

God Creates Faith from the Outside In

1. **Justification as the Lens**
 - Faith alone in Christ justifies us (Article IV).
 - Everything—including how faith is created—must be understood through this lens.
2. **Article V: How God Creates Faith**
 - God gives faith through the **external Word and Sacraments**.
 - The Holy Spirit works where and when God pleases, not through our feelings.
3. **Faith Comes by Hearing**
 - Romans 10: Faith comes from hearing the Word of Christ.
 - God uses physical means and real people to deliver His promises.
4. **God Makes the First Move**
 - Faith is God's gift, not a human achievement.
 - Assurance rests in God's promises, not in the strength of our decisions.
5. **The Danger of Feelings Without the Word**
 - The Holy Spirit never contradicts Scripture.
 - God's Word, not personal experience or emotion, grounds faith and calling.
6. **Living in Assurance**
 - When faith feels weak, return to God's external Word.
 - God's promise remains firm even when our feelings waver.

Reflection Questions

1. Read Romans 5:1-10. Why is it important to keep justification by faith as the “lens” for reading the Bible and the Augsburg Confession?
2. What does it mean that God creates faith “from the outside in” rather than “from the inside out”?
3. Read Romans 10: 9-17. How does Romans 10 challenge the idea that faith is primarily a personal or private experience?
4. Where are you most tempted to locate assurance of your faith—in your feelings or in God's promises?
5. Read Isaiah 55:6-11. Why do Lutherans emphasize the external Word and Sacraments as the means by which God works?
6. How can relying on feelings alone lead to confusion about God's will?
7. When your faith feels weak or absent, what practical steps does this sermon encourage you to take?
8. How does hearing God's promises spoken aloud (absolution, preaching, Scripture) shape your confidence in salvation?