



THE JOURNEY CHURCH

SERMON GUIDE 3.6.2022

The Five Solas

SCRIPTURE:

Romans 11:33-36

RECAP:

Today, we live in a culture that is catechizing everyone to believe that correction = oppression. Schools are becoming limited to what they are allowed to teach and are endorsed to teach kids things that are giving them opposing views of Scripture concerning sex, sexuality, and gender. Workplaces are adjusting policies to adapt to these things as well. These things are the fruit of human desires and the human will being at the center of why and how we do things and the fear of man being labeled a close-minded oppressor.

I want us to know, especially us in this room, that if that was the posture of the reformers in the 16th century, the church would still be in really bad shape right now. Reform — tells us that they were not trying to teach or do anything new but instead point them back to what is true.

For hundreds of years the church had abandoned the core beliefs in the Bible. Truth was concealed and not taught. Scripture was not proclaimed faithfully, faith and grace was not preached accurately, Christ was not exalted properly, resulting in the Glory of God not being esteemed.

Some of you may have been here a couple years ago when Pastor Erik covered Martin Luther in the Cloud Series. In short, Martin Luther, father of the Protestant Reformation, after a near death experience, began to seek God. But again, truly understanding who God really was at this time was corrupted by heretical teachings, and this is something that Luther would discover later after a series of events where Luther discerned that He wasn't receiving the clarity he needed about salvation, Luther began to... read his Bible.

After studying God's Word, as you can imagine, He began to quickly see the heresies that were being taught by the Roman Catholic church. As many were being led astray and abandoning truth, the Gospel was a stake and action needed to be taken.

Luther, with full conviction, began to write and, famously, according to History, nailed 95 theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg Germany. He continued to rebuke the Catholic church for their heretical teachings, the Catholic Church began to threaten Luther with excommunication and even death if he did not recant burn His writings. Luther's reply was mind blowing:

"Unless therefore I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture, or by the clearest reasoning, unless I am persuaded by means of the passages I have quoted, and unless they thus render my conscience bound by the Word of God, I cannot and will not retract, for it is unsafe for a Christian to speak against his conscience. Here I stand, I can do no other; may God help me! Amen!"

From this movement, the 5 solas served as what some call the "nucleus" of this Reformation. These 5 pillar statements served as a clear distinction between the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Church. Though the formulation of these solas didn't come about until the 20th century, they capture what the Reformation stood for. **Salvation has everything to do with God's eternal plan to redeem man according to His own purposes and Him receiving glory from it.** Scripture + nothing else. Grace + nothing else. Faith + nothing. Christ + no one else. The Glory of God + nothing else. We'll take some time to dive into them one at a time.

SOLA SCRIPTURA - Scripture Alone

Sola Scriptura is known as the "formal principle" of the Reformation since it gave form to everything. Everything that we know specifically about God and ourselves, is from God's divine Word.

Sola is a latin term that means alone, or only, and Scriptura is a latin term for writings pointing to the Scriptures, God's Inspired Word. Because Scripture is inspired by God, it is the only reliable Word and anything outside it does not hold ultimate authority. Scripture should serve as the guardrails through all of life. It reveals to us, who we are, who God is, and how we are to respond to Him.

It is inerrant, meaning without error. It is sufficient, we can trust God's word as the only profitable teachings that teaches us about salvation, obedience, and communion with Him, and it is authoritative; the final authority of the church, meaning that it has the ultimate and final say-so in how we are to respond to God and live our lives. There is no tradition or other authority that competes with or holds the same weight that God's Word does.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

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

2 Peter 1:19-21

19 And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, 20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

The Problem "Scripture Alone" Addressed : The Pope alone operated in a way that demonstrated power to interpret Scripture and power to formulate new doctrines and at fair price and could even grant you forgiveness for your sins. For centuries, the Roman Catholic Church made it's traditions superior (and still do today). Those traditions were held over God's Inspired Word.

The Solution "Scripture Alone" Argued: Sola Scriptura would push back against traditions, unbiblical and extra biblical teachings that contradict the Word of God. Jesus addressed a similar issue in **Mark 7:6-9** as He rebukes the Pharisees for their hypocrisy,

6 "And he said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; 7 in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' 8 You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men."

Jesus condemns them because their teachings are not from God, but rather from human traditions. They worship God in vain. How so? Because they have abandoned his teachings and elevated their own. The problem is, there can only be one primary objective authority that man must fall under. If not, then we are at the luxury of 8 billion

people's subjective opinions. As Christians, we know that primary authority is the Word of God. So anything that tries to take its place, is a direct attack against God's divine Word. It's not merely people who are just trying to do what's best for them, it is a complete disregard and rejection of the very Word of God and there are consequences for that. The only way that we can know who God is and what He expects of us, is by His Word. Anything that contradicts it, is false and should be dismissed.

Current Objections: How can you use Scripture to validate Scripture? That's circular reasoning.

Correction: For our culture to be abandoning basic logic and reason and become slaves to their feelings, this argument should be going away... But for the sake of the question, I'll entertain it...

God's Word is self-attesting. The error in most people's approach is that they are usually trying to reach above God to find an outside and higher authority to try and validate His words. Well, that's the first mistake. There is nothing outside of God that can validate His Word better than Himself because God is the highest being. We as Christians, are saying that God's Word is the higher authority, and if people object and say, "Well, prove it to me." Our response cannot be looking to external resources to try and validate God's Word because that will slide God's Word under the authority of those resources. You know how you "prove" it to them. By asking them to read it and asking the Holy Spirit to open their eyes to it, that they may perceive that it is already true and stands alone.

Wrap Up: God's Word is the universal truth and authority. It's final and it's good. It stands alone.

SOLA GRATIA - Grace Alone

God's grace is His unmerited, undeserved favor to His bride that brings salvation. God saved us because He is gracious. From top to bottom, from seam to seam, it is mere grace that brings our salvation. It is not by our merits, but the merits of Christ alone. We don't muscle our way to this belief. It is the grace of God that opens our eyes to our sins and our Savior. When we look at that, you know what we see? A whole lotta grace!

In Jerry Bridges' book, "Growing Your Faith", he talks about the synergistic and monergistic views. You may or may not be familiar with the terms, but the definitions may bring clarity because we all land in one or two of these categories.

Synergistic means “to work together”

This view teaches that our good works, our good deeds, are in cooperation with the work of God. That God works together with us in salvation. The works of God and the works of man will grant man salvation.

Some hold this view, perhaps some of you today hold this view. If you know me, you probably know (or have heard) that I do not hold this view. Some of you may hold this view because that’s what you believe Scripture teaches, and I do not hold this view because I do not believe that’s what Scripture teaches. We can fight over it over some coffee and shake hands, but I don’t think you’d disagree entirely with the monergistic view.

Monergistic means “to work alone”

God works in isolation and we have a genuine response in faith that is granted to us by God. He overrides our resistance, opens our eyes, and He aligns our will with His own. God’s grace that saves is a grace that is sovereign. Our souls were dead, and God made us alive.

Romans 3:10-11- *10 “as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God.*

Why not? How come? Because...

Romans 8:7 - *7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.*

Ephesians 2:1-9 - *1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. 4 **But God**, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—**by grace** you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For **by grace** you have been saved through faith. And this is **not your own doing**; it is the **gift** of God, 9 **not a result of works**, so that no one may boast.*

Titus 3:5 - 5 *“he saved us, **not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy**, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,”*

Acts 13:48 - 48 *And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.*

Ephesians 1:3-6 - 3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 **to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.***

Romans 9:13-16 - 13 *As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”¹⁴ What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! 15 For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” 16 So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.*

The Problem “Sola Gratia” Addressed: Roman Catholicism taught, not grace alone, but grace + sacraments. The church taught that our works bring about God’s grace and continue to bring about God’s grace. The idea they presented was that those who are coming to God are gradually being saved through their participation in the sacraments. The sacraments were taught to be necessary for both your salvation and your sanctification. There is no assurance of salvation, so you better keep working (and paying).

The Solution “Sola Gratia” Argued: Romans 3:23-24 which says *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified **by his grace as a gift**, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,”* Our justification comes to us by God’s grace alone, as a gift. It is not based on our merits, but on the merits of Christ. We are justified once and for all, through the blood of Christ.

Current Objections: If monergism is true, how can man be free to make real decisions?

Correction: God’s grace does not dismiss our real decisions. I believe we really do have a voluntary choice and make real decisions in accepting Christ. Bruce Ware talks about the “freedom of inclination” or the “freedom of volunteer choice”, meaning the “the freedom to choose what we most want.” We will choose what we desire to do most. In

light of this, for those of us who have or will come to Christ, was ordained by God that we'd be inclined to do so and act on that inclination.

I think where we go wrong is thinking that free will has to mean an autonomous decision for it to truly mean that we have the ability to make real decisions. I'd argue that though we make genuine decisions, it is still held in the hands of a sovereign God who brought us to that decision.

God's sovereign grace is nothing to fret about. It's everything to rejoice in. It brings assurance to our salvation. If the ball was in our court, we'd be condemned. When we ask ourselves the question why did God save us, we dare not begin with, "Because I..." but instead, "Because He..." Because He is gracious and kind.

SOLA FIDE - Faith Alone

Sola Fide, meaning "Faith Alone", is arguing that the reception of salvation can only come about through faith. Our merits never produce or motivate God to save us.

The Problem "Faith Alone" Addressed: Our righteous works will merit salvation.

The Solution "Faith Alone" Argued: Righteous works flow from being justified by faith in Christ and point back to us being truly justified. That no good works could make you holy and blameless before a holy God, but that our good works show that we have been justified by faith. There is no righteousness of our own that can merit salvation, but there is righteousness outside of us that needs to be imputed to us for us to be saved.

In the book 50 Core Truths of the Christian Faith, Gregg Allison talks about Martin Luther making a distinction between two kinds of righteousness: **alien righteousness and actual righteousness**. Alien righteousness talks about the extra nos, outside righteousness, the righteousness of Christ, that is imputed to us. It is external to man and must be given to man to be declared righteous. Actual righteousness refers to the justified believers engaging in good work that is made possible through the external imputation of the righteousness of God.

Philippians 3:8-9 - *8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, **not having a righteousness of my own** that comes from the law, but that which comes through **faith in Christ**, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—*

2 Corinthians 5:21 - *21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

John 3:16 - *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that **whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.**”*

Current Objections: Shouldn't we need more confirmation than faith for salvation?

Corrections: 1). The righteousness of Christ is sufficient. 2). Our works justify our faith. Faith without works is dead. Our works point back to our faith. (James 2) It is faith alone that justifies, and work that confirms that we have faith.

We can perceive clearly from Scripture that our works are not at the center of salvation, and that God has used faith as the tool for us to receive salvation, and even that faith is a gift from God and is granted to His bride.

SOLUS CHRISTUS - Christ Alone

Justification comes through Christ alone and not by the merit of any other human being. This would have been a knock toward any opposing authority (the pope and priest).

The Problem “Christ Alone” Addressed: Grace comes through the sacramental system and confession of sin to the priest. They also esteemed and exalted Mary on the same level as Christ.

The Solution “Christ Alone” Argued: It is Christ and Him alone who saves. Jesus is the High Priest. Christ gives grace independently. Through Christ, we are a holy nation and royal priesthood who now has direct access to God through Christ. We are not dependent upon our pastors nor any priest for us to be made right with God. It is Christ alone who makes us right with God.

Acts 4:12 - *12 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.”*

John 14:6 - *6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

1 Timothy 2:5 - *5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,*

Romans 3:21-26 - *21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. 26 It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

Luke 18:26-27 - *26 Those who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" 27 But he said, "What is impossible with man is possible with God."*

Current Objection: Why is Christianity so exclusive? Why can't other religions be true?

Correction: No other religion explains both the problem with and solution for man. What separates Christianity from all other religions, is that Christ has atoned for the sins that separated us from God by living a perfect life, dying in our place, and was raised from the dead. If we remove Christ from the picture, the problem is still there. The problem still remains outside of Christ and so does His wrath.

"The Gospel is not built on "do" but "done". I think that's true. It is not built on, "I must start..." but instead "Christ has finished..." As Steve Lawson says, "He (Christ) exchanged the worst of me for the best of Him." Only Christ alone can save. Praise God.

SOLI DEO GLORIA - Glory to God Alone

The glory of God is His infinite worth, value, and perfections on full display for man to behold. John Piper defines the glory of God this way, **"The glory of God is the radiance of the intrinsic worth and beauty and greatness of his manifold perfections."** When we look at these other 4 solas, we see God honored and exalted. We see Him glorified! Who should receive the glory from all this? Only God receives glory from our salvation. Though we benefit from God's grace to save us, we exalt and glorify God for doing the saving.

Colossians 3:17 - *17 "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."*

The Problem "Glory of God Alone" Addressed: To say anything less than Scripture Alone, Grace Alone, Faith Alone, and Christ Alone, is to say to the glory of "man". A love

for the glory of man will blind us from the glory of God. We see this in **John 12:42-43**: *42 Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.*

The Solution “Glory of God Alone” Argued: This is God’s world. History is filled with God-ordained events that will ultimately bring Him glory and the same is true for the present and future. All of life is about God receiving glory because He wants it that way. Any denial of these truths, is a direct denial of His glory, and God will be glorified.

The Westminster Catechism says that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Salvation began with God. Salvation was executed by God. Salvation was applied by God. Salvation is sustained by God. Salvation is completed by God. Therefore, may the God of our salvation receive all the glory.

Conformity to these truths is true Christianity.

Scripture Alone - God’s Word is authoritative and immutable. His truths are timeless and we are accountable to them. If you ask one of Rome partners Jason Davis what the turning point was in the converts in Rome, there is a common theme that you’ll hear, **“I just began to read my Bible.”** I picked up God’s Word, and I saw the truth, and I came into submission to that Truth. Scripture Alone! You can actually listen to our Apologetics podcast called “Everyday Apologetics” with an episode featuring him. Go subscribe to it!

Spurgeon sums it up with this, **“Nobody ever outgrows Scripture; the book widens and deepens with our years.”**

You have been saved by “Grace Alone” through “Faith Alone. Instead of trying to fix our sins, we repent of them and cast ourselves onto the mercy of God. Instead of trying to trust in our works, we have faith in the finished work of Christ. As George Liele, whom we covered in The Cloud, reminds us that it is “only through the merits of my dying Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” that we can be justified.

And it is only by Him. By no other name can man be saved, except by Christ Alone. Christ is our righteousness. He was our righteousness, He is our righteousness, and He will always be our righteousness.

Glory to God Alone - We dare not, with words or deeds, come close to abandoning any of the other 4 solas, lest it not be to the glory of God alone, but to the glory or man alone.

Why is “Glory to God alone” the only response? Because as we look at the narrative of the Gospel, it is a whole lotta God going on!

What would the church look like if we understood this and lived by it? That to stray away from this is to attack the glory of God. The 5 solas are telling the Gospel narrative. When we encounter the 5 Solas, we encounter the Gospel. That’s what the giants of the faith fought for and why we still fight for it today.

Lost in our sins with no way to no God, it was God who breathed out His Word for us to know Him and live for Him. We were once dead in our trespasses and sins, unable, unwilling to seek God, it was God that pursued us and gave us life by His grace that we may believe in the finished work of Christ. Once enemies of God, but God showed His love for us by sending His Son to be the propitiation for our sins, even at our most unlovable state. To God be the glory forever, Amen!

QUESTIONS:

1. As Christians go through life learning to know their Bibles better and growing in Christian maturity, do they tend to trust the Bible more or less? In heaven, do you think you will believe the Bible is inerrant? If so, will you believe it more firmly or less firmly that you do know?
2. Why is it important that Scripture alone be the main guide for following Jesus?
3. Do you believe in the Synergistic view or the Monergistic view? What Scripture do you have to back up your view?
4. How would you define faith? (Proverbs 3:5, John 3:16)
5. What is the danger of believing that it is Christ plus something that allows us to come to faith?
6. Why was it that only Christ alone could be the only perfect substitute for our sin? (John 14:6, 2 Corinthians 5:21)
7. Read Isaiah 43:6-7. Why were we created?
8. Why must we live by the other four solas in order to give God glory alone?