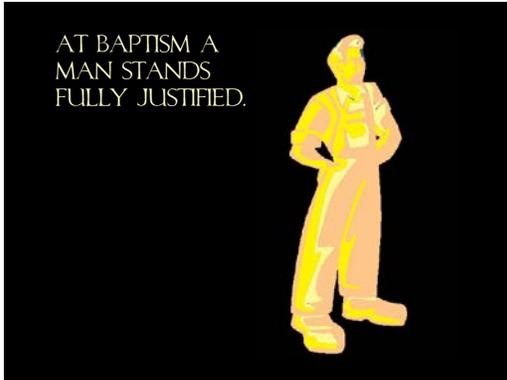
I had indeed been captivated with an extraordinary ardor for understanding Paul in the Epistle to the Romans. But...a single word in Chapter 1...stood in my way. For I hated that word "**righteousness of God,**" which, according to the use and custom of all the teachers, I had been taught to understand *as that* righteousness...with which God is righteous and punishes the unrighteous sinner.

Though I lived as a monk without reproach, I felt that I was a sinner before God...I did not love, yes, I hated the righteous God who punishes sinners...Thus I raged with a fierce and troubled conscience. Nevertheless, I beat importunately upon Paul at that place...desiring to know what St. Paul wanted.

At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I gave heed to the context of the words, namely, "**In it the righteousness of God is revealed, as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live.'**" There I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith...*it is* the righteousness of God revealed by the gospel, *that is*, the passive righteousness with which merciful God justifies us by faith...Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates...And I extolled my sweetest word with a love as great as the hatred with which I had before hated the word "**righteousness of God.**" Thus that place in Paul was for me truly the gate to paradise.¹⁶

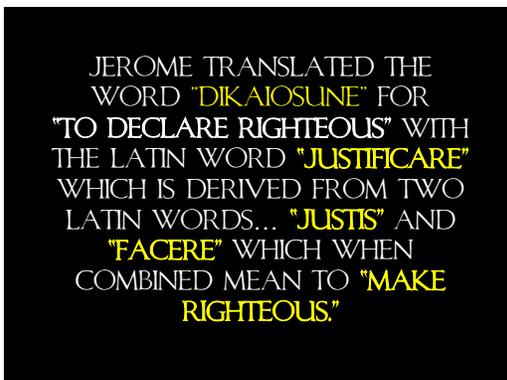
You see the reason for Luther's confusion...the reason for much of medieval Catholicism's confusion centered in the fact that they believed at baptism a person was made intrinsically righteous...that is, they believed a person was actually

made holy on the inside. I think if you want to understand Luther's battle you ought to keep this image in mind.



What that meant practically was that baptism and penance for medieval Catholicism was the key. Baptism made a person intrinsically righteous and penance provided an opportunity to restore righteousness lost through sin.

Now, part of the misunderstanding stemmed back to Jerome's translation of the Latin Vulgate. Whenever he translated the word for "to justify" he used the word Latin word "justificare" which is derived from two Latin words..."justis" and "facere" which when combined mean to "make righteous."



^{NIV} **Romans 3:28**...For we maintain that a man is **justified** by faith apart from observing the law.

The problem with that was that the underlying Hebrew and Greek words for “**to justify**” both carried the nuance “**to declare righteous**” rather than “**to make righteous.**”

I hope you can see why that matters. If not maybe this will help. I am reading from Alister McGrath’s *Reformation Thought*.

What is Luther talking about in this famous passage, which vibrates with the excitement of discovery? It is obvious that his understanding of the phrase the ‘**righteousness of God**’ has changed radically. But what is the nature of this change?

The basic change is fundamental. Originally Luther regarded the precondition for justification as a human work, something which the sinner had to perform, before he or she could be justified. Increasingly convinced, through his reading of Augustine, that such an act was *impossible*, Luther could *only understand* the righteousness of God...as a punishing righteousness. But in this passage, he narrates how he discovered a ‘**new**’ meaning of the phrase — a righteousness which God gives to the sinner. In other words, God himself meets *His own demand*, graciously giving sinners what *He requires them to have* if they are to be justified. An analogy may help...

Let us suppose that you are in prison, and are offered your freedom on condition that you pay a heavy fine. The promise is real — so long as you can meet the precondition, the promise will be fulfilled. *Catholic theology worked* on the presupposition, initially shared by Luther, that you have the necessary money stashed away somewhere. As your freedom is worth far more than the money, you are being offered a bargain. So you pay the fine. This presents no difficulties so long as you have the necessary resources. But Luther increasingly came to share the view of Augustine that sinful humanity just doesn’t have *any money*. *In that regard, Luther was correctly reading the Bible’s analysis of man’s condition*. Now, you can see why that caused Luther a problem. Since sinners you don’t have the

money, the promise of freedom *have any* relevance to their situation. For Luther, therefore, *and for Augustine before him*, the good news of the gospel is that you have been *given* the necessary money with which to buy your freedom. In other words, the precondition has been met for you by someone else.

Luther's insight, which he describes in this autobiographical passage, is that the God of the Christian gospel is not a harsh judge who rewards individuals according to their merits, but a merciful and gracious God who bestows righteousness upon sinners as a gift.¹⁷

Now that was Luther's discovery, rather his rediscovery of the gospel. It was not, however, Luther's gift to the church.

It is the gift of the Lord Jesus to all those that call on Him in faith and I wonder this morning...I wonder if even here there might not be someone that is still trying to work their way into God's favor...or trying to work their best to keep God's favor. If you are, you never going to make it. You are never going to attain to a level of righteousness that will please Him because all your righteousness, not all you sin...but all your righteousness is as filthy rags. But He has promised if anyone will come to Him He'll not turn them away.

^{NIV} **Matthew 11:28...**"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

Now do you know what that means? It means he'll rest you from pursuing righteousness to gain God's favor. It means he'll give you His own imputed righteousness to cover you over like a pure white garment and that He'll make you to be at peace with God. That's what Luther rediscovered and what Paul preached and what many of us have come to know experientially. You can know it too, if you don't...just come...not by works but by faith.

Let's pray.

¹ "Alps" taken from Dictionary.com...A mountain system of south-central Europe, about 805 km (500 mi) long and 161 km (100 mi) wide, curving in an arc from the Riviera on the Mediterranean Sea through northern Italy and southeast France, Switzerland, southern Germany, and Austria and into the northwest part of the Balkan Peninsula. The highest peak is Mont Blanc, 4,810.2 m (15,771 ft), on the French-Italian border.

² Richard Friedenthal, *Luther and His Times*, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1967), 77.

³ *Ibid*, 77.

⁴ Council of Trent, Chapter XIV: On the Fallen and Their Restoration.

⁵ Taken from the article in the On-line Catholic Encyclopedia on "Indulgences."
Cf. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07783a.htm>

⁶ Friedenthal, 77.

⁷ J. H. Merle D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the 16th Century*, Book 2, Chapter 6, 215.

⁸ D'Aubigne, 217.

⁹ Ricahrd Marius, *Martin Luther; The Christian Between God and Man*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), 82. He writes: "The city swarmed with prostitutes, some living in elegant palaces, frequented by members of the high clergy and treated as grandes dames. They came from everywhere in western Europe. Homosexuality among the clergy was common, acknowledged by many Italians, its practice by clergy high and low later condemned by Pope Leo K Pope Julius II was said to suffer from syphilis, the new disease From the New World, and he was accused by some close to him of homosexuality. The streets were made dangerous by beggars, many of them vagabond monks crowding into the city to live off the tourist traffic.

Luther was most shocked by the irreligion of Rome. Italian priests, he said, scorned those who believed all the scripture, a declaration that seems to indicate the progress of skepticism that may have come from humanistic study of classical texts. Many, he said, did not believe in a life after death. Nor did they take seriously the daily religious rituals that provided most with their living. Luther claimed that he went to mass time and again and was shocked by the irreverence of officiating priests—which made him want to vomit. "**Bread thou art, and bread thou shalt remain,**" they chanted in Latin at the altar, mocking the doctrine of transubstantiation and by extension the tradition of the church and the notion of the unseen world. Roman priests like Christian priests everywhere at the time were paid to say masses for the souls of the dead. They sped along, Luther said, as if doing a trick, and when he took his turn at the altar to say his own mass, slowly in the pious German way, the next priest in line hissed, "**Get on with it! Get on!**"

¹⁰ D'Aubigne, 217.

¹¹ D'Aubigne, 218.

¹² Friedenthal, 82.

¹³ James Strong & John McClintock, "Scala Sancta" in the *Cyclopedia Of Biblical, Theological And Ecclesiastical Literature*. "(Ital. for *holy stair*), a celebrated staircase, consisting of twenty-eight white marble steps, in a little chapel of the Church of St. John Lateran at Rome. Romanists assert that this is the staircase which Christ several times ascended and descended when he appeared before Pilate, and that it was carried by angels from Jerusalem to Rome. Multitudes of pilgrims creep up the steps of the Scala Santa on their knees with roses in their hands, kissing each step as they ascend. On reaching the top, they repeat a prayer. The performance of this ceremony is regarded as being particularly meritorious, entitling the devout pilgrim to plenary indulgence. It was while thus ascending these holy stairs that Luther thought he heard the words "The just shall live by faith," and, mortified at the degradation to which his superstition had brought him, fled from the spot."

¹⁴ Marius, 83.

¹⁵ D. Martin Luther, *Werke*, 67 vols. (Weimar: Hermann Bohlaus Nachfolger, 1883–1997) See Volume 51:89. As noted by Marius, 83.

¹⁶ Martin Luther, *Luther's works, vol. 34: Career of the Reformer IV* edited by J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann (Fortress Press: Philadelphia, 1960; reprinted 1999), 336-7.

¹⁷ Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1988), 95-6.