



# Rediscovering the Reformation



'For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith' - Romans 1 v 17. When Martin Luther read these words in the Bible five hundred years ago they changed his life and changed the history of the Christian church, Europe and the world.

In the Reformation, Luther and other Reformers rediscovered and were re-energised by reading God's truths in the Bible. Luther had been a monk who had adhered diligently to the practices of the medieval church—where attending mass, confessing your sins, fasting and abstinence were considered necessary in order to get into heaven. However, Luther found that he could not be assured that he was doing enough to know whether he was saved.

Studying Romans, Luther realised that he did not have to earn God's forgiveness through good behaviour—instead, righteousness (being right with God) was a gift from God

through faith. By believing and trusting in God's word of promise, he was made right. When Jesus died on the cross, he dealt with our guilt and sin and out of his love, this is shared with us.

This message was completely counter-cultural. In some quarters, it was very unpopular—the wealth and structures of churches and states were based on the idea that people had to earn their way to heaven. But for many, just as it is today, it was also life-changing. The courage of Luther and the Reformers to share this message, despite opposition, persecution and death, means that today we can read the Bible in English and trust in Jesus for ourselves. To paraphrase Romans 1 v 16, The Reformers were not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.

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