

Five Solas, One Faith  
*Five Solas of the Reformation*  
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**Preached on:** Tuesday, August 7, 2018

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Last year in October, we honored the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation by preaching a series titled "The Bible and Roman Catholicism." It turned out to be a 10 part series, as I recall, and it appeals to me to use October on Tuesdays, at least for another year or two, to have Reformation-centered types of series in October on Tuesdays. I think that's healthy to give us a recurring theme about the roots of our faith, of our biblical faith. There are five Tuesdays this October and I'm going to do a five-part series. That's all I'm trying to say.

So you say, "But, Don, Don, Don, this is August. What does this have to do with October and why are you starting it here?" Well, here's what we want to do in October, Janet. It's really simple. We're going to do a series in October on what are known as the Five Solas of the Reformation. These are pronounced differently. The Solas refer to Latin terms that describe key aspects of the faith. Sometimes they are described in slightly different forms. The English speakers will pronounce them a little bit differently but the Five Solas of the Reformation, Sola Scriptura, Sola Gratia, Sola Fide, Solus Christus, Soli Deo Gloria, those five Latin terms describing defining aspects of Reformation theology, five terms that summarize the beliefs that drove the Protestant Reformation but what we would want to understand is that these aren't simply historic relics of a past time, these are five terms that describe the very nature of biblical Christianity and define it for all of time and define it against all forms of error that would seek to undermine it.

The various forms of the Latin word "sola," it's a Latin term that means "alone or only." Sola Scriptura, Sola Gratia, Sola Fide, Solus Christus, Soli Deo Gloria, these terms highlight the exclusivity of each article of faith they describe. They rose up against the false teaching of the Roman Catholic Church that contradicted the Gospel and we'll describe them in those terms, but what we want to do this evening, what I want to do, I don't know if you want to do it or not, I'll presumed to speak for you; we are going to do this whether you want to or not. What we're going to do is we're going to treat them in a very quick overview manner, having one message where we deal with all five at once. I think there is value in that to kind of introduce the terms if they are new to you, they might very well be new to many of you even though – here's what's really important – the content of what we're talking about is not new but putting them in this form may be new to you and it will help you understand, and what we're describing here are five doctrines that are necessary, that are crucial, that are fundamental to the nature of biblical salvation

and these Solas are necessary due to a problem that you and I share with every man, woman and child that has ever lived, we all share in man's universal guilt before God.

In Romans 3:10, a passage we refer to often, it says,

10 ... There is none righteous, not even one; 11 there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; 12 all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one.

In the book of Ephesians in like manner, Paul describes the universal lostness of man before God when he says in chapter 2, verse 1,

1 ... you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

The spiritual picture of mankind is unrelentingly bleak. Man cannot save himself. Man is lost in sin and he is separated from God by his sin. And what do the Five Solas have to do with that? Well, one writer says it this way: the Solas help uncover the heart of the Gospel and illuminate what it means to be a Christian. The Five Solas tell us what it means to be a Christian; what it means to be saved from the wrath of God; to be saved from sin; how it is that a man can be born again. In other words, the Five Solas are describing the most important aspect of human existence. They are defining for us what the crucial matters of truth are.

Now, the Protestant Reformation rescued biblical Christianity from the satanic clutches that it had found itself in for many centuries within the walls of the Catholic Church. The Five Solas, and I'll repeat these multiple times before the night is over, the Five Solas did this: they drew a bright line between Rome and the Bible. They defined what the issues were so that people could see clearly what the nature of true biblical Christianity was and is. These Five Solas still frame the fundamental convictions of biblical Christianity and it is important for you and it is important for us as a church to understand these, to be able to interact and discuss, as it were, with our forefathers in the faith, what the essentials of biblical Christianity are and that's what we're going to look at in October in detail. Tonight, we're just going to survey all five. Tonight is me kind of planting seed in the fertile soil of your heart so that these things can be introduced to you if they are new and they can start to take root, and then in October what we're going to do is we'll come back and we'll water them and we'll cause them to grow even more as we deal with them in detail. Tonight is just a survey and we will circle back to them all in October and I'm already looking forward to October before I even start tonight's message.

So here's what we're going to do. We'll go through these five. As you read about these, you'll find that different authors put them in slightly different sequences. We're not going to worry about that so much but we're going to start, first of all, with Sola Scriptura, and that Latin term means this: it means Scripture alone. Scripture alone, and this is in some ways the cornerstone of everything else because it states that the Bible alone is the source of truth. Only the Bible is the authority for Christians. Only in the 66 books, no more, no less books of the English Bible, is where God has revealed himself, where God has made his truth known. The Reformers, Calvin, Zwingli, Luther, those great men of history towering above the course of time, raised up by God specifically for that hour to articulate truth and recover truth in a way that has served us for the 501 intervening years since then, upon whose shoulders we stand and with whom in some cases, not with those three men in particular but in the course of some with whose blood that was shed, we gladly would share in if called to do so, those Reformers found the doctrine of Sola Scriptura, the doctrine of Scripture alone in the Bible's own claims for its own authority.

Look at Psalm 19. Scripture alone. Sola Scriptura, Psalm 19 is the text that we want to turn to at the moment. Psalm 19, beginning in verse 7.

7 The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. 8 The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether. 10 They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.

The perfection of the law of God as we read it now in the light of the close of the canon, means that God has said everything that he has to say. If there was revelation needed outside of the bounds of the Bible, the word of God would not be perfect, instead it would be incomplete, it would be inadequate if there was to be more added to it, and to say that, to suggest that would contradict Scripture on its very own terms. So what we realize that God has done, is he has given us a revelation that preempts all other truth claims; that the Bible makes an exclusive truth claim that does not allow for anyone else or anything else to say that this is of equivalent authority. So the doctrine of Scripture alone immediately invalidates the entire religion of Mormonism. It invalidates Catholicism in its claims of tradition and the authority of the Pope and the teaching of their magisterium.

We see this echoed also in the New Testament book of 2 Timothy. Turn to 2 Timothy with me, if you would, just before the book of Hebrews as you're looking for it. 2 Timothy 3, beginning in verse 14, a command that Paul gave to his protégé Timothy, to whom he passes the baton in this his final letter of his apostolic career. He says to Timothy in verse 14 of chapter 3,

14 You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that

from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Everything that is necessary to lead a soul to saving faith in Christ is found in the word of God and in the word of God alone. It is sufficient. It is adequate. Scripture alone defines what a man needs to know in order to be saved.

Going on, once a man is saved, Scripture is sufficient for all of his spiritual life. We don't need psychology. We don't need other things that are mixed together with the word of God as if Scripture were somehow inadequate. Chapter 3, verse 16,

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Now, there's a chapter break, isn't there, in the English Bible? That chapter break is something that was added centuries after Paul wrote, and that's okay, we're not going to fuss over that this evening, but what I want you to see, the reason I call attention to that is that where Paul goes, if you just stop at the end of chapter 3, you miss the consequence that he draws out from what he had just said about the sufficiency of Scripture. So he tells Timothy, and by extension he places command upon the church of Jesus Christ, a command that is so routinely violated in our modern day sickness. Chapter 4, verse 1, Paul says in light of the sufficiency of Scripture,

1 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

Why? Why this emphasis on the proclamation of the word of God? Because the time is going to come and, beloved, we are here right now, this is the era in which we live,

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, 4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

"Timothy, man of God," Scripture says, "in light of the sufficiency of the word of God and the word of God alone, sufficient to convert souls, sufficient to grow souls in Christ, you preach the word." The Bible alone is sufficient to convert the lost and to edify the saints.

The Confession, the 1689 Confession which we use as our statement of faith, our Confession of Faith here at Truth Community Church, its first sentence says this, "The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain and infallible rule of all saving knowledge,

faith and obedience." If something contradicts Scripture, if it adds Scripture as though it were additional revelation from God, beloved, Sola Scriptura teaches us it is not to be believed, it is not to be received, it is to be rejected out of hand and, oh, the clarity that that brings to spiritual discernment for us.

So in the day of the Reformation, Sola Scriptura was a cannon-shot against the walls of the Catholic Church because Sola Scriptura rejected the authority of Catholic tradition, it rejected the authority of the Pope, it rejected the authority of their College of Cardinals by which the Catholic Church teaches their seven sacraments, the doctrine of purgatory, the doctrine of Mary, and many other demonic doctrines that lead people away from the truth and into a destructive false Gospel that will damn their souls. So Sola Scriptura is critical because it teaches us that our consciences are not to be bound by these extra-biblical claims to authority. We are free to come to God's word and find within it everything that we need to know to address, to solve our problem of universal guilt, to lead us surely and safely to the path that leads to biblical salvation found in Jesus Christ. So when institutions, denominations, individuals come and start spouting about how they have an additional new word from God, new prophecies, new ways that God has spoken to their heart, we come back to the doctrine, to the truth of Sola Scriptura and we say, "No, thank you. No way. My conscience," as Luther said, "my conscience is captive to the word of God and the word of God alone." And that brings great clarity to our spiritual lives. Sola Scriptura, Scripture alone.

Let's look at a second Sola, Sola Gratia, grace alone. Grace alone. Beloved, if there is to be any salvation, if there is to be any reconciliation with God, if any sinner is going to go to heaven in light of his guilt and condemnation, it must come from a free sovereign act of God's favor that is in no wise prompted by anything within that sinner. If the sinner is as lost as Scripture testifies him to be, then it's obvious that salvation must come from something that is rooted in God; a kindness, a favor, a patience, a compassion that God bestows upon that unworthy sinner rather than that sinner earning something by what he has done and Scripture makes this abundantly clear.

In Ephesians 2:8 and 9, you know the passage. What does it say?

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

By grace. It is a gift. Not as a result of works. Not of yourselves. No one can boast here.

Grace alone and, brothers, sisters, friends, to speak rightly about Sola Gratia, to speak rightly of grace alone, plunges a dagger into the heart of the pride of man. It plunges a lethal blow to the pride of man because what grace alone teaches us, what the universal guilt of man compels us to is this, and this is where you can kind of separate the wheat from the chaff in terms of people thinking about the nature of true salvation: you and I, sinners throughout all the course of time across every culture, in every land, of every tongue, sinners everywhere, all of humanity, no exceptions, no, not one, sinners have no

claim upon God. None at all. I'm quoting James Montgomery Boice here, "God owes them nothing but punishment for their sins. If he saves them in spite of their sins, it is only because it pleases him to do it and for no other reason."

If you are here tonight and you are a Christian, you realize that you are in this privileged position because it pleased God to do that for you. It pleased God to do that for reasons that were known to him, for reasons that satisfied him and him alone. Not because you were somehow better than the next guy. Not because you had better insight than the person who is not saved. Not because you are better than the flaming atheist who rails against God's word and rails against Christ incessantly. Not because you're better in any way, shape or form. Not because you were born into a Christian family. Every one of us has to be born again. No, Grace alone tells us that there was nothing about us in our heritage, there was nothing good in us, there was no wisdom in us independent of God that caused us to come to him or that caused him to come to us. He came to us in grace alone, because it pleased him alone to do it, for reasons that were satisfactory to him alone, and when we talk about biblical salvation, we talk about the doctrine of justification, God justifies sinners. He declares them righteous. He forgives their sins and gives them the righteousness of Christ on their account solely by grace. God justifies sinners by counting the perfect righteousness of Christ to their account and assigning their guilt to Christ, which he did on the cross when Christ offered his life as a penal substitute for sinners, taking the penalty of sin in his body on the cross, through an act of substitution, his life for yours. He died the death that you should have died. He gives you the righteousness that you did not live and God now treats you as if you had lived the perfect life of Christ, having treated Christ at the cross as if he had committed all of your sins.

Now I ask you, beloved, I ask you: what sinner deserved that? On what basis did we merit, were we owed, was God obligated to us to deal with us thusly in Christ? On what basis did we earn Christ coming to do that for us? There is no answer to that question. Grace alone humbles us and silences us before the cross and we realize that Christ came as an act of pure undeserved favor from God and whoever he includes within the orbit of the intention of that grace, belonged to him. Salvation is from the Lord. No sinner deserves that. No sinner ever could. The pride of man is rightly crushed before the cross and, beloved, a true Christian like so many of you, a true Christian would have it no other way. We, conscious of our sin, of our guilt, of our inability, would not want to take credit for our salvation. We're silenced before the holiness of God by our own guilt, by our own transgressions. We wouldn't want the credit for that. We realize that it was grace alone. Beloved, we are saved from our sins because of what God has done, not what we have done. Grace alone preserves that, makes that clear, definitive, and excludes any boasting from man.

In Romans 3, you can turn there, Romans 3 as Paul having established the universal guilt of all men, goes and says, "Well, how is it, then, that anyone is saved?" Chapter 3, verse 20, Paul stating what we in our stammering way tried to just say over the past several minutes, Paul says in verse 20,

20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

Boasting is excluded. Works are excluded. No flesh will be justified. Well then, how is it that anybody is saved then? Verse 21 through 24,

21 But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, [here it is in verse 24] 24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus... 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

Salvation, biblical salvation finds its source, biblical salvation was caused by God's sovereign grace alone. It is God's grace alone that provided Christ. It was God's grace alone that established the saving Gospel. It was God's grace alone that awakened us to Christ. It was God's grace alone that drew us to Christ that we might believe and put our faith in him to be saved, John 6. Grace alone. The pride of man slaughtered at the cross.

Sola Scriptura. Sola Gratia. Number 3, the question becomes how do we receive this gift then? How does God, having established Christ as the sole Savior of man, how do we receive this gift. Point 3: Sola Fide, f-i-d-e for those of you taking notes. Sola Fide, faith alone. Faith alone.

Well, in light of what we've said about guilt and grace, what is it that a man must do in order to be saved from guilt and from God's judgment? The Gospel calls for a response when it commands men to repent and believe in Christ. What must a man do? The Reformers answered that question with Sola Fide, faith alone. Oh, they are all so important, beloved. That's why we're going to spend a week on each one of them in October, Lord willing. Here's what we see in Sola Fide. Salvation is not received through works that we do. It is not received through acts of merit. You can't get salvation by joining a church. You can't get salvation by being baptized. You can't buy it from the Catholic Church with their indulgences or whatever their latest money raising scheme is. No, Sola Fide emphasizes that sinners receive Christ by faith alone. Faith is the means by which we receive Christ.

You're in the book of Romans, look at Romans 4:5 with me. Romans 4:5,

5 ... to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

It is not by works. It is not the godly that God saves. Look at that. This is so easy to miss. Who is it that God justifies? It's not that we attain a certain level of godliness and then God justifies us. God has to justify us while we are ungodly because we cannot do anything to save ourselves. So we believe in Christ. We receive him by faith.

Galatians 2:16 emphasizes this in a trifold way. Three times positive and negative. Galatians 2:16, listen to it with me. Galatians 2:16 says,

16 nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.

Christ is received not by doing something but by yielding to him, by receiving him. The Shorter Catechism, the Westminster Shorter Catechism answers this question, number 86, it says, "What is faith in Christ Jesus? What is this faith of which we speak?" And it answers it with these long-lasting worthy words, "Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation as he is offered to us in the Gospel." To state this in other ways, we put our trust in Christ alone. We rely exclusively on Christ. Only on Christ. Nothing of ourselves. With a beggarly bankrupt spirit, we call out to Christ with a spirit that says, "I am a sinner. I am separated from God. I deserve his judgment. I am told in your word that you are a Savior who can save us from our sins and I ask you to save me like that. I receive you not because I deserve it but because you have promised to save those who come to you. And with no merit of my own, bankrupt in spirit, mourning my sin, Christ, I come to thee and I receive you."

You receive Christ, you yield to him and, beloved, there is another aspect about faith that I like to emphasize when it comes up, is that you rest in him. You rest on him and you rest on him alone, meaning this, meaning that all of your hope of eternal life, all of your hope for forgiveness of sin, all of your hope for righteousness belongs outside of you and reposes in Christ. You rest in him recognizing that he is sufficient, he is a complete Savior, and you contribute nothing to his righteousness that provides the basis upon which God accepts you as righteous in his sight. We are saved, we are accepted by God solely on the basis, only, sola, alone for the sake of the righteousness of his dear Son, not in anything in ourselves. It is a free gift. Romans 6:23,

23 ... the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Philippian jailer trembling under fear over his sin and over the calamity that had just taken place said to Paul, "What must I do to be saved?" And Paul said to him, "You believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved." We believe in Christ for salvation not thinking that we can do a work to add to that. Salvation is received by faith alone, not through the Roman Catholic Church, not through good works, not through human effort, not through what any man can do for you or what you can do for God. We humbly go to Christ with empty hands and ask him to save us. "Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to thy cross I cling." Sola Fide. Faith alone. Not by works.

Well, in this survey we hurry on to point number 4: Solus Christus. Solus Christus, s-o-l-u-s, C-h-r-i-s-t-u-s. Some will say Solo Christo, but the key thing being Christ alone.



Christ alone. And every one of these is crucial and every one of these is special. Every one of these is exceedingly precious. Every one of them vital. And what Solus Christus teaches us, Christ alone teaches us is this, is that Jesus Christ alone, Jesus Christ only provides access to God for sinners. There is no other door to heaven. There is no other Savior. There is no one else. When the dust of the spiritual battle between true and false religion settles down, when it is all said and done, there will be one Victor on the battlefield. There will be one Champion. There will be one triumphant and it will be Christ alone and everyone else will have fallen dead on the grounds of war. There will be no one else standing. Christ alone will be standing as the one Victor over sin, the one true bridge from sinful man to holy God.

So Solus Christus indicates that Christ alone provides access to God for sinners. Should we prove that from Scripture? How many months do you have for that to be established? How many Scriptures we could quote. John 14:6, in the words of Christ himself,

6 ... "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

Words of Jesus himself.

Acts 4:12,

12 "... There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

Beloved, in this despicably godless pluralistic age in which we live, this postmodern world that wants to define the very concept of truth out of existence, that wants to invite us to believe that all paths lead to God, biblical Christianity comes and declares that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a message of utter exclusivity. One and one alone. No others. And let's think for a moment about the nature of Christ, the work of Christ, and see how that must be the case.

Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone is the God-man, fully God, fully man, two natures in one Christ. He alone is the God-man. Christ alone has the perfect righteousness that God requires for fellowship with him. Christ alone made atonement for sin at the cross with his perfect sacrifice to satisfy the demands of God's justice. 1 Peter 3:18, "Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God," and beloved, as you think about the nature of Christ, you just start to realize how he ascends in the order of the universe to an utter place of glorious exclusivity that no one else could possibly rival or come to. God in human flesh. Perfect righteousness. He could say to his enemies, "Which one of you convicts me of sin?" And they fell silent before him. They would have loved to have had one thing to accuse him of but they knew they couldn't.

No deceit found in his mouth. Utterly sinless. No one else is like that. Mohammed was not sinless. Mary was not sinless. You should read about the Popes sometime. No one would suggest that they were sinless. You read about the history of the Popes and you

say, "These were men straight from the pit of hell," many of them with their profligate immorality. And you take the glorious majesty of Christ and compare it to other religious leaders and you realize we're talking about someone alone, he is in a category of one, no one else like him. You look at his work on the cross where creation falls dark as he bears the sin of the world on his shoulders, where the temple rends in two from top to bottom, where graves open up and dead men come to life as these Gospel accounts tell us about. There is no death like this. There is no Christ like this. Go three further days, go to his tomb, look at the stone rolled away, peek inside with Mary and John and Peter. There's no one there. There is no grave like that where a man came out of his own grave on his own power, raised by the power of God, triumphant over death. There is no one like that. It's Christ alone. One. Sola. Only him. Only one Savior. Only one sacrifice for all time. Only one Mediator, one who bridges the gap between God and man. 1 Timothy 2:5 says,

5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

Christ alone. And what I hope you see as we are going through these things here this evening in this overview fashion, just the way that they interlock together. This is one woven garment. This is one stunning mosaic made of different contributions of color but presenting one unified picture as the different parts contribute their beautiful contribution. Testified by Scripture alone. Motivated by the grace of God alone. Received by faith alone. In Christ alone, there could be no one else. You are not your own Savior. You are not the captain of your own destiny. You are not the master of your soul. Neither am I. Neither is anyone. We are all humbly left at the feet of grace asking for mercy that we do not deserve if we are to be saved, and recognizing, recognizing as we go in our mind to the cross, as we go to the empty tomb, as we look up into heaven and see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Father, recognizing how obviously that no other religion could save; recognizing how obviously there could be no other prophet, no other priest, no other King. Christ alone, exalted in our understanding as Christians, exalted in our affections in the proclamation of the Gospel, stating with utter exclusivity, with utter dogmatism, allowing for no contributions, you must believe in Christ alone or you will die in your sins and if you are in a religion other than Christ that you think can save you, you need to come out of that. You need to come out of the world. You need to come out of your atheism and come to Christ alone humbly if you are to be saved, and we beg men to be reconciled to God through Christ, 2 Corinthians 5. We beg you as an ambassador of Christ, be reconciled to God because Christ alone can save you. And in the glow of these majestic realities, we realize why Scripture says the one who spurns Christ, who tramples underfoot the blood of Jesus as if it's something undeserving of his time, unworthy of his attention, unworthy of his faith, we see in light of these majestic realities why people who spurn the Gospel will face the most severe judgment of them all. Beloved, if you're here and you're not in Christ, flee to him now. God has in mercy shown you his word tonight again and called you graciously to believe in Christ for salvation.

Well, there is a fifth and a final Sola, Soli Deo Gloria. This is number 5, s-o-l-i, if you're taking notes, s-o-l-i D-e-o gloria. Glory to God alone. Glory to God alone. Now beloved, these prior four have created a great momentum to throw us into this reality, to let us join

in affirmation of what Scripture says. Here we were in universal guilt, sinners by nature, sinners by choice, dead in trespasses, dominated by the devil, doomed to suffer the wrath of God, and God has brought a Gospel to bear to deliver us completely from all of that; to forgive all of our sins; to credit to us a perfect righteousness so that we can have a confident assurance that we belong to God and we have been reconciled, that our sins are forgiven and our destination is heaven for ever and ever, amen. Well, you start to reflect on that and your heart is just bursting with praise and thanksgiving, isn't it? You say, "This is wonderful. This is better than anything this world has to offer. If the whole realm of nature were mine, that would be a present far too small to offer thanks to God for such a gift as this." So we're brought naturally to this fifth and final Sola, glory to God alone. God receives the praise for man's salvation and God alone receives the glory, the praise, the honor, the thanks. There is no room for boasting. Human pride has been excluded. Human boasting has been canceled out. It has been ruled out by a principle of grace.

Turn to the book of Ephesians. I think we last left off in Galatians but it doesn't really matter in terms of where I had you turn. Ephesians 1. We're just going to rocket through this and just use this as an opportunity to look forward to October. Ephesians 1 in that great prayer of praise from Paul to God for the nature of salvation says in chapter 1, verse 6,

6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved... 12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory... 14 [the Holy Spirit] given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession [what?], to the praise of His glory.

As Paul articulates the grandeur of biblical salvation again and again and again for emphasis and because he is so consumed by the same thoughts that consume us here tonight, all he can say is, "To the praise of the glory of God. To the glory of God. To the glory of God and to the glory of God alone."

Romans 11:36,

36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever.

The whole plan of salvation is designed to promote the recognition of the glory of God. The goal of life in the meantime, to glorify God. 1 Corinthians 10:31,

31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

In 2 Corinthians 5, talking about our reconciliation with God, not using the word "glory" specifically but you'll see the theme as it speaks about Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:15 says,

15 [Christ] died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

All of life for him who saved us. To his glory alone.

You can think about it this way, beloved. Ephesians 1 talks about the pre-eternal plan of God being to his glory, 1 Corinthians 10 talking about our goal in life now being the glory of God, and in the future, look at Revelation 5. Turn there with me as we soon will close. Week by week, those are the saddest words I speak: it's time to close. When I'm standing here. Revelation 5:11. In eternity past, it was for the glory of God. In life now, it's for the glory of God. In eternity to come, it's going to be for the glory of God.

Revelation 5:11,

11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." 13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." 14 And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped.

Sola Scriptura. Sola Gratia. Sola Fide. Solus Christus. Soli Deo Gloria linked together in a golden chain that expresses the true Gospel.

Beloved, hear me as I close here. These Five Solas express the Gospel which is the power of God unto salvation but I want you to note something really crucial and significant as we bring this to a close this evening. The real battle, and this will help you understand so very much in your conversations with Catholic friends, with people who mix faith and works, who want to put Christ in a pantheon of other deities, the battle that is won with the Five Solas, or maybe better stated, where the battle is fought is not specifically over Scripture, or grace, or faith, or Christ, or the glory of God. It's not over those particular topics, per se, because many false religions will head-fake, will nod in those directions. "Oh, I believe the Bible. I believe in Christ. Sure, faith is important." And they'll talk in terms that sound familiar, that sound right, but you have this nagging sense that something isn't the same. Well, the Five Solas help you understand where the battle is. The battle is not over those things, per se. When it comes to the Reformation truth, when it comes to the Gospel of Christ, when it comes to the truth of God's word, the battle is over the word alone because the word alone excludes all other claims to revelation. It excludes a role for man. It excludes a role for the Roman Church. It excludes all other religion. It excludes the pride of man because if you made room for a little bit of works, you can say, "Sure, glory to God and to me. I sought, I did something to contribute." The Five Solas extinguish that and puts the fire of pride out, never to be sparked up again, because the Catholic Church will talk about Scripture, talk about grace, talk about faith,

talk about Christ, talk about the glory of God, it's when you inject the word "alone" into the conversation that the sparks begin to fly. And that's okay. That's okay because it is there where the battle is engaged. It is there where truth is distinguished from error.

So we need these Five Solas to help us define and defend the Gospel, and as we articulate them here tonight, as you meditate on them as you go home, as we consider them in the future, our prayer is that they would lead us all and men beyond our walls to the one true salvation found in Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone, based on the Scriptures alone, to the glory of God alone.

Let's pray.

*God, may you receive the glory. May you save many through your truth. May you save many through your Son. And may all who are saved see that they are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone. Make us people of those great truths, Father, to live and die for them and one day enter into heaven where we will give you even expanded glory beyond what we can do now in this frail flesh with these feeble words. Father, we long for the day where we will join with the myriads of myriads around your throne giving glory and honor and praise and blessing to the Lamb upon the throne. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

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