

**Study Aids**  
**Discussion Items**  
**and Suggested Reading**  
For “What’s the Message?” Lessons

Lesson 143

A brief summary of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod on Justification:

The LCMS teaches (a) that God does not receive men on the basis of their own good works; (b) but that without the deeds of the Law, by grace alone, on account of the perfect merits of Christ, He justifies them, that is, He regards as righteous all those who believe that for Christ’s sake their sins are forgiven; (c) that by this doctrine alone Christ is given the honor due Him, and through it alone sinners receive the abiding comfort that God is surely gracious to them; (d) that the Christian religion is centered in the precious doctrine that we obtain forgiveness of sin without works of our own, solely by the grace of God, for Christ’s sake, through faith.

It is a Lutheran theological axiom that justification is always complete and dare never be equated with a progressive sanctification. Also, mankind is justified solely by faith for Christ’s sake, not by Christ for faith’s sake (as if it were a good work in itself). As Luther said, it is the very nature of faith to do good works because it is a living, busy, active, powerful thing . . . so that it is impossible for it not to do good without ceasing.

Discuss the above. Where do you agree or disagree? Why, or why not?

Suggested reading for further study:

Probably the best known of all Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s books is **The Cost of Discipleship**, published by The Macmillan Company (also available in paperback). The first section is pertinent here, as it contrasts cheap grace with costly grace, and why we prefer to bestow cheap grace upon ourselves.