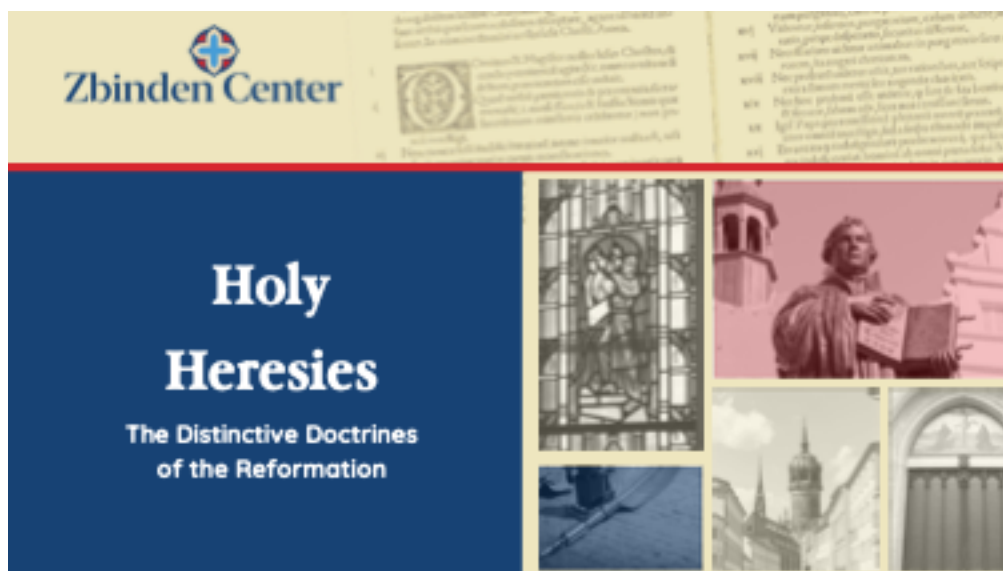




HOLY HERESY 4: FAITH ALONE (SOLUS FIDE) MARCH 12/13, 2025

Romans 1:16-17:

*¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."*¹

- I. The Medieval Church and the Problem of Works-Based Righteousness
 - a. 16th-century people were deeply concerned with heaven and hell.
 - b. The Church was corrupt: fear, manipulation, and financial exploitation.
 - c. Salvation was viewed as a system of merit:
 - i. Spiritual Credit Score: sin bankrupts, good works improve standing.
 - ii. Sacraments & Indulgences: Church-controlled access to grace.
 - iii. Purgatory: Post-life suffering to purge remaining sins.
 - d. People believed they had to earn salvation rather than receive it.
- II. Martin Luther's Struggle and Revelation
 - a. Luther was a devout monk, desperate to earn righteousness.
 - b. Despite extreme devotion, he found no peace.
 - c. His confessor, Johann von Staupitz, urged him to study the Bible.
 - d. Romans 1:16-17 changed his life—realized righteousness is by faith, not works.
Luther's conclusion: *"This passage of Paul became for me a gate to heaven."*
 - e. Faith is trusting God's grace, not trying to manipulate or earn it.

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Ro 1:16–17). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

- III. The Opposition to Sola Fide
 - a. The Medieval Church resisted Luther's teaching.
 - b. Faith alone threatened Church power—whoever controlled grace controlled people.
 - c. Duke George of Albertine: If people could claim salvation by faith alone, it would make them "*presumptuous and mutinous.*"
 - d. Luther: Grace is not earned through rituals—it is received through relationship.

- IV. The Biblical Basis of Faith Alone
 - a. Jesus lived the life we could not live:
 - i. Obedient where we are rebellious.
 - ii. Selfless where we are selfish.
 - iii. Holy where we are sinful.
 - iv. He died for us, so we could live in Him.
 - b. Christianity is unique:
 - i. Other religions: "What must we do to reach God?"
 - ii. Christianity: "Look what God has done for us!"
 - c. Ephesians 2:8-9—Salvation is a gift, not from works.

- V. What is Saving Faith?
 - a. More than general optimism or "having faith" in something.
 - b. Three key elements of Saving Faith:
 - i. Knowledge – Understanding who Jesus is.
 - ii. Belief – Accepting the Gospel as true.
 - iii. Trust – Betting your life on Christ's work.
 - c. Saving faith is personal:
 - i. Jesus didn't just die "for the world"—He died for you. "*Jesus did not die for all of us, He died for each of us*" (The Rev. Buckner Fanning)
 - ii. Karl Barth: Faith is not just knowing about Jesus, but believing He is your Savior.
 - iii. Luther: "Faith is a living, bold trust in God's grace, so certain of God's favor that it would risk death a thousand times trusting in it."

- VI. Living by Faith
 - a. Faith is not passive—it transforms our lives.
 - b. Faith leads us to:
 - i. Stand for truth, even when unpopular.
 - ii. Trust God, even in trials.
 - iii. Live by His Word, even when the world disagrees.
 - c. The righteous shall live by faith—not by fear, not by works, but by trusting in Christ alone.