

The 5 Solas of the reformation

Sola Scriptura

MPS: **The Word of God is our highest authority!**

2 Timothy 3:14–17 (ESV) 14 *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it* **15** *and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.* **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.*

- Today is October 31st... Happy Reformation day!
- Today marks the 504th anniversary of the day Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the Wittenberg castle church.
- The Protestant Reformation was a movement in the 16th and 17th centuries in Europe which tried to 'reform' the Roman Catholic Church because of perceived doctrinal and moral corruption that undermined the Christian gospel.

So does the reformation have anything to do with this new series? YES!

- The **Five Solas** are five Latin phrases (or slogans) that emerged during the Protestant Reformation to summarize the Reformers' basic theological convictions about the essentials of Christianity – in particular salvation - in contrast to certain teachings of the Roman Catholic Church of the day.

"Sola" is Latin meaning "alone" or "only" and the corresponding phrases are:

- *Sola Scriptura*, by Scripture alone.
- *Sola Fide*, by faith alone.
- *Sola Gratia*, by grace alone.
- *Solus Christus*, through Christ alone.
- *Soli Deo Gloria*, glory to God alone.
- Do you know your spiritual heritage? Have you ever asked the question, “why do we do what we do in Christianity?”
- It is good to know where we came from. “Those who cannot learn from the past are doomed to repeat it.” Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*:
- Our history is an important part of our identity.

- The whole Bible is marked with genealogy - where did I come from? God included the history, legacy, and genealogy of his chosen people and the Messiah in the scriptures— why does *God* find it important that we should know where we come from?
- We need to know who we *are* and who we are *not*.
- The Protestant Reformation is the reason we are here doing what we are doing right now... if it weren't for the reformation, we wouldn't have GB, denominations, the Surgeons and Grahams, etc.

Differences between the Catholic Church and protestant church

- It's why we don't sit in a confessional booth - instead we go directly to our High Priest, Jesus for forgiveness
- It's why we don't believe in purgatory (apocrypha)--we believe in the present Heaven, in which the saved-by-grace enter into the presence of the Lord
- It's why we don't baptize babies for their means of justification - instead we receive imputation rather than impartation.
- It's why we don't pray to saints--instead, directly to the Father, through the way made for us by the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit
- It's why we don't have priests who intercede to God on our behalf- instead we have pastors/elders who shepherd us in our direct relationship with God
- It's why we don't go to mass - instead we do communion the way we do it
- If it weren't' for the PR things would be way different – but because of the PR, we also have 5 theological convictions that are essential and foundational to our faith – to Christianity.
- Why are they important? There is a problem that makes these 5 solas necessary.
- What's the problem that makes the 5 solas necessary? We are under the wrath of God and dead in our trespasses... We have to be delivered. We have to escape... (John 3:36)

Romans 3:9–10 (ESV) 9 *What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, 10 as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; ... 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

Romans 6:23 (ESV) 23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Romans 5:9 (ESV) 9 *Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.*

1 Thessalonians 1:9–10 (ESV) 9 *...you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*

John 3:36 (ESV) 36 *Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.*

Ephesians 2:1–5 (ESV) 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—*

Q: Is there hope that we could live, and God could be 100% for us forever?

A: Yes! This is the good news of Christianity. And the answer that the PR found in the Bible was this: Our being made alive in Christ, and God being 100% for us forever is...

- By God's grace alone,
- Received through faith alone,
- On the basis of Christ alone
- So that all things lead ultimately to the glory of God alone,
- With Scripture alone as the only final, decisive authority for discerning, teaching, and defending these truths.

SOLA SCRIPTURA – The Scripture alone

The Word of God is our highest authority!

- It's not solo Scriptura which would be "only" Scripture is our authority – we have other authorities – Sola Scriptura simply means it alone is our highest authority.
- The fight over the authority of scripture wasn't the *initial* fight. It was the subsequent fight—the more crucial and necessary one, since, if we don't recognize the same authority (common ground), then we can't move forward together.
- Justification was the first fight Luther had with the Church—imputation versus impartation. It came down to (basically) a matter of, "Yeah? Who says?!"

- Luther said, “It’s right here...IMPUTED justification...in the BIBLE.”
- The Church said, “Yeah, but the Pope says imparted justification...and other, previous Popes said so...and Church tradition, too!”
- Luther said, “Their authority is nothing compared to GOD’S Word,”
- The Church said, “Sure they are! But, to satisfy you and defeat you on your own ground, look at *these* scriptures over here that say what we say about justification...in Tobit, Marcion, and the Gospel of Thomas!”
- Luther said, “Are you crazy? Those aren’t in the BIBLE! They’re not canon!”
- The Church said, “Oh...wow...you know what? Now they are! The Pope just said they are!”
- Luther got so mad that he went CRAZY. He went home, drank some beer his wife had been brewing, and fist-fought a donkey in his backyard.
- So...he basically had to fight for scripture alone as the highest authority so that he could *go back* to fight for justification by grace alone through faith alone—an IMPUTED justification, not an imparted one.
- Historically, Christianity has believed there are 2 kinds of Revelation from God – General revelation and special revelation are the two ways God has chosen to reveal Himself to humanity. General revelation refers to the general truths that can be known about God through nature. Special revelation refers to the more specific truths that can be known about God through the supernatural.
- The Roman Catholic church believed there were 2 sources of special revelation – The Scripture (Bible) AND tradition – a dual source of special revelation.
- The reformers said, there is not a dual source of special revelation but a single source of special revelation and by that single source we try to settle all controversies of doctrines and theologies.
- Hence, Sola Scriptura – Scripture alone is our highest authority - Scripture alone as the only final, decisive authority for discerning, teaching, and defending these truths.
- Though the Reformers didn’t believe in a dual source of divine, special revelation, they did believe in dual authorship of the canonized Scriptures. They beloved the scriptures

were divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit – given to men to write the very words of God. So do we.

2 Timothy 3:16 (ESV) 16 *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,*

- When Martin Luther was summoned to the Diet of Worms in 1521 and asked to recant his teaching, he replied, "Unless I am convinced by Scripture and plain reason, my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience would be neither right nor safe. God help me. Here I stand, I can do no other."

"Under God, the Scripture alone is the final, decisive authority for discerning, teaching, and defending the saving truth of the 5 solas of the protestant reformation. All other human authority and human insight may be useful in understanding and teaching and defending the Scripture, but are subject to the Scripture alone as the final, decisive authority.

Therefore, for the sake of the gospel of new life and justification by God's grace alone, on the basis of Christ alone, received by faith alone, so that all things lead ultimately to the glory of God alone, we take our stand, with confidence and joy, on the final decisive authority of Scripture alone," John Piper.

4 takeaways from Sola Scriptura:

1. Need the Bible

- You need it because found in it are the means to be saved.

Consider the diversity of the Bible. The Bible:

- was written over a **period of some fifteen hundred years** or more (from at least 1400 B.C. to nearly A.D.100),
- is composed of **66 different books**,
- was written by some **40 different authors**,
- was composed in **three languages**—Hebrew, Greek, and some Aramaic,
- contains discussions on **hundreds of different topics**,
- was written in a **variety of different literary styles**, including historical, poetic, didactic, parabolic, allegorical, apocalyptic, and epic,
- was composed by **authors of many different occupations**.

Yet in spite of all this vast diversity, the Bible reveals an amazing unity. First, it is **one, continuous unfolding drama of redemption** from Genesis to Revelation; from paradise lost to paradise regained; from the creation of all things to the consummation of all things

Second, the Bible has one central theme—the Person of Jesus Christ (Luke 24:27). In the Old Testament, Christ is seen by way of anticipation; in the New Testament by way of realization. In the Old Testament He is predicted, and in the New Testament He is present (Matt. 5:17-18).

Third, from beginning to end the Bible has one unified message: humanity's problem is sin (Gen. 6:5; Rom. 3:23), and the solution is salvation through Christ (Luke 19:10; Mark 10:45).

- You need it because found in it are the attributes of God.
- You need it because found in it are all the means for life and godliness.

2. Read the Bible

- One of the principles of Sola Scriptura was a belief that all Christians had the right and responsibilities to read the Bible for themselves.
- They also believed that all Christians had the right to interpret the Bible for themselves.
- The Bible is written in such a way that all things necessary for our salvation and for our Christian life and growth are very clearly set forth in Scripture.
- DO YOU HAVE A PLAN?

3. Trust the Bible

- Inerrancy of the Bible

The inerrancy of Scripture means that Scripture in the original manuscripts does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact.

- Inspiration of the Bible

Proverbs 30:5 (ESV) 5 *Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.*

- What if the Word of God was the first place you went to for all of life's issues and questions? It should be the first place you go to - and its important to do it in community.

4. Submit to the Bible

- Authority of the Bible

The authority of Scripture means that all the words in Scripture are God's words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God.

- The Word of God is our highest authority.

- Go to the Bible to answer life's questions - All other ground is sinking sand (Matthew 7:24-27)