

Grace ②



Completed
Merit

Atonement

Promise ①
in
Word and
Sacraments

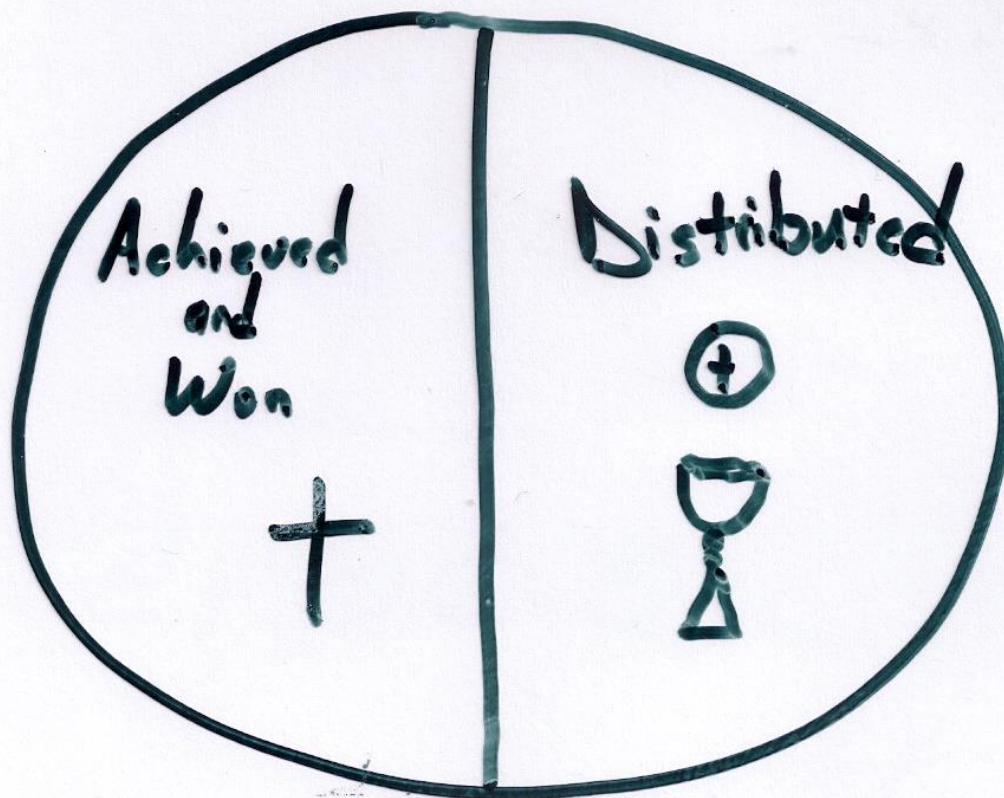
"Whoever believes
will be saved."



Faith

Justification

Scripture
Lutheran Confessions



III. The Three Items connected with Justifying Faith¹

Now let us examine the Promise of God. Returning to the sub-section within Article IV of The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, entitled, "*What Is Justifying Faith?*" it speaks of those three items that are to be kept together. (*I have added the numbers for future reference*)

53] As often, therefore, as we speak of justifying faith, we must keep in mind that these three objects concur: (1) the *promise*, and (2) that, too, *gratuitous*, and (3) the *merits of Christ, as the price and propitiation*. (1) The promise is received by faith; (2) the "gratuitous" excludes our merits, and signifies that the benefit is offered only through mercy; (3) the merits of Christ are the price, because there must be a certain propitiation for our sins. 54] Scripture frequently implores mercy; and the holy Fathers often say that we 55] are saved by mercy. As often, therefore, as mention is made of mercy, we must keep in mind that faith is there required, which receives the promise of mercy. And, again, as often as we speak of faith, we wish an object to be understood, namely, the promised mercy. 56] For faith justifies and saves, not on the ground that it is a work in itself worthy, but only because it receives the promised mercy.²

Beginning with the second item, we learn that this "promise" to give out the "merits of Christ" is not a promise based on the merit of the Law, but upon the gratuitous mercy of God. The Law also promises eternal life and many blessings, but they are conditioned by perfect obedience. Due to sin, all have fallen short of the glory of God. This offered promise is not given in exchange for our works or merit. The Apology explains that this promise to give the merits of Christ is the result of God's grace and mercy and not on account of anything that we have done.

The third item is described as "the merit of Christ, as the price and propitiation"³. This merit is none other than the completed vicarious atonement.

Christ has secured a treasury of merits for us. Here are some of the ways in which this sub-section describes it:

"the remission of sins and justification"

"the forgiveness of sins, grace, and all salvation."

"every treasure of grace in Christ."

"the forgiveness of sins"

"the merits of Christ are the price, because there must be a certain propitiation for our sins."

Thus, the merits of Christ, gratuitously given, are the content of the Promise of God.

¹ FC SD III, 25] For not everything that belongs to conversion belongs likewise to the article of justification, in and to which belong and are necessary only the grace of God, the merit of Christ, and faith, which receives this in the promise of the Gospel, whereby the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, whence we receive and have forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, sonship, and heirship of eternal life.

² Lutheran Church. Missouri Synod. (1997). *Concordia Triglotta - English : The symbolic books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Includes Historical Introductions by F. Bente and indexes of subjects. (electronic ed.) (137). Milwaukee WI: Northwestern Publishing House.

³ Later in Apology IV it speaks again of the propitiation of Christ, not apart from faith, but through (justifying) faith. "261] ...For Christ is a *propitiation*, as Paul, Rom. 3, 25, says, *through faith*. When timid consciences are comforted by faith, and are convinced that our sins have been blotted out by the death of Christ, and that God has been reconciled to us on account of Christ's suffering, then, indeed, the suffering of Christ profits us."

Rydecki Video, Part 2

Jon Bucholz: Let me start with a little characterization of how Martin Luther talked about forgiveness

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I'm going to use terms like forgiveness and universal forgiveness.

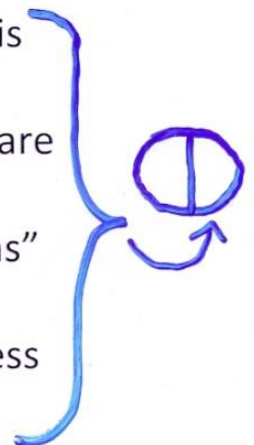
Terms that need to be clarified and understood.

When we talk about justification ...what we are really talking about is receiving forgiveness

I want to make sure that we don't call things synonyms, things that are not synonyms.

The Augsburg Confession says that "to receive the forgiveness of sins" is to be justified.

The Formula of Concord says basically the same thing that forgiveness of sins, the word "justified" in that context is "to forgive."



Martin Luther...1525 "Against the heavenly prophets"

The subject of forgiveness is spoken about in two ways.

The one way we deal with forgiveness is it is achieved and won by Christ at the cross for all people without exception

The other way is the way it is distributed... means of grace, Gospel, the Sacraments.

Martin Luther treats forgiveness as **a completed reality that was perfected and completed at the cross for all people**. That forgiveness is **an accomplished fact**. That is where **it happened** for all people. When Jesus died on the cross it **{forgiveness}** is finished. Tetelesthai...

The other part of forgiveness is how it is distributed comes only when the Gospel is preached.

“Against the Heavenly Prophets in the Matter of Images and Sacraments” pages 75-223

p.213-214 So that our readers may the better perceive our teaching I shall clearly and broadly describe it. **We treat of the forgiveness of sins in two ways.** First, how it is achieved and won. Second, how it is distributed and given to us. Christ has achieved it on the cross, it is true. But he has not distributed or given it on the cross. He has not won it in the supper or sacrament. There he has distributed and given it through the Word, as also in the gospel, where it is preached. He has won it once for all on the cross. But the distribution takes place continuously, before and after, from the beginning to the end of the world. For inasmuch as he had determined once to achieve it, it made no difference to him whether he distributed it before or after, through his Word, as can easily be proved from Scripture. But now there is neither need nor time to do so.

If now I seek the forgiveness of sins, I do not run to the cross, for I will not find it given there. Nor must I hold to the suffering of Christ, as Dr. Karlstadt trifles, in knowledge or remembrance, for I will not find it there either. But I will find in the sacrament or gospel the word which distributes, presents, offers, and gives to me **that forgiveness which was won on the cross.** Therefore, Luther has rightly taught that whoever has a bad conscience from his sins should go to the sacrament and obtain comfort, not because of the bread and wine, not because of the body and blood of Christ, but because of the word which in the sacrament offers, presents, and gives the body and blood of Christ, given and shed for me. Is that not clear enough? ...

p.215 To this we answer. First, the blood of Christ does not become the blood of Gabriel or Michael when it becomes immortal, but remains the blood of the same Christ. For we believe and hold that the blood of Christ now at the right hand of God in heaven was shed for us once only. If we consider the act by which **the forgiveness of sins was achieved**, we know that it did not take place at the supper. But now it has taken place and is accomplished. When we consider the application of the **forgiveness**, we are not dealing with a particular time, but find that it has taken place from the beginning of the world. So St. John in the Book of Revelation [13:8] says that the Lamb of God was slain before the foundation of the world.

Since now **all they who are forgiven** still have sins, the body and blood of Christ are necessary for them. Thus it is still true that he is given for them. **For while the act has taken place, as long as I have not appropriated it, it is as if it had not taken place for me.** Frau Hulda gets nowhere with her sharp sophistry, for she does not see that the question concerns completely the application of what Christ has won for the sake of the distribution and has placed in the distribution. As we have mentioned above, St. Paul therefore says, “The body of Christ was broken for us” [I Cor. 11:24]. It neither hinders nor helps the forgiveness to speak of mortal or immortal, or of what has happened or will happen. It is sufficient that the blood be one and the same. When it is given for and to me, it is shed for me. That which is shed for me, does and must take place daily” (Luther’s Works, Vol. 40).

76] to attain remission of sins = to be justified

Apology of the Augsburg Confession IV

Attain
Obtain
Apprehend

Acquire
Comfort ourselves
Receive



God says
He is
righteous

That We Obtain Remission of Sins by Faith Alone in Christ.

75] We think that even the adversaries acknowledge that, in justification, the remission of sins is necessary first. For we all are *what* under sin. Wherefore we reason thus:— \oplus = Atonement = Christ did

76] To attain the remission of sins is to be justified, according to Ps. 32, 1: *Blessed 77] is he whose transgression is forgiven. By faith alone in Christ*, not through love, not because of love or works, do we acquire the remission of sins, although love follows faith. 78] *Therefore by faith alone we are justified*, understanding justification as the making of a righteous man out of an unrighteous, or that he be regenerated.

79] It will thus become easy to declare the minor premise [that we obtain forgiveness of sin by faith, not by love] if we know how the remission of sins occurs. The adversaries with great indifference dispute whether the remission of sins and the infusion of grace are the same change [whether they are one change or two]. Being idle men, they did not know what to answer [cannot speak at all on this subject]. In the remission of sins, the terrors of sin and of eternal death, in the heart, must be overcome, as Paul testifies, 1 Cor. 15, 56 sq.: *The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the Law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* That is, sin terrifies consciences, this occurs through the Law, which shows the wrath of God against sin; but we gain the victory through Christ. How? By faith, when we comfort ourselves by confidence in the mercy promised for 80] Christ's sake. Thus, therefore, we prove the minor proposition. The wrath of God cannot be appeased if we set against it our own works, because Christ has been set forth as a Propitiator, so that for His sake, the Father may become reconciled to us. But Christ is not apprehended as a Mediator except by faith. Therefore, by faith alone we obtain remission of sins, when we comfort our hearts with confidence in the mercy promised for 81] Christ's sake. Likewise Paul, Rom. 5, 2, says: