

What is this faith of the tenth leper by which Jesus says he was saved, not merely cleansed as He says of the other nine? It is right worship of sinners humbly bowing to beg God's blessed gifts, while religious pretenders present holy worship to God to gain audience and reward.

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF CONCORD
FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY
APOLOGY OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION
ARTICLE IV: JUSTIFICATION

48] . . . [Faith is . . . not my doing, not my presenting or giving, not my work or preparation, but that a heart comforts itself, and is perfectly confident with respect to this, namely, that God makes a present and gift to us, and not we to Him,]

49] And the difference between this faith and the righteousness of the Law can be easily discerned. Faith is . . . [divine service], which receives the benefits offered by God; the righteousness of the Law is the . . . [divine service] which offers to God our merits. By faith God wishes to be worshiped in this way, that we receive from Him those things which He promises and offers....

53] As often, therefore, as we speak of justifying faith, we must keep in mind that these three objects concur: the promise, and that, too, gratuitous, and the merits of Christ, as the price and propitiation. The promise is received by faith; the "gratuitous" excludes our merits, and signifies that the benefit is offered only through mercy; 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.

57] And throughout the prophets and the psalms this worship . . . is highly praised, although the Law does not teach the gratuitous remission of sins. But the Fathers knew the promise concerning Christ, that God for Christ's sake wished to remit sins. Therefore, since they understood that Christ would be the price for our sins, they knew that our works are not a price for so great a matter [could not pay so great a debt]. Accordingly, they received gratuitous mercy and remission of sins by faith, just as the saints in the New Testament. . . . 60] Thus God wishes Himself to be known, thus He wishes Himself to be worshiped, that from Him we receive benefits, and receive them, too, because of His mercy, . . . And such consolations the adversaries abolish when they extenuate and disparage faith, and teach only that by means of works and merits men treat . . . God [with their worship].

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"Christ Healing a Leper," Reed pen, brown ink, and wash with white gouache on paper by Rembrandt c.1657-60 from Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. [<https://www.pubhist.com/w7339>]