

So what: Since Scripture is the only, infallible authority we have, we will be a church who ensure that all our doctrine and practice is in line with Scripture and those confessions and creeds we profess likewise wholly rest upon the sure word of Scripture. We will not hold to reason, institution or experience above Scripture.

Sola Gratia – Salvation is by God’s grace alone

Read: Ephesians 1:3-8 - We can do nothing to merit our salvation

Pelagianism – we can save ourselves without Christ, by living morally

Semi-pelagianism / Arminianism – in salvation God plays His part and we play ours. Christ only makes salvation possible

Monergism – salvation is all God’s work by undeserved grace alone

What makes the difference in whether I am saved or not – something God does or I do?

“Who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?”¹

When Jesus died on the cross He actually saved specific individual people, not just made it possible for people to be saved

Read Ephesians 2:1-9 - This must be so if we are dead in sin

So what: Since we are saved by God’s grace alone then we will be a church who:

- are honest and serious about sin aware that we are not saved through our goodness,
- delight in the Christ as the one in whom God acts in grace towards us,
- are serious about prayer, aware that we are totally dependent on God
- base our assurance of salvation alone in God’s grace to us in Christ
- recognize church as the place where God’s means of grace (Word & Sacraments) are found

Sola Fide – Justification by faith alone

“the doctrine upon which the church stands or falls” – Luther

God declares sinners to be in the right with Him by counting (imputing) Christ’s righteousness to us through the *instrument* of faith alone.

“What must I do to be saved?” always answered by *“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved,”* (Acts 16:30-31).

¹ 1 Corinthians 4:7

So consider Abraham, the model believer, who receives righteousness as a gift :

*And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.*²

See Galatians 3:6-11 and Romans 4:1-5

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.”³

God never intended to declare anyone righteous through the moral act of keeping His law

Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and His righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification: (Rom.3:28) yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but works by love.⁴

Faith that justifies is never alone in the believer but always is accompanied by works of love.

So what: Since we are declared right with God by faith alone apart from any meritorious works of our own we will not rest upon good works as the grounds of our salvation but as the outworking of a living, God-given faith. We will call unbelievers not to morality that cannot save, but to trust in Christ through repentance and faith. Faith in Christ comes through hearing (Romans 10) and so we will be a church that declares the gospel to the lost.

Solus Christus – by Christ’s work alone we are saved

God’s Son Jesus Christ is exclusively the only Saviour. He saves us apart from the merit or work of any other, but is the complete Saviour that we need.

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”⁵

For Christ alone is the High Priest who has offered himself as a sacrifice for our sin which is acceptable to God and who now lives to mediate between men and God (so Hebrews 9:11-12 and 1 Timothy 2:5-6)

We need no other mediator, whether Mary, or other saints (living or dead), to approach God.

Our faith must be faith in *this* Christ, Prophet, Priest and King, as He is revealed in the faithful testimony of Scripture, because only this Christ actually saves.

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed⁶

² Genesis 15:6

³ Galatians 3:8

⁴ Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 11:2

⁵ Acts 4:12

All other religions, because they do not claim Christ as the exclusive Saviour are false and do not lead to salvation.

So what: Since our salvation is by Christ's work alone we will be a church who unashamedly proclaim the exclusivity and sufficiency of Christ as the only Saviour, mediator and Lord. We therefore deny there is salvation in any other religion, philosophy or lifestyle, apart from Christ.

Soli Deo Gloria – For the Glory of God alone

“*Salvation belongs to the Lord,*” Psalm 3:8

Q. “What is the chief end of man?”

A. “To glorify God and enjoy Him forever.”

Salvation is sovereignly from God and has been accomplished by God, it is for God's glory alone.

*So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*⁷

Life cannot be split into spiritual and secular – all of life is set apart for God's service

So what: Since all things are for the glory of God, as a church we consider all of life as set apart to God's service and want our doctrine and practice to result in praise to God's glory.

Things to think over this week:

Why are the five *Solas* that encapsulate the recovery of Biblical doctrines at the time of the Reformation so important for us to hold on to today?

Think through the “so what” aspects of these doctrines. Does your understanding of the gospel lead to a church that has these characteristics?

Supplementary reading (available online):

Points from the past that should matter to you –

www.christianity.com/church/church-history/the-five-solas-of-the-protestant-reformation.html

*** Are the 5 solas in the Bible - www.desiringgod.org/series/are-the-five-solas-in-the-bible/labs**

9 Marks of a Grace-Along Church - www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/10-marks-of-grace-alone-church/

The Five Solas: Soli Deo Gloria - reformedforum.org/five-solas-soli-deo-gloria/

⁶ 1 Peter 2:24

⁷ 1 Corinthians 10:31 (see also 1 Peter 4:11, Ephesians 3:21)

Key Doctrines #2

Doctrines that should matter to us

Five Solas of Reform:

Sola Scriptura (“Scripture alone”)

The Bible alone is our highest authority.

Sola Fide (“faith alone”)

We are saved through faith alone in Jesus Christ

Sola Gratia (“grace alone”)

We are saved by the grace of God alone

Solus Christus (“Christ alone”)

Jesus Christ alone is our Lord, Savior, and King

Soli Deo Gloria (“to the glory of God alone”)

We live for the glory of God alone.

Question: If a church holds to these five truths what practical difference should it make?

Sole Scriptura: Scripture alone is the final standard

The “*formal principle*” of the Reformation - the method by which we determine what to believe.

Where do we go to find answers to what we should believe and do?

The 4 grounds of authority we look to: **Bible, Reason, Institution & Experience** (BRIE)

There is a place for Reason, Institution and Experience in the Christian life, but they cannot be our supreme authority. **The Bible alone is our supreme rule & authority.**

As fallen sinners no part of us, including our minds are unaffected by sin

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened – Romans 1:21

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work -2 Tim. 3:16-17

We are not saying = “the Bible is the only authority”

We are saying = “the Bible is the highest & only infallible (never wrong authority). The teachings of the church, experience & reason while valuable, must always submit to Scripture.”