



## SERMON REFLECTION QUESTIONS – October 29, 2023

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**Sermon Title:** 'The Restless Heart of Martin the Monk'  
**Sermon Series:** 'Tell Me a Story ...'  
**Scripture:** Romans 1:16-17  
**Preacher:** Rev. Dr. Bryan Eckelmann

**Theme/Concept:** Brother Martin fully dedicated himself to monastic life, the effort to do good works to please God and to serve others through prayer for their souls. Yet peace with God escaped him. He devoted himself to fasts, flagellations, long hours in prayer and pilgrimages, and constant confession. But the more he tried to do for God, it seemed, the more aware he became of his sinfulness. The demands of study for academic degrees and preparation for delivering lectures drove Martin Luther to study the Scriptures in depth. Luther immersed himself in the teachings of the Scripture and the early church. Slowly, terms like penance and righteousness took on new meaning. With joy, Luther now believed and taught that salvation is a gift of God's grace, received by faith and trust in God's promise to forgive sins for the sake of Christ's death on the cross. This, he believed was God's work from beginning to end.

**Icebreaker:** (if with a small group) Have you ever taken a leap of faith? Perhaps with your family, in school, in your career or other situation? What resulted?

**Reflections on the sermon:** What point in the sermon resonated most with you?

**Background Scripture:** Romans 1:16-17 (New International Version)

<sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. <sup>17</sup> For 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."

## Reviewing the Scripture:

1. In verse 16, Paul states that he is not ashamed of the Gospel. What did he mean by that? What are some of the hardships endured by Paul that showed his boldness to preach the Gospel? For example, see Acts 14:19, Acts 16:22-24, 2 Corinthians 11:23-28, and 2 Corinthians 12:5-10.
2. What is it, according to Paul, that makes the Gospel so effective? What else does the Bible say about the power of God's Word? For example, see Isaiah 55:11, Hebrews 4:12, 1 Peter 1:23, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, and 2 Timothy 3:16.
3. To whom does God grant salvation? (Verse 16) What does it mean, 'first to the Jew, then to the Gentile,' as stated in verse 16?
4. What does verse 17 say is revealed in the Gospel and what is its connection to faith?
5. In your own words, how would you explain 'righteousness? How does a person become righteous? (Verse 17)
6. What are two things we can learn about the Gospel from these two verses?
7. After many years of being of being plagued by uncertainty and doubt regarding his salvation, and through study and prayer, Martin Luther ultimately concluded that salvation was a gift of God's grace, received by faith and trust in God's promise to forgive sins for the sake of Christ's death on the cross. How was this conclusion dramatically different from what was being taught and practiced at that time?
8. What did Martin Luther post on the door of the castle church in Wittenberg, Germany on October 31, 1517? What was the subject matter of the post and what was the result?
9. How did Martin Luther express his view of salvation in verse 2 of the song he wrote, entitled 'A Mighty Fortress Is Our God':

Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing,  
Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing:  
You ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He;  
Lord Sabaoth, His Name, from age to age the same,  
And He must win the battle.

**Going deeper:**

1. Have you ever been 'ashamed' of the gospel? If so, what are some of the reasons you have felt that way?
2. Is it possible that you doubt God's power when you refrain from sharing the Gospel? If so, how might Paul's understanding of the Gospel expressed in Romans 1:16-17 help you overcome this feeling?
3. What does it mean for you to know that you have received God's grace as a gift rather than through anything you have done to earn it? Are there any areas in your life where you need to let go and trust more in God's grace?
4. For what reasons are you confident that the Gospel is true?
5. What might it look like to mutually encourage one another to share the Gospel? Is there someone who seems unreachable that you can start to pray for this week?

**Closing prayer:**

Dear Father-

We praise you Father that you loved us so much to send your son to die a gruesome death for our sins. Help us to live with confidence knowing that we are assured of salvation through the gift of your grace, received by faith and trust in your promise to forgive sins for the sake of Christ's death on the cross. Help us to share this Good News with those around us both by our words and our actions.

In Jesus name, AMEN